

DEVELOPING A PREMARITAL COUNSELLING PROGRAMME TO
PREPARE YOUNG ADULTS FOR CHRISTIAN HOMES AT
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MAIDUGURI

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to address the inadequacy in the existing premarital programme in First Baptist Church Maiduguri. The existing premarital counselling does not have provision for a growing problem of mate selection among our young adults and the ill of marriages to non Christians, especially to Muslims. Since it usually comes up when it is few months to the wedding. The project therefore developed a program that will provide adequate premarital counselling for Christian young adults of First Baptist Church Maiduguri, in order to ensure happy Christian homes. This project provided answer to the following. How premarital counselling would ensure right choice and adequate preparation for marriage life. How it would reduce or eradicate many of the crises in marriage. The various ways of providing premarital counselling and type of premarital counselling programme best suitable to prepare young Christian adults for Christian home.

In order to carry out this project a literature reviewed of related books and research works on premarital counselling was carried out. Then a programme was designed which contained one preaching and five seminars. The preaching challenged the members of First Baptist Church Maiduguri on the challenges of premarital counselling and their role in making it effective. The five seminars were prepared to explain and update their knowledge on premarital counselling.

The method used was pre-test and post-test questionnaires. This method measured the effectiveness of the designed programme through pre-test and post-test questionnaires. The pre-test questionnaire was administered before the preaching and the presentation of the seminars, while the post-test questionnaire was administered at the end of the seminars. The questionnaires were to elicit the church members' experiences on existing premarital counselling and the effectiveness of the implemented programme.

The implementation of the programme brought about the conclusion that premarital programme should involves parents and others as providers of premarital counselling to complement the Church' pastor premarital counselling programme. In addition to this was the fact that premarital counselling should start early at Teen age as to prepare them for heterogeneous relationship, and young adult stage of mate selection. This as was observed will take care of teenage pregnancy, problem of mate selection and ensured happy home for young adults.

An excitement and positive reaction of the members as they commended the programme and demanded that it should be published and implemented, coupled with the result of the research, brought about the recommendation that the new programme should immediately replace the old one at First Baptist Church Maiduguri and the members had agreed. Churches and other stake holders in premarital counselling should also consider the new programme for better performance of premarital programme. And that this programme should be published as was observed, for the use of those who may need it.

Conclusion

The following conclusion could be drawn from this project

1. That premarital counselling is very important before marriage.
2. Premarital counselling is important to building a Christian home.
3. Premarital counselling has a lot of benefits for ensuring happy marriage and Christian home.
4. Premarital counselling should not mean for only engaged couple preparing for wedding. But should include preparation for successful and health love relationship, mate selection, engagement, courtship and marriage.
5. Premarital counselling should start early at Teen stage or before Teen stage as to get them prepare for the challenges of love relationship at Teens age and mate selection at Young adult stage. As this will take care of teenage pregnancy, premarital sex, problem of mate selection in the young adult and therefore ensured happy home for the young adult. However for the pre-marriage counselling also called wedding preparation counselling, it was agreed that it should start not less than three month to the wedding day.

6. That pastors, parents, experienced deacons and elders, counsellors, (pastoral counsellors, and professional counsellors) and spiritual leaders should be providers of premarital counselling.
7. That premarital counselling should address the following, Sex education, Preparation of the adolescent for adult role of married life. Insight about love, relationship and mate selection, Compatibility, Expectations/shared vision of life couple want to live together, Personality and family origin, Communication, Prevention & conflict resolution, Intimacy and sexuality, Long- term goal, Understanding of biblical roles and responsibilities for a husband and wife, and Parenting.
8. The parent role in premarital counselling includes, Laying premarital counselling foundation for their children, Releasing and moving a child towards adult independence, Helping them succeed at school, Providing sexual education, Ensure proper character development by developing a child's character, identity and morality, Providing essential spiritual foundations and helping a child grow spiritually, Guide and guard their children, Pray with them and for them, Provides premarital education & counselling, and finally encouraging them to get more from the church and counsellors.
9. Pastors role in premarital counselling should be, Lead and prepare the church in providing premarital counselling, Prepares the church members for Christian parenting, Training of counsellor to assist in counselling, Provides right atmosphere for premarital education and counselling, and Provides premarital counselling.

10. Methods for providing premarital education include the following Preaching, Teaching/Seminar, Video ministration, Drama ministration, and Questions & answers forum.
11. Methods for providing premarital counselling include One to one, Group counselling, single seminar, engaged group, and marriage preparation.
12. The following are discovered as tool for premarital counselling, Teen's fellowship, Single's fellowship, Couple's fellowship, Family's fellowship, Family revival, and Family educational programmes. Through these tools the church can promote effective premarital education and counselling.
13. Pastor can involve the following people in pre-marriage counselling. Experience Deacons, experienced Christians, Parent, health workers and professional counsellor.
14. That the church should make premarital and pre-marriage counselling compulsory.
15. That church should make the following test compulsory, blood test like blood genotype test and HIV. Then pregnancy test to maintain the sacredness of Christian marriage.
16. That the project is applicable in all churches especially in Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches.

The analysis of the result of pre test and post test questionnaire indicated that the objective of the project were met, in addition the conclusion derived from the project compared with research questions and purpose of the study stated at beginning of this project show that the project was successful.

Recommendations

From the outcome of this project the following recommendations are made.

1. The new programme should replace the old programme of premarital counselling in First Baptist Church, Maiduguri.
2. The research study should be made available to other churches, pastors and other stakeholders in premarital counselling for consideration for their use.
3. The programme as requested should be considered for publication as to make it available for people that may need it.
4. There is need for more resources for every issue in premarital counselling. Therefore will need experienced scholars in specialised field to write on premarital counselling important topics like sex education, love relationships, dating, courtship and marriage. Books on that can guide parent in premarital education and counselling.
5. There is need for specialized training for premarital counsellors as a specialization in counselling just as we have marriage counsellors. We need people that we specialized in premarital counselling. More so judging from its importance, our institutions like the seminaries need to put premarital counselling as course of study for all pastors.
6. The family department of our convention and of our churches need to include programme that will promote healthy premarital issues in their programme. More important to consider issues raised in this project.