

NBTS  
D. MIN.  
09-99.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS  
IN MINISTRIES AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, OTA, OGUN STATE

A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES OF  
NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, OGBOMOSO

2013—0780

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE AWARD OF THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE

BY  
VICTOR OLUWASEGUN OYELOWO

(09/0229)

JUNE 2013

## ABSTRACT

The challenge of little or no participation of church members in church ministries has been a recurring decimal in many average local congregations. Many factors are responsible for this ugly situation. It is a sign of an unhealthy church. It is a monster that must be tackled headlong. This research project is an action plan to arrest the situation which is prevalent at First Baptist Church, Ota. The question this project will attempt to answer is: How can the First Baptist Church, Ota, achieve greater involvement of her current and future members in church ministries? The method adopted to find solution to the above problem is experimental study. This method involved pre-test and post-test administration of questionnaire. The former determined the current level of involvement in church ministries by each of the respondents. The latter assessed the understanding gained after the series of teachings which lasted five weeks. A total of 101 respondents completed the pre-test questionnaire while 96 did for the post-test questionnaire. As part of the methodology used in this research, the writer read extensively available literature on church leadership, church growth, priesthood of believers, spiritual gifts, and strategic planning. He gained scholarly insights on the central issue of the research through such consultations. The primary tools used include the different Bible translations, Bible Dictionaries, Lexicons, and scholarly books on related subjects. This researcher developed this project in five chapters. It is introduced through Background to the Project, Statement of problem, Thesis Statement, Scope of the Project, Significance of the Project, Purpose of the Project, and Definition of Terms. A broad review of major books on four different concepts was done. These four concepts are: priesthood of believers, spiritual gifts, church ministries, and strategic planning. These books show that the low participation of church members in church ministries is an aberration and a strange thing to the New Testament. All of the readings showed that all believers are expected to play active roles in the body of Christ. An examination of some selected passages was carried out. Here a total of twenty gifts of the Spirit were analyzed. A series of teachings on spiritual gifts with extensive reference to the doctrine of priesthood of believers, and concepts of church ministries and Christian service, was developed. The outline of these teachings was produced in this research. After the teachings, there was an evaluation of the understanding of each of the participants. The results of the questionnaires administered showed that there was an acute ignorance of the gifts of the Spirit, priesthood of believers, Christian service, and church ministries on the part of most of the members of the church, including those who have been members for a long time. It was discovered that the aforementioned issues – gifts of the Spirit, priesthood of all believers, Christian service, and church ministries are interrelated. A good understanding of these is the passion that can drive church members to active involvement in church ministries. There is the need to continuously emphasise those four concepts, and to ensure that the church Ministry Enlistment Team carries out its function i.e. to help all members, including future members discover and develop their gifts in the context of the ministries available at the First Baptist Church, Ota, Ogun State.

conversion to the Christian faith. All church members who are genuinely saved have the gifts to serve the interests of God who has called them out of darkness into the light of His glorious kingdom.

The third fundamental issue for the involvement of church members in church ministries is a synthesis of church ministries and spiritual gifts. It has been noticed that spiritual gifts are not ends in themselves. Rather, they are a means to an end. The gifts of the Spirit are spiritual abilities given to believers for them to carry out specific ministries in and through their local congregations. Every local church should create enough ministries for her members to channel their spiritual gifts. Also, the onus lies on each church to help each member identify the various ministries he or she can serve courtesy of his or her gifts. This is the end goal.

How this would be accomplished should be properly set out. Thus, there is the need for a strategy, or an action plan. This carefully devised action plan should be properly put in place to help existing and future members find their bearing in Christian service. This strategic plan needs committed, mature, and passionate church leaders to coordinate. It should be called Church Ministry Enlistment Team. The task before this team is enormous. So the church should give full backing to the persons tasked with this great assignment. It should however be noted that any church that practices this strategy will reap abundantly in terms of church workforce.

### Conclusion

The largely passive posture of a large percentage of church members in most churches today is as a result of lack of a concrete plan on the part of the church. Most churches don't have any strategy in place for enlisting their members in the work God has committed into their hands. Yet they expect things to happen. So their members



fold their arms and remain perpetual onlookers. Ultimately, the ministries of the church continue to suffer because of lack of concrete integration plan.

On the part of the church members, ignorance of their status in Christ is a chief reason for their non-participation in the ministries of their churches. Many contemporary church goers don't know the significance of the curtain of the temple which was torn in two when Christ died on the cross (Matt 27:51). Also, a vast majority of church members are ignorant of the concept of spiritual gifts as outlined in the New Testament. The few who do have some ideas of the gifts of the Spirit couldn't make any correlation between gifts and ministries. So those gifts remain unutilized, and the gifted become unproductive servants in the household of faith.

#### Recommendations

After undertaking such an elaborate study as this, the researcher has discovered many things through the literature reviewed, the teachings sessions, the data analyzed, and other interactions in the course of the project. In fact, this research is an eye opener. The following are the researcher's recommendations for an effective involvement of church members in church ministries:

##### To the Church

This research has shown that there is the need for the Church to passionately and purposefully emphasize (through preaching and teaching) the fundamental doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. This should be holistic, not one-sided. Through such attempts, God's investments in the life of His people, and His expectations from them will come to limelight. This researcher has observed that the large-scale compromise, waywardness, and spiritual laziness found among Christians

in the contemporary time are partly due to inadequate teaching on the concept of priesthood of all believers.

In line with the above recommendation, this researcher is recommending that the church pastor should plan to teach on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers at least two Sundays in a year. This approach will serve as reminder to existing church members, and a fresh call to new members to see themselves as God sees them. The doctrine is actually a foundational teaching of the Christian faith, and so should be prioritized.

Moreover, the Church should consciously and consistently stress the significance of the gifts of the Spirit in the body of Christ. This research clearly shows that many of the church members, including those who had been in the church for a very long time, have little or no knowledge of the gifts of the Spirit. A fresh emphasis on the spiritual gifts is clearly the way forward in the quest for maximum input in Christian service. Stemming from this, the church pastor should plan to have an annual spiritual gift seminar. When properly executed, the local church will never complain of lack of people to serve in her ministries. In fact, such efforts will yield great dividends in the nearest future.

Each local church should have a Church Ministry Enlistment Team that will be responsible for helping church members discover their spiritual gifts, and to channel same to appropriate ministries in the church. The traditional concept of Nominating Committee should be discarded to pave way for a more holistic approach to enlisting members in the ministries of the church. The research has shown that, inappropriate methods being used to recruit people to church ministries (such as Nominating Committee), is responsible for the acute shortage of ministers in the church. So, this research strongly recommends that an Enlistment Team be set up in

