

Youth Inclusion and Church Leadership in Ibadan Baptist Conference

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DOI: 10.56201/ijrcp.v8.no3.2023.pg106.122

ABSTRACT

This research investigated Youth Inclusion in Church Leadership among Churches under Ibadan Baptist Conference of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. And the specific objectives of the study was that it examined the perception of the respondents on Church leadership, determinants for inclusion in Church leadership, extent of youth inclusion in Church leadership, its impacts on the Church and factors that enhances youth leadership development in Ibadan Baptist Conference.

The study adopted descriptive survey research design; the population involves all youth leaders, youth fellowship members, Pastors/Church leaders in Ibadan Baptist Conference. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select a sample of 400 respondents, with the Youth in the majority 297 (74.3%). The research instrument used for data gathering was a research-designed and duly validated questionnaire named 'Youth Inclusion and Church Leadership Questionnaire' (YICLQ) with Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient value; 'r' = 0.93. Descriptive statistics of percentages and mean was use for data analysis.

Findings from the research revealed that majority (61%) of the respondents agreed that Church leadership is a sacred responsibility that must be ascribed to God. In addition, majority (56%) affirms that the Biblical virtues of regeneration, infilling of the Holy Spirit, obedience to God, impactful spiritual lifestyle, sacrificial living and availability are inevitable determinants for youth inclusion in Church leadership. It also reveals that some (38%) of the respondents reported that youth are being highly included in Church leadership in Ibadan Baptist Conference, while some (41%) of the respondents affirmed that youth are being minimally included in Church leadership. While (21%) of the respondents agreed that youth are not included in Church leadership.

It is hereby, recommended that local churches should intensify more efforts towards including youth in Church leadership responsibilities. Furthermore, local churches should make efforts towards training of the youth in all areas of Church leadership in preparations for further inclusion and engagement in leadership assignments at other higher levels both at the Associations and Conferences, Church should also tap into the potentials of Baptist youths, because of the great potentials inherent in them as endowed by God, which must be channelled towards Church growth and expansion. The Youth too should reciprocate such opportunities accorded them through their inclusion in leadership roles, by channelling their energies and spiritual gifts towards the improvement and growth of their local Churches.

Key Words: Youth, Inclusion, Church and Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is all about having influence on the lives of people that are being led. This is the thrust of leadership which is being craved for in all of human endeavor. And because it is needed in all facets of life therefore, the Church is not exempted. Tamunomiebi, mosioni, and Odunayo (2018, 48) assert that,

“Leadership is ideal in the tenets of every existing society. This is because leadership is important to human society. A society or organization without leadership is like sheep without Shephard, and there is bound to be confusion, disorderliness, lawlessness, and nothing positive can be achieved. The history of Leadership is as old as that of creation. Leadership occupies a unique position in every society, organization or community.”

Good Leadership is non-negotiable for transformation, peace, and progress. However, Maxwell (2002, 5) has opined that "Leadership is for everyone! How can I make such a bold claim? Because every person who accepts Christ is called to influence others. Leadership is not just for a select few." Leadership is not the role that is relegated to one person or a section of people in any sphere of life, but leadership ought to be open to all gender, strata, and ages of people. But this fact seems not to be appropriated in the corridors of leadership.

One of the identified areas of leadership that has this shortcoming is the Church. Bariu (2017, 302) noted that "The Youth are hardly involved actively in formal governance of institutions and processes of the church and society. In the Church, a negligible percentage of the youth sits in the highest decision-making bodies of the Church." Bari's assertion seems to suggest that a form of leadership that operates in the Church today is such that subtly ignores the Youths. This assertion implies that it appears that the Youths are not being engaged in the leadership roles of the Church and that the Youth within the Church are perhaps viewed as incompetent and immature to be involved in Church leadership.

Notably, youth are aspiring to be included in the leadership work of the Church and due to long time of negligence to their quest for inclusion in Leadership, some of the Youths are daily migrating from the churches where they are not given leadership responsibilities. While some have migrated to other Churches where they are accorded the chance, a host of others have stopped going to Church.

The Church, which is paying lips services towards abating this trend is unmindful of the mass exodus of the youth from the Church. The kind of movements of youth from one Church or denomination to the other, which is unfolding in the religious domain is alarming. Among some indices that might be necessitating this fad, lack of adequate youth inclusion in Church leadership is a possible underestimation of the capability of the Youth to perform well in leadership. Incidentally, the Baptist Denomination is not left out of this unworthy experience in Church leadership.

It is germane to state that to attain balance Leadership in the Church, the pivotal involvement of the Youths is inevitable. Leadership is dynamic and creative and the key to unlocking the dynamism and creativity is not without the inclusion of the Youths in it.

God is the initiator of leadership and the chief leader. He began leading the first man he created 'Adam' (Genesis 2:15ff). God's leadership role also span through the days of Noah (Genesis 7, 8, &9), Abraham (Genesis 12), Isaac (Genesis 26:1ff), Jacob (Genesis 32:1ff) and the whole nation of Israel from Egypt to the land of Canaan (Exodus 2:23-25). He has been the leader of humanity from time immemorial till today. However, God began to engage humanity to join Him in the task of Leadership. He enlisted Moses, a youth to take on the mantle of leadership of the nation of Israel and to lead them to the land of Canaan (Exodus 3:1ff). The nation of Israel moved and travelled as a family and Church led by Moses. At different times and places, they worshipped as a congregation of God's people.

The congregational worship were led by adult and young leaders. These includes the likes of Aaron and his children, seventy elders with Moses as the key leader (Exodus 24). This leadership chain continued even into the New Testament with Jesus the Saviour and Chief Shepherd who led the whole human race back to God (Matthew 1:21-22; Luke 1:76-80). Sin separated humanity from God. But, graciously, Jesus came and reconnected humanity back to God. The Christian Reformed Church in North America (2005, 11) thus assert that "The Bible teaches us many things about the nature and quality of Christian leadership. Perhaps the most profound insight comes from the life of Christ himself and Christ's clear teaching regarding servant leadership." Evidently, it can be seen that the greatest form of Leadership was exemplified by Jesus Christ by laying down His life for humanity as a pathway for leading them back to God.

Jesus was a Youth when he began leading and completed His task of leading the church of God (Luke 2:49-50). This trend of leadership within the household of God spans through the time of the Early Church with the twelve disciples taking the leadership role as evident in the book of Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1ff). Apostle Paul and Barnabas too raised the banner of Church leadership as they were chosen by the Lord. And they went from one place to another, strengthening the Church of God around the world (Acts 13:1ff).

The task of Church leadership has been growing with many disciples taking up responsibilities in the household of God, such as the disciples of Paul, namely, Titus, Timothy, and many others even today. These disciples went from place to place, expanding the work of God. Leadership from the Biblical purview is to guide people in the way and purpose of God.

It is quite evident that the Bible is filled with record of young people who were part of the leadership of the Church. This can be traced to people like Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Joash, Josiah, Jesus, Timothy, Titus, Phoebe, Silas etc. All of these above mentioned leaders were youth as at the time that the Lord called them into the position of leadership. Therefore, youth having part of Church Leadership and they have done so much towards advancing the Kingdom of God. It is vivid in the Bible that all these associates of Paul were youth and they were very effective in the churches they served.

But it appears that reverse is the case contemporarily, Bariu (2017, 302) has reported

"A survey conducted by the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (UN IANYD) with 13,000 respondents expressing their voices from 186 countries highlighted that the main challenges for youth were limited opportunities for effective participation in decision-making processes. With limited opportunities and exposure to meaningfully participate in inclusive decision-making processes, young men and women feel excluded and marginalized in their churches and communities. The

need for participatory structures and greater trust between youth and institutions for greater capacity development were also stressed (UN IANYD 2012)”

This assertion and survey thus show that the youth appears to be excluded in the leadership affairs and decision making in both the Sacred and Secular settings. This exclusion of youth in leadership perhaps may be a reason for which the youth are isolating themselves from these institutions. Again, it has been observed that the youth tends to either remain silent or isolate themselves from Associating with any institution they belong to once they notice that they are not being included in the leadership structure.

Bariu (2017) while attesting to the foregoing assertion on the issue of youth exclusion from leadership added that,

“Young people between the ages of 15 and 25 constitute a fifth of the world's population. The Churches are getting more and more youthful following this global trend. The youth are hardly involved actively informal governance institutions and processes of the Church and society. In the church a negligible percentage of the youth sits in the highest decision-making bodies of the church. Youth issues are coming into sharp focus. Governments and states are realizing the importance of youth participation in decision-making. Similarly, the Church ought to realize the centrality of effectively utilizing the youth resource for posterity.”

If the Youths are being excluded from being actively involved in the Leadership and decision-making of the church it simply suggest that the future of the church, that is the youth, are not being engaged in the life of the church.

In his own opinion, Crawford (2014, 1) stressed that “The Church is full of opportunities for service. The local Church has often relegated the teens and young adults to the youth groups and have ignored the potential they have to be effective servants of the Lord.” Crawford’s assertion that the youth are being relegated to the affairs of that concerns the youth reveals that the Church leadership may be underestimating their potentials and efficacy to be capable to be part of the activities and leadership of the Church which are considered to be meant for adults. This tendency has the capacity to keep them off from being included in the leadership cum decision-making process of the Church. And this inevitably can give way to possible taking to be silent or isolate themselves from the Church.

Ishola-Esan (2018, 90), while corroborating the fact that Youths are being excluded from church leadership, opines that “The leading challenge they face is lack of opportunity to participate in meaningful programmes and they are also involved in some of the units of the Church with a great prospect being church leaders and sustenance of the good heritage of the Church.” This is one of the reasons why they are being excluded from the leadership role in the Church. When the Youth are not given the chance to have meaningful and significant participation in the activities in the Church they will be certainly not be considered for leadership engagement. It is when they are allowed to have freedom to be practically involved in the life of the church that they will become part of the leadership of the Church.

But if they are not allowed nor encouraged to get involved in the leadership and decision-making process of the Church, this may bring about unimaginable consequences. One of such is what has been expressed by Lee’s (1999) submission “That the youth are disinterested in the programmes of a Church when they are not given privileges to partake in a meaningful way in the church programmes and they then are bored.” Of cause, when there is the neglect of people

from active participation in institutional life and activities, they will certainly feel bored and uninterested in the happenings in such an institution. More so, this is common with the youth as they are easily turned off from whatever is boring to them.

In his own view, on the fact that youth have prospects for being Church leaders, Bariu (2017, 302) argues that “When the church leadership recognizes the potential, the youth has in designing and participating in the implementation of a sustainable development agenda, the faith community will begin celebrating young peoples’ views and initiatives.” It is undeniable that the youths are highly loaded with great potentials to become great church leaders who can bring about a transformational Church and Church leadership. But then, it becomes germane for the current church leadership to decipher this truth and embrace it. One key thing that is currently needed is to involve them and trust them that they have the capacity to do it and bring about result.

Consequently, Ishola-Esan (2018, 91-92) while quoting Lee (1999) gave a list of seven reasons why youths are not interested in the activities of a church and these reasons include:

1. Adults do not give the Youths opportunity to participate in meaningful way in the church programmes.
2. The Youths get bored because of the lack of relevant church programmes for them.
3. The adults in the church see the youth as inadequate to serve they do not have apt knowledge and understanding that is required to serve in the church.
4. The perception of the adults about the youths failing to recognize their stage of seeking to become independent, searching to test things out themselves, and that adults do not need to think for them.
5. The belief that the youth do not possess the intellectual aptitude by the pastor or the church adults.
6. The lack of understanding of the adults that the youths have outgrown their childhood faith and belief and that they are becoming more matured
7. Critical hypocrisy of the pastor and church leaders due to the problem of double-standard of living.

Therefore, the above mentioned factors may lead the youth to isolate themselves from the Church since they are being misunderstood and being ill-treated by the leadership of the Church. This is the more reason why there is a need to check and see if the Youths are being duly included in or unduly excluded from church leadership.

In view of foregoing observations by the various researchers, it shows that youth are not being adequately included in Church leadership and this is the concern of this research. The burden of this study is to know if youth are being included in Church leadership or not. More so to investigate the reasons which may be necessitating their exclusion from Church leadership. Consequently, to proffer solutions on how to address the reasons for the exclusion of youth from Church leadership. More critically, to spur the youth to brace up towards developing themselves for inclusion in Church leadership.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In an ideal setting, leadership is supposed to be open to everyone in the Church and the society. Both the adult and youth should be allowed to become leaders and carry out responsible leadership role in the Church and the society. This is what is Biblical, ideal and a global reality. More so, no one is to be looked down upon as inadequate to lead in the Church or Society. But it appears that reverse is the case in some today, because it is perceived that there seems to be segregation in the choice of who becomes a leader within a Local Church and the society as this affects the youth mostly.

Currently, the leadership structure in most Churches and the society focuses on engaging the adults in leadership positions and paying little or no attention to the involvement of the youth. This research addresses what appears to be a vacuum observed in the leadership structure of the Baptist denomination and our society. This trend, seemingly leaves the youth somewhat out of practical involvement in leadership. Therefore, this study investigates Youth inclusion and Church leadership in Ibadan Baptist Conference.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research investigates youth inclusion in Church leadership among Churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention within Ibadan Metropolis. Hence, the specific objectives of the study are to:

1. ascertain the perception of Church and youth leaders on Baptist Church leadership in Ibadan.
2. identify the factors that determine youth inclusion in Baptist Church leadership in Ibadan.
3. determine the areas of youth inclusion in Baptist Church leadership in Ibadan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will were outlined for the study:

1. What is the perception of Church and youth as leaders in Baptist Church leadership in Ibadan?
2. What are the factors that determine youth inclusion in Baptist Church leadership in Ibadan?
3. What are the areas of youth inclusion in Baptist Church leadership in Ibadan?

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted the Descriptive Survey research design. The population for this research work included all Church Pastors/Leaders and Youth/Leaders across the Baptist Churches in Ibadan. Purposive sampling Techniques was adopted to select One Hundred Forty Four (144) Baptist Churches among others in Ibadan metropolis. Therefore, Simple random sampling techniques was used to determine the Church Leaders and Youth Leaders/Members who are within the sample Churches. The instrument for the research data gathering was questionnaire purposefully designed by the researcher and named; Youth Inclusion Church Leadership Questionnaire (YICLQ). The researcher distributed sixty four (64) printed copies of the research instrument and three hundred and thirty six (336) of the Google form of the research

instrument to one (1) Church Leader and two (2) Youth in each church. The research adopted the descriptive statistics using percentage and mean value representation for the analysis of each research questions.

Table 1: Sample Selection of Churches by Association

S/N	Name of Church	Church Pastor/Leader	Youth
1	Amazing Grace Baptist Association	8	16
2	Champion Baptist Association	8	16
3	Christ Baptist Association	8	16
4	Emmanuel Baptist Association	8	16
5	Goshen Baptist Association	8	16
6	Gilgal Baptist Association	8	16
7	Hephzibah Baptist Association	8	16
8	Ibadan Central Baptist Association	8	16
9	Ibadan North Baptist Association	8	16
10	Ibadan East Baptist Association	8	16
11	Living Stone Baptist Association	8	16
12	Corner Stone Baptist Association	8	16
13	Fountain of Mercy Baptist Association	8	16
14	Solid Rock Baptist Association	8	16
15	Onaiye Baptist Association	8	16
16	Orison Ayo Baptist Association	8	16
17	Overcomes Baptist Association	8	16
18	Asokan Kristi Baptist Association	8	16

Source: Field Survey 2021/2022

Table 1: This reveals gives an overview of how the research instrument was distributed. More so, the table also shows that Church leaders are the minority of the respondent. While the Youth and Youth leaders are the majority of the respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=400)

Parameter	Groups	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	242	60.5%
	Female	158	39.5%
Marital Status	Single	304	76%
	Married	96	24%
Age	17-30 years	297	74.3%
	31-40 years	51	12.8%
	41-50 years	33	8.3%

	51-60 years	19	4.8%
Number Of Years In Church Leadership	None	68	17%
	0-2 years	109	27.3%
	3-5 years	114	28.5%
	6-10 years	53	13.3%
	11 above	56	14%
Occupation	Student	208	52%
	Public/Civil Service	51	12.8%
	Artisan/Technician	19	4.8%
	Self Employed	38	9.5%
	Private Sector	27	6.8%
	Clergy	57	14.3%

Source: Field Survey 2021/2022

Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. The table revealed that majority 242 (60.5%) of the respondent are male. Again, majority 304 (76%) of the respondent are single, 297(74.5%) are between age 17 and 30.

The table further shows that majority 114 (28.5%) of the respondent have served in their current leadership position for 3 to 5 years, followed by those that have served between a day to 2 years with 109 (27.3%). Lastly majority of the respondent are student with 208 (52%) followed by Clergy men and women 57 (14.3%).

RESEARCH FINDING AND RESULT

Research Question One: What is the perception of Church Pastors and Youth leaders on Church leadership in Baptist Churches in Ibadan?

S/N	Perception on Church Leadership	SA		A		D		SD		M
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Leadership in the church is a service to God	230	(57.7)	78	(19.6)	47	(11.9)	44	(11.1)	4.2306
2	Christian leaders must demonstrate worthy values	244	(61)	63	(15.8)	46	(11.5)	47	(11.6)	4.2625
3	Christian leaders must satisfy Biblical, Church Membership	157	(39.3)	128	(31.9)	65	(16.2)	50	(12.4)	3.9425
4	Christian leaders must be exemplary to others	234	(58.5)	61	(15.2)	54	(13.5)	51	(12.6)	4.1875
5	Church leadership requires absolute commitment	237	(59.3)	73	(18.2)	47	(11.8)	43	(10.8)	4.25

Table 3: Perception of Church Leaders and Youth on Church Leadership.

Source: Field Research, 2021/2022

Table 3 shows the perception of youth and adults on church leadership, findings revealed that ‘Leadership in the church is a service to God’ recorded 308(77%) agreed,44(11.1%) are not sure while 47(11.9%) disagreed, ‘Christian leaders must demonstrate worthy values’ 307(76.8%) agreed, 47(11.6%) are not sure while 46(11.5) disagreed. Again ‘Christian leaders must satisfy Biblical, Church Membership and academic conditions for enlistment’ recorded major response as agreed with 285(71.2%), 50(12.4%) are not sure while 65(16.2%) disagreed, ‘Christian leaders must be exemplary to others’ recorded 295(73.7%) agreed, 51(12.6%) are not sure while 54(13.5%) disagreed. Lastly ‘Church leadership requires absolute commitment’ recorded 310(177.5%) agreed, 43(10.8%) are not sure while 47(11.8%) disagreed. In summary, majority of the respondents agreed that Church leadership is a Sacred responsibility which is done unto God.

S/N	Factors determining inclusion in leadership	SA		A		D		SD		M
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Church leadership requires people who are Spirit filled and possess other qualities as stated in Acts 6:1-7	208	(52)	100	(25)	57	(14.2)	35	(8.7)	4.1475
2	Church leaders must be born again and be spiritually mature	218	(54.5)	78	(19.6)	49	(12.3)	55	(13.7)	4.1625
3	Church leadership requires people who will lead in obedience to God	225	(56.3)	82	(20.4)	41	(12.7)	42	(10.5)	4.2025
4	Church leadership requires having impacts on people's lives	221	(55.3)	82	(20.4)	51	(12.8)	46	(11.5)	4.1825
5	Church leadership requires sacrifice and availability	231	(57.8)	77	(19.3)	48	(12)	44	(11)	4.2275

Research Question Two: What are the factors that determine Youth inclusion in Church leadership in Ibadan Baptist Conference?

Table 4: Church Leaders' and Youth's view of Factors that determines Inclusion in Leadership

Source: Field Survey 2021/2022

Table 4 shows the Factors determining youth inclusion in leadership, findings reveals that ‘Church leadership requires people who are spirit and possess other qualities as stated in Acts 6:1-7’ reported 308(77%) agreed, 35(8.7%) are not sure while 57(14.2%) disagreed. ‘Church leaders must be born again and spiritually mature’ reported 298(74.1%) agreed, 55(13.7%) are not sure while 49(12.3%) disagreed. ‘Church leadership requires people who will lead in obedience to God’ reported 307(76.9%) agreed, 42(10.5%) are not sure while 41(12.7%) disagreed.’ Church leadership requires having impacts on people's lives’ reported 303(75.7%) agreed, 46(11.5%) are not sure and 51(12.8%) disagreed. Lastly ‘Church leadership requires sacrifice and availability’ reported 301(77.1%) agreed, 44(11%) are not sure while 48(12%) disagreed. Summarily, majority of the respondents affirms that the identified factors are inevitable determinants for Youth inclusion in Church leadership in Baptist Churches in Ibadan.

Research Question Three: What are the areas of Youth inclusion in Church leadership in Baptist Churches in Ibadan?

Table 5: Church Leaders’ and Youth’s purview on Areas of Youth inclusion at all levels of Church Leadership

S/N	Youths forms part of Church leadership	NI		MI		HI		M
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Youth are represented in the Church council	61	(15.3)	200	(50)	139	(34.8)	2.195
2	Youth are playing leadership roles in Church programs	60	(14.9)	185	(46.3)	155	(38.8)	2.2375
3	Youth are among the children/teenagers coordinators	80	(20.1)	144	(36)	176	(44)	2.24
4	Youth are part of adviser of Baptist Student Fellowship	72	(17.9)	179	(44.9)	149	(37.3)	2.1925
5	Youth are involve in the ushering unit of the Church	85	(21.5)	149	(37.1)	166	(41.5)	2.2025
6	Youth are part of worship leaders/pulpit committee	79	(19.8)	152	(37.9)	169	(42.2)	2.225
7	Youth are part of the finance committee of the Church	103	(25.8)	190	(47.5)	107	(26.7)	2.01
8	Youth are part of leaders of music ministry of the Church	72	(18)	112	(28)	216	(54.1)	2.36
9	Youth are part of leadership of evangelism unit of the Church	83	(20.8)	190	(47.6)	127	(31.8)	2.11
10	Youth form part of leaders of medical ministry of the Church	84	(21)	169	(42.2)	147	(36.7)	2.1575
11	Youth are included as part of leadership of project committee	105	(26.3)	189	(47.4)	106	(26.6)	2.0025
12	Youth are part of leadership of education unit of the Church	95	(23.8)	154	(38.5)	151	(33.8)	2.14
13	Youth are part of leadership of scholarship board of the Church	123	(30.7)	175	(43.8)	102	(25.4)	1.9475

14	Youth are included as part of leaders of transportation unit	105	(26.3)	174	(43.6)	121	(30.4)	2.04
15	Youth play leadership role in R.A.GA&Lydia Cycle	68	(17.1)	79	(19.8)	253	(63.4)	2.4625

Source: Field Survey 2021/2022

Table 5 avers that it can be concluded that people minimally agree that youth are represented in the Church council and 139(34.8%) of the respondents highly agrees, 200(50%) of the respondents minimally agrees while 61 (15.3%) are of the opinion that they are not included. Again it can be concluded that people minimally agree that youth are playing leadership roles in Church programs and 155(38.8%) of the respondents highly agrees, while 185(46.3%) of the respondents agrees minimally while 60(14.9%) agrees to not included also, it can be concluded that people highly agree that youth are among the children/teenagers coordinators and 176(44%) of the respondents highly agrees, 144(36%) agrees minimally while 80 (20.1%) of the respondent are of the opinion that they are not included.

Again it can be concluded that people minimally agree that youth are part of Adviser of Baptist Student Fellowship and 149(37.3%) of the respondents highly agrees, 179(44.9%) agrees minimally while 72 (17.9%) of the respondent are of the opinion that they are not included, it can be concluded that people highly agree that youth are involve in the ushering unit of the Church and 166(41.5%) of the respondents highly agrees, 149 (37.1%) agrees minimally while 85(21.5%) of the respondent are of the opinion that they are not included. Unarguably, about two-third of the respondents uphold the fact that youth are being included in Church leadership in especially in the Church council, worship and ministry related amrs of the Church.

Table 5 further shows that it can be concluded that people highly agree that youth are part of worship leaders/pulpit committee 9(42.2%) of the respondents highly agrees, 152(37.9%) agrees minimally while 79(19.8%) of the respondent are of the opinion that they are not included. Again it can be concluded that people minimally agree that youth are part of the finance committee of the church and 107(26.7%) of the respondents highly agrees, 190 (47.5%) agrees minimally while 103 (25.8%) of the respondent are of the opinion that they are not included, it can be concluded that people highly agree that youth are part of leaders of music ministry of the Church and 216(54.1%) of the respondents highly agrees, 112(28%) agrees minimally while 72(18%) says not included.

Again, table 5 reveals that it can be concluded that people minimally agree that youth are part of leadership of evangelism unit of the church and 127(31.8%) of the respondents highly agrees, 190 (47.6%) agrees minimally while 83(20.8) says not included, it can be concluded also that people minimally agree that youth form part of leaders of medical ministry of the Church and 147(36.7%) of the respondents highly agrees, 169 (42.2%) agrees minimally while 84(21%) of the respondent are of the opinion that they are not included. Summarily, about two-third of the respondents have agreed that youth are included in Church leadership as committee members in differs areas of ministries of the Church.

Consequently, Table 5 reveals that it can be concluded that people minimally agree that Youth are included as part of leadership of project committee and 106(26.6%) of the respondents highly agrees, 189(47.4%) agrees minimally while 105(26.3%) of the respondent are of the

opinion that they are not included, again it can be concluded that people minimally agree that youth are part of leadership of education unit of the Church and 151(33.8%) of the respondents highly agrees, 154 (38.5%) agrees minimally while 95(23.8%) of the respondent are of the opinion that they are not included.

Respondents minimally agree that youth are part of leadership of scholarship board of the Church and 102(25.4%) of the respondents highly agrees, 175 (43.8%) agrees minimally while 123(30.7%) of the respondent are of the opinion that they are not included, also it can be concluded that people minimally agree that youth are included as part of leaders of transportation unit and 121(30.4%) of the respondents highly agrees, 174 (43.6%) agrees minimally while 105 (26.3%) of the respondent are of the opinion that they are not included, it can be concluded also that people highly agree that youth play leadership role in R.A, GA & Lydia Cycle and 253(63.5%) of the respondents highly agrees, 79 (19.8%) of the respondents agrees minimally while 68 (17.1) says not included. Evidently, is it affirmed by majority of the respondents that youth are highly included in the leadership of the Church.

In Summary, it is being revealed from the perception of the respondents that the youth are seemingly being included in leadership of Churches in Ibadan Baptist Conference.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In view of the findings from the study, it is clearly shown that church leadership is a sacred responsibility, as majority of the respondents believe that someone involved in Church leadership must be born again, spiritually matured, have good values and must be exemplary to others, to be enlisted for leadership roles, they must satisfy Biblical and Church Membership Conditions. The respondents clearly confirmed this with 80% of the respondents agreeing with this. The findings collaborate with the assertion of Watt (2014, 125) that, “The call to be a Church leader may take the form of preacher, pastor, teacher, counsellor, missionary, small group leader, or other Church-related ministry, but no matter what the call, the Church needs to identify and provide leaders with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to reach today’s culture.” Watt’s postulation simply denotes that church leaders are not mere people who are devoid of exemplifying Christian virtues alongside professionalism.

Additionally, Church leaders must be people of high biblical qualities and intellects. A stem of people who are endowed with abilities to attain the aim of the Church. Also Park and Birch (2004, 8) did assert that leadership,

“Is the most crucial factor in the reform or revival of the Church today. Effective church leadership is the strongest indicator of a positive fate for a congregation. What we need is church leadership that drinks deeply from the well of the church's own scriptures. What we need is church leadership that connects with the church's best knowledge about the Triune God who calls forth creation, elects a people, and directs the drama of salvation history.”

In consonance with this assertion, Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) quoted Barney Wells, Martin Giese, and Ron Klassen, who has also noted that “Leading the church is essentially a doctrinal task, guided by the Word and empowered by the Spirit.” Therefore, Church leaders must demonstrate virtues that portrate that they are Christians.

Apparently, the findings from the research revealed that some (38%) of the respondents concur to the fact that youth are being highly included in Church leadership across some of the Baptist Churches in Ibadan Baptist Conference. While some (41%) of the respondents uphold the fact that youth are being minimally included in Church leadership. In addition, (21%) of the respondents stated that youth are not being included in Church leadership in Ibadan Baptist Conference.

Furthermore, from the field research one could easily conclude that youth are highly involved in the leadership of Church organizations that deals with youth related ministry such as RA, GA, Lydia, Music ministry. Whereas, their inclusion in leadership of church council, Church project unit, finance committee, education unit, transportation committee are minimal. This requires that they should be more included because any form of negligence to this cannot help the development of the Church. Because this is one of the reasons the youth are leaving some churches for other denominations. And this can lead to extinction of the heritages of the Church. Because those that would uphold the heritages may leave the Church. If not given opportunities to be part of the leadership of the Church.

This corroborates with Crawford (2014, 1) that “The Church is full of opportunities for service. The local Church has often relegated the teens and young adults to the youth groups and have ignored the potential they have to be effective servants of the Lord.” Crawford asserts that the youth are being relegated to the affairs of the Church that concerns the youth related ministry of the Church. And this reveals that the church leadership may be underestimating their potentials and efficacy on leadership roles considered to be meant for adults. Consequently, underrating their being capable to take part in all the leadership activities of the Church. This tendency may lead to keeping them off from being included in other leadership responsibilities cum decision-making process of the Church. And this inevitably can give way to choosing to be silent or self-isolation from active participation in the Church.

In addition, Bariu (2017) added that,

“Young people between the ages of 15 and 25 constitute a fifth of the world's population. The Churches are getting more and more youthful following this global trend. The youth are hardly involved actively in formal governance, institutions and processes of the Church and society. In the church a negligible percentage of the youth sits in the highest decision-making bodies of the church. Youth issues are coming into sharp focus. Governments and states are realizing the importance of youth participation in decision-making. Similarly, the Church ought to realize the centrality of effectively utilizing the youth resource for posterity.”

This postulation on the level of youth inclusion in major areas of leadership and decision-making of the Church simply suggest that the future of the Church is not being included in the life of the Church. Ishola-Esan (2018, 90), while corroborating the fact that youth are being excluded from Church leadership, opines that “The leading challenge they face is lack of opportunity to participate in meaningful programmes and they are also involved in some of the units of the Church with a great prospect being church leaders and sustenance of the good heritage of the Church.” The youth need to be given the opportunity to participate significantly and meaningfully in all areas of Church leadership. When the youth are not given the chance to have meaningful and significant participation in all areas of Church leadership they may get discouraged and feel underesteemed. It is when they are allowed to have full inclusion in all areas of the life of the Church that it can be said that they are adequately part of the leadership of the Church.

CONCLUSION

In view of the findings of this study, it is factual that youth are being included in leadership role in the Church. More so, the areas of their inclusion is mostly in the youth related arm of the Church such as R.A, G.A, BSF, Teens' Fellowship, and Youth Fellowship. Therefore, this research thus conclude that, more inclusion of the youth in Church leadership is very important for the progress and future of the Church. The youth are the future of any institution and society. They need to be prepared and engaged to take on the responsibility from now onward and into the future.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the foregoing, the following are the recommendations of this research:

1. The Church should seek to understand the youth and their potentials which can help enhance the growth of the Church if they are being included in Church leadership.
2. The Church should always use a Biblical criteria for Enlistment of Church leaders. And the requirements for choosing Church leaders should not be drawn in such a way that edges the youth out of the realm.
3. The Church should be intentional towards paving way for more inclusion of youth in Church leadership. This requires that those who have being serving in specific leadership positions for a long time can be ask to step aside for the new hands to take over. In addition, leadership position can be tenured so as to make it easier to include others.
4. The Church leaders should be educated on the benefits of youth inclusion in Church leadership. This is because some Church leaders do not believe that the youth are mature or competent enough to serve as leaders in the Church.

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