The Relationship between Clarity of Church Goals with Church Growth in Nigeria: A Study of the Universal Reform Christian Church (N.K.S.T.).

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I.   Introduction

All organizations have goals and objectives that guide their existence be it profit or not-for-profit making organizations. These goals and objectives give organizations and their members a sense of direction and serve as the basis for assessing performance. Churches fall under not-for-profit making organizations and thus have goals and objectives that define them. Given the nature of church organizations, their central objective is to ensure the spread of the gospel across cities and nations. This central objective most often gives rise to the creation of some specific objectives which are centred on growth in terms of membership, area of coverage, infrastructural development and the likes. The universal reformed Christian church (the erstwhile N. K. S. T.) has overtime established herself as one of the most populous churches in Benue State. This development can be considered to be an indicator of growth. This study therefore, intends to unveil the possible influence of churches' goals and objectives as determining factor forchurch growth. Church growth is measured in terms of membership size, and assets value.

1.1   Statement of the problem

The ideals of a church are determined by the founders and initiators of the church. With increase in membership size and expansion beyond the physical vision of the founders and more pastors (managers) who join the church management structure later on. There is the need for the objectives of the church to be more clearly defined, determined and diffused down the line so all members will buy into it. It presupposes that clarity of objectives result to harmony of efforts, unity of direction, unity of purpose, and team leadership that are tools for organizational growth.The problem of the study is to ascertain if clear definition of the objectives of churches result to church growth in Nigeria?

1.2   Research objective

The objective of the study is to ascertain if clarity of goals and objectives is a determining factor in the growth of universal reform Christian church (NKST)

1.3   Research question

To what extent is the relationship between clarity of church objectives with the growth of universal reformed Christian church (NKST)?

1.4   Research hypothesis

There is no relationship between clarity of church objectives with growth of the universal reform Christian church.

1.5   Significance of the study

The study will add to the existing body of literature on church goals and objectives in Nigeria and also establish if there is a relationship between church objectives with growth of churches in Nigeria.

II.   Literature Review

2.1 Goals

Goals are the broad reason or intent for the existence of organisations. Goals can be seen as the rationale for the creation and existence of organisations which is generally to solve societal problems through provision of goods and services. Indeed Argenti (1966 p.48) view goals as

Something fundamental to the nature of a company and which distinguishes it from other types of organisations – it is therefore something permanent and unalterable. It is reason for the very existence of the company, that for which it came into being and what it is for now. It is that which, if the company fails to achieve, it fails. It is a permanent unalterable aim or raison d'etre.

Goals are foundations upon which the nature and structure of organisations is defined and determined. Organizational goalsaffirm and validate all the activities and functions of organisations. Without organizational goals, there can be no vision, mission, objectives, and strategies for managers to work with and for. Goals are observable, measurable, and verifiable at a time period.

Goals are relevant in organisations or institutions because they give organizational direction, push and focus, also direct efforts and resources, in addition to serving as motivation to organizational members and managers.

Elements of Goals

In order to achieve organizational goals there is need for implementing some key elements of organizational goals. They are summarized below.

Goalcommitment: All organizational members will believe and work towards the attainment of the goals, this require team work, unity of command, and unity of direction.

Strategicalignment: The strategies used by managers should align or be congruent with organizational goals. Strategies must fit with goals.

Goalcommunication: The goal must be clearly communicated to all organizational members in quantitative and qualitative form so as to be understood and embraced by all.

Goals are important because they provide direction, clarify job roles, give something to strive for, show how far you've come and help make the vision attainable. Having goals written down makes things more real and achievable. It allows you to see where you are going and the steps to get there. Church goals should be written at the organizational level as the first step in strategic implementation. This involves showcasing high level goals that the church as a whole is trying to accomplish.

As the organization works towards accomplishing the strategic plan here needs to be structured process to take the organization from where it is to where it wants to be. This can be done by developing annual organizational goals that are written to break the long-term goals into little-sized pieces. This step also provides the framework to accomplish them in step and stages, rather than the overwhelming task of trying to do them at all once, and a tool to monitor its progress.

The structured process should include a cycle that begins with writing goals, communicating expectations, monitoring performance toward goals, assessing performance and lastly ends with the performance appraisal. This cycle is repeated annually. Once the organization has some direction for what it wants to accomplish during the next twelve months, the priorities can be shared. This ensures that there is a person or group of people with responsibility for completing those goals.

Churches that invest the time clarifying their mission and vision can develop a strategic plan that disseminates goals throughout the ministry, not only experience success at implementing the plan, but also engages employees and volunteers to support the mission of the organization. This kind of engagement is how God uses the body to build the church. The goal of NKST is to satisfy the spiritual needs of Tiv people specifically and others generally. It is the reason for the creation of NKST.

Objectives

Objectives are specific results that an office or office holder intend to achieve within a specific time period using available resources. Objectives are the outcomes expected to be achieved and maintainedin the course of operating and growing organisations. They are short term in nature and are tools or instruments for the realization of long term organizational goals and are also the basis for creating policy and evaluating performance. Objectives make it possible for organizational members and the public to know what is important to organisations.Office holders are in essence involved in pursuing and achieving organizational objectives at specific time periods in line with the stated organizational goals.

Importance of objectives

Objectives help in spelling out the quantity and quality of performance expected to be achieved, the time period within which objectives should be achieved, the process (tools and procedures) to be used, the people who are responsible for the achievement of the objectives and the people responsible for supervising and monitoring the performance of the work that will ensure the objectives are achieved. It also serves as the basis for decision making and a yardstick for stakeholders' appreciation of the use of organizational resources.

Objectives provide a sense of direction to activities in organisations as they measure and control individual, unit, and functional performance thereby coordinating activities towards a common objective. Objectives also assist in facilitating prioritization of activities and resolving conflicts among departments.

Attributes of Objectives

Objectives should have the following attributes which are referred to as SMART

Specific. The objectives should be clearly stated in quantity and quality with a clear understanding of what they seek to achieve.

Measurable. The objectives should be in measurable form with clearly defined instruments and tools for measuring the performance outcome in quantitative and qualitative form.

Attainable. Set objectives that can be achieved with the resource constraint faced by the institution. Is the outcome expectations feasible? Too high an outcome expectation or too low outcome expectation is not good.

Realistic. Set objectives that can be achieved based on the resources, competition, and indeed the environment of the institution.

Timely. The objectives should be achievable within a specific time period. The objectives has be realized within a specific measurable timeframe or accounting year or reporting period which can be monthly, semi-annually, annually.

Scope of Objectives

Objectives can cover all or some of the areas and issues of organizational/institutional life such as;

Customers -Seek to satisfy the yearnings and needs of the end users of the outcome of institutions production. End users are the people involved in consumingthe output (products) generated by the universal reform Christian church.The publichave expectation of the required behaviour and attitude to be exhibited by members of a church and so churches are expected to engineer behavioural change among its congregation in line with societal expectations.Pastors and managers of churches in Nigeria are expected to imbibe among their congregation practices of justice, truthfulness and integrity.

Productivity- This is assessed by the extent to which the institution utilizes with minimal expense or waste of resources in achieving organizational objectives. The right goals can be achieved but at times at a high cost. It is the objective of management to ensure that the right goals are achieved with the use of minimum resources or waste of resources.

Staff - In terms of staff welfare, staff productivity, staff turnover, staff attitude to church members, colleagues, and the public. It is the responsibility of management to ensure that staff are motivated to do their jobs. Motivated staff tend to be productive and satisfied. This brings about positive behavior among staff and trigger productivity, low absenteeism from office, and low staff turnover. Staff welfare should be an objective for managers of churches in Nigeria.

Financial management. The objective of financial management is to balance income with expenses. This entail prudent management of resources. Though a church, financial management is an objective that churches should strive to achieve. This entail that proper records and appropriate accounts are maintained and updated to reveal the true nature of the financial state of the church.

Physical facilities.Managers of churches in Nigeria has a responsibility to ensure that the physical facilities like buildings, furniture, fittings, and equipment serve their desired purpose as at when due. Managers of churches must ensure that the working environment and the church environment is generally hygienically maintained and upgraded. Electricity and water should be available at all times to make life in the institutions conducive for productive endeavours.

Organisation structure. It is the responsibility of the managers of churches to maintain order, discipline and law in the working environment. Standard laid down procedures should be followed in relating with staff in all matters and avoid management by personality instead of management by principles. It is the responsibility of church managers to ensure that any correspondence or action that does not follow the laid down organizational structure is not acted upon and be redirected to follow appropriate procedures.

Innovation and creativity. It is the responsibility of church managers to maintain order. But continuous execution of tasks using same tools and techniques will not improve efficiency, so managers should encourage and create environment for new ideas that can bring about improvement in the work environment.

Security. To secure life and properties of the church, minimize and eliminate pilferage, loss or destruction of institutions properties and also ensure that lives of church congregation are secured from physical and other harm. It is the responsibility of church managers to ensure that lives and properties of churches are properly secured and protected from loss, harm, and injury.

Creating the Right Atmospheres & Environments for Church Organisations

Creating the right atmosphere means creating an atmosphere that is conducive to the movement of God. Anything that requires growth has to have a certain kind of atmosphere or environment to grow in a healthy way (Cotton, 2009a). Seeds only grow in certain environments, children in the womb only thrive in certain environments and some people are experiencing pain right now, because they were simply raised in the wrong environment (Cotton, 2009b).

The good news is that God has given us the authority to change our environment (White, 2013).

1. God has given us the authority to hinder, enhance, create and shift our atmospheres and environment.

2. God is everywhere, but God's presence will manifest at greater degrees contingent on the atmosphere or environment we create.

3. We all have a part to play in creating the right atmosphere in our church.

4. For God to heal, move and set free in our church like we want to, we have to create the right kind of environment.

Church Structure

An organization's structure is based on its purpose and how it lives that out. Structure develops a way for a group to organize its activities to pursue its purpose. A church's organization and structure should provide an effective and efficient way for the church to pursue its mission. Once the church's mission is determined, it can decide the best way to organize itself to carry out that mission. Structure is the way people are gathered, transformed and sent out.

Principles of Church Structure

Knowledge of principles of church structure can help evaluate church structure, restructure or begin new structure. Some basic principles are (Hartman, 1997):

• **Structure supports purpose.** It states why you exist based on what you need and want to do and in turn how you best organize to do it.

• **Structure needs to provide a way for people to belong.** One of the principal reasons why people join an organization is because of their need to belong and have meaningful personal relationships with other people. People want to belong to a group with people who share common values, similar interests and life perspectives, and who make them feel included and at ease. A church's structure should provide a primary group setting where each member or prospective member can feel at home. This means that the church will attract people who are like the present members. The greater the similarity between a church's members and the people who live around the church, the greater the possibility of attracting people from the community into the church. The greater the diversity of people in the community, the greater the need for the church to provide a variety of kinds of groups where people can feel they belong. People are called to repentance and faith and into the community of the church by the working of the Holy Spirit. The way in which the Holy Spirit works in the life of a person can neither be predicted nor manipulated. But the church's experience confirms the importance of those settings in which people hear the gospel proclaimed and experience the love and support of a Christian community as settings in which the Holy Spirit breaks into people's hearts and minds. Structure, then, is a servant or vehicle for the Holy Spirit to call people to repentance, faith and service.

• **Structure needs to provide a way for people to change and grow.** People need to grow into the new life in Christ, act in new ways and live their salvation in the world. The church provides a place for the reflection and prayer, study and reasoning, contending and healing that are necessary for this to happen.

• **Structure needs to provide a way for participation in tasks.** Not only do people need to belong and to grow, they need a way to express their faith and their sense of calling. They need to be able to use their gifts in ministry with others. You'll need to pay particular attention to the way people can find a task that fits them. One study has shown that people are looking for very specific kinds of participation. They want to win people for Christ or study the Bible or put the church to work in the community and world.

• **Structure needs to provide for diversity.** The more homogeneous the congregation, the less complex the structure has to be. However, the more ways a church provides for people to feel they belong and have a task to accomplish, the more likelihood there is for growth in numbers and in participation. A structure that provides a basic group experience for a variety of people will be more effective than one that expects everyone to fit into one category. People of different ages, men and women, families, singles, people with different worship traditions and tastes, different cultural backgrounds, different theological perspectives, different social and political orientations and different economic means need a place where they can find personal support, hear the gospel and offer themselves as disciples in carrying out tasks. The structure must also provide ways for these diverse groups to communicate with each other. Since the United Church of Christ has sought to intentionally become more multicultural and multiracial, there is abundant evidence that diversity can revitalize congregations, especially if structure and program accommodate it.

• **Structure needs to provide ways for all people to feel they belong to the whole congregation and participate in its mission.** While people join groups and committees for a sense of belonging and to participate in the task, they need to identify with the whole congregation. In smaller churches where most people are alike, it is in the whole congregation that people can find their sense of belonging and emotional attachment. In larger churches, structure must accommodate coordination of diverse programs, building use,

resource allocation and leadership so that groups can pursue their own objectives within the context and purposes of the whole church. The greater the differences among church groups, the more leaders need to manage them and the structure needs to accommodate them.

III. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study adopted a survey design thus the opinion of pastors and elders of the universal reformed Christian church were sampled and inferences drawn from these responses giving rise to conclusions.

3.2 Population of the study

The total population of the study is 70. The structure of the population is made up of pastors (managers) of Makurdi consistory that comprises of N.K.S.T. Central, N.K.S.T. High level, N.K.S.T. Low level, N.K.S.T. Iortyer, N.K.S.T. Idye and N.K.S.T. Lobi.

3.3 Sample size

The entire population was also considered as the sample size because of the small size of the population. Copies of the questionnaire was structured as Likert-likewere distributed to the respondents.

3.4 Method of data analysis

The Pearson Product Movement Correlation coefficient was used to test the statistical relationship between objectives and growth of Universal Reformed Christian Church in Nigeria.

IV. Results and Discussions
Table 4.1: Clarity of Church goals in line with mission and vision.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	20	32.26
Agree	34	54.84
Undecided	2	3.23
Strongly Disagree	4	6.45
Disagree	2	3.23
Total	62	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 4.1 shows that, 20 respondents representing 32.26 per cent of the total respondents strongly agreed that clear statement of church goals and objectives clarifies why the ministry exists (mission) and what it is trying to accomplish (vision), 34 respondents representing 54.84 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed to this assertion, 2 respondents representing 3.23 per cent of the respondents were undecided on the issue, 4 respondents representing 6.45 per cent of the total respondents strongly disagreed that statement of church goals clarifies why the ministry exists (mission) and what it is trying to accomplish (vision) and 2 respondents representing 3.23 per cent of the respondents disagreed to this assertion. Given that majority of the respondents agreed that the writing of the church goals and objectives clarifies why the ministry exists (mission) and what it is trying to accomplish (vision), it can be inferred that clear statement of church goals goes a long way in giving the church direction.

Table 4.2 Clarity of Church goals and church membership.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	24	38.71
Agree	27	43.55
Undecided	3	4.84
Strongly Disagree	5	8.06
Disagree	3	4.84
Total	62	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 4.2 shows that, 24 respondents representing 38.71 per cent of the total respondents strongly agreed that the goal of aggressive evangelism encapsulated in the churches' doctrine increases the church membership. 27 respondents representing 43.55 per cent of the respondents agreed to this assertion, 3 respondents representing 4.84 per cent of the respondents were undecided on the issue, 5 respondents representing 8.06 per cent of the total respondents strongly disagree that the goal of aggressive evangelism encapsulated in the church doctrine increases the membership of the church and 3 respondents representing 4.84 per cent of the respondents disagreed to this assertion. Considering that majority of the respondents aligned with the assertion raised is a clear pointer to the fact that, the membership of the church has increased over the years as a result of aggressive evangelism embarked upon by the church.

Table 4.3 Church expansion objective.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	22	35.48
Agree	30	48.39
Undecided	2	3.23
Strongly Disagree	4	6.45
Disagree	4	6.45
Total	62	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 4.3 shows that 22 respondents representing 35.48 per cent of the total respondents strongly agreed that the objective set by the church to increase her area of coverage and spread the gospel to the nukes and cronies of the country facilitates the opening up of new branches, 30 respondents representing 48.39 per cent of the respondents agreed to this assertion, 2 respondents representing 3.23 per cent of the respondents were undecided on the issue, 4 respondents representing 6.45 per cent of the total respondents strongly disagreed that the objective set by the church to increase her area of coverage and spread the gospel to the nukes and cronies of the country facilitates the opening up of new branches and 4 respondents representing 6.45 per cent of the respondents disagreed to this assertion. It is clear from the responses gotten that, the church has witnessed widespread opening up of new branches across the country which can be attributed to their objective of taking the gospel to the ends of the country and beyond.

Table 4.4:Church environment for worship.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	25	40.32
Agree	24	38.71
Undecided	3	4.84
Strongly Disagree	6	9.68
Disagree	4	6.45
Total	62	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 4.4 shows that 25 respondents representing 40.32 per cent of the total respondents strongly agreed that the goal of the church to enhance her worshipping environment results in the acquisition of equipment and infrastructure for worship, 24 respondents representing 38.71 per cent of the respondents agreed to this assertion, 3 respondents representing 4.84 were undecided on the issue, 6 respondents representing 9.68 per cent of the total respondents strongly disagreed that the goal of the church to enhance her worshipping environment results in the acquisition of equipment and infrastructure for worship and 4 respondents representing 6.45 per cent of the respondents disagreed to this assertion. The renewed commitment towards enhancing the infrastructural development in the church can be traced to the zeal to enhance the worshipping environment of the church.

Table 4.5: Relationship between goals and increased church membership.

Correlations

		Goals	Increased membership
Goals	Pearson Correlation	1	.927**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	62	62
Increased membership	Pearson Correlation	.927**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	62	62

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the Pearson Product movement correlation coefficient (r = 0.927, p<0.05) indicates that there is a significant relationship between goals and increased membership in universal reform Christian church.

Table 4.6: Relationship between objectives and infrastructural expansion of church.

Correlations

		Objectives	Increased area coverage
Objectives	Pearson Correlation	1	.943**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	62	62
Increased area coverage	Pearson Correlation	.943**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	62	62

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the Pearson Product movement correlation coefficient (r = 0.943, p<0.05) indicates that there is a significant relationship between objectives and increased infrastructural expansion of the church.

Table 4.7: Relationship between goals and improved worshipping environment.

Correlations

		Goal	Improved worshipping environment
Goal	Pearson Correlation	1	.895**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	62	62
Improved worshipping environment	Pearson Correlation	.895**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	62	62

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the Pearson Product movement correlation coefficient (r = 0.895, p<0.05) indicates that there is a significant relationship between goals and improved worshipping environment.

V. Conclusion
This study sought to ascertain the relationship between clarity of goals and the growth of church organizations with particular reference to the Universal Reformed Church of Christ (N.K.S.T). It is apparent from the data collected and analysed that there is a significant positive relationship between clarity of church goals and the growth of church organizations. This is evident inincreased membership,wider area coverage and improved worshipping environment among churches that have clearly specified their goals and objectives.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that;
1) Church organizations that are desirous of growth should consistently intimate and remind their pastors and elders (who serve as the managers of the church) of the goals and objectives that define their existence and purpose.Since these goals and objectives ifclearly defined, gives direction to the church managers and guide decision making among church organizations.
2) Managers of Churches in Nigeria should also strive to create an enabling environment for worship and a structure that supports the achievement of goals and objectives especially in the area of giving members a sense of belonging and accommodating the diversity in membership.

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