

# IPM IN THE NICK OF TIME

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## **WHEN ALL SEEMS LOST**

Like many churches in Uganda, Everlasting Sanctuary of God Church in Uganda was burdened and strained by a Pastor who was overstrained and in charge of everything in the church.

Pr. Magembe Gideon Dickson is the Lead Pastor of Everlasting Sanctuary of God Church in Gayaza Wakiso District. His every waking moment everyday was spent at his Church. He had no rest days and did everything by himself. He was burnout and wanted to give up.

*"I was being overworked. I was on top of everything because we lacked systems in the church. No one knew what to do", he says. "I was carrying the church alone. I was doing everything alone. It was too much and too heavy on me. I was overstressed with everything and everyone depending on me alone."*

Everlasting Sanctuary of God was one among many Pentecostal churches afraid to seek for help when the Lead Pastor is feeling overwhelmed, and the church is suffering.

Many Pastors are very distrustful of churches and Pastors coming in to offer help. They are afraid that this "help" only comes to "steal" their flock. Personal Insecurities and the lack of Church governance systems are other factors that contribute to Churches not seeking for help. Some Church leaders have a ministry system that ties the church to them, making the church unable to operate in the Pastor's absence, which was the case of Everlasting Sanctuary of God Church.

## **A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL**

*"I was introduced to PDN (Pastors Discipleship*

Network) when I joined the Luteete Discipleship hub. I was introduced to several programs PDN has included Interim Pastoral Ministry”, Pr. Dickson says.

The PDN Discipleship hub model brings together Senior Pastors in different communities every week to support, and exhort each other, as well as keep each other accountable. It is in one of these sessions that PDN’s Interim Pastoral Ministry (IPM) was introduced to Pr. Dickson.

The PDN IPM Program seeks to offer individualised support to a church experiencing gaps in its leadership. Sometimes a pastor is not able to give the much-needed leadership in a church because he/she is sick and cannot offer pastoral leadership, or death, or there is a need to travel for different reasons like study, a sabbatical, on leave, or a mission trip. A gap can also be brought about when a pastor has fallen morally and a break from leadership is needed. Sometimes it may be a lack of some specific competencies and the need for support in a specific area. PDN’s IPM Program comes to bridge the leadership gap by deploying an Interim Pastor who serves within a church’s existing structures to provide continuity of spiritual leadership which gives the church stability and the opportunity to

row its roots and spread its branches.

*“PDN intervened through the deployment of a Pastor at my church who helped provide us with capacity building of the church ministers. The IPM Pastor helped us through training the ministers in capacity building. Some of the things we learnt were leadership skills. We learnt how to put up systems in the church. I was also invited to several conferences and trainings at PDN”, says Pr. Dickson.*

PDN run a needs assessment analysis to determine the specific needs of the church, the nature of engagement and period of deployment. After the assessment PDN deployed a well-trained, trustworthy, seasoned Pastor to support Pr. Dickson and his team for 6 months. The receiving church leadership and IPM run an orientation meeting to familiarise themselves with IPM, purposes for smooth transfer of responsibility, and expectations on each side.

## **CHANGE IS HERE**

*“Before this intervention, we did not have a clear mission and vision statement for the church, but now when he came in, we learnt to come up with the mission and vision statements and we have managed to put up systems that can sustain the church even in the absence of the pastor. Right now, many ministers we have in church know what*

*to do. They are self-driven, and they can do what is expected from them”, says Pr. Dickson.*

PDN’s Interim Pastors are adequately equipped in ministry competencies to ensure effective ministry support to the church they serve.

*“It’s now a healthy church. They are growing spiritually and physically. Everyone is enjoying what he/she is doing because they know what they are doing. They are served. There is life in the church now. The numbers have increased. More people are coming in now. There are now systems which allow people to come in and stay, which was not there before”, Pr. Dickson happily tells us.*

Some of the competencies brought into the deployment are; Vision and mission development, Theology (introductory), Inductive bible study, Biblical communication, Discipleship, Servant Leadership, Resource mobilization, Conflict resolution, Counseling skills, and Children and youth ministry.

*“As a Pastor, it has relieved me of the burden I had. I was carrying the church alone. I no longer carry that burden on my own. I have free time now. I have time to do other things and yet the church is running. It is no longer depending on*

*one person. I now even get time to rest. I get more time to attend to my family. Now things are balancing. I can now balance ministry and family”, says a relieved Pr. Dickson.*

A successful Interim Pastoral deployment helps the church become stronger during the transition. The Lead Pastor or Leaders can regroup, be renewed spiritually, clarify its values, and refocus its vision. Consequently, they are then in the best position to grow a healthy church, which in turn builds a health community and healthy nation.

*“Even now that the deployment ended, PDN is still helping us. And I participate in everything that they invite me to. I am now also in the IPM program and can be deployed. I am also participating in the establishment of discipleship hubs and training in these hubs”, says Pr. Dickson enthusiastically.*

PDN's IPM program currently has ten (10) Interim Pastors deployed full time as well as twenty five (25) Churches reached and ready for deployment support.

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