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THE CHALLENGES OF STRUCTURAL CHANGES ON THE STUDENT MINISTRY  
DIVISION OF THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

BY

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## ABSTRACT

This study sets out to examine the challenges of structural changes on the Student Ministry Division of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. This is with a view to finding the extent of the impacts of the structural changes that had taken place at the Convention on the Baptist Building work force and the entire Baptist family in Nigeria. It also aims to identify various challenges of these structural changes with particular reference to the Student Ministry probing into the recent responsibility imbroglio noticed in the Ministry. The study was done with an expectation that it will be of help to the Convention leadership and Student Ministry stakeholders in providing proper channels for ministering to student appropriately in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The research was conducted on sixty staff of the Baptist Building of which twenty eight (28) were from Missionary Organisations Department to which Student Ministry belong, six (6) Christian Education Department, six (6) Publications Department, eight (8) Finance and Supply, four (4) Social and Medical and eight (8) Administration Department staff. This was done with a set of questions with the response categories Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed and Undecided for them to respond based on their personal views. The data collected through the instruments used were analysed with simple percentage count to determine challenges of structural changes on the Student Ministry Division of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. The findings from the study established that structural changes are inevitable for human existence, the major challenges to the structural changes in the Convention is lack of faithfulness to the cooperative programme, there are little or no impact of the structural changes on the staff and the entire Baptist family and that Student Ministry is unique and should be handle in that regard. It also confirmed the recent noticed responsibility clash in the Ministry. Based on the findings, the following suggestions are made to improve the provision of proficient structures for Nigerian Baptist Convention with particular reference to the Student Ministry:

Baptist leaders should be well versed in Baptist beliefs and practices with proper understanding of theory of change for adequate structural change in the Convention.

The Baptist family should be carried along from initiation of any structural change to its implementation so that they will feel sense of belonging and make it community development driven.

Unhelpful structures should be jettisoned by the leadership of the Convention to look into the Student Ministry and restructure it in the best way that can remove the responsibility clash.

Student Ministry should be given better attention because it is the strong pillar of the Convention.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

This study has been able to explore the challenges of structural changes on the Student Ministry Division of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. This work has concluded that challenges are inevitable in human life and the Nigerian Baptist Convention was not exempted. The impacts of the various structural changes in the Convention will be felt more by and by as every one cooperates and contributes his or her own quota to move the Convention forward. There is no more doubt that Student Ministry Division is unique and should be handled in that regard. The responsibility clash noticed must be dealt with a view to help the ministry out of the challenges.

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is imperative to make some recommendations with a view to improving the provision of proficient structural changes in the Nigerian Baptist Convention that will enhance the gospel.

In the first instance, it is advocated that the Convention leadership should understand the way Baptist churches are organized to do the work assigned to them by the Lord Jesus Christ (Ilupeju 2). A clear understanding of who are the Baptists and congregational polity will in no small measure assist the leadership to bring up a visionary structure that will make meaningful impacts on the entire Baptist family.

The Convention leadership will do well to carry the local Baptist churches along. It is not enough to announce a policy or plan without giving room for discussing the logistics that will facilitate the accomplishment of what is desired (Ilupeju 12). Any

structural change that will make impact must be community development driven. People must see it as their own and they must feel belonging. Therefore, right from initiation to the implementation, they should be carried along. This will provide necessary checks and balances (Kolawole 14).

The leadership of the Convention must jettison the unhelpful structure that has been in operation for several decades now in favour of a structure that will help to harness all the resources that God has placed in the hands of his people for mission work. This needs courage and bold step to achieve great things for God. (Ilupeju 16). Peradventure, this will be more appropriate for the SMD; every staff knows that there is no need for the duo of the Director and the Coordinator, if it is a must to have the Director to make the section a department, the position of the Coordinator should be scraped to remove the lock jam and slow pace of operation so that staff will report to the Director directly. On the other hand, the Coordinatorship can be sustained but report directly to the General Secretary.

Student Ministry should be handled with better concern because it is the corner stone of any organization. Baptist Student Fellowship (BSF) is known for sound biblical teaching that is able to bring life and hope to the Convention tomorrow, any attempt to treat them any how will tell on the future of the entire Baptist family. Therefore, capacity building in terms of finance, human and material resources invested on it will come back yielding dividend in multiple folds.