

THE PROBLEM OF UNENGAGED THEOLOGICALLY TRAINED GRADUATES  
OF THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION: AWARENESS AND REMEDIES

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## ABSTRACT

This work examined the problem of theologically trained graduate unengagement and its implications for the overall growth, development and spiritual prospects of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. The objective were to raise a deeper awareness about the state of unengaged theologically trained graduates situating it in the general context of secular unemployment in Nigeria. To show how the problem affects the growth, pastoral leadership, qualitative and quantitative spiritual wellness of the Nigerian Baptist Convention; to suggest ways of mitigating the challenge. To achieve these, library research method was employed. Books focusing on different aspects of the subject were consulted and reviewed. Journal, articles that are related to the subject matter were also reviewed as well as materials from the internet sources. Some unpublished materials from the seminary library were also consulted. Questionnaires guide was also design for respondents on the subject. The discussions emanating from the analysis of the questionnaire were presented in tabular and pie chart formats. The purpose of the study is to create an awareness of the problem. The findings revealed that, unengaged theologically trained pastors are gradually losing focus of their sense of call to ministry. The timely and deliberate response of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, theological training institutions, local Baptist churches with the view to mitigating the problem would save the future of our great Nigerian Baptist Convention.

## 5.2 Conclusion

This thesis has been able to raise or increase the awareness level of increasing problem of unengagement of graduate ministers of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. It has also highlighted its negative implications on the overall mission of the Nigerian Baptist Convention and the great commission of Mathew 28:19-20. The problem poses serious danger on los of ministry focus, threat to family cohesion, unity, love, etc. It also portend danger to Baptist heritage, faith and future. The local churches, theological institutions and the Conventions have roles to play in addressing this issue of graduate pastors unengagement in the Nigerian Baptist Convention. Except all stakeholders responds appropriately and on time, our local Baptist churches and the convention at large may not experience quantitative and qualitative growth and development.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research work, the following recommendations are made for the Baptist local churches and the Convention at large, as means to tackling unengagement of graduate ministers so as to enhance both spiritual and numerical growth and vitality.

### a. Recommendations for affected graduate pastors.

- i. The need to maintain the steam of their divine call as well sticks with their call.
- ii. The willingness, openness and readiness to respond to God's call to any pastorate without personal biases and or preferences.
- iii. The courage to take personal, bold and faith initiative to begin a pioneer ministry task.

- iv. The readiness to display themselves to a deliberate, sincere volunteer service at any local Baptist of their choice, their home local Baptist assembly, particularly where they are accepted and accommodated
  - v. Spouses of unengaged graduate ministers be empowered economically as a means of alternate means of income.
  - vi. Pastors' fellowship across the Nigerian Baptist Convention should initiate programmes such as vocational trainings, workshops and seminars on economic empowerment, special prayer programmes for divine favour and breakthrough for unengaged graduate ministers.
- b. Recommendations for local Baptist churches.
- i. An aggressive church planting attitude should be imbibed so as to create ministerial vacancies for graduate ministers.
  - ii. Local churches should look inward with the view to identifying ministry need areas, where graduate ministers could be engaged.
  - iii. Local Baptist churches should resolve to embracing team ministry (multi-staff) culture, so as to increase the member of absorption of theological trained pastors.
  - iv. Local Baptist churches should resolve to lead social, economic and financial support of graduate ministers especially those who may have been a member of such assembly pending their call to a pastorate.
  - v. Local Baptist churches should deliberate organize prayers for unengaged graduate ministers.
- c. Recommendations for the Nigerian Baptist Convention

- i. A deliberate drive to plant new Baptist churches must be adopted as an imperative.
- ii. The Nigerian Baptist Convention should encourage local Baptist churches to plant at least a new church in every two years.
- iii. A desk should be established at the Nigerian Baptist Convention headquarters where unengaged graduate pastors can register. This could serve as a data base where needy local Baptist churches may resort to engaging pastors to their pastorate. This will also enhance the Nigerian Baptist Convention to be current with the rate of unengaged graduate ministers.
- iv. This census of all local Baptist churches be carried out by deploying enumerators across the length and breadth of Nigerian Baptist Convention to ascertain local Baptist churches without pastors. Such churches having been identified be invited to the headquarters with the view to engaging possible means of encouraging them to engage a pastor.
- v. Where there is vivid evidence of financial incapacitation of any such identified pastorless local churches, a mutual workable partnership for engaging a pastor be reached with the church, for an agreed stipulated duration.
- vi. Nigerian Baptist Convention leadership should tactically discourage the use of lay leadership and pastors who are not trained in the Baptist theological institutions. This is to avoid doctrinal problems as well as checking of ministerial space.

If these recommendations and others, as may be evolved on account of further studies on this problem, as well as the Nigerian Baptist Convention leadership are carefully engaged, it is most likely that the number of unengaged graduates would be significantly reduced if not eliminated entirely over years.