

CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY AS AN IMPERATIVE IN CONTEMPORARY
CHRISTIAN MISSION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

There have been various studies on the subject of church planting. This researcher, however, chose to research into the significance of appropriate use of strategy for planting churches in Christian missions, due to the observed failures brought about by the wrong use of strategy and methodology in contemporary times. This work presents an appraisal of NBC church planting activities in the past few years. The study focused on church planting within the Nigerian Baptist Convention. The aim of the study is to provide some adaptable church planting strategies that are appropriate for different situations in the field of church planting in the twenty first century. Empirical research methodology was employed for the study by the use of structured interview questions. The data was analysed using percentages. The findings revealed that church planting has not been given top priority among many Baptist churches in Nigeria. It also shows that the understanding of church planting strategy is very low among many NBC churches and their leaders. Hence, there is the need for a re-awakening on effective evangelism that leads to planting of churches in Christian missions; and on the use of appropriate strategy for planting churches. This research work recommends that there should be greater commitment to evangelism and church planting carried out by correct application of appropriate strategy in contemporary Christian missions. It also recommends an inclusion of evangelism and church planting in the curriculum of all Theological Institutions as mandatory for all ministers in training. This work can be applied as a working tool for churches in their missions and church planting endeavours. It will be a useful compendium for training of missionaries and church planters.

5.2 Conclusion

It is evident from the result of this research work that many Baptist church members and their leaders do not have a good grasp on the understanding of the nature and functions of the church. The Biblical understanding of what the church is and why the church exists is not clear to many; hence the mission of the church on earth was not understood. Consequently, the churches are not truly committed to doing missions, which involves effective evangelism that leads to congregating new converts into churches. In other words, a good understanding of the Great Commission and of the appropriate strategies to fulfil it has not done on many of the church people in contemporary times; hence, the need to plant viable, healthy, reproducible churches where genuine disciples will be raised has not been given priority in their church programmes and activities, as well as in their church budgets.

This work therefore serves to inform and equip the church in her missions of evangelizing the vast population of unconverted people and to plant viable, reproducing churches, in order to accommodate the converts so that they can be nurtured and matured to become Christ's disciples. This will consequently lead to the fulfilment of the Great Commission. Also, the work will be an effective working tool for missionaries, church

planters and mission agencies that are engaged actively in training of missionaries and church planters. It will particularly be useful for the Global Missions Board of the NBC as it provides an overview of the Board's church planting activities in the last few years and also provides some church planting strategies that are adaptable for twenty first century mission endeavours.

5.3 Recommendations

In the light of the findings made in this work, the researcher hereby makes the following recommendations.

- (1) The GMB as the arrow head of the convention mission enterprise should be more focused on its mandate.
- (2) NBC should ensure that the GMB leadership is made up of men of clear focus, genuine burden and sincere passion for the lost and missions.
- (3) The GMB should carry out a periodical review of its mission and church planting strategies in keeping with current developments and challenges.
- (4) The missionaries and church planters recruited by NBC should be men with genuine call unto missions.
- (5) The training and re-training of the missionaries and church planters should be given special attention, to ensure that they keep abreast of new developments and to continually equip them to meet with the challenges of the time.
- (6) Awareness should be continuously created among NBC churches about the need for greater commitment to missions and church planting.
- (7) All NBC stakeholders in missions – the churches, associations, conferences and GMB should be constantly reminded of their primary mandate to fulfil the Great

Commission by committing themselves to active missions and reproducible church planting through the use of appropriate strategies and methodology.

- (8) Established Baptist churches in the Western part of Nigeria should reach out unto areas of less Baptist concentration and support weak churches in the Eastern and Northern parts of Nigeria and beyond.
- (9) NBC and the Baptist churches under her should direct more resources into missions. The churches should be encouraged in the light of the urgency of the task of the Great Commission to commit at least twenty percent of their income to missions.
- (10) The Theological Institutions should give top priority to evangelism and church planting in their curriculum. Those who are undergoing training should be made to see the need to be committed to missions and planting of churches in their future ministries.