

AN EVALUATION OF LAGOS WEST BAPTIST CONFERENCE PASTORS'  
PERCEPTION OF NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION'S DISCIPLESHIP  
PROGRAMMES

AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES  
THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,  
OGBOMOSO

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE AWARD OF  
MASTER OF DIVINITY IN THEOLOGY

BY

IDOWU MOSES OYEWOLE  
MATRIC NO: 12/0150

JUNE, 2015

## ABSTRACT

The title of this essay is An Evaluation of Lagos West Baptist Conference Pastors' Perception of Nigerian Baptist Convention Discipleship Programmes. The essay among other things found what the perception of pastors in this conference is towards the discipleship programmes of the Nigeria Baptist Convention. The command of Jesus Christ is for the church to go and make disciples of all nations. For the command to be carried out effectively by the local church, the role of the pastor is very important. This essay found out the extent to which the pastor is at home with the Baptist denominations discipleship programmes which is meant to aid the spiritual development of the members of the church with the pastor being in the forefront. The study used questionnaires to find the perceptions of the pastors to the discipleship programmes of the Convention in terms of the content, theological and biblical correctness of the materials. The essay provided solutions to challenges confronting pastors on the use of the Convention's discipleship programmes. Part of the findings is that the discipleship materials are not a duplication of the Sunday school. It was also discovered that the materials help in social interaction among church members. The essay also reviewed the extent to which the pastor has availed himself/herself of the spiritual development opportunities offered by the discipleship programmes. In reviewing related literature, prominence is given to biblical basis and approaches to *discipleship in both the Old and New Testament and also the Nigerian Baptist Convention Discipleship programmes as provided in the materials*. Some of the recommendations were that the church pastor should see discipleship as an approach not only to grow the church numerically but also spiritually. The pastor should also plan ahead how he intends to integrate members into the discipleship ministry of the church using the various available Nigerian Baptist Convention and other materials as a tool. In carrying out the research, the descriptive survey method using questionnaires was used as the instrument of data collection while the target populations were pastors within the Lagos West Baptist Conference. The responses were analyzed using the SPSS and this was the basis of opinions, recommendations and conclusion.

## 5.2 Conclusions

Discipleship is one of the legacies left by the Lord Jesus Christ. He preached it, lived it, taught and trained the men he called and made them to catch the vision of disciple making. The Lord laid down a model for his followers to use in the disciple making process. The disciples of Jesus at the beginning of the early church and after use this model to the extent that the leaders of the day said of the disciples of Jesus that “These that have turned the world upside down...” The primary call of Jesus was a call to discipleship. (Mark 1:16-17)

This being the case, church leaders today especially pastors` have a duty to be directly involved in the discipleship process of the church. As a denomination, we are not short of discipleship materials; a Baptist Pastor therefore has no excuse for not discipling the members of his church with the abundance of resources.

It is so interesting to note that the Pastors who responded to the questionnaires all believe in the materials of the Convention and are actively using it. There is therefore the hope that more people will not only come to know the Lord but will continue to grow in their knowledge of and in relating with Him. It is however

needful for training and retraining of Pastors in various discipleship methods being discovered from scriptures and from research to meet with the challenges of contemporary times.

### 5.3 Recommendations

In other that discipleship be effective and be able to achieve its desired objective especially in the contemporary time, planning must be properly done by all parties involved in the disciple making process.

#### Pastors

The Pastor is strategically placed as the head of the church to lead the discipling of the members. In order for the Pastor to have a strong discipleship ministry, the following are recommended.

- The church Pastor should see discipleship as an approach not only to grow the church numerically but also spiritually.
- The pastor should plan ahead how he intends to integrate members into the discipleship ministry of the church using the various available Nigerian Baptist Convention and other available materials as a tool.
- The Pastor in order to be effective should also train people who can become a pool of resources for him to draw from and delegate to teach other.
- The discipling process must go from being theoretical to being personal. The Pastor should as much as possible use discipleship to create relationships and oneness in the church.
- The Pastor should avail himself of the various training opportunities provided by the NBC so that he can update himself on discipleship dynamics.

- The Pastor should be an example to the church in integrity and transparency.
- The Pastor should also master very well the materials provided by the Nigerian Baptist Convention and be able to use it to communicate both truth and growth to members of his congregation.
- The Pastor should have a large heart and should be able to combine sternness with tenderness and meekness. He should be approachable.
- The materials should be used to develop spiritual disciplines in the lives of members. Disciplines such as prayer, personal devotion, study of the Bible etc.
- The use of the materials should not be limited to the church auditorium alone, the Pastor apart from the various groups within the church should work at using the materials outside the church to such places as household fellowships; work environment where people dedicate part of their time to join others to study together. More people will be reached and some will likely come to faith in Christ.

#### Conference

- The Conference should organize regularly training/retreat for Pastors on discipleship so as to help in tackling challenges faced by the Pastors.
- The Conference should also have a feedback mechanism to gauge the relevance of the materials and also to be able to know current challenges and needs of the church in the area of discipleship.

## Convention

- The Nigerian Baptist Convention should see discipleship not just as a programme, rather it should be seen as the building block/foundation upon which the church rests.
- The Nigerian Baptist Convention should create opportunity for evaluation of the discipleship materials. This evaluation should be done by individuals, churches, associations and conferences.
- The Nigerian Baptist Convention should as a matter of urgency begin a Sunday dedicated to discipleship emphasis. This will help create a forum for people to understand and appreciate the work and ministry of discipleship.
- The Nigerian Baptist Convention in conjunction with the conferences and other discipleship oriented mission agencies like the Great Commission (Campus Crusade for Christ) and the Navigators should be in training partnership that will help the Baptist churches to develop a strong discipleship ministry in the churches.