

CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGIES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH  
GROWTH IN EVANGEL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, LAGOS

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## ABSTRACT

In recent years, intensified emphasis has been given to church planting and growth within the Nigerian Baptist Convention. This work appraised the church planting effort of Churches in Evangel Baptist Association. The research employed a combination of historical-descriptive and random sampling survey. The designed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection from the ten churches in the Association. Fifty questionnaires were distributed evenly among the churches and the data collected from the forty returned questionnaire were analysed. There is a close correlation between the number of churches planted and the growth of the Baptist denomination. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability test generally used as a measure of internal consistency of a psychometric instrument was used on the research instrument and the result was 0.879 which shows higher level of coherence and consistency of the research instrument. The research found out that church planting is biblical. It is the best means to grow a church. It develops new leaders, and a necessity for Baptist denominational survival and growth. Many churches are not committed to church planting and as such do not achieve desired growth. Also, the research discovered that without church growth through church planting, other forms of growth such as financial, numerical among other forms of growth would be a mirage. The research rejects a one-strategy-fit-all approach to church planting and growth but recommends that the Holy Spirit should be given the leadership role to guide the Church on strategies for church planting and growth. Church planting should not be left in the hands of disinterested and unfocussed people in the church. Pastors are advised to develop passion for church planting.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

There is a general consensus among church growth specialists that the best way to grow a church is through church planting. The analysis of the questionnaires revealed how churches could exist for years and yet failed to plant any church. The current objectives and mission statement of the Nigerian Baptist Convention on Breaking New Frontiers should not be a mere phrase to draw attention to mission and church planting alone but should be vigorously pursued through church planting both by the local churches and the Convention. Planting of churches should be highly celebrated far above the celebration of financial contribution to the Convention cooperative programme through the honour roll call at the Convention-in-session. Churches which have failed ought to be called to order irrespective of

their financial standing. The research revealed the need, prospects and problems of church planting and how it can be used to achieve church growth in the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Church planting is not as difficult as people think but cannot be done without adequate preparation. Churches must be deliberate about church planting. “Any church that does not deliberately reproduce herself may soon attract the wrath of God”.<sup>78</sup> The following recommendations are made for churches to achieve growth through church planting.

Church planting should not be left in the hands of disinterested and unfocussed people in the church, no matter the calibre of such people. In-fact, not all pastors should be saddled with church planting. It is the duty of the church pastor to identify those who are called to church planting and get them to work.

Pastors must be encouraged to develop passion for church planting. The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary should create a department for church planting. The myriad problem confronting the Nigerian Baptist Convention can best be solved by promoting church planting at every instance.

Churches that are not doing well should be visited. The Global Mission Board should create a Committee which would be made up of church members and qualified people to oversee church planting. Churches which have existed for over 10 years and are yet to plant churches should be visited and assisted in every way to ensure that they are planting churches.

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<sup>78</sup>Segun Adeleke. *Church Planting Made Easy*. Ibadan: Freedom Press, 2009. p.11.

Churches should learn to ask God for directions on church planting. God is not silent but man but man has not asked Him where He wants His church established.

Financial committee of the church are to be reminded of their responsibility to save souls and not to save money. It is evident that many good programmes are starving for financial reasons. Financial Committee members as well as other church members must become aware of returns on investment in church planting which is higher than any investment elsewhere. Church planting that leads to growth should not be planned only in the air-conditioned offices. There is a need to visit, do spiritual mapping and people must be motivated to be part of it.