

Tent-Making Missionary Strategy of the Apostle Paul: A Model for Contemporary
Baptist Missionaries

N.B.T.S.
M. Div. Miss.
DS — 81

A Thesis Submitted in Department of Missions and Evangelism, Faculty of
Theological Studies of "The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho" In
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of
Divinity in Missiology

**J.C. POOL LIBRARY
BAPTIST SEMINARY
OGBOMOSO NIGERIA**

Omoregbe Christopher Osagiede
NBTS/10/0098

2014 — 0785

June, 2013

Abstract

The intention of this research is to grasp the concept of tent-making as Paul's missionary strategy and to apply the strategy to contemporary Nigerian Baptist mission enterprises. Tent-making missionary strategy is a novel methodology in Christian mission that has gained prominence among Churches in the 21st century. The strategy seeks to explore the Professional skills and/or trade of professing Christians as a platform to communicate the Christian faith amongst unreached people groups. This strategy has become indispensable solution to open up the creative access nations. Data collected for this thesis was through the method of questionnaire administration. Extensive library research was carried out to gather facts and ideas from research of other people. Particularly, in this regard is the work of Ruth Siemens, Jonathan Lewis and others. The research carefully examines the tent-making missionary strategy of the Apostle Paul from his writings, his acts reported by Luke and other New Testament scholars. Historical perspectives of tent-making missionary strategy from the Old Testament, Intertestamental period, the Medieval as well as during the Reformation were also cautiously examined. The research also analyzes the mission strategies of the Nigerian Baptist Convention and her mission agency, Global Missions Board from 1960-2010. Based on questionnaire administered to serving and prospective Baptist missionaries, findings revealed that tent-making missionary strategy is a Biblical and legitimate option for Christian mission in today's world. This missionary method has in fact become absolutely essential to 21st century Church. Seven practical recommendations for re-strategizing and development of the mission strategies of the Nigerian Baptist Convention missionary sending Churches as well as the Global Missions Board mission enterprise are offered. Prominent among these recommendations is the need to set in motion the process of recruiting Baptist professionals as Tentmakers to both home and foreign mission fields. These recommendations will help the contemporary Baptist missionaries achieve better and greater results which were the characteristics found in the Apostle Paul.

makers avoid the temptation of developing evangelism methods that are craftily motivated by financial gains. The tent-maker is able to preach the message of the Kingdom without pay. Tent-makers can model a pattern of Christian service for those targeted for Christian witness. They can model commitment, hard work, faithfulness, trust and other Christian virtues as they witness amongst the people. If this concept is properly understood, the Global Missions Board and contemporary Baptist missionary may have secured the Kingdom key to unlock hitherto closed and hostile communities for Christian witness.

5.2 CONCLUSION

It is evident from this study that tent-making missionary strategy is a biblically based option for Christian mission today. The leadership of the Nigerian Baptist Convention sets the mission objective and goals. However, the extent to which these goals can be fulfilled is largely dependent on the personnel as well as strategy employed. It was agreed by the entire respondents in this study that tent-making missionary strategy is capable of aiding the attainment of the NBC mission focus: "Moving Forward with the Great Commission, Breaking New Frontiers," and that if the Apostle Paul tent-making missionary strategy is applied in Baptist mission enterprise today it will solve the incessant problem of mission financing.

Therefore, it is imperative for Contemporary Baptist missionary to understand the significant place that tent-making missionary strategy hold in Christian mission today. It is the desire of God that all humanity should be saved. But for them to be saved there is the need to communicate the Christian faith to the unreached people groups and there have been various means of carrying out this divine mandate. As earlier noted, most of the early strategies involves sending out full-time professional missionary personnel to the mission field. It should be noted here that the novel

methodology which has gained prominence among various Christian denominations over the world today is the use of tent-makers as missionaries.

Observably, this mission strategy is not without perils. There are certain perils associated with tent-making missionary strategy that contemporary Baptist missionary will do well to avoid. The fundamental peril to avoid according to Siemens is the hazard of been absorbed on material success that the focal point on evangelism is undermined or lost altogether. The second but equally potent danger is that the tent-maker may lose the consciousness that he or she is different from the Christian businessperson sent out by his or her employers for overseas missions. The tent-maker is not a business trip to a foreign land. Money is a big part of life and a big part of world mission. However, the tent-maker must take special care to view the business as a part of the whole strategy and not just extra income (White 11).

Contemporary Baptist missionaries need to brace up for the new challenges that are facing Christian missions today. The 21st century with its numerous demographic variables across nations of the world, particularly Africa, presents chain of challenges to contemporary mission operations. Contemporary Baptist missionaries should learn the art of strategizing. They should avail themselves of opportunities of training as tent-makers with a mind of using the skills acquired as a platform for effective mission enterprise. The current mission strategy of the Global Missions Board should be reviewed for better performance. Contemporary Baptist missionaries who cannot fit into the challenges of this generation might not be able to adequately carry out a bold mission thrust.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of this study, the researcher is giving the following recommendations:

1. Contemporary Baptist missionaries should endeavour to know and have a good understanding of the concept of tent-making missionary strategy of the Apostle Paul.
2. Every contemporary Baptist missionaries should learn and maintain a trade or have a profession.
3. The Global Missions Board of the Nigerian Baptist Convention should set in motion the process of using tent-making mission strategy as an instrument of recruiting Baptist professionals as well as skilled and semi-skilled parishioners as tent-making missionaries into her home and foreign mission fields.
4. Serving missionaries in the Convention should be encouraged to take their 'nets' with them into the mission fields where they are currently.
5. Tent-making missionary manual should be developed for prospective Baptist missionaries. The manual should contain amongst other things the traps that are inherent in tent-making missionary strategy.
6. Intensive sensitization should be carried out in all Churches within the Baptist Convention on the need for Baptist members to use their trade or profession wherever they may be as a means of service for Christ not primarily to earn a living.
7. Prospective Baptist missionaries should be highly oriented to use their previously acquired professional skills in addition to their theological training in carrying out their missionary enterprise.