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# THE ROLE OF NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY MISSIONS

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## ABSTRACT

"The role of NBC women in contemporary missions" is an attempt to stimulate missionary consciousness of men and women of this generation by highlighting the organisation, missionary strategy and contributions of women of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

The first chapter contains introductory materials such as motivating factor, purpose and significance of the work. Areas of possible misconceptions are cleared while research methodology as well as definitions of some key terms which recur in the essay are provided.

A review of the role of women in missions from biblical times through contemporary periods provides the basis as well as the context for NBC women participation in missions. This is done in chapter two.

Chapter three opens by placing NBC women in context of mission strategy of Nigerian Baptist Convention. Finding them relevant and strategic within the Convention, their varied missionary roles are thus examined and highlighted.

In chapter four, the implications of women involvement are examined. Drawing from their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, fresh challenges are given, not only to women but also to all who are called into the Kingdom task of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The concluding chapter, chapter five, attempts a summary of the essay. From the advantageous point of view of research carried out, recommendations are made and options offered to the various agencies through which NBC carries out her missionary objectives.

## B RECOMMENDATIONS

In the course of carrying out research work for this paper, a number of concerns came up which could provide new insights or improved missionary organisations and outreaches for our great Convention. Since the goal is to involve all in this all important assignment of mission, recommendations will be made directly to the Convention or her departments with the mind of better strategising for missions. Recommendations will also be made to other organisations or identifiable groups within the Convention who are directly or remotely connected with missions.

### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS TO NBC

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<sup>1</sup>"Woman's work for Women," The Encyclopedia of Mission 1904 ed., p.791.

<sup>2</sup> Paul O. Ebhomielen, Forty Years of NBC Missions (Benin- City: Christian Network Organisation, 1993), p.31.



a. Autonomous Status for Missions Department.

In the course of gathering materials for this essay, the writer's close interaction with the missions department affords her the opportunity of an objective assessment of some aspects of the work in the department. There is need for restructuring of the department to make room for better coordination of the missionary organs of the convention. The department should initiate and stimulate missionary consciousness from local church levels, through associational, conference to convention levels. Regular visits must be paid to mission fields by the functionaries of the department to possess up-to-date information about their goals, aspirations and problems.

To this extent the present office is grossly understaffed and inadequate to carry out the volume of work expected of a missions department of the dream of NBC. The writer therefore advocates for an autonomous status for the missions department of NBC for a more effective missionary outreach.

b. Auxiliary Status For MMU

The NBC is highly commended for her magnanimity in granting an auxiliary status to WMU in 1925. The contributions of WMU to Missions which have been highlighted is enough proof of what the Convention stands to gain by extending same privilege to the menfolk. It is about time that Boys and Men's work were given a boost. It is strongly believed that when MMU is given an auxiliary status, the missionary concerns of the NBC will be carried to greater heights.

c. Orientation for Female Missionaries.

It is acknowledged that the WMU is doing a great work in training Pastors wives serving as missionaries in Home and Foreign Mission fields. Beyond WMU work, this paper recommends a more comprehensive orientation for Pastors' wives

serving as female missionaries. This is in the areas of ministry related courses such as preaching, counselling and praying, among others. Ministry on the mission fields often times demands spontaneity and dynamism both for the Pastor and his wife. Circumstances dictate that the Pastor's wife begin to function in certain roles which are not perceivable from the view point of the streamlined and well organised local churches in urban centres. The experience of the Udoms in Akwa Ibom mission field is a good case in point where Mrs Udom inevitably finds herself standing in for her husband to carry out certain roles in some churches within the mission field.

It is therefore recommended that female Pastors with a strong bias for missions should be utilized in giving ministry orientation to female missionaries by the missions department of the NBC.

#### d. Educational Institutions

The NBC is called upon to establish a separate school of missions for the exclusive training of male and female missionaries. The success story of missionary agencies in Nigeria such as CAPRO faith ministries, who have a separate school of missions, is hinged on the specialized training given to missionaries. Lois Fuller underscores the benefits of an indigenous mission school, stating that his training in capro school of missions afforded him the opportunity "to see missions from the Nigerian point of view."<sup>3</sup> Where this is unattainable at the moment, a separate department of missions should be created in our seminaries and Bible schools. A semester work, currently offered in many NBC seminaries on missions may not equip the missionary adequately with the right tools needed to handle the intricacies and complexities of the mission field.

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<sup>3</sup>Lois Fuller, "The Delicate Balance," OCCUPY, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1994, p.5.

