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ADVOCATING FOR CHURCH-BASED EVANGELISTS
FOR CHURCH PLANTING IN
THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

AN ESSAY PRESENTED TO
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ABSTRACT

This work, "Advocating for Church-Based Evangelist for Church Planting in the Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches," attempts to propose effective evangelism that would effectively aid the planting of churches in the Nigerian Baptist Convention. It shows that church-based evangelists provide the appropriate leadership needed for local Baptist churches to plant daughter churches that are healthy, evangelistic and growing.

The first chapter deals with general introduction to the whole study. In this chapter, the writer pictures the goal of the research and how he plans to achieve it. The goal is to present church-based evangelist as the most viable method of sustainable church planting.

Chapter two discloses that church-based evangelist stands on strong bases: biblical and sociological. Biblical bases point God through the Scripture as the designer and sustainer of church-based evangelists. Sociological bases disclose that God purposes church-based evangelists to help in meeting the total needs of people in their diverse contexts. Both bases are needed to direct the course of church planting in the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

Chapter three discusses the history of church planting in the Nigerian Baptist Convention from the period when indigenous Nigerians took over the leadership of the Nigerian Baptist Convention and the extent of its effectiveness. The ineffectiveness of the approach of church planting has

produced aging non-growing churches, churches that maintain unhealthy relationship with their pastors, non-evangelistic churches and a host of other problems for which church-based evangelist option would effectively address.

Chapter four states how the church-based evangelist would effectively work with a local church to plant new viable evangelistic churches and stimulate healthy growth in existing churches. The writer pointed out that the local church would need to consciously cooperate and provide the necessary support that would facilitate the actualization of the church-based evangelist's goal.

Chapter five discusses the comparative effectiveness of church-based evangelist over free-lance evangelist and his work in the Nigerian Baptist Convention. The writer emphasized that the church-based evangelist is readily available, focused in attention, zealously committed and is involved from the planning stage to the planting and post-planting stage. Consequently, he is comparatively more effective than the scarcely available free-lance evangelist in church planting.

Chapter six is the conclusion to the study. It contains a summary of the study and recommendations on how the local churches in the Nigerian Baptist Convention could go about calling a church-based evangelist. From the whole research, it can be known that church-based evangelist method for church planting is biblical, appropriate, helpful, applicable and relevant in the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

CONCLUSION

In bringing this thesis to a close, it is reasonable to re-state the undergirding problems that the writer set out to study. He seeks to address the ineffectiveness of evangelism carried out by local Baptist churches in the Nigerian Baptist Convention both for the purpose of church planting and church growth due to lack of appropriate leadership for which a church-based evangelist adequately fits.

In pursuance of this study the scriptural bases, the sociological bases and the history of how churches have been planted in the Nigerian Baptist Convention were critically considered. In addition, the study vividly shows how the work of the church-based evangelist and the local churches function interdependently in order to effect evangelism that would plant healthy growing evangelistic churches.

In the course of critical examination of the history of church planting in the Nigerian Baptist Convention, it was evident that church planting as practiced by local churches lacked proper planning, appropriate leadership, adequate commitment of sponsoring churches and conscious effort to disciple converts of daughter churches planted. To address these fundamental problems and ensure effective evangelism that would aid the planting of

healthy growing evangelistic churches, the writer advocates the method of church-based evangelist.

The writer suggests the following as recommendations for the calling of a church based evangelist.

1. The church desiring the services of a church-based evangelist should be sensitized on the need of calling a church-based evangelist. This can be done through a church-wide teaching or seminar. Such teachings should be conducted by a minister who possesses the gift and calling of an evangelist.
2. The church pastor of a prospective church should give his blessing to the idea and actively participate in the calling process. This is important because the church-based evangelist would work under his leadership and could frustrate or enhance his efforts.
3. The church should seek for a candidate with a sense of call and gift of an evangelist. He should be willing to work under the supervision of a senior pastor and show evidence of involvement or participation in effective evangelism and church planting exercise. He should also possess sound theological training from a good theological institution with at least a Bachelor Degree in Theology or Missiology.
4. The local church should work out a comprehensive plan that would cater for the upkeep and maintenance of the church-based evangelist. This would include remuneration, welfare and such like.

5. The church should inaugurate and empower a search committee to proceed with the process of calling a church-based evangelist. This should be preceded with the church formal approval of the willingness and readiness of the church to call the minister.
6. The search committee on completion of their duty should forward their recommendations to the church council and the church-in-conference for approval and implementation.
7. The church should engage in fervent prayers for divine guidance and direction at regular intervals from the commencement to the conclusion of the exercise.

When these suggestions are considered and implemented the effectiveness of evangelism in planting healthy growing evangelistic churches can be considered to have started. Also existing local churches would be influenced to begin to experience conversion growth.

From the whole research, it can be known that church-based evangelist method for church planting is biblical, appropriate, helpful, applicable and relevant in the Nigerian Baptist Convention.