

**AN APPRAISAL OF CHURCH PLANTING  
AND GROWTH IN AKURE BAPTIST  
ASSOCIATION**

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M. Div.

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## ABSTRACT

Members of the orthodox churches of which Baptist is one feel that the neo-pentecostal churches are ahead in the area of church planting. Also, in Akure Baptist Association, a particular church and pastor is very much ahead of all other churches and pastors in the art of church planting.

In view of the above, this study was carried out to find out why some churches are inactive in church planting while others are active. The study was to see how the inactive churches can benefit from the experiences of the active ones. It was also geared towards finding out what could be done to make churches grow and to see what church leaders understand by church planting. Also, it was to find out the relationship between evangelism and church planting and form a basis for further studies in this area.

A set of questionnaires were then administered to pastors in the Association. An interview was then conducted with a particular pastor that planted most of the churches in the Association. Descriptive statistics of percentages and pie charts were used to analyze the information obtained from the field. Results indicated that all the pastors were well-educated (formal education) before proceeding to theological education. All pastors are of middle age; that made them physically fit for the work of pastoring churches.

The study showed that the knowledge of the pastors in the Association on church planting is low and that a lot needed to be done to inculcate in them the culture of church planting. Very few of them (i.e. 7.7 percent) do not believe in church planting. The study concluded and recommended that the Nigerian Baptist Convention should device means of making pastors under her have interest in the works of missions and evangelism which would end up in church planting.

## **Conclusion**

From the findings of this study, it would be necessary that pastors in the Nigerian Baptist Convention should be educated on the basis of planting churches. They should know that pastoral work is more than preaching and teaching of church members but that they should be involved in obeying the “Great Commission”. They should realize that they are accountable to God and therefore must obey His

Words. Many of the churches in this Association are of the opinion that church planting is an area of specialization of which they are not into. This is absolutely wrong and they should be made to know this from the Association and Conference as well as the Convention.

### **Recommendations**

There is need to review and make sure that the curriculum of the training of Baptists include that of Church Planting. I am sure of the Seminary in Ogbomoso. If there are any of the Bible Colleges without this, it should be included and made compulsory; not minding the autonomy of each local church, young pastors ought to be placed under the supervision of older pastors for a period of time, may be, before ordination. During this period, the senior pastor should be expected to oversee, direct and advice the young pastor on every aspect of pastoral work.

At every convention in session, during pastors' conference, Baptist conferences and Associations, there should be a session devoted to teachings on church planting, missions and evangelism. The convention should mandate every church to organize similar teaching sessions for church leaders, pulpit committee members and church workers so that when a pastor embraces the vision, it could be shared by other members. This should be done at least once a year.

Workers retreat on yearly basis must involve topics on mission and evangelism. The convention should encourage Mission Exchange visits locally as a form of encouragement for weaker churches. For example, pastors in Akure Association to travel to Port Harcourt where church planting has become a hobby and concern of all church members. This is making specific reference to New Life Baptist Church, Port Harcourt where about twenty (20) churches were planted in the last ten (10) years. Exchange programmes does not have to be overseas but just the way we invite preachers for crusades and revivals locally, this could be practiced for mission exchange programmes.

Training and re-training of pastors should be made compulsory at regular intervals of about five (years). They should be up-dated on the recent happenings in pastoral care with particular reference to church planting. During the training of pastors, regular, sandwich, diploma or whichever course, students should be made to have a compulsory project on church planting in any of the rural areas of his/her home church or close to the school of study. This should be made a pre-requisite for graduating.