CRITICAL EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN MISSIONS A CASE STUDY OF GLOBAL MISSION BOARD OF NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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ABSTRACT

Missions is God's mandate to Christians all over the world. In fulfilling this mandate, two major resources (financial and human) among others are paramount and essential. It is of great value to the fulfillment of missions mandate if these resources are effectively and efficiently managed. This study dealt with normative biblical and contemporary principles that are pertinent for accomplishing effective and efficient management of financial resources in missions. The Nigerian Baptist Convention has been in existence over one hundred and fifty years and has been involving in missions through Global missions Board for over 50 years. The Board has been facing challenges in management of financial resources in missions like other organizations e.g. CAPRO, CMF and local churches. There are diverse reactions to the Board's management of financial resources in missions. The study recommends the need for the Board to adhere more to the normative Biblical and contemporary principles, like theocentric nature of missions; setting of goals and objectives; proper planning and organization; budgeting and adequate control system among others, for management of financial resources in missions effectively and efficiently.

5.1 Conclusion

Summarily, this paper has revealed that effective and efficient management of financial resources in missions enterprise is pertinent. It poses challenges to missions activities of the Global Mission Board (GMB), churches and the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) at large. The challenges on the part of the GMB are not limited to the Board management but also missionaries and pastors on the fields. The challenges on the part of the NBC has to do with the struggle to meet missions objectives and other activities. On the part of the churches, it has to do with their cooperative contribution, how is it being used? And whether it will be better for them to carryout missions activities on their own. The challenge is also posed to NBC as a whole in considering how far it has gone in the missions work since the time it has taken over from international mission Board (IMB) of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), who had managed the missions resources in Nigeria for over 103 years.

Also, the paper looks at the extent of compliance of GMB to normative biblical and contemporary principles of effective and efficient management of financial resources in missions enterprise. What factors affecting the management of financial resources; effect of poor management of financial resources in missions; and suggested solutions/steps to effective and efficient management of financial resources in missions.

The normative biblical principles for management of financial resources are discussed in chapter two. These are not limited to christocentricity of missions, stewardship and accountability, planning and organizing, check and balance, developing financial priorities among others. These are expedient for GMB to practise and adhere to in order to be effective and efficient in management of financial resources in mission. Evaluation of GMB compliance to normative biblical and contemporary principles reveals that, to some extent GMB possesses some of these principles:- goal and objectives that are christocentric, but with little deficiency in implementation. This is because sometimes focus is shifted to other activities other than missions. Also, there is plan and organizational structure, but some of NBC activities that are outside the GMB plan are being financed by funds meant for missions activities of GMB. From the NBC books of reports, it reveals that often times not all funds collected from 20% cooperative programme that are meant for GMB are remitted. This causes inadequacy of funds for GMB to carryout her duties. GMB has in place proper and adequate accounting system and policies; however, the problem is the extent of compliance. Similarly, the board has in place sound internal control of funds but how effective is this control in reporting mismanagement of funds?

The short fall in effective and efficient management of resources has adverse effect on the GMB missions works, the missionaries, pastors on the fields, and churches on the fields and all churches in the NBC. On the part of the missionaries, often times, their salaries and allowances are being delayed while their works on the field are paralyzed. In addition, some of the project in the missions field are abandoned and wasted. Some properties are not

captured in the record while GMB is yet to legally take the full ownership of some properties on the fields.(an instance is the case of Awka home mission field where Government allotted acres of land for the field but there was delay in perfection of the land till government revoked the possession of land) On the part of church on the fields, this affect their growth, while some churches in convention still feel that their contributions to missions are not effectively and efficiently used for missions. This has led to some churches having their own missions enterprise while some prefer to be partner so that they will be able to monitor and participate in missions work of GMB

5.2 Recommendations

The response of the Global Missions Board (GMB) and the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) cannot be casual to adverse effects of poor management of financial resources in missions. And some of the deviations of the GMB and NBC from the normative biblical principles discussed in chapter four.

Therefore, with all that is discussed so far, it becomes expedient to ask: how can GMB of NBC improve more on management of financial resources in missions, and what to be done by GMB and NBC to be more effective and efficient in management of financial resources in missions. These steps are intended to assist in this.

First, positive attitude should be developed for missions. GMB and NBC leaders must possess deep convictions and genuine enthusiasm themselves. Effectiveness in financial resources management is directly related to one's attitude towards the people of the world about the great commandment. In accomplishing this, the NBC should try as much as

possible to respect the autonomy of GMB and ensure prompt and full remittance of fund due GMB.

Third, Incorollary, compliance to policy and guidelines will be of great assistance towards accomplishing effective management of financial resources in missions. Hence GMB should adhere to policy and guidelines has stipulated without any reservation that can hinder effective management of funds.

Fourth, every member of the GMB should contribute to the budget even to the grassroots, not only the Budget planning department. This could be done by calling on each department to submit their budget. Each department's budget should be gathered by the contribution of each officer in each department. For instance the for missons department, each missionary is expected on the field should forward for estimate of their needs for the year to GMB for total budgeting. This is because the missionaries that are on the fields are the ones on the grass root. Although, there might be need for verification to ensure that estimations are rational,

Fifth, missions operation financing should either be centralized or de-centralized. Both should not be used. This is to facilitate proper coordination of mobilization and application of funds without any leakages from any quotas. However, for any one chosen, there must be a sound control system in place.

Sixth, competency development should be adopted by the GMB. It should cut across all the personnel. Awareness of new changes in missions enterprise is pertinent for all missionaries. This will help to reduce cost and wastage.

Seventh, one of the most significant areas that GMB need to look at is appraisal of missionaries' performance and competence. This is essential because bulk of the board expenditure goes for salaries and allowances. If care is not taken, the Spirit of civil service may crop in, where people in service have a mind set that whether they work or not their salary will come. This is Unlike faith ministry where the missionaries depend on God for their survivals and the challenges on the fields. Also, competence gap should be identified and changes should be effected in all level of the Board-top-down. In addition, the Board should ensure competency development by putting in place re-training programmes.

Eight, Mobilizing church participation and ensuring feedback system that are reliable will be of great assistance to the GMB and the NBC at large. This is because many ideas will be gathered that will help in furtherance of mission works efficiently. Also people will see missions work as their own not as the work of GMB alone.

Although, this work is limited to GMB of NBC, nevertheless, all what has been discussed so far and the recommended steps that are intended to assist in effective and efficient management of financial resources in missions enterprise could also be of assistance to other missions agencies, organizations, churches and missions-minded individuals.