

**THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**MISSIONARY INITIATIVE OF FOUR SELECTED BAPTIST  
LEADERS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR NIGERIAN  
BAPTISTS**

**AN ESSAY PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY  
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AWARD DEGREE MASTER OF DIVINITY (MISSIOLOGY)**

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### ABSTRACT

The focus of this essay, "Missionary Initiative of Four Selected Baptist Leaders and Their Significance to the Nigerian Baptists", is to examine the factors that gave birth to the missionary initiative of selected Baptist Leaders and their implications for Nigerian Baptists.

The first chapter considers the introductory matters overview conception of missionary initiative. Chapter two generally looks into the beginning and the spread of Baptist mission in England and America, like bases for Baptist mission and missionary activities.

Chapter three handled the missionary initiative among the Baptist by revealing four nature of the missionary task ; spiritual, biblical, faith and human task. The chapter also consider the missionary initiative of William Carey, Adoniran and Ann Judson, Luther Rice and Thomas J. Bowen and their results.

Chapter four deals with the birth and stages of NBC missions with the typology of missionary initiative among Nigerian Baptist Temi and Femi Adewumi, Solomon A Ojo, the Boyos and Badejogbins were considered. Chapter five, contains the conclusion that are drawn from the study and recommendations for the Nigerian Christians especially the Nigerian Baptist.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the reason for the church is mission. Christians' response of appreciation for the awesome privilege of coming into God's salvation provision in Christ finds its ultimate expression in a readiness to seek to extend the same saving grace to the lost.<sup>1</sup> Mission found expression, in the beginning, in God's redemptive plan as it began to unfold after the fall of Adam. It continued through the call of Abraham and "the choice of Israel as a model theatre of God's redemptive grace of human history."<sup>2</sup> It culminated in God's self giving through the life and ministry of Jesus and His death on the cross.

The task of mission has since been passed on to the Church which is the new partner with God towards the fulfillment of the missionary mandate. The enterprise of Christian mission which the Church has received is not just a tradition rather, it is 'a cause that makes its reality of the brokenness of God's creation manifested from time to time (till the present).

Mission challenges for the contemporary Nigerian Baptists include; (i). Promoting missions Awareness programmes and mobilizations among the local Churches, Associations, Conferences, Convention at large, and with the theological institutions; (ii). The need for creating an enabling environment for the flourishing of individual missionary initiatives; (iii). Encouraging pioneer missionaries, lay field

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<sup>1</sup> Mission Awareness Conference, Global Missions Board (NBC), Ibadan, 2001, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

evangelist; church planters and leaders through missions' discipleship programmes, short term missions experience; and (iv). Guiding members on the biblical uses of their spiritual gifts.

It is high time for the Nigerian Baptist to take the leadership position in missionary enterprise. Moreso:

Since we have so great a cloud of witnesses (Carey, Judson, Rice, Bowen, etc) surrounding us (NB), let us lay aside every encumbrance (in form of anti mission duties, burden and obligations), and the sin (great omission), which so easily entangles us (NB), and let us (NB) run (through the innovative) with endurance (genuine strong conviction) the race (world Evangelization) that is set (committed) before us (NB). Fixing our eyes (focus and pursuit) on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our (missionary) faith, who for the joy set before Him endured (fulfilled) the cross (mission) despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12:1-2)

In the light of the above chapter, the researcher will like to point out some significant lessons, derived from the study:

1. God is a missionary God and His children must resemble Him also in all things
2. God's message has been faithfully proclaimed through the Ages through His obedient children
3. God's saving plan is the over preaching message of the Bible. Contemporary Christians must be appreciative and stand in awe and wonder of God's great salvation to the point of giving up themselves sacrificially for the mission will of God.
4. The mission of Jesus Christ is the basic and fundamental mission within the divine plan.

5. Jesus sent His witnesses to continue His mission and He is still in the business of sending men and women for the execution of the missionary task
6. There is sovereignty of God in mission, even during fears, persecutions and deaths God is seen in the progress of the gospel.
7. The advancement of the gospel leads to the founding of settled Christian communities.
8. The contemporary Christians have their quota to contribute roles to play and part to fulfil in missions.
9. There are still many unreached groups in the so called reached communities.
10. Every Christian is a missionary with diverse gifts which must not only be discovered, but also developed and used for kingdom expansion.
11. Every minister must be ready to lead his/her congregation through a change of attitude and determined action towards the mission of God.
12. Today's denominations should look for pioneers who are already working 'without permission' to accomplish tasks that congregations have never done well.
13. Like Paul, every Christian has been commissioned by Christ, entrusted with the ministry, charged with the proclamation of this gospel and must be faithful to fulfil the role of "ambassadors for Christ" whatever the cost.

14. Nigerian Baptists of today can preach, write and go for mission like Carey if they give up themselves sacrificially for the task.
15. Mobilization, awareness programmes for missions support is the bedrock for doing effective and fruitful mission.
16. God is able to use the least expected person for His business of human redemption.
17. Boldness is needed rather than cowardice in taking personal missionary initiatives.
18. Man's efforts of discouragement cannot hinder genuine conviction and one seriousness on the part of one who desires to initiate mission endeavours
19. The little contribution any one makes today is history making in progress.
20. If the churches cooperate with the field missionaries the result of the effort will be more pleasing to God
21. Individual missionary initiative is imperative for the greater effectiveness of the great commission.

## II. Recommendations

Based on the focus of this essay and its findings, some suggestions are made below for the Nigerian Christians, and Nigerian Baptist in particular. The recommendations are in four categories which include (i). Local Church (ii). The Bible School or Seminary, (iii). The mission sending agent and (iv). The particular individual Christian.