

AN EVALUATION OF THE BAPTIST COOPERATIVE PROGRAMME
AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN MISSIONS EXPANSION
OF THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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ABSTRACT

The work of missions and expansion of God's kingdom is not what can be done single-handedly, no matter how strong, virile and vibrant a church or an assembly of believers could be. There will be more results and greater effects if there is a pooling together of manual, material and monetary resources.

This essay is an attempt to evaluate how effectively the Baptist Cooperative Programme is and to consider the impact the contribution has had on the propagation of the gospel to the unreached people everywhere according to the commandment of Christ so addressed by the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

Missions work in the Baptist denomination is being sustained through various means but this essay has attempted to reveal that the major strength of the Missions activities is the Cooperative Programme and a withdrawal from faithfulness to this collective responsibility could mean a great setback to kingdom expansion on earth.

In this study, facts were drawn out from figures so as to validate the effectiveness of the Baptist Cooperative Programme, it has attempted to reveal how missions has been influenced through this 21st century strategy that was conceived through a major disaster in America. This essay analysed the perspective and standpoint of the Baptist minister, the local Baptist church, the Nigerian Baptist Convention and the Nigerian Baptist Theological Institutions. This essay has proffered solutions to the unfaithfulness of local churches as regards the collective responsibility and a complete turn around will make missions work in the Nigerian Baptist Convention break new grounds and build up God's kingdom strongly in the lands He has given us.

In carrying out this evaluation, references were made to relevant literature, questionnaires were sent out to obtain data which were converted into information for analysis and the breakdown was used in drawing the conclusion. From the findings, recommendations were made to the local Baptist churches, the Baptist pastors and to the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This research work has been able to highlight the various basis for cooperation, what the Cooperative Programme is and some of the reasons why the Baptist Cooperative Programme is not supported, it has also been established that there could be no reason genuine enough to foster unfaithfulness to this collective responsibility. This essay has also looked at the perspective of the Baptist minister, the local church, the Baptist Convention, and the various theological institutions as regards the Programme, through this essay it can be ascertained that the use of joint efforts in expansion and extension of God's kingdom is historical, biblical, ecclesiastical, theological, sociological and missiological. Thus the discovery that a persuasive and effective tool for missions expansion is the Baptist Cooperative Programme.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of this essay, the researcher hereby wishes to make some recommendations or suggestions that will be of remarkable help to the Nigerian Baptist Convention, the Global Missions Board, churches, theological institutions and pastors who are major stakeholders on missions activities and the determinant factors of the success and continuity of the Baptist Cooperative Programme. This recommendation is given with the intention that the concerned bodies will respond positively in appropriate ways to the programme thus leading to the extension of God's kingdom on earth to achieve church growth there by fulfilling the Great commission. The recommendations are as follows:

- a. The NBC should intensify efforts at devoting sections during the Convention in session to educate the Baptist people on the Cooperative Programme and the

importance of faithfulness to this scheme as these ones are the majority decision makers in the church as continuous teaching will make a tangible difference.

b. That all of the Nigerian Baptist Convention's theological schools should add the course content on the Programme to their curricula and encourage the churches where the students pastors are observing their supervisory ministry experiences to participate as a form of inculcating in the pastors and churches the idea that even when the pastors are still in training, they are a part of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. By this the pastors in training will understand the Cooperative Programme and be well equipped for its use on the field after graduating.

c. The Global Missions Board should appreciate all churches that give to the Cooperative Programme particularly churches in suburbs that wholly appreciate recognition from the denominational bodies. In other words, they should give each church that contributes the recognition that they are aware that they are working towards the expansion of missions activities in the world.

d. There is a need for Global Missions Board to be transparent with their expenses, as transparency has more advantages and leads to trust even in the hearts of every giver. The reality of the knowledge of how the financial resources are administered would make member churches put in their best.

e. The Nigerian Baptist Convention and the Global Missions Board need to promote the Baptist Cooperative Programme through various means available as many of the local churches seem to be ignorant of the scheme and its effectiveness in the expansion of missions. these denominational bodies should endeavour to expand the scope of promotion just like the Southern Baptist Convention that invest a lot on awareness of the Cooperative Programme thereby fostering public intimacy with the local churches.

- f. As at today, the Nigerian Baptist Convention deducts 20% of the income from the Cooperative Programme and sends it to the Global Missions Board which uses the funds for Staff salaries, maintenance of buildings and machineries and various purchases; the Convention should take care of all other expenses and encourage the Missions Board to send the 20% as a whole to the Missions field. This would be necessary as the local churches and pastors have an idea that the whole amount goes to the field hence the complaint and duplication of efforts by some local churches on the missions field, to forestall this the Convention should concentrate on the amount fixed and the running expenses should not be inclusive
- g. The increase in the Cooperative Programme should be published in details and made available to each local church so as to further sensitize and give confidence to the members.
- h. The Convention should encourage every defaulting church to be faithful by sending monitoring teams out to ensure faithfulness. If the church workers see the denominational workers around to query and appease them they would be more faithful.
- i. The Global Missions Board should take a cue from the Southern Baptist Convention by starting up a Cooperative Programme Committee accountable to her and all local churches that would be administering the deducted percentages for onward transmissions to the Missions fields.

If the listed recommendations are responded to positively by the various stakeholders in the Baptist denomination, it is obvious that the transparent act of the Global missions Board and the Nigerian Baptist Convention will further promote faithful giving of the local Baptist churches to the Baptist Cooperative Programme

and the abundance of resources will give room to the effectiveness and expansion of missions work in Nigeria and the entire world through the Baptist mission of Nigeria.