

EVALUATING THE CHURCH PLANTING METHODS:
A CASE STUDY OF THE TEN CHURCHES OF
UNITY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF
LAGOS BAPTIST CONFERENCE

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ABSTRACT

This research work focuses on church planting methods. This finding shows that the church planting methods are inexhaustible. They are as many as the number of their proponents. The church planter should be exposed to available numerous methods after which he receives direction from God about the exact method he should adopt in his church planting effort.

Various reasons why we should be involved in church planting are examined briefly. In addition to that, what the churches should put into consideration before undertaking church planting venture are also dealt with appropriately. The thesis also considered what constituted hindrances to church planting by churches.

Ten selected churches in Unity Baptist Association were used as the case study of this empirical study. The thesis evaluated their church planting methods. The formulated hypotheses were validated by this research work. The traditional church planting method was confirmed to be effective method of church planting in Unity Baptist Association of Lagos Baptist Conference. It was furthermore verified by the research work that obedience to the biblical mandate (Great Commission) is the motive for their church planting efforts.

5.1 CONCLUSION

Through the interactive sessions, it was discovered that all of these churches were started through traditional church planting method. The outcome of this research shows that traditional church planting method is an effective method of starting churches in Unity Baptist Association of the Lagos Baptist Conference. It was further discovered that the major reason why churches went into church planting primarily was to fulfill the great commission mandate. It was furthermore discovered that a method used for one context may not necessarily be effective in another context. Therefore, some factors are to be considered in adopting a church planting method.

5.2 Factors Determining Methods Selection

The church planter considers a lot of factors and their implications in adopting a relevant method in church planting.

5.2.1 HOLY SPIRIT:

A church planter must be led and controlled by the Holy Spirit daily especially in church planting issues. Barnabas and Paul were led of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13: 1-4; 16: 5-10). Some other physical issues have to be considered also.

5.2.2 CONTEXT:

The church planter must consider the nature of the environment. Is it a homogenous or heterogeneous community? The answer to this question has a lot of implication for an observing church planter. This will also determine the kind of church to plant and the relevant methods to use. If it's a local, metropolitan or cosmopolitan congregation; this will determine the method to be used in starting it and ministering to the congregation.

5.2.3 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL OF THE COMMUNITY:

The level of affluence or poverty in a setting can have strategic implications. Addressing the felt needs of the population in a chosen community may give the planter an access into the community. The nature of the need will determine the type of ministries provided and issues addressed. People could conveniently fall into lower class; middle class and upper income class. Lower income people respond to the gospel of hope that addresses physical needs such as food, shelter, advocacy, medical, childcare, drug prevention or neighborhood improvement. For middle class people, they need ministries that emphasizes on the quality of life and addresses children, youth, counseling, finance and marriage because they tend to struggle with stress, family and community issues.

Warren concludes by saying that upper income people tend to struggle with isolation and loneliness. Ministries that involve: peer groups,

mentoring, philanthropy, alcohol and drug counseling and community building will be relevant to them (Warren, 32).

5.2.4 POPULATION ANALYSIS AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The kind of people who live in a particular place, the kind of houses they live in, the size of their families, their age, the kind of job they do, their languages, and host of other things will determine the method to adopt in planting a suitable church in a particular environment (Warren, 32). There is need to understand people before you try to reach them.

5.2.5 THE SPIRITUAL CLIMATE

Discerning the spiritual climate will help a church planter to adopt the right method that will bring result. Ability to read the spiritual climate is an added advantage, (Warren, 34)

5.2.6 IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

Available spiritual opportunities that will enhance the work must be identified and explored. Such available opportunities will inform the choice of a church planting method. Spiritual opportunities consist of those things God provides to give a new church a good start. These opportunities include: existing Bible study, availability of resources, local leaders, children's club, work force such as student Pastors from nearby, Bible school, college of theology or seminary. Relational opportunities should also not be left out.

5.2.7 TRENDS

Church planters must take trend into account as they develop strategy, model and method. Every community has trends which include: population trends, building trends, housing trends, church trends, economic trends, generational trends and business trends. The knowledge of the community today and what it can become tomorrow will adequately equip the church planter with the right method to plant a church.

5.2.8 CULTURAL AND BACKGROUND (COMPATIBILITY)

Most planters should seek cultural compatibility with the community they are seeking to reach. If planters differ significantly from their target audience, they may be seen as an outsider who does not belong to the community, such planters are ignored, misunderstood or unwanted. In adopting a church planter method, the culture and background of the people must be taken into account.

5.2.9 RESOURCES

Money, material or human resources possessed by the church planter will play a major role in the type of strategy he uses.

5.2.10 CALLING

The nature of the call of the planter will determine the method he uses in a given environment.

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