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**THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION**  
**MISSIONS ENTERPRISES 1960-2000**

**A Thesis Presented to**  
**The Faculty of the**  
**Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary**  
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## ABSTRACT

This study presents a historical analysis of the missions enterprises of the Nigerian Baptist Convention during the period 1960 to 2000. It shows what the missions enterprises of the Convention are and what the Convention did, during the period under review. It lists what were the challenges or problems of the missions enterprises and proffers solutions.

The study used the historical method. Both primary and secondary sources were explored and examined. Reports of the various departments of the Nigerian Baptist Convention available in the Books of Reports or in the Minutes of the Convention sessions, published in *The Nigerian Baptist* and elsewhere were consulted.

## CONCLUSION

Anyone who followed the trend of developments in the Nigerian Baptist Convention between 1960 and A.D. 2000 would declare that the Convention made some advances. They were advances that gladden one's heart. The Convention should not relent in its effort in the succeeding years but must work on. The theme of the Port Harcourt Convention in 1961 was "Let Us Go On." In the Convention sermon of that year, Rev. Dr. A. M. Howell listed a number of fields or areas in which Nigerian Baptists were required to go on.

Two of the areas Dr. Howell said Nigerian Baptists should go on were missions and evangelism. Geographically, they must go to cities and states in Nigeria with the gospel. Much was done in these two fields during the period under review.

The area where the Nigerian Baptist Convention had the greatest achievement was Missions – both home and international. Throughout the period under review, the Home and Foreign Mission Board (now called Global Missions Board) was the agency of the Convention for proclaiming the message of God's redeeming love and grace to thousands at home and abroad. At the end of A. D. 2000, Nigerian Baptists could offer praises and thanks to the Almighty God for the achievements the Global Missions Board had in missions.

The Nigerian Baptist Convention set up the Global Missions Board at its 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Session held in Jos, Plateau State from April 18 to 23, 1998 to carry out the following tasks:

- a. To awaken the members of the entire Convention to their responsibility of spreading the gospel message to the whole of Nigeria and beyond.
- b. To direct the energies of the Convention in propagating the gospel at home and abroad.
- c. To recommend ways and means of financing the missionary enterprise.
- d. To recruit suitable volunteers for mission work.<sup>1</sup>

The Global Missions Board carried out these four tasks before the year A.D. 2000 came to an end.

**Awakening Responsibility** – The Board, in some ways, awakened the Convention and its members to their responsibility of spreading the gospel message to the whole of Nigeria and beyond. The first way it awakened them was the “Mission Hour” during the annual sessions of the Convention. The Director and other members of staff of the Global Missions Board usually gave reports on the work done in the mission fields during the year. It was the aim of the Board to provide both information and inspiration, and to present a challenge to the messengers present that they could take back to their churches.

The second way the global Missions Board awakened the Convention and its members to their responsibility of spreading the gospel message to the whole of Nigeria and beyond was the giving of reports by the Director and other members of staff of the board in *The Nigerian Baptist* every month. Every coordinator wrote comprehensively about what went on in his division.

The third way was the production by the Global Missions board of *Missions*

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<sup>1</sup>A.D. 2000 International Mission Week of Prayer Programme, November 19-25 2000, p. 6.

*Bulletin* twice a year. This Bulletin reported all that was done in the Global Missions Department. The fourth way was the sending of the Board's representatives to associational meetings where they enlightened people on the activities and programmes of the Board.

The Programmes of the Home and International Weeks of Prayer were probably the most important and effective way the Board awakened the Convention and Nigerian Baptists to their responsibility of spreading the gospel message. The Board encouraged churches of the Convention to buy copies of the programmes for their use and sent copies of them to the institutions of the Convention. The Board usually urged the churches and institutions to make the widest possible use of the information in the programmes to inform the people of what was being done.

**Propagating the Gospel at Home and Abroad** – The Global Missions Board directed the energies of the Convention in propagating the gospel. To do this, the board appointed missionaries and field workers to serve in fields and among people who would not otherwise be reached by Baptists with the gospel.

*Statement on mobilization trip during the Holidays Higher Institutions*

To propagate the gospel effectively at home and abroad, the Board established four divisions, namely: Missions Division (Home and International), Evangelism and Discipleship Division, Stewardship Division, and Operation Reach All/Prayer Mobilization Division. A coordinator headed each of these four divisions. In addition, an Advisory Committee backed each division for effective performance.

**Ways and Means of Financing the Missionary Enterprise** – The Global Missions Board had three sources of generating its income, namely:

1. 20% of the Convention's total annual income..

2. Home and International Weeks of Prayer offerings.
3. Special donations from churches and individuals.

The Convention remitted the amount due to the Board on monthly basis, and faithful churches observed the two weeks of prayer emphases and sent proceeds to the office of the Board. In addition, churches, organizations and individuals aided the Board by their special donation.

**Recruiting Suitable Volunteers for Mission Work** – The Global Missions Board made available to those who were qualified for missionary service information about the need for such missionaries and the qualifications required of those who would be appointed volunteer missionaries. The Director of the Board sought opportunities in theological institutions to speak concerning the need for missionaries.

Long vacation job ministries for Mission-minded students in the institutions of the Convention were another opportunity for recruiting volunteers for missionary work. The students went to serve for two months in some fields, particularly, home mission fields.

Just as some measures of success were achieved in home missions and international missions during the period under review, some measures of success were also achieved in the other missions enterprises of the Convention, namely: educational services, medical services, and social/welfare services. But that is not saying that the Convention did all that it should do during the period under review.

This study is ending with the following recommendations:

The Nigerian Baptist Convention should have a greater missionary awakening in the new century just starting. Such awakening is basically what it needs for the twenty-first century mission work. The chief features of its mission work in the new century

