

**THE ROLE OF BAPTIST MEMBERS IN CHURCH PLANTING:  
A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED CHURCHES  
IN LAGOS BAPTIST CONFERENCE**

NBTS  
MATS  
Ay-973

**A Project in the Department of THEOLOGY  
Faculty of theological Studies  
Submitted to the  
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso**

**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Award of the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Theological Studies**

2013 — 0439

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Matric. No. 008/0008  
June, 2011**

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## ABSTRACT

This essay focused on the role church members in church planting are making with particular reference to Lagos State Baptist Conference. The purpose of the study was to challenge Baptist pastors to equip church members for the task of church planting and involve them in same. This was done with the intention that it would lead to more churches being planted using the coalition of church members and resulting in large scale expansion and growth of the Baptist denomination in Lagos State.

The essay employed an empirical method of research using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. 100 questionnaires were administered and the data were treated using simple percentage count. Findings from the research indicated that most churches are not making maximum use of church members in their church planting exercises. The findings also indicated that churches that effectively utilize the potentials of church members experience growth at a faster rate than churches that do not.

In the light of the findings, the study recommends that pastors should structure the year plan in such a way that sermons on evangelism and church planting get adequate attention. It also recommends that the Nigerian Baptist Convention should design a unified church planting training manual to be used in equipping church members for church planting activities. Likewise, the Convention should partner with other bodies to provide funds for church planting activities especially to individual pioneer planters and financially less privileged churches.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

It is obvious from the study that very little importance and significance is attached to the task of church planting generally and the active involvement of church

members in the noble kingdom venture. Many pastors don't give attention to teaching and preaching on the Great Commission to challenge their members from passiveness to activeness. Even when pastors sometimes preach on this concept, they are not explicit enough hence, they end up confusing members more than before the message. This has inadvertently led to a situation where church members are not adequately informed on the importance of the Great Commission and their personal role and involvement in fulfilling the Commission. Instead of members being empowered to play their roles as priests and ministers before God in keeping with the Baptist doctrine of believers' priesthood, they are left to depend virtually on the pastor and the pastor invariably becomes a Mr. Do-all. This is not helping the church in any way but rather impeding the growth of the kingdom of God through church planting. The implication of this is that, it is high time pastors and denominational training agencies arose to the responsibility of adequately informing and involving church members in most aspect of church life and work, particularly the task of church planting. This can be made possible through systematic teaching on church planting and evangelism; as well as making available training materials at the central and conference level for training members of the church.

### 5.3 Recommendations

In the course of the study, some ideas and thoughts arose which cannot be adequately discussed within the framework of this research work. Precipitate on this and from the information gathered from books reviewed and research conducted, this work, therefore, recommends that:

1. Pastors as the spiritual and administrative heads of the church should structure their sermon outlines for the year in such a way that sermons on evangelism and church planting are incorporated for members to be enlightened on the concept.
2. In the same vein, pastors should identify members with the spiritual gift of evangelism, train them and create room for them to make use of the gift in the church's evangelistic outreaches.
3. The Nigerian Baptist Convention should, through her theological institutions, design a unified training manual on church planting and evangelism for the general use of her member churches.
4. The Convention should also annex with her sister bodies locally and internationally to partner in the task of church planting and funding. This will encourage individual pioneer church planters and financially weak churches to embark more on church planting knowing that they will receive financial aid. Invariably, this will lead to explosive growth and increase in the number of Baptist churches nationwide and also reduce drastically the exodus of Baptist church members into new generation churches.