

THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF MISSIONARIES UNDER THE
GLOBAL MISSIONS BOARD OF THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST
CONVENTION.

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ABSTRACT

Missions is a mandate that is saddled on all Christians. The fulfillment of it requires among others the service of missionaries. This work is an attempt to examine the recruitment and retention of missionaries under the Global Missions Board of the Nigerian Baptist Convention; as well as the problems that are inherent in her recruitment and retention of missionaries. It is discovered that some recruited missionaries do not serve long on the field because of some problems they face.

In order to encourage recruited missionaries to be willing to be retained or stay for a long period of time on the field, the Global Mission Board which is the mission agency recruiting them should provide them with adequate infrastructural amenities such as good well or pipe borne water, electricity, mobility and accommodation. Recruited missionaries should also be made to stay in semi-urban or urban centers where there are facilities such as schools for their children to attend, good motorable roads, to mention but a few.

A comparison of the GMB with another mission board, namely the CMF reveals that the GMB is doing her best to cater for her recruited missionaries. In as much as the GMB is commended in this regard, she should go a step further by improving upon her present conditions of service for her missionaries. For the GMB to achieve this, will require the various churches, Associations and Conferences that constitute the NBC to be educated on what it takes to maintain a missionary on the field. This will motivate such institutions to improve in their giving towards the GMB, which will go a long way to improve on missionary welfare. This will eventually result in an increase in the GMB's

recruitment and retention of her missionaries. In order to achieve this, the study is divided into five chapters

Chapter one is the introductory materials, such as the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research methodology. Thesis statement as well as the definition of some technical terms. Chapter two presents the biblical basis for the recruitment and the retention of missionaries. Chapter three talks about the history of the formation of the Global Mission Board. Chapter four which is the main core of the thesis, talks on the recruitment and retention of missionaries under the Global Mission Board. And finally, the last chapter centers on concluding statements, suggestions and recommendations

CONCLUSION

The essence of this research is to establish the fact that the missionary recruitment and retention strategies of the GMB need to be improved upon. In the light of this, this study work has critically looked into the modalities by the GMB's recruitment and retention of missionaries, and by so doing have highlighted its strengths and weaknesses.

Based on the above assertion, some recommendations are made below. These recommendations are for the GMB of the NBC. They will also be useful as a model for other denominations and mission boards.

First, there should be a reorganization of the administrative policies of the GMB as regards missionary recruitment and retention exercise. In doing this, the GMB should do away with her present policy of non-transfer of her missionaries. This policy gives room for missionaries to serve for as long as they can on a particular mission field.¹ This in the writer's opinion makes such missionaries to turn themselves into "thin gods" or barons on a mission field where they have served for so long a time and are still serving there. Another implication is that it may make such missionaries to be redundant and be no more zealous for the mission work, which they were recruited and have been retained for so long a time for. But when the GMB adopts a new policy of making her recruited missionaries to work for a period of five years on a mission field and then transfer them to other mission fields, it will make the missionaries to work effectively and thereby enhance the effort of the GMB to reach the whole world with the gospel.

¹ See pp 2-3 of this research work for details.

The GMB should scrape her present practice of providing some basic domestic amenities such as official accommodation, transportation, to mention but these few to some of her recruited missionaries at the expense of others. For instance the missionaries to Idoma, Ogoja, Katsina (formerly Funtua/Malumfashi), Etche, Abuja, Southern Ijaw are provided with mobility² while others do not have but are only given a monthly transport allowance for it. Paul Anyasi asserts that the missionaries to Ogoja and Southern Ijaw are provided with accommodation.³ On this too some other recruited missionaries are only given housing allowance.

As much as the effort of the GMB to provide her recruited missionaries with mobility and accommodation is highly commended, the GMB should endeavour to evenly provide all her recruited missionaries with such facilities. This will positively affect their performance and it will also motivate them to be willing to be retained for a long period of time. The resultant effect is that it will make the missionaries to work very hard, which will greatly contribute to the growth of the mission enterprise of the GMB.

On the above mentioned issue, Obije reveals that the GMB is planning to construct a three bed room apartment which will be self contained in nature and outlook on each of the mission fields to accommodate her recruited missionaries.⁴ This will also ease the accommodation problem that some missionaries face on the mission field.

Another of the administrative policy of the GMB that needs to be repealed is her policy of two years pastoral or church related working experience for her

² Interviews with Mwelbish, Osadare and Anyansi.

³ Anyasi, Interview.

⁴ Obije, Interview, May, 2001.

prospective missionaries.⁵ This policy has been acting as a hindrance to some people who are zealous for mission work to apply to the GMB for recruitment. An abolition of this policy will make prospective missionaries without pastoral experience to qualify for recruitment as missionaries. Moreover, the GMB's policy of making all her prospective missionaries to be trained pastors before they can qualify for recruitment⁶ should be done away with. The writer is of the opinion that there is a difference between a pastor and a missionary. Though all of them are regarded as clergymen. The GMB should lay more emphasis on training in missiology for her recruited missionaries rather than attaining in theology. This will make them to perform better. On this view, Osadare opines that some missionaries misbehave in such a way that betray their calling because they are not trained in missiology.⁷ He made this assertion out of his experience as a missionary. This indicates that training in missiology for missionaries will expose them to the rudiments of what mission and missionary work is all about and this in a way may help the missionary to behave well on the mission field. Moreover training in missiology is not as tedious as training in theology. The GMB should emulate indigenous mission agencies such as CAPRO and CMF who have a school of Missions each⁸ by establishing her own school of Missions too where her recruited missionaries can be trained.

Second, the GMB should stop recruiting only married male pastors as missionaries.⁹ The GMB in her history has been recruiting only male pastors who are married missionaries. The GMB should establish a new policy of not recruiting only male married pastors as missionaries but also single pastors of either gender. This

⁵ Interview with T.M. Adams, Ibadan: Global Missions Board, Nigerian Baptist Convention. 26th September, 2002. see. Also Udoh, *Missions Hand Book*, p. 20.

⁶ Udoh, *Missions Hand Book*, p. 20.

⁷ Osadare, Interview. 11th September, 2001.

⁸ Paul. Kolawole "The Growth And Dynamics of Indigenous Schools of Missions In Nigeria (M.Th. Thesis: *Ogbomoso*. The Nigerian Baptist Seminary. 2000) pp. 31&37.

⁹ This is revealed in an interview with Ayanrinola Coordinator of Missions, Global Missions Board.

