

THE AFTERMATH OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES' POLICIES ON AFRICAN MISSIONS: THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION AS A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT: *This article entitled “The Aftermath of Missionaries’ Policies on African Missions: The Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) as a case study” is aimed at examining the reasons for inadequate finance for the NBC in the funding of her ministries. From its inception, the usual slogan has been “NO MONEY.” This was because the pioneering missionaries did not encourage the indigenous Christians to give towards missions, but rather the latter were over pampered. This lack of funds, has affected the growth of the Baptists in Nigeria. The article is of the view that Henry Venn’s missionary policies can be of help in solving the problem. The research demands the use of multi-dimensional approaches; which include phenomenological cum historical methods and the conduction of interviews especially on financial policies on the NBC and Missionary’s records. Quantitative approach was also used by subjecting the BMN attrition policy on the NBC into statistical analysis. Among others, it has been demonstrated in this research that lack of discretion and courage on the part of the BMN in keeping strictly and consistently to the attrition policy was the major factor behind slow growth and non-rapid financial advancement of the NBC. On the contrary, if Venn’s mission’s financial policy is adopted, we hope, it will go a long way in ameliorating the financial inadequacies and promote missions in Africa in general and the NBC in particular.*

ABSTRACT: Foreign Missionaries’, Policies, African Missions, Nigerian Baptist Convention

INTRODUCTION

Henry Venn’s missionary legacy was summed up by Warren (1971:28) as follow: “Euthanasia of a Mission”, which stipulates that a foreign missionary who is surrounded by well-trained native pastors, is able to relinquish all pastoral duties into their hands, and gradually relax his superintendence over the pastors themselves till his overseer duties possibly ceases; and so the mission passes on to a settled Christian community. Then the foreign missionary and all their agencies should be transferred to new frontiers. Venn’s ultimate social goal for a national church therefore is to be self-governing, self-propagating, and self-financing. In order to achieve his objectives, he advocated for the use of the Bible and the plough strategies, which would serve as instrument of economic freedom for the newly evangelized lands.

On their part, the Baptist Mission of Nigeria (BMN), in identical manner to Venn’s policies, had policies of the above three-selves. However, it was lately implemented especially in self-financing. It began from partnership in progress, gradual withdrawal and climaxed with

complete severance. Delay in the implementation of the latter policy between the BMN and the NBC that distinguishes Venn's doctrines of missions from that of the Baptist denomination. This makes Venn's model a better alternative, hence the necessity of this article.

Gradual Withdrawal Policy

Several factors necessitated to the gradual withdrawal of Missionaries from the NBC until the final severance. The first sign of withdrawal was due to the Nigerian Civil War in 1967 to 1970. Most of the American Missionaries had to return home, except few courageous ones who stayed behind to render humanitarian services among victims of war. The effect of the war was reflected in mission's report that the missionary personnel continue to decline (Editor's Handbook, 1971-1972:37).

Another factor that reduced the presence of missionaries in Nigeria in 1980s was due to the Government's shift in immigration policy to a quota system, whereby Nigerian agencies would have to request expatriates for specific positions. This again was evident in mission's report that, "There will probably be a phasing out of our missionary force over a period of two to five years. Some of us already have been denied new residence permits pending the outcome of the quota" (Editor's Handbook, 1984-1985:51). Although in 1987, the Nigerian government seemed to have relaxed the quota system on foreigners, yet the Mission seemed to have maintained attrition policy on her missionaries in Nigeria. Collins puts it this way:

During the late 1980s, there was normal attrition as well as a high number of resignations due to family needs. Because of the reluctance of the Nigerian government to grant visas to missionaries, particularly those coming into the country for the first time, it was difficult to replace those who left (Collins 1993:71). Apart from the Seminary and other Bible Colleges, the Federal Government took over mission schools and the medical institutions, which were factors that led to the reduction of missionary presence in Nigeria. The remaining secondary school and medical institution that are still owned by the BMN that the NBC has presently inherited are the Baptist High School, Jos and the BMC Ogbomoso (Presently Campus to the Teaching Hospital of Bowen University, Iwo). The major factor that gave birth to the gradual withdrawal of the American Baptist Missionaries was the necessity of evangelizing the unreached areas in the country, specifically the northern parts of the nation. Looking into Mission Minutes and reports from the Strategy Committee Meetings held in the 1980s, the common phrase that was not part of Mission history in the past was represented as "Unreached people groups." Barret gave a descriptive definition of unreached people group as: Groupings of persons (usually a large segment of a society) who have identify with each other because of linguistic, ethnic and sociological distinctions. For purposes of evangelization, "this is the largest possible group within which the gospel can spread without encountering barriers of understanding and acceptance (Barret and Shreck, 1987:44).

In resume Collins (1993:79) regarded the "Unreached people groups" as a priority concern in the global strategy of the FMB of the BMN in the 1980's. In 1987 Paul and Faye Burkwall of the

BMN were the first missionaries appointed by the FMB for full-time work among the Fulbe. Other Missionaries that came to Nigeria thereafter were specifically assigned to the unreached people groups. The last strategy for gradual withdrawal was on finance. The struggle of withdrawing financial grants from the NBC by BMN was a difficult task. Difficult in the sense that the positions where the Whites had earlier occupied in the medical, theological, educational institutions and administrative office in Ibadan where their emoluments were being paid by the FMB; were now transferred to the Nationals with its financial implications.

To add to the difficulties was the unwritten policy of the missionaries as stated by Oswood (Interviewed September 23, 2007) that: "Anywhere a missionary is, there the mission finances will be spent." The implications of Oswood statement are these: Firstly, as soon a missionary is relocated from an area of ministry, the financial assistance for the former station ceases. Secondly, that the missionaries did not trust some Nationals with respect to financial matters. The third possible implication is that the missionaries like to monitor projects where mission finances are used for proper accounting to the FMB at home. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the Executive Secretary to the FMB of the BMN declared the Mission's attrition termination date in an Annual Convention Session held in April 24-29, 1999. Among other things Wilson (1999:58) reported that: Although the major portion of the funds comes from the Nigerian Baptist Convention, the Mission continues to send subventions to several institutions. This subvention is given on a decreasing basis. The final year for any institution owned and operated by the Nigerian Baptist Convention to receive a subvention will be 2003 (Wilson, 1999:58). The detail of the financial subvention from BMN to NBC is discussed below, especially those areas that concern the attrition era.

Complete Severance Policy

Although, the Mission subvention to the Convention officially closed in 2003 Convention in Session, yet there was evidence of financial assistance that the BNC was still enjoying from the BMN. An interview granted to the researcher by Oswood reveals as follows: It is true that the Mission's attrition processes was terminated by 2003 Convention in Session, yet the Convention in a way is still receiving assistance from the Baptist Mission and not grant. That is to say, the retirees, and retired missionary kids' along with those missionaries that are still serving in Nigeria, on their own do assist the Convention and her agencies. Second, there is no way a Missionary who had laboured in Nigeria, would completely forget the field of her labour. Beyond the Mission policy, the relationship between a missionary and her field of labour cannot be divorced except by death (Oswood, Angel Interview 23rd September 2007).

The above detailed given by Oswood reveals the long paternalistic relationship between BMN and NBC especially on the part of the missionaries on the field of labour. Although, Mission's policy on attrition terminated by 2003 Convention, yet it did not necessarily terminate the assisting role of the missionaries to the Nationals. However, the NBC 96th Annual Session Book of Reports states that the BMN Head Quarters' Office that has been together with the NBC Head Quarters' at Ibadan; has been relocated to Jos since December, 2008. Two major reasons informed the relocation. Firstly, it was as a result of change in mission statement. Secondly, it

was informed as a result of proximity to where the missionaries are mostly concentrated (NBC Book of Reports 2009 213-215). The change of Mission Statement was informed by the FMB of BMN relocating her missionaries to the northern part of Nigeria for the purpose of the unreached people groups. The ministry to the above group is different from the NBC already established ministries hence the change in mission statement. On the other hand, the relocation of the Mission Head Quarters finally completed the severance policy. Financial records and book of reports of the NBC from 2010 upward were silence about mission grant to the latter. This has confirmed the earlier statement made by a female missionary (Oswood) when she said: “anywhere a missionary is, there the mission finances will be spent.” The only relationship that seems to exist between BMN and NBC is the sharing of mission’s ideologies for the purpose of evangelization. In this Copeland reveals that: “The new direction of partnership after severance will have to be from Convention initiative and invitation” (NBC 88TH.Annual Session Book of Reports 2001:53-55). To add credence to this article under discussion, there is need for theoretical framework and practical evidence of financial gradual and final withdrawal policy. It is also known as attrition policy of the BMN on the NBC.

The Attrition Policy of the BMN on the NBC

The attrition financial policy of the BMN on the NBC are hereby represented below on tables, histograms and pie-charts from the perspective of before the attrition years, during the attrition and what happened after the expiration of the attrition era. The financial assistance from BMN to the NBC, the contributions from the Churches of the NBC along with the yearly budget of the Convention and their percentage performances were also analyzed in order to showcase their strengths and their weaknesses in comparison to Henry Venn’s philosophy of missions and also to assist the researcher’s findings to be empirically evident.

Budgetary Performance Compared to Financial Contribution by the BMN and Churches of the NBC Before Attrition Policy

YEAR	BMN ANNUAL GRANTS TO THE NBC BEFORE ATTRITION POLICY	CHURCHES ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO NBC BEFORE ATTRITION POLICY	NBC ANNUAL BUDGET BEFORE ATTRITION POLICY	ANNUAL PERCENTAGE PERFORMANCES OF :	
				BMN ANNUAL GRANTS TO THE NBC BEFORE ATTRITION POLICY	CHURCHES ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO NBC BEFORE ATTRITION POLICY
1984	25,977.00	1,311,488.00	2,014,000.00	1.29	65.12
1985	28,980.00	1,204,784.00	2,570,395.00	1.12	46.87
1986	30,893.00	1,333,248.00	3,850,500.00	0.80	34.63
1987	63,050.00	1,740,028.00	5,455,789.00	1.16	31.89
1988	74,311.00	1,995,598.00	7,385,668.00	1.00	27.02
1989	64,914.00	2,656,759.00	10,235,106.00	0.63	25.96
1990	71,339.00	3,225,664.00	12,736,646.00	0.56	25.33
1991	76,191.00	5,121,161.00	14,378,864.00	0.53	35.62
1992	127,530.00	8,405,671.00	15,500,775.00	0.82	54.23
1993	261,912.00	14,642,712.00	17,822,910.00	1.47	82.15
TOTAL	825,097.00	41,637,113.00	91,950,653.00	1.00	42.88

Figure 1(a) Budgetary Performance before Attrition Policy

The above tabulated financial table reveals the actual grant by the BMN to the NBC for a period of ten years in comparison to the contributions of the Churches within the NBC and their budgetary percentage performance. While the total percentage for the BMN was one percent, the Churches were forty two point eighty eight percent, all together is less than fifty percent of the total budget of the ten years in view. This was the situation prior to the attrition years. In a glance, the above table is also represented below on histograms for BMN grant, Churches contributions to the NBC and as well in pie-chart indicating the percentage budgetary distribution between missions, Churches and the un-met aspect of the budget respectively.

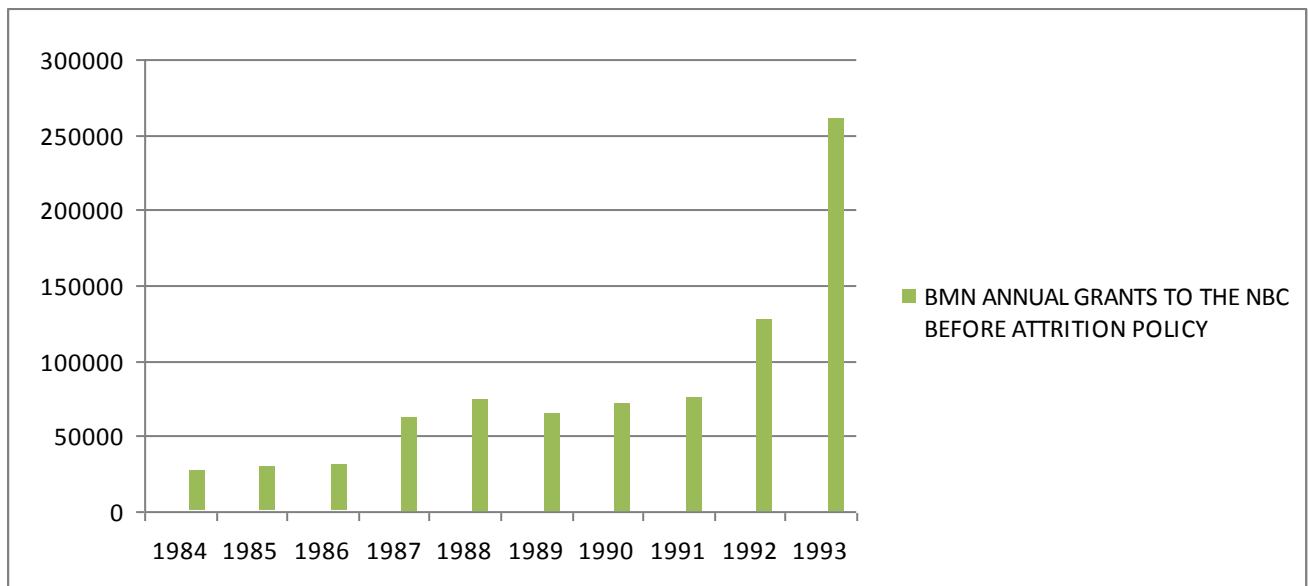


Figure 1(b)

The above histogram is representing BMN financial grants to the NBC in thousands for a period of ten years before the implementation of the attrition policy.

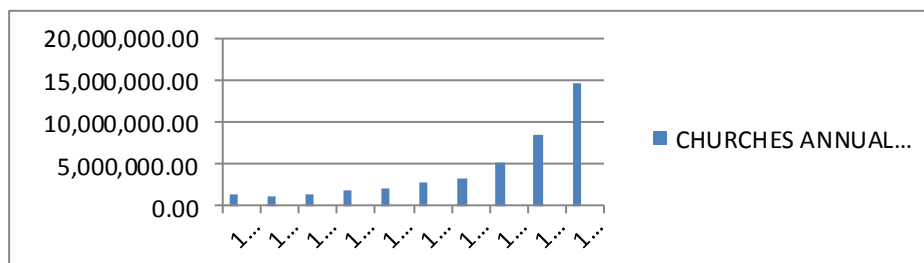


Figure 1 (c)

The above Histogram is representing Churches' contributions to the NBC in millions for ten years prior to the implementation of the attrition policy of the BMN.

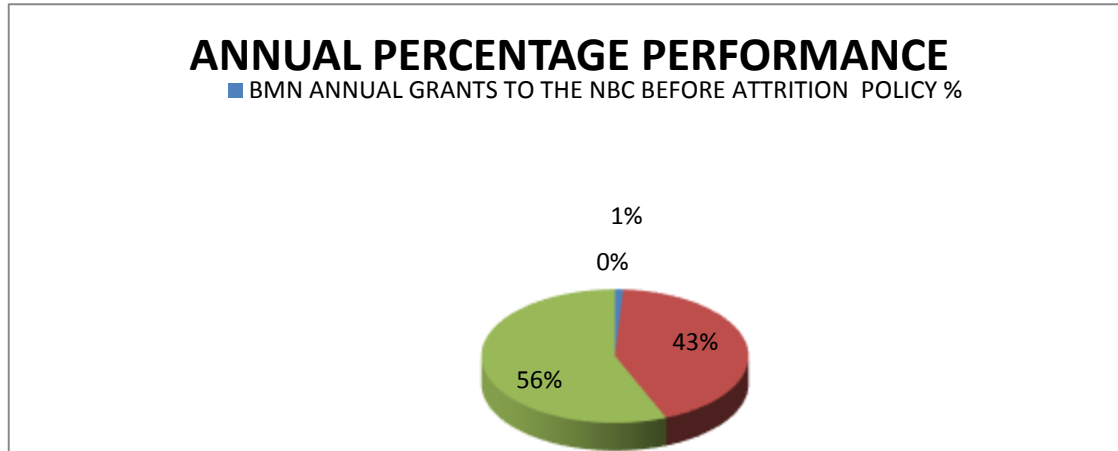


Figure 1(d)

Pie-Chart is representing the percentage performance of financial contributions of the BMN, Churches of the Convention to the NBC and the un-met aspect of the budget for the period of ten years prior to the attrition era.

Budgetary Performance Compared to Financial Contribution By the BMN and Churches of the NBC during Attrition Policy

YEAR	GRANT BY BMN TO THE NBC DURING ATTRITION ERA	ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY CHURCHES TO THE NBC DURING ATTRITION ERA	ANNUAL DUES BY NBC BUDGET DURING THE ATTRITION ERA	ANNUAL PERCENTAGE PERFORMANCE BY (BMN)	ANNUAL % PERFORMANCE BY (NBC)
1994	6,450,146.00	16,416,728.00	25,500,000.00	25.29	64.39
1995	8,360,197.00	21,280,593.00	34,260,000.00	24.40	62.11
1996	21,972,718.00	25,675,716.00	53,442,527.00	41.11	48.04
1997	13,319,364.00	32,061,320.00	77,535,232.00	17.18	45.35
1998	15,649,704.00	38,502,976.00	86,282,662.00	18.14	44.62
1999	19,022,162.00	55,460,510.00	92,948,727.00	20.46	59.67
2000	28,151,946.00	73,588,052.00	152,327,760.00	18.48	48.31
2001	54,690,160.00	121,946,766.00	270,897,483.00	20.19	45.01
2002	63,750,000.00	142,377,942.62	286,920,295.00	22.23	49.62
2003	83,515,372.00	154,997,784.00	300,981,941.00	27.74	51.50
TOTAL	314,881,769.00	682,308,387.00	1,321,086,627.00	23.83	51.65

Figure 2(a) Budgetary Performance during Attrition Policy

The above table represents the ten years en marked for the attrition period which is also known as the years of gradual withdrawal of financial assistance by the BMN from the NBC. The budgetary percentage of withdrawal by the BMN for each year was ten percent until the final year when the NBC should not have expected any fund from the BMN if all things being equal. Looking into the above tabulated figures critically, from the perspective of BMN grant to the NBC and the contributions of Churches to the Convention in comparison to the budgetary and its performances, it has been discovered that the BMN scored twenty three point eighty three percent (23.83%). The Churches of the NBC contributed fifty one point sixty five percent (51.65%), while twenty four point fifty two percent (24.52%) of the budget was not met.

Further critical analysis on the above tabulated table further reviews that the BMN did not kept to the attrition policy of gradual withdrawal of financial grant to the NBC. The only exemption on the table is 2007 and 2008 where BMN grant to the NBC were relatively reduced and there after it returned to an increase instead of a decrease. The explanation given by one time financial officer of the NBC in an interview reveals the following that: the reduction of grant to the NBC in the above two years by the BMN was as a result of a change of the Executive Director of the BMN because the incumbent went on furlough.

Secondly, it was true that the attrition policy was within ten years period from 1994-2003, and with ten percent deduction in each of the attrition years. However, the hyper inflation and devaluation of the Nigerian currency as against the highly rated American Dollar was one of the causes while the BMN could not keep to the attrition policy. The Nigerian economy during the attrition years was very poor hence the BMN was still increasing grants to the NBC. At this period according to *Durodola*, one dollar was equivalent to fifteen naira (*Durodola*, Victor. an interview on 24 June, 2012).

Thirdly, the above explanation on the tabulated financial figures on the attrition years, also known as gradual withdrawal of financial assistance from the NBC by the BMN is represented by histograms, showing BMN and the NBC Churches performances from one year to another. While the BMN histogram is in thousands, the Churches of the NBC contributions are in millions. The third is Pie- Chart showing the percentage performances of the BMN, NBC Churches contribution to the Convention and as well as the un-met aspect of the budget at a glance.

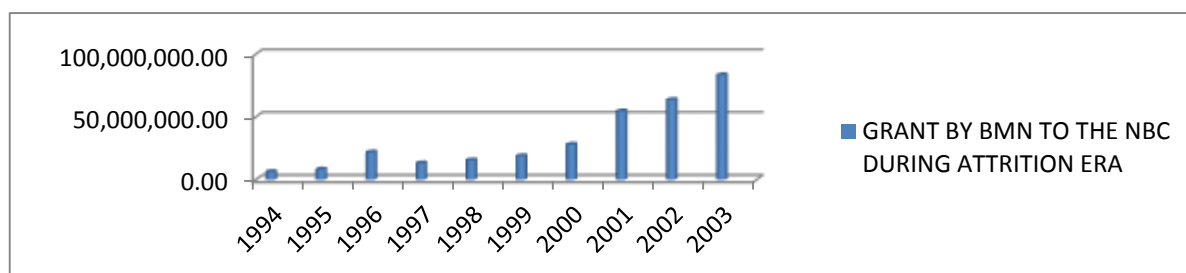


Figure 2(b)

The above histogram is representing a gradual and steady rise of financial grant by BMN to the NBC during the ten years of attrition policy by the former. This was in contradiction to the initial attrition policy made by the BMN.

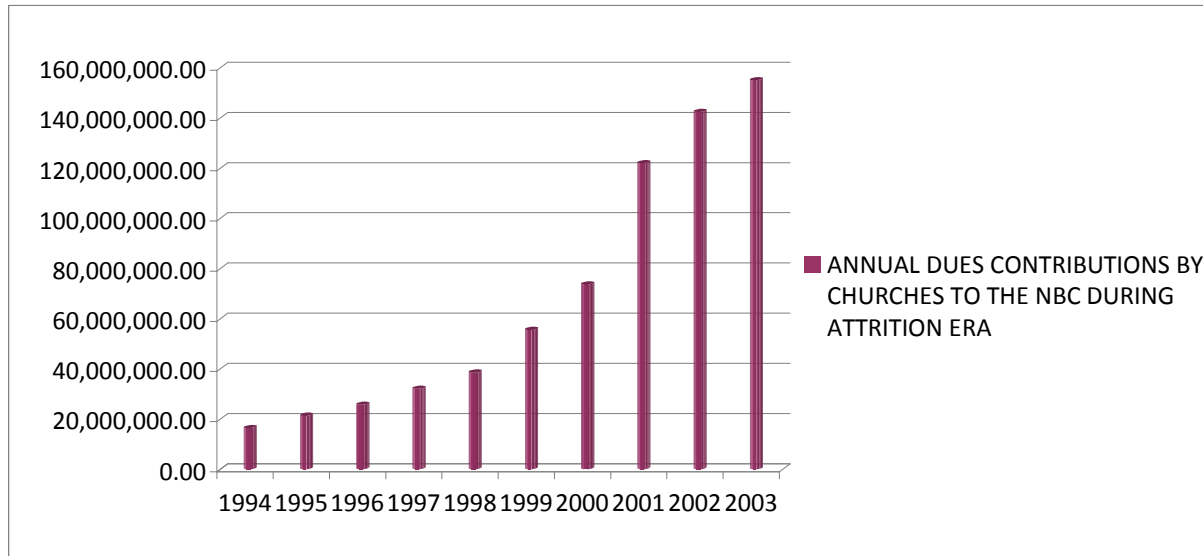


Figure 2(c)

The histogram is representing a gradual rise of Churches of the Convention financial contributions' to the NBC during ten years of the BMN attrition era. However, the Churches could only achieve a little above fifty percent of the entire budget for the period under consideration. While the Churches failed the Convention in their collective responsibilities to the Convention Cooperative Program, the BMN on the other hand, failed woefully to adhere to the attrition policy of yearly reduction of financial support to the Convention.

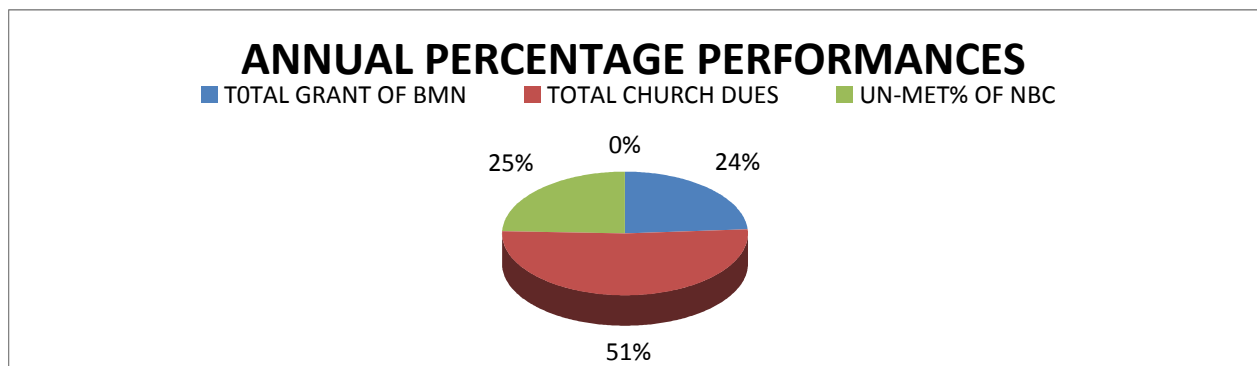


Figure 2 (d)

The Pie-Chart above is showing at a glance the budget performances during the attrition era. The emphasis here is on the failure of the BMN inability to disengage both her physical presence and

financial contributions to the NBC at the end of the attrition era. The above negates Henry Venn's dreams and desires for financial independence of a Native Church that is matured enough to be self sustaining.

Budgetary Performance Compared to Financial Contribution by the BMN and Churches of the NBC after the Termination Periods of the Attrition Policy

YEAR	GRANT BY BMN TO NBC AFTER THE ATTRITION PERIOD	ANNUAL DUES FROM CHURCHES TO THE NBC.	NBC ANNUAL BUDGET AFTER THE ATTRITION PERIOD	ANNUAL PERCENTAGE PERFORMANCE (BMN)	ANNUAL PERCENTAGE PERFORMANCE (NBC)
2004	2,208,000.00	263,104,262.00	446,939,408.00	0.50	58.87
2005	1,904,000.00	300,741,381.00	548,940,137.00	0.035	54.78
2006	NIL	374,735,522.00	596,151,941.00	-	62.85
2007	3,687,500.00	538,362,793.00	628,580,781.00	0.60	85.64
2008	1,533,351.00	635,598,732.00	669,162,773.00	0.24	94.98
2009	200,000.00	842,930,451.00	943,423,851.00	0.021	89.35
2010	NIL	954,093,983.00	964,322,238.00	-	98.93
TOTAL	9,532,851.00	3,953,359,420.00	4,763,728,833.00	0.20	82.98

Figure 3 (a) Budgetary Performance after Attrition Policy

Although, records reveals that the attrition policy year ended in (2003), yet the BMN continued to assist the NBC, although there was no contribution in 2006 and it continued until 2010 when the former finally stopped grants to the Convention. In response to the above observation, Durodola asserts that the attrition policy actually ended in 2003; what was regarded as grant from the BMN was the cost of rent from the latter in occupying a part of Baptist Building (Baptist Head Quarters) in Ibadan.

However, the BMN built the Baptist Building in 1954, and later sold it to the NBC as part of their attrition policy in moving up North. What was not clear from the longest financial officer of the Convention is that if the BMN started paying rent for occupying part of the Baptist Building after the attrition years, why was the percentage of the rent age is not consistent as found in the financial records of the NBC? Secondly, if it was truly a rent, after the missionaries' final movement to Jos in 2008, why records still reflected grant in that same year and the one that followed?

Thirdly, if the missionaries truly kept to the attrition policies in total, why should they maintain rent age in a matured field which they should have left? These questions were indicators that beyond the rent age issue raised by Durodola, coupled with available financial records, it seems to the researcher that the BMN was still committed in assisting the NBC after the expiration years of the attrition policy. This is a short fall of Henry Venn's expectations on mission and missionary policies on the Native Church.

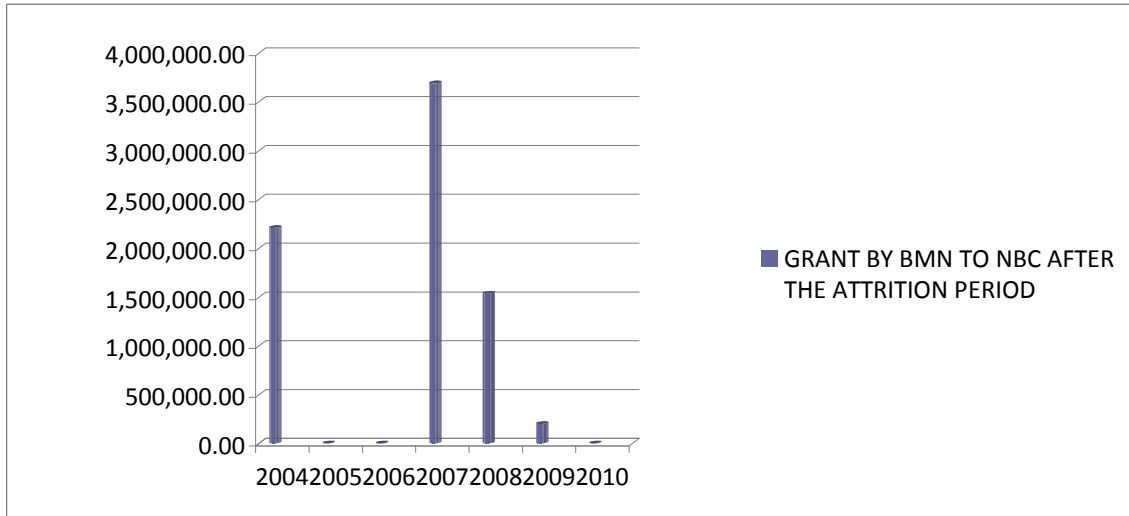


Figure 3(b)

The histogram is representing further contributions to the NBC by the BMN after the attrition era.

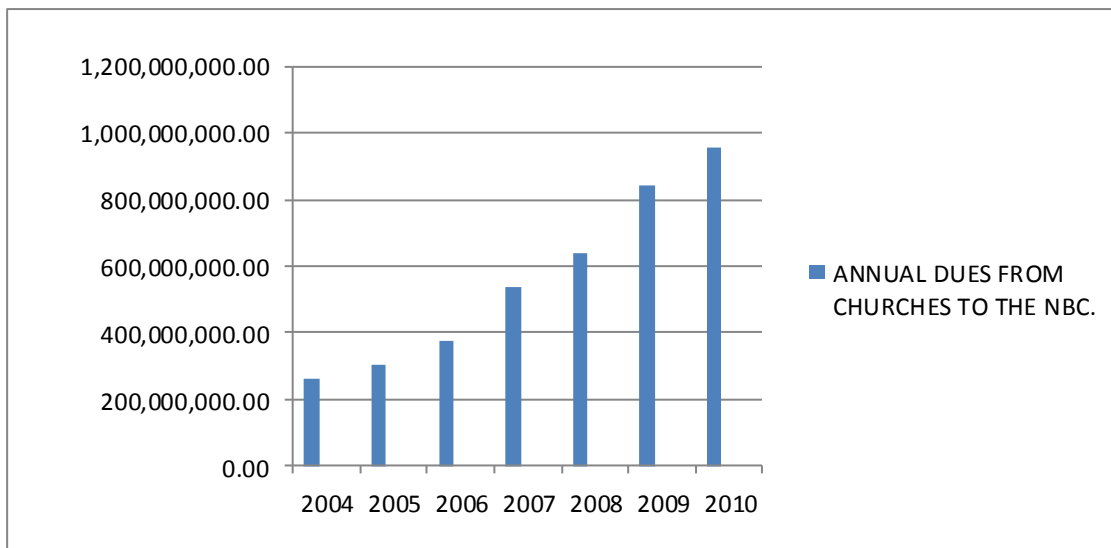


Figure 3(c)

The above histogram is representing Churches’ continuous and systematic rise in their financial commitment and contributions to the NBC in millions, whereas the BMN is finally moving physically and financially to a New Fallow Ground.

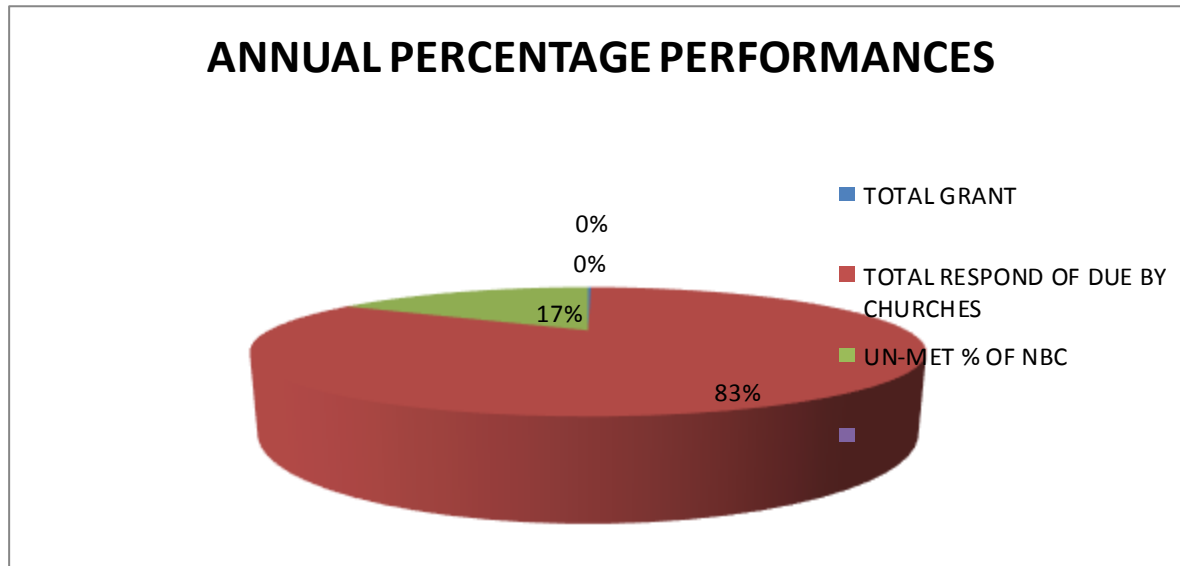


Figure 3 (d)

The Pie-Chart is representing budget performance after the attrition era with the Native Churches contributing above eighty percent of the budget, the un-met aspect of the budget was close to seventeen percent while the BMN had less than one percent. The latter would have ended her insignificant contribution with the terminated years of the attrition policy in order to earn Henry Venn's commendation.

FINDINGS

Having investigated the aftermaths of the attrition policy years, the next assignment is findings and recommendations for the NBC. Second, the researcher had earlier on asked questions on the reason why the NBC that has been in existence for over one hundred and sixty years ago is yet to be completely self sustaining. In other words, what might have been responsible for the lack of growth in the NBC since its inception? From the above interviewees, coupled with the statistical financial data analyses from prior, during and after the attrition periods, that have already been discussed in this research, the researcher is now fully informed with the resources for his findings which include:

Lack of Discretion in the Implementation of the Attrition Policy by the BMN

Evident has chosen that the lack of discretion and will power in the implementation of the attrition policy to the latter by the BMN was the primary reason behind the financial constraint of the NBC. The statistical financial analyses on tables, histograms and pie-charts during and after the attrition years are testimony to the above assertions. For instance, instead of ten percent financial deduction during the attrition years by the BMN, it was rather an increase in grant to the NBC. Also, after the attrition years, the experienced remain same until 2010 when the BMN finally stop giving financial assistance to the NBC due to the latter relocation to new mission

fields. It was also our findings that the missionaries did not encourage the indigenous Churches of the NBC in giving in as much the money which they were using to fund the NBC was coming from America and they themselves (missionaries) were living comfortably. Some of them were better economically when compared with their colleagues at home. The more funding of the NBC, the more attractive and commendations they did receive back at home through their annual reports.

The discretionary laxity of the BMN was also caused by the Executive members of the NBC. They kept on lobbying the BMN over funds and pleading with them that if they withdrew their financial assistance to the Convention, the latter would not survive the financial vacuum. When the BMN some time insisted on not giving grant to the NBC, the latter would arrange for loans from the former of which most of the time such loans were written off. The BMN on the other hand, in order to account for the loan properly, it would be converted and treated as grant at the end of the financial year. The next finding elucidates more reasons for dependant gesture of the NBC on the BMN.

Paternalistic Approach by the Missionaries

One obvious fundamental reason for lack of growth especially in area of finance is the long years of BMN paternalistic approach with the NBC and her related institutions. For several decades: precisely between (1850-1950), the NBC Churches including the Northern Churches depended mainly on the American Baptist Mission for financing all projects which included: medical projects, church planting, church buildings and payment of national pastors and other church workers. To buttress the above findings, Olaleye (1994: 60) asserts that:

The missionaries were looked upon as the providers who could supply all necessities and the nationals looked at themselves as receivers. Since the one who “plays the piper dictates the tune” the missionaries’ who pays the bills saw themselves as the “Sole administrators” of the Baptist Churches and could then dictate what was supposed to be done by the church.

Inadequate Professional Skills Acquisition

Thirdly, apart from pastoral training, teaching career and medical skill acquisitions by native Christians, the BMN did not encourage the former in other fields of endeavour. Therefore, one of the major causes for inadequate funding of the NBC and her dependent agencies was due to lack of professional skill acquisition made available by BMN. For several years, the BMN imported her skill labour such as carpentry, builders and engineers from overseas. There was no attempt to encourage and introduced advanced mechanized farming to the indigenous Christians as it was in the case of Henry Venn, but rather the BMN made them to rely on white collar jobs which were not available but for the few learned ones. As a result of non implementation of Venn’s recommendations on professional skill acquisitions, especially in the field of agriculture and commerce, is one of the major causes of long time impoverish of the NBC.

The Delay in the Implementation on Henry Venn's Missionary Policies

It is evidently clear that the late application of Henry Venn's tripartite missionary and church growth policies by the NBC were responsible for the delay of financial growth and slow development. The effects of the above led to the retardation of the latter and several of her agencies thereafter. The long period of years in the paternalistic relationship between the missionaries and the National Christians and the eventual complete severance policy of the SBCFMB on the NBC has negative effects on the NBC. The only way out of the above financial constraint is to apply Henry Venn's tripartite missionary formula in order to accelerate growth in all ramifications. To this end: the new generational Baptist Churches have set the pace by not allowing new founded Churches to be dependent on their mother churches for too long.

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Interviews

- Dn. Durodola Victor, 69 years old, Treasurer, Baptist Building, Ibadan, was interviewed at Ibadan on 24/06/2012.
- Ms. Oswood Angel, 48years old, Missionary, Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku, was interviewed at Eku on 23/09/2007.