

THE HISTORY, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT OF BAPTIST WORK IN
ODEOMULAND BETWEEN 1921-2011

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BY
ADEYEMO ADESUNBO ABIOYE
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ABSTRACT

This research is an investigation into the work of the Baptist Mission in Odeomu in Osun State of Nigeria. Despite the fact that Baptist Mission started over ninety years ago, no effort has been made to document these activities and their impact in Odeomu. This research fills this gap. It adopted the historical research design method. Primary and secondary sources were used to gather information. Primary sources include interviews, and field survey, while secondary sources comprise books, journals and internet sources. The study reveals that Baptist Mission work had contributed immensely to the development of Odeomu in many areas. This includes educational, social, economic, spiritual and moral life of the town. While the achievements of the Baptist in Odeomu can be said to be highly commendable, the study recommends that more efforts should be geared towards Muslim evangelization because Islam is still a very strong rival of Christianity within the community. Numerical Christians and Muslims are still at par.

5.2 Conclusion

Looking at the work so far, one will be able to say confidently that on the overall, the Baptist work in Odeomu land is growing. The advent of Baptist denomination in the town has been of good influence in all ramifications of life. This however, does not mean that the work is growing as expected.

The efforts of the Baptist founding fathers in Odeomu have bore good fruits to the glory of God. The death of late Pa Ogunjimi and the refusal of the Anglican Church to bury him which eventually caused disagreement and division in the Church was the catalyst that fuel the beginning of Baptist Mission in Odeomu. This incident was very significant and the history of Baptist Mission in Odeomu cannot be completed without mentioning it.

The efforts of Late Pa Ogunjimi's loyalist in the establishment of Baptist Church in Odeomu cannot be over emphasized. Among the Late Ogunjimi's contemporary who were the key players in the establishment of Baptist Mission work in Odeomu were Messrs Odetola, Gabriel Ogunyomi, Ojewale, Fapohunda, Daniel Akintobi, Jacob Adetunji, Williams Adeniran, Joseph Adeniyi of Onitokun's compound, Joseph Adeniyi of Bada's compound, John Oyediran, Jacob Omilani, Joseph Olowookere, Michael Ojewale, Joshua Obaleye, Othniel Ojetunmbi and Emmanuel Adedigba, all of blessed memory. Posterity cannot forget their labour of love.

The establishment of Baptist Mission Work in Odeomu has impacted the people positively in many areas. The town has recorded enormous achievement in the field of education. The establishment of Baptist primary, modern and Grammar Schools in the town had turned out Professors, Technocrats, Medical doctors, Accountants, Lawyers etc. This gave opportunity to indigenes to become self supporting, self sufficient and self reliance. Socially, various societies were formed to promote social life of the

Church members, many social clubs were formed in the town and many social amenities and infrastructures were introduced.

The future of Baptist Mission is bright in Odeomu if unity and hard work are applied. The expected progress and success in Mission and evangelism will come if the members work together as a team. The growing nature of borrowed culture from other denominations which has crept into and adopted by Baptist in the town must be dealt with if Baptist will maintain and uphold her identity and cherished heritage in the town. In spite of the fact that Baptist work is growing in Odeomu, the influence and growth of Islam in the town is alarming. This called for more concerted and strategic evangelistic programme targeting this area.

One of the major challenges facing the founders of the Baptist Church in the town was the teaching and preaching against polygamous marriage. They left Anglican Church in the town because of the practice of the Church not to bury anyone who marry more than one wife. These founders found out that Baptist denomination is also against the practice of polygamy. Many of them were not at home with the teaching against polygamy and posed a great challenge to them. The founders were also initially labeling or tagging as rebels i.e rebelling against constituted Anglican Church Authority.

5.3 Recommendations

These are the recommendations after a serious study of the problem and progress of the Baptist work in Odeomu land.

1. The practice of the borrowed culture from other denominations must be discouraged in Odeomu in particular and Baptist in general. Our uniqueness and cherished heritage must be maintained. We need to look into and preserve our distinctive.
2. The growing nature and increasing activities of Islam in the town deserves special attention. There is the need for the Baptists to arise and be alive to the great

commission and to be more proactive in their evangelism activities and exploit, employing all modern methods of witnessing and evangelizing.

3. Baptist churches in Odeomu should rise to the challenges of unemployment and poverty which is confronting the youths and the school leavers. This can be done through establishment of Small Scale industries and the introduction of vocational training for the people.
4. Regular seminars, programmes and workshops should be organized so as to expose members to their spiritual authority and responsibility thereby making them self-dependant in spiritual matters.
5. All the Baptist Churches in Odeomu land should by all means have the history of their Churches documented for future reference as the importance and value of history cannot be over emphasized.
6. All Baptist Church in Odeomu should be united and be one in spirit so as not to give room for division or disunity. Consolidated efforts should be made to plant more Churches in Odeomu.
7. Laymen empowerment should be encouraged. There is a great need for every Baptist Church to engage itself in effective and efficient teaching ministry.