

**THE HISTORY AND GROWTH OF BETHEL
BAPTIST CHURCH SAPELE
1942 - 2000.**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose for writing this essay is primarily to chronicle the history and growth of Bethel Baptist Church, Sapele from inception till the year 2000 A.D.

The research collected information from the few surviving members of the church who have been there since the 1950s, the church records, programmes, written speeches, correspondences, church officers' files and a pamphlet.

The essay has six chapters. Chapter One introduces the essay and key terms were adequately defined. Chapter Two deals with the short history of the beginning of the church. Chapter Three focuses on the physical growth of the church which include the formation and growth of organizations, the spiritual growth which include evangelism and mission activities in the church. Chapter four gives information about membership development, the leadership of the church, the appointment of deacons and deaconesses, and Church Officers. Chapter Five is on Church projects and donations to the church and chapter six. contains the conclusion - evaluation and recommendations of the essay.

CONCLUSION.

Bethel Baptist Church Sapele, that started in the house of Pa O. Onakpoya in Amuo -Ogodo , a village in Sapele with less than twenty people in 1942, today is the biggest Baptist Church in the Sapele Association with about one thousand five hundred members and situated in the heart of Sapele township.

Having examined the historical development of the Church for the past fifty eight years, one could see that it has been evangelistically mission-minded right from the start. This has contributed immensely to the growth of the church . The Church is doing well in the Nigerian Baptist Convention and it is still ready to do more for humanity and is making a steady progress.

Generally, the work has started well but there is much more to be done. The Church can still be more evangelistic than ever and members should not relent in their effort nor loose their vision in carrying out evangelistic ministry at all cost.

This paper may not have presented all the informations needed because of the difficulty in data collection due to the poor recording keeping system in the Church but more thorough research can still be carried out by anyone who wishes to know more about the history and development of the Church.

here that one of such crisis brought about a split in the Church in 1973 but the two churches are having a good Christian relationship.

This church has also done an excellent job towards giving to the convention. This shows in its name always being on the honour role in the convention, Conference and Association for giving. See appendix C.

The Church should be commended for having English worship services before Sunday School. The church should also be commended for having an Associate Pastor.

The church, though, has a minor problem of tribalism, there is the hope that with the love of Jesus Christ among the members, this will eventually fade away from the church. There is this strong politiking in the Church which does not give room for the leading of the Holy Spirit when certain decisions are to be taken. It sometimes lead to the taking of wrong decisions. It is not healthy for spiritual growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Church needs to improve in certain areas. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Church needs to know the importance of history. She should cultivate the habit of keeping records of past and present events and keeping records of all important activities happening in the church.

2. The Church needs more land for the Nursery /Primary School as it has encroached into the accommodation for the Sunday School Classes.
3. The Church members need to know that Pastors are called by God to do God's work and not by them. Respect should be given to whom it is due.
4. The youth of the church should try to be vast in Christian teachings and living as it is taught in I Timothy 5:1-2.
5. The Church should be more dedicated to her baby churches since it is mission-oriented.
6. The Church is too large for the few deacons and deaconesses that it has now, therefore more should be elected with out being partial.
7. Computer and photocopy machines are needed. We are now in the computer age where everything is computerised.
8. The Church should think of having a modern day Pastors office that will provide for the convenience of both the Pastor and his client during counselling sessions and at the same time house office equipment and files cabinet conveniently. I f t h e s e recommendations are adhered to, the Church will grow from strength to strength in all her objectives.