

THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
BAPTIST WORK IN ZION 1 BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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ABSTRACT

Zion I Baptist Association is an off- shoot of what was originally called Zion Baptist Association. There has been a lot of development in terms of structure numerical strength, financial capability and in the spiritual realm. The Association has really developed in leaps and bounds and the researcher is committed to tracing the pace of development.

The beginning discusses the background to the study, motivation for the study and the purpose of the study. It also brings out the significance of the study and the methods by which the work will be carried out. Later the researcher looks at the historical background considering the geographical location, people and where they came from. He also talks about the people in relation to their religious life before the Missionaries came into their midst.

The work also considers the history of some Baptist institutions within the Association. The establishment and growth of these institutions were discussed from inception and their gradual development were highlighted . The establishment and the development of some outstanding churches were also discussed.

Lastly the researcher looks at the work and the achievements of the Association thus far. The hindrances and problems facing the development of Baptist Work are enumerated. Major ones among them are finance and personnel shortage in terms of trained and dedicated ministers. The essay looks at the prospect for the future expansion of the work of the gospel carried on by the Association.

(d) Recommendation and Conclusion

In order that the Association might wax stronger and stronger the following recommendations would go a long way to help. The researcher is sure that the present administration of the Association would aspire to leave behind an indelible mark of development.

It has been a fierce battle to have a Baptist as the principal of Baptist Girls' High School, Osogbo. We thank God for His hands of miracle that brought Mrs. O.J. Ojo to head the school at present. That opportunity that came our way should not be allowed to slip away. When an old student who is also a Baptist rise to lead our school, that would stongly preserve our traditions as Baptist teachers to Baptist schools.

It is also recommended that the Association should strive to make Zion Baptist High School a model in Osogbo and Osun State in general. It shall never be a wasteful venture to invest the Association resources into it. Positive results will come a later date.

The Association should not depend entirely on five percent contributions from churches. The time is ripe for the Association to find other means to increase its financial resources. The landed property of the Association should be developed in this direction.

The idea of Association pastor is a noble one that should not be discontinued at future date. The services of the pastor are very essential in helping the young churches to grow into maturity. It is recommended that the Association should not stay in a station more than three years before moving to a new one.

Since the Association is the backbone of Osun Baptist Conference and one of the pillars that convention rests upon. The writer strongly recommends that this should be upheld by all churches in the Association. They should always support the Association to maintain its status quo.

The Association should not rest on its oars but should grow to the extent of breaking into three again. The Association should work towards realising this goal within the next five years. This will cause the expansion of the kingdom of God to happen again in our own time.

The Zion Baptist Association is ten years old in 2001. It is definitely a milestone in the history of its development. The Association has grown in leaps and bounds within these ten years. We thank God for men of vision that have been leading the Association since Tolulope and Ede Association were carved out of the old Zion I Baptist Association ten years ago. During this space of time the baton of leadership had changed from Rev. D.O. Alagbe the pioneer moderator of the Association who spent two terms of six years in office. He successfully handed over to Rev. E.O. Adeloye in January

1997.¹⁶ This man of God ended his first term to answer a higher call to serve as the Secretary of Osun Baptist Conference. His exit ushered in the present Moderator in person of Rev. Dr. E.O. Kehinde from Union Baptist Church, Osogbo.

Today, the Association is second to none within the Osun Baptist Conference. The leadership style has been an excellent one. The contributions of some churches within the Association to the conference and the convention cannot be overemphasized. Churches like Union Baptist church Osogbo, First Baptist Church, Osogbo and Dada Estate Baptist Church always find their names in the honours roll of the Nigerian Baptist Convention Book of Reports.¹⁷

The Association has also proved itself to be first among equals by establishing a secondary school. The school has got a permanent site within the first year of its establishment. Also, the school has a bus that conveys both students and staff of the school. This is a very laudable investment that would yield dividend in terms of soul winning and income generation for the Association.

In fact, it is not an overstatement for one to conclude that Zion one Baptist Association is a model and a sample to copy for other Associations. Apart from the physical and concrete achievements, the way the meetings are being moderated is worthy of emulation. There is no room for wasting of time and a lot is always achieved within a stipulated time.

The writer is a member of Association for the past fifteen years. The researcher had been an insider for almost ten years of the existence of the new Zion one Baptist Association and was the Assistant Secretary from 1997

¹⁶Interview with Alagbe D.O., Ebenezer Baptist Church, Osogbo. 30 November, 2000.

¹⁷ Alagbe, Interview

to 2001. This has given him an indept knowledge about the Asssociation. The writer has been privileged to moderate meetings when the moderator was absent. Thanks be to Almighty God for men and women of vision who have joined hands together to lead the Association to this present height.