

**THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT
OF BAPTIST WORK IN IWO LAND:**

1909 - 1980.

**AN ESSAY PRESENTED
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is the study of the Baptist Mission work in Iwo land. Baptist Mission had been playing a dominant role towards the development of Iwo and its environs since its inception. The project is motivated by the desire to create awareness of God's work in the minds of churches in Iwo and districts.

Further, it is an attempt to make young ones of the area to have a burning desire for mission. The lives and hardship encountered by the pioneering missionaries and early converts exposed by the essay will make people to be aware that there is great responsibility ahead in order to keep on the light that had been lighted by the pioneering fathers.

The work is divided into five chapters excluding the introduction. The first chapter makes a survey of Iwo and gives the geographical location, historical background and the situation of Iwo and area before the advent of Christianity.

Chapter two looks into the literature review of Christian missions.

Chapter three discusses the advent of Baptist work in Iwo and districts.

Chapter four is made up of various Baptist Institutions, while chapter five is the conclusion. This is made up of the appraisal of the Baptist work and a reflection of the future of Baptist Mission in Iwo land.

CONCLUSION

A. EVALUATION OF BAPTIST WORK IN IWO LAND

The efforts of the Baptist Mission to transform the socio-politics, economics, religion and education of Iwo to enviable standards cannot be over emphasized. The mission has played dominant role in Iwo land since inception in 1919/1992. The missionaries sent to Iwo and the Pastor Evangelist, Pastor Sangowole sent by the First Baptist Church Awe worked tirelessly to enhance the propagation of Baptist faith in Iwo land.

As has been described in the above chapters, Iwo was regarded as a “no go area” by missionaries in the earlier years before the Baptist came. Even as late as 1951, approximately ninety-five percent of Iwo indigenes were still Muslims while others were idol worshippers¹.

It may therefore be gratifying to note that by now it is estimated that more than forty percent of the people of Iwo are Christians².

By now, many Christian denominations have emerged in Iwo. These include: Anglican, Methodist, Catholic and innumerable independent churches. As at now no mission had been able to surpass the Baptist Mission in the provision of schools, both primary and post primary; health care and socio-economic facilities in the whole of Iwo ;land districts.

The available statistics of churches in the towns in Iwo land shows that the Baptist denomination is growing at a faster rate as already mentioned in chapter four.

The evangelistic programmes of two of the big churches. Aipate and Ebenezer Baptist Churches are worthy of note. Both of the churches have established duly registered nursery and primary institutions. Aipate Baptist church in addition has recently established a post primary institution. These institutions are patronised by members of the whole community including the Muslims. This is so because of the good infrastructure in these schools and the provision of adequate teachers.

Among all denominations only the Catholic has adopted the Baptist the provision of Schools and health services. The Baptist occupies a unique position in the provision of health facilities in Iwo and districts. Right from inception, the Baptist had made education and health care their priorities.

The former dispensary has now been upgraded into the Baptist hospital and people of the whole Iwo land still patronise it. It can also be referred to here as earlier mentioned that the Baptist had set up a technical Institution in Iwo an equivalent of which are the Technical Colleges now as early as 1922. The mission had earlier catered for lepers at inception.

It is no gainsay that apart from evangelising the whole of Iwo land, Baptists had contributed tremendously to the socio-economic, education, health care, moral and co-existence of the people of Iwo and district. The Baptist mission had also seen to the up-keep of the underprivileged in the whole land. Miss. Chief Alma Rohm, probably the longest serving missionary in Nigeria today is still in Iwo land. She has catered for the children of Christians and non Christians since she arrived in Nigeria in 1951.

She has been conferred with a chieftaincy title by the Late Oluwo Oba Abimbola in commemoration of her great services to the whole community. The chief-taincy title is Iyanisin of Iwo. The whole Baptist community of Nigeria can

never forget Mama's efforts on music during conventions and music workshops. Mama still resides on the premises of the Baptist College which was phased off in 1994. She continues to serve as one of the remaining missionaries of the Baptist Mission of Nigeria.

B. THE FUTURE OF BAPTIST MISSION IN IWO

As had been referred to in the earlier chapters, the Industrial Institute and the Baptist College had served as spring boards of evangelism in Iwo and districts. It is unfortunate that the College swallowed up the Industrial Institute in 1953 and the College also was at last phased out in 1994.

To some observers, this development will somehow look problematic in view of the evangelistic efforts of the students and teachers of the institutions. The development, however, has created no problem in view of the situation of the established churches. The work of evangelisation has been taken up by the churches. The Pastors of the churches are equal to the task of evangelism. In virtually all these churches various Baptist Organisations had sprung up.

The W.M.U. had been performing from the beginning in the area of evangelism. The church has now got various department of the Baptist organisations. The M.M.U. is now functioning just like ^{its} W.M.U. counterpart.

The Baptist University hopefully will be an asset to evangelism. The fact that the Baptist owns the institution will open the campus to series of symposium, crusades by Baptists. This will make people of different faiths to hear the gospel of Christ. The fact that people of all walks and religions will be admitted and since religion will be free, holding this various programmes will make Christ touch the hearts of unbelievers.

