

THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NBTS
M. Div
0501-e

**EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT
OF W.H. CARSON ASSOCIATION**

**AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF DIVINITY IN THEOLOGY**

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JUNE, 2005

06 — 1039

ABSTRACT

This work is an attempt to trace out the Emergence and Development of Carson Association. No formal documented research effort has been made on this, topic hence sources of information is very limited. To meet the demand, the researcher used oral interview and questionnaires. He had the following information from his research: That Carson Association was carved out from Buguma Port Harcourt Association; It was established in September, 1992 with twenty two (22) churches. From 1992 to 2004 eight (8) churches were added to it; The name Carson was to commemorate the good work of Rev. Dr. William H. Carson.

Some Proffered Reasons for the Split: Geographical vastness and its population density; Upland churches dreaded coming to the reverine for meetings, Hosting and accommodation problems during meetings; The need for more people to participate in the conference and convention meetings.

From the researcher's findings, there was numerical growth but the growth was slow. Eight new churches from the old twenty two churches over a period of about eleven years were planted. Financially, they contributed to the convention and the conference which they belong.

Recommendations made by the researcher: Awareness through seminars and workshops be created to alert the churches of their responsibility for growth and expansion and their financial contribution for the conference and the convention; The association should have a paid traveling pastor.

Among all other things, they should plan and execute preaching programmes with the churches that have no pastors, encourage churches to have weekly Bible studies, yearly revival programmes, organize seminars and workshops on stewardship, church training, discipleship and Sunday School programmes.

The association should discourage churches who can maintain pastors but are contented with lay-leaders.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Having gone through the study of the emergence and development of W.H. Carson Association, the researcher tends to appraise his findings and proffer some recommendations. Generally, W.H. Carson Association Churches would not have done better if they had remained under the umbrella of Buguma / Port Harcourt Association. The split therefore is to her a blessing and great advantage.

Considering her financial cooperative standing with the Rivers conference, one would give her a pat on the back. For about eighteen (18) associations that made up the conferences, the least position she have had (from the honour role from 1995 to 2003, a space of nine (9) years was 4th position. She had been either 2nd or 3rd position. The one that have been competing with her has been her sister association. Amakiri and Dale Moore that was given birth to by Amakiri, all in Port Harcourt.

Considering her givings to the convention, the researcher finds out that only a few churches are consistently and regularly being faithful to their financial contribution to the convention. There are also those who are contributing but not consistent. There are also those who are not contributing to the cooperate purse of the convention. In this direction, I want to strongly suggest that the workshop titled. 'The local church and the co-operative programmes" that was organized by the association at her early years of life for the benefit and understanding of her churches as regards their financial relationship with the conference and the convention should continue. I should also suggest that for now such workshop should be yearly. It could be organized by association for the churches.

Churches who are well able can also organize such programmes. They may invite somebody who is an expert in the field and who can deliver the goods. Such a person should be able to revive the members of the churches. He could be from the conference or the convention. You need the best, if you desire improvement.

The associational adviser can also work with the churches concerning this area. There are some churches in the association who know very well their financial obligation to these cooperative bodies but either the pastor is not interested and so do not encourage the members and or the pastor is willing while the members are kicking against his efforts. They many feel that they are not gaining from these bodies hence should use their financial resources for their internal projects. It is the place of the associational adviser to organize enlightenment programmes for the churches. The person of the associational adviser is also very important. He should be one that can influence and arouse interest in the lives of the churches. He has to be mobile and loves traveling. He must have a burdened concern for the general growth of the churches. The association should budget for this office so that money should not be a hindrance for such programmes. The writer is earnestly praying and looking forward when the association will have a paid adviser, call him a traveling pastor. He is not to be attached to any church. The association should care for him. He should not be less than a seminary degree holder. He should be filled with the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit and with the fruit of the Holy Spirit as his spiritual foundation. He should be one that has a burden for discipleship, church planting and church growth.

Among other things, he serves as adviser, plans preaching programmes with those churches that have no pastors. He should study to know the area of needs both weakness

and strength of the churches He should organize workshops, revivals, plan seminars on stewardship, fasting and prayers, significance of the word of God in Sunday school programmes and weekly Bible study. Such a pastor will be a great blessing to the association. No amount you spend on him will be a waste.

One other area, I found that the churches in the association lack badly is the area of record keeping. There are at least two major areas of this problem. There are those who keep these records but are not consistent. There are those who keep these records but not with durable materials and are not prepared to renew them so with time, they are worn out and torn away and hence become useless. The second aspect is that a lot of churches don't have permanent place of keeping their records. You will be surprised to go to a church for a particular document and it will take you days if not weeks to find it out.

In this computer age, record keeping should become a tradition, something we have been accustomed to, used to doing. Churches should begin to see the need and importance of recording keeping. Without record keeping you cannot determine the growth and the development of the organizations of the churches and the church as a body. With records, you can determine the area of the church that needs immediate spiritual attention. Churches should provide permanent room(s), call it library where documents and the literatures of the church are to be neatly and structurally kept. Shelves should be built. Sections should be provided for all documents pertaining to the organizations and departments of the church. If you need Sunday school, church training, convention, conference etc. you know the exact section of the shelves you can find them, they should be arranged according to their years. By this our age, record keeping should not be a novelty. The researcher pleads with churches that are yet to have a written

document of the history of their churches to do so without delay. Now that they may still have among them some living founding fathers. It is a history that is so important for the present and generation yet unborn.

One other area that the association is badly affected is the area of church planting and growth. The association became independent with 22 churches on September 1992. From 1992 to the present date October, 2003 is exactly eleven years the records have it that at most nine (9) churches have been added to the association. It is an indication that the association is not completely stagnant. It has grown from 22 to 31 churches. If one should consider the number of churches (22) and the number of years (11) that gave birth to these nine churches, one should pause to ask some questions the clear fact that not all the 22 churches contributed to these nine churches. How many out of these 22 churches actually gave birth to the nine churches? what are the rest of the churches doing? It is true that there are some villages which nature has made church planting not very viable but could that be true of all the churches which have remain for these eleven years and more without one single church? The answer should be no. Apart from the disadvantaged villages, the researcher believes that there are still more churches, which could do better than there present state. The problem, which has been a standing one, is that of pastoral leadership. It is true that there are churches, which by their financial and numerical strength cannot pay a seminary-trained pastor. They are forced to depend on lay leaders for their pastoral ministry. There are those who can maintain trained pastoral but do not see the need. There are those who manage to call pastors but do not have a vision, a focus of the type of pastor who should meet up the needs of their churches. Generally the

