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THE HISTORY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
IKEJA (1902 - 1994)

An Essay Presented
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CONCLUSION AND OBSERVATION

First Baptist Church, Ikeja, a preaching station of First Baptist Church, Lagos, founded in 1902 but organized in April, 1946 faced a lot of teething problems in the first sixty years of its existence. Due to the dedication of the founding fathers and the commitment of the subsequent leaders and pastors, Ikeja being made an industrial centre by the old Western Region and its being made the capital of Lagos State on the creation of States in 1976, the church has grown phenomenally in all aspects of church life. It has established five preaching stations and sponsored pastors in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso and Pastors' School, Oyo. It has been the highest contributor to the finances of Ireti Ogo Association since its inception in 1980, one of the highest contributors to the Lagos State Conference fund, the 5th highest contributor to the Nigerian Baptist Convention fund in 1992 with ₦177,037.01,¹ and the 7th highest contributor in 1993 with ₦257,119.43.² The first time the name of the church appeared on the honour role of the Convention was in 1979 when it contributed ₦2,105.28 and occupied 64th position.

¹ Nigerian Baptist Convention Financial Report, 31st December, 1992, p. 48.

² Nigerian Baptist Convention Financial Report, 31st December, 1993, p. 53.

The church has the resources, both human and financial to become one of the most evangelistic churches in Nigeria if the following recommendations are reviewed and acted upon:

1. The church should have a planned visitation programme so that all members of the church could be visited at least once a year. Lack of such programme in the past resulted in only few new members becoming regular members of the church, and complaint of neglect by members.
2. There should be effective follow-up on new converts and those making decisions for Christ. Without such follow-up, this class of people may not be faithful to their decisions.
3. The church is overripe for multiple ministry. There should be at least four ministers in the church. These are the Minister, Associate Minister, Education Minister and Minister of Music. As a first step, an Associate Minister and an Education Minister should be called immediately to help effective growth of the church.
4. The Church Council should ensure that the decisions of the church are immediately implemented. Lack of implementation or delay in implementation of some important decisions in the past has not helped the church. Some examples will suffice. Based on letters received from Ifelodun Society and Baptist Men's Fellowship by the Church Council on the need for an Associate Pastor,

a sub-committee of five members was set up to work out the modalities at the Church Council meeting of 19th June, 1988.³ The Church-In-Conference of 19th June, 1988 unanimously agreed that an Associate Pastor should be called and that the sub-committee already set up by the Church Council should work on this.⁴ The sub-committee submitted its recommendations to the Church Council on 15th September, 1988⁵ and in the Church-in-Conference of 23rd October, 1988, "The Conference approved the appointment of an Assistant Pastor who should be a holder of not less than Certificate or Diploma from Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso."⁶ Over six years after this decision, an Associate Pastor is yet to be called. The closest the Church Council moved to implementing this decision was the call of a Children's Pastor in 1992, who worked for a year before returning to the Seminary to further his education. Another example is the "Ipodo Baptist Mission House" which is being built on the site of the old church at Ipodo. It should have been completed long ago at a far less cost if immediate action was taken on church decision on it. Delay in acting also led to the loss of the church land at Egan.

³"Minutes of the E.C. Meeting of 12th May, 1988," E.C. Minutes Book, p. 39.

⁴"Minutes of Church-In-Conference of 19/6/88", E.C. Minutes Book, p. 50.

⁵"E.C. Minutes Book, p. 59.

⁶E.C. Minutes Book, p. 71.

5. Bible Study should be better planned and organised.
6. The church should maintain efficient record keeping and filing system. All important events in the church should be documented and copies sent to Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso for vertical filing.
7. House Fellowships should be re-organised and re-launched to make them more effective. Moribund House Fellowships should be resuscitated and capable leaders chosen to lead them.
8. Seminars and lectures on different topics should be organised on regular basis for the spiritual development of church members.
9. The church should introduce social ministry into its evangelism programme and budget for evangelism should be substantially increased as this is the main task of the church of God.
10. The church must display renewed interest in adult education which only exists today due to the interest and tenacity of a member who has continued to be involved as a teacher despite frustrations and lack of encouragement. An interview conducted by this researcher revealed that some qualified teachers are interested in helping when the whole programme is re-organised. Teachers should be remunerated by the church.
11. The church should ensure that it has adequate funds to support its preaching stations and other projects, and should not "bite more than it can chew." presently, it should nurture its three preaching stations properly before embarking on planting new ones.

12. Special occasions of the church are becoming "worldly" and this situation must be rectified. Announcing chairmen, chairpersons, supporters, guests etc. and the amounts donated by them during such occasions, taking place within worship services, should be discouraged. In fact, special occasions that will involve "ceremonies" should take place outside worship services and preferably on weekdays.

There is no doubt that First Baptist Church, Ikeja has today, become one of the greatest sustainers of the corporate existence of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. The church has covered a lot of lost ground within the past two decades. It is now alive to its evangelistic responsibilities, and it continues to grow both numerically and spiritually.

One of the greatest assets of this church is genuine Christian love among its members. It always rises up as one body to "rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn."

First Baptist Church, Ikeja could become a future mega church if it continues to open itself to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.