

**THE IMPACT OF ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS
BETWEEN 2000 AND 2003 ON BAPTIST WORK IN KADUNA**

AN ESSAY

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ABSTRACT

One of the greatest challenges threatening the peace and unity of Nigeria nation today is religious conflicts. Nigerian Christians have witnessed oppositions, crises, persecutions and even death because of their faith. Religion has, therefore, assumed a negative status of dividing Nigerians rather than uniting them.

Between year 2000 and 2003, Kaduna town has witnessed series of ethno-religious crises which had occurred in quick successions. Several human lives have been lost and properties worth millions of naira were burnt or destroyed as a result of these crises.

Kaduna Town is one of the towns in Northern Nigeria that Baptist work is well established. The study tried to find out the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on ministries of the Baptists in Kaduna between 2000 and 2003.

The ethno-religious crises had both negative and positive impacts on Baptist work in Kaduna within the period. Despite the persecutions, death, destruction of property, the Baptists still love the Muslims, and will continue to preach the message of Christ's love to them.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendation have been made

- i. Churches where low attendance has been recorded as a result of the crises should not be discouraged. They should see this as a challenge to reach out to more souls and to bring them to the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- ii. Both Pastors/Church Leaders and members should be sources of encouragement to one another during persecutions. This will enable the church of God to continue to expand.
- iii. During crises situation churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention should be able to provide more financial support to churches that are affected. This will enable the churches of God to rebuild their auditoriums or pastoriums that have been destroyed. The 27 Baptist churches that had their auditoriums and or Pastoriums destroyed need the support of the Baptist family in Nigerian to rebuild their structures.
- iv. Churches that are relocating new sites should be careful about who buys their property. The property could be sold to Christians or other organizations that will not do things that will ridicule Christendom. The churches could use the abandoned sites to put up structures that would provide social services to their communities where they are located.
- v. The relocation of the Baptist Theological Seminary Kaduna to the newly acquired site is a task that the Nigerian Baptist Convention must face. The Convention must mobilize her churches to support this course. The present site of the Seminary and the facilities could be used for other purposes when the Seminary finally relocates.
- vi. Christians should continue to love and forgive Muslims despite the persecutions they suffer from them. Cordial relationship should be maintained with Muslims.

5.3 Conclusion

The ethno-religious crises in Kaduna between the year 2000 and 2003 greatly affected many Christians and Baptist work in Kaduna township. Baptist work in Kaduna was affected in areas such as killing of some members, destruction of church auditoriums and pastoriums and destruction of the Baptist Theological Seminary Kaduna.

However, despite persecutions, the church still loves the Muslims. This love must be demonstrated by presenting the Muslims with the gospel.