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THE HISTORY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, KONTAGORA
WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON HER
EVANGELISM EFFORTS FROM
1916 TO 1997.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSION:

First Baptist Church, Kontagora, which was founded in 1916 has passed through a number of developmental stages to attain her present level of both spiritual and physical development. The Church has struggled through thick and thin in the area of evangelism, and has demonstrated her best possible ability to reach the world around her.

In her eighty-one (81) years of existence, the number of the members has grown from a little less than forty to more than five hundred (500) members. Out of her emerged other two Baptist Churches - Albarika Baptist Church Kontagora (Hausa speaking) and English Service Baptist Church, Kontagora.

The pioneer leaders tried hard to sustain the church and consolidate her membership. Being the first Yoruba speaking Church in the town as well as the only church in the town before 1930, most of the Yorubas that came to the town on business were invited to the church by the early leaders. The leaders did this well and they recorded a commendable success in this regard. Also, when the Hausa-speaking Christians started coming to town, they pitched their religious tent with the First Baptist Church, Kontagora. The leaders did well by conducting the services both in Yoruba and Hausa. The Hausa speaking people later pulled out to establish the present Albarika Baptist Church.

As mentioned in Chapter three, the Church started calling trained pastors in 1952, about thirty-six (36) years of the Church's establishment. The Church, as earlier noted was organized on March 19, 1967, about fifty-one (51) years of the birth of the Church.

For the eighty-one years of the church's existence, she has to her credit the establishment of the following daughter (mission) churches:

1. Albarika Baptist Church, Kontagora
2. First Baptist Church, Shadadi
3. First Baptist Church, Sahorami.
4. First Baptist Church, Babarami
5. Ebenezer Baptist Church, Ibeto.
6. English Service Baptist Church, Kontagora.

The Church also influenced the establishment of the Yoruba speaking Baptist Church, Rijau and the Alafia-Oluwa Baptist Church, Kagara. Out of these churches, only Albarika Baptist Church, Kontagora and First Baptist Church Sahorami have been organized.

The Church, since her establishment has been able to sponsor two Pastors-Rev. M.O. Ojo, and Pastor T.A. Ajala to the Seminary. She also assisted a number of other pastors financially in various Seminaries and Pastors Schools.

However, the following conclusions are inevitable about the Church's mission or evangelism efforts.

The early leaders were not adequately mission-minded. Since they all came together as people of the same denomination and town (Ogbomoso), their main interest was to maintain their common interest rather than reaching out to the indigenes of

Kontagora and its environs. This was the situation with the Church until around 1948 when the Hausa speaking people started worshipping with the Church. It is not certain whether it was the Church that invited or witnessed to these non-Yoruba Christian or that they joined the Church on their own. Thus, it is easy to conclude that the attitude of the Church in her early stage was not good enough toward evangelism and mission.

The conclusion above is directly responsible for the too low number of preaching or daughter stations established by the Church in her eighty-one (81) years of existence. The Church was able to open six (6) daughter churches out of which only two (Albarika Baptist Church and First Baptist Church, Sahorami) have been organized. On the average, it took the Church thirteen and a half ($13\frac{1}{2}$) years interval to establish a preaching station. This is not good enough as an evangelical Church.

As mentioned in chapter three, it was (in reality) in 1960 that the first mission church started viz. Albarika Baptist Church, Kontagora. This means the Church existed for fifty-four (54) years before reproducing herself. This was about eight (8) years when the Church started calling trained Pastors to lead the Church. It is expected of the Church to have opened more preaching stations within and around Kontagora than she has done. The land is very fertile for productive cultivation if only the church will come up forcefully to evangelise the area.

Another concern is the date of organization of the Church. Records show that the church was organized on 19th March 1967, about fifty-one (51) years the church was born. The reason for this long delay is not clear, but, one can conclude that the leadership of the Church for such a long period of time did not

do the church any good by the late organization. However, the Church should be commended for organizing her first daughter church - Albarika Baptist Church, Kontagora only two days (21st March, 1967) after her own organization.

It can also be concluded that the Church lay-leaders stayed on too long before leading the Church to call trained Pastors to lead the Church. As noted earlier, the first Pastor was called in 1952, that was about thirty-six (36) years of the church's birth. During this period, the Church was in complete darkness on the vision to reach out. This was also responsible for the low number of Mission stations established by the Church; because it was when the Church started calling Pastors that the Church started opening Mission Stations. Thus, in the area of evangelism, the lay-leaders of the Church did below expectation to lead the Church in Mission efforts.

The evangelism group of the Church, of which the writer was a member for about nine (9) years has not been productive as expected. Though, the group struggled to establish the daughter churches (except the English Service and Albarika Baptist Churches), the group has since stopped to reach out to other areas. Her hospital and prison ministries are now very sick and almost in-active. What the group does now is only to pay occasional visits to the Mission Churches in Babarami, Ibeto, and Shadadi. Without any prejudice, it is certain that if the evangelism group of the Church is inactive, the mission efforts of the Church is in the danger of decay. As at 1997, the evangelism group of the Church has not opened a new station since 1989 when last the group led the Church to open a station at Ibeto.

The Church should be commended for visiting the Guffanti Mission field in 1996. This field is currently being taken care of by First Baptist Church, New Bussa. This visitation was the first in the life of FBC, Kontagora. Why the church delayed so long was due to non-chalant attitude of the Church toward mission. In fairness to the Church, this mentioned visitation was done when the Church has no pastor. However, on a general note, it should be concluded that the Church has not done well enough in paying visit and ministering to the people in both our home and foreign mission fields.

Despite these, the writer believe that there is room for improvement especially with the zeal of the present Pastor (Revd. S.A. Ishola) of the Church. The Church is now moving forward in mission, and the fruits will soon be realized.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS:

From the conclusion made above, the following recommendations are imperative.

1. It is high time to church reshape her evangelism strategies to suit the present sophisticated drive to reach the unbelievers. It is becoming increasingly difficult to reach the Muslims as they are constantly struggling to make it difficult for the Christians to reach them. Now that open air crusade is 'almost impossible' in the northern part of the country, the church can engage through Radio/Television ministration, Printing of tracts in the languages the people can read and understand, and engaging in house-to-house witnessing.

2. The Church can regularly organise week-end evangelism in the villages around. This can be done through video show, presentation of gifts that the unbelievers considered very important to them, and of course showing love to them. To do this, the Church must be ready to spend her money, while members should be ready to sacrifice their time and properties too.
3. The present evangelism group of the Church should be given adequate training on how to reach out to the unreached and the unbelievers. The Church should make money available to this group to help her function well.
4. The Church's various small groups (societies-"Egbes") should be well involved in the Church mission effort. They can be encouraged to open or adopt any mission (daughter) Church. The societies should be encouraged to visit the daughter churches, and, if possible address their needs. They as well as groups like the Men Missionary Union can also organize/sponsor some spiritual programmes.
5. The Church's annual budget should favour mission, because evangelism is the major responsibility of the Church.
6. The Church should plan to visit at least one of the Convention's mission fields every year.
7. The Church should call trained Pastors to lead the daughter Churches that have no Pastors, and organise them into full autonomous churches.
8. The Church should struggle to open new Mission Churches in and around Kontagora. The practice of Cell System may be of good help in opening more mission stations. The Cell System must be handled with great care.

