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**THE EFFECTS OF ISLAM ON THE SPREAD AND GROWTH OF
BAPTIST MISSION WORK IN KEBBI ASSOCIATION**

A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

**FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
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**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARDS OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

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ABSTRACT

The research was purposely conducted to examine the effects of Islam on the spread and growth of Baptist Mission work in Kebbi Association. Kebbi State seems a bit peculiar and different from other Northern states in that while most Northern states are known for violence, Kebbi has very low record of violence but a very serious stronghold of darkness with Sharia as its tool. The researcher did some findings pertaining to the development and expansion of Baptist work in Kebbi. This aspired to document some historical records of how Kebbi Baptist Association was founded and how Baptist Churches have subsequently been planted.

In other to achieve the purpose of this essay and produce an acceptable academic work, the researcher interviewed some persons both clergymen and the laity alike, some of who have one time served in Kebbi Baptist Association and some of which are still actively involved in the Association to give accounts of their experiences as it concern mission work in Kebbi Baptist Association.

Findings revealed that Kebbi Baptist Association was formally established in 1998. Though the Baptist mission work in Kebbi has recorded tremendous growth, yet there are still a lot of challenges posed by Islam. As a matter of fact, the success recorded did not come at an easy prize. The researcher also traces the advent of Islam in Northern Nigeria and specifically in Kebbi State. Also, the researcher relates the present Islamic upheaval in the country as it affects Mission Work in Kebbi Baptist Association.

The work contributes to scholarship because of its thorough investigation as regards Baptist Mission Work in Kebbi, when it started and the Islamic influence that

militates against it. More so, its relationship to the recent Boko Haram upheaval in the nation makes it a relevant material as regards Christian and Muslim relations.

The researcher concluded with possible solution to the menace of Islam to the expansion of the gospel of Christ in Kebbi and all over the nation.

5.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the role of every church member is of great significance in mission work in Kebbi Baptist Association. From the study undertaken, the following conclusion may be drawn: that evangelism is a divine mandate given to the church. This divine assignment when committed to by the church with all seriousness can result into planting and growing of churches. There should be proper awareness and adequate knowledge on mission activities so that it will boost the morale of the Baptist family.

The church should count on every member to carry out mission activities in the Muslim dominated land like Kebbi State. Baptist members as well as churches should be eager to see the extension of Christ's kingdom here on earth. They must understand that they can affect the growth of churches greatly despite the Islamic influence if they adhere to the great commission as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20. Baptist people should not be afraid or be inferior as regards mission activities but as part of God's husbandry that will give account of their stewardship to God. Baptist mission work in Muslim dominated area must be done with an attitude of love; and boldness must be applied. The mission work must be planned strategically to meet up with the challenges in those areas, so that Baptist work will grow. Planting of churches must be taken seriously, especially among the indigenous people of the land. This will help the Baptist mission work to grow and expand.

Finally, the desire and yearn for expansion of God's kingdom here on earth cannot be achieved except every true believer launch out either individually or corporately to witness Christ Jesus to those who are yet to know Him. This we must do, regardless of the difficulties that may stand on our way.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Having carefully studied the Islamic influence and its effects on Baptist mission work in Kebbi Association, the researcher hereby makes the following recommendations to further enhance effective mission work in Kebbi Baptist Association:

- i. **Prayer** – More prayers should be offered for the desired expansion to come to reality. All through the New Testament, prayer is the key to supernatural exploits and manifestations. In the ministry of Jesus, the apostles of the early church and even in the ministry of Paul, prayer is seen as the secret of their successes. Hence, Christians should give themselves more to the ministry of prayer and of the word as this is one of the key to mission expansion. More so, we need prayers more now than ever at this time of great persecution against the church of Christ.
- ii. **Sacrificial Leadership** – Our church leaders must be willing to pay the price for church growth and mission expansion and not only that but be able to go the extra-mile when the need arises. This is not only for pastors, but for church leaders as well. Like Adeleke posits, ‘the price for church planting could be great, it entails leaving our “comfort zones”’, (16) every one of us, the clergy and the laity alike must be willing to pay for church growth with last drop of sweat we have left.
- iii. **Supportive Stewardship** – The plight for mission expansion does not exclude the church members. Every Baptist church member should see themselves as ministers and stewards of the gospel of Christ. They must support their pastors and churches for the expansion of mission work in Kebbi Baptist Association as it is expected of stewards to be found faithful (I Corinthians 4:2).

- iv. Discipleship – Discipleship is the process of training new converts into Christ likeness. The aim of mission work is not to plant churches with spiritual dwarfs, but men who are relevant in God’s plan. In our newly planted churches, discipleship facilitators should be made available who will disciple the indigenous converts in their own language. Also, in our existing churches, pastors should train and provide their members with the discipleship programmes. For expansion to take place, members must be mature, battle ready against the devil, his cohorts, and be prepared to work effectively.
- v. Need-Oriented Evangelism – The mode of evangelism should be need-oriented. If the immediate needs of the people are met, access is granted for the preaching of the gospel. It was the style of Jesus to meet the needs of people as He ministered the gospel. In the same way, if Kebbi Baptist Association can meet some of the needs of the people such as health needs, educational needs, clothing, etc. then we would have gained ample access to minister Christ to these Northern ‘brothers’.
- vi. Re-Orientation on Methods of Outreach – Like we have aforesaid in the preceding chapters of this research, the Association through churches under her must educate her members and also engage new modes of outreach such as adoption of indigenous congregation and annexing the evangelistic efforts of corps members.
- vii. The Association should carefully complement the weak attitude of the Baptist Convention to missionary work in Kebbi State.
- viii. Associational leaders should take time to visit the churches under their jurisdiction and encourage them to engage in more mission activities.

- ix. Lastly, as regards the present evil of the Boko Haram in the Northern States, the association should encourage and take part in dialogue among the religious to ensure a peaceful co-habitation of Christians and Muslims.