

A HISTORY OF THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION MISSION WORKS IN NIGER-
KEBBI BAPTIST CONFERENCE, 1998-2011.

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ABSTRACT

Missions are indispensable in fulfilling God's mandate on earth. It is the divine plan of God that all human beings should accept the free gifts of salvation in Christ Jesus. This made the Southern Baptist Convention of United State of America to embark on missionary enterprises in Nigeria as far back 1850. This effort gave birth to Nigerian Baptist Convention with so many Conferences in which Niger-Kebbi Baptist Conference is inclusive. It should be noted that one cannot know the way forward if history of the past is not taken into consideration. The Nigerian Baptist Convention has been able to establish her mission work, especially in Niger-Kebbi Baptist Conference on the foundation of the past missionaries. However, the mission work in Niger-Kebbi Baptist Conference is not without challenges. Some challenges were persecution from other religions such as Islam and African Traditional Religion. The Niger-Kebbi Baptist Conference is making positive missionary impacts in the northern parts of the Nigeria. However, lack of harmonization, inadequate finance, language barriers and many others are militating against the growth of missions' works of the conference. Therefore, this study: A History of the Nigerian Baptist Convention mission works in the Niger-Kebbi Baptist Conference: Problems and Prospects examined the missionary works of Nigerian Baptist Convention in Niger-Kebbi Baptist Conference before and within the period of her formation, 1998 to 2011. The effort of Yoruba traders and their impacts on the northern indigenes are also examined. The study is historical in nature. The researcher therefore employed historical descriptive method to analyze the history of Nigerian Baptist Convention mission works in Niger-Kebbi Baptist Conference. This is to promote the growth of mission works of conference. The realization of pending challenges that are truncating the growth of the mission works in this conference and other conferences is the great motivation for this work. Based on the examination, certain solutions were brought out and used as tools to promote the growth of mission works of the conference. On the basis of this it was recommended among others that, the local churches, associations and conference should put their resources together for effective missionary works. Every local Baptist church in Niger-Kebbi Baptist Conference should avoid abuse of local church autonomy. Thus, the conference leaders should use one annual conference in session for teachings to curb the syndrome of autonomy that is affecting the growth of mission works in the conference.

6.2 CONCLUSION

God delights in Christian missions and his original plan for the whole world is to know Christ as Lord and Saviour. On this note, Southern Baptist Convention of America

came to Nigeria to sow missionary seed of Christianity through Thomas Jefferson Bowen. The seed germinated and became the great Nigerian Baptist Convention with many prospects and challenges. This effort led to formation of many conferences in which Niger Kebbi Baptist Conference is inclusive.

The Niger Kebbi Baptist Conference missionary effort is making impacts in the northern part of the country although the impacts have not been sufficient as it is expected as a result of some militating factors. The Nigerian Baptist Convention at large is expected to reinforce the efforts of the Niger Kebbi Baptist Conference to attain greater height in fulfilling the great commission. The efforts of Yorùbá traders and early missionaries should not be forgotten in the area.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This work has examined the history of Nigerian Baptist Convention mission work in Niger-Kebbi Baptist Conference 1998-2011: Problems and Prospects. Having undertaken a sequential study on the above stated issue, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The local churches, associations and conference should put their resources together for effective missionary works.
2. Every local Baptist church in Niger Kebbi Baptist Conference should avoid the abuse of local church autonomy. Thus, the conference leaders should use one

annual conference in session to teach biblical principles of church autonomy that is affecting the growth of missions in the conference.

3. There is need for every Missionary working in the Home Mission Fields within the jurisdiction of NKBC to be sending the reports of their activities to the Conference President (CP) and be allowed to give reports in every annual Conference in session
4. All mission coordinators of churches and Moderators of Associations should be mandated to give their mission work activities reports to the Conference President through the Mission coordinator of the NKBC at least twice in a year.
5. There is need for all arms of the conference to set aside at least one or two times a year when they will all visit a mission field and reach out to the lost soul. That will rule out the duplicating of mission work and efforts would be properly documented.
6. The Niger Kebbi Baptist Conference should ensure proper documentation of all her missionary efforts. This could be done through distribution of data collection form to all the local churches.
7. It is discovered that there is no synergy between NKBC and GMB/NBC in the issue of missions and the Missionaries in this area; instead it has been occasional conflicts. Every missionary sending by GMB should through GMB be tutelage of

CP. That will help in harmonization. Therefore solution to it is to togetherness work for the same goal and denied ego.

8. The Global Mission Board, local Baptist Churches and individual Christians who are coming to the mission fields within the Niger Kebbi Baptist Conference should inform the office of Conference President.
9. The office of Conference President of Niger Kebbi Baptist Conference should ensure sending of proper record to Nigerian Baptist Convention and Global Mission Board.
10. There should be planting and growing of local Baptist churches in strategic places and the social ministries aspects of the existed Churches should be intensified. For instance, widows, widowers and orphans should be taken care of by distributing foodstuffs, clothing and payment of the school fees of the less privilege. Doing this will create awareness about Christ. Simultaneously, it contributes to civilization and enlightenment. For instance Christians in the north do not subject their male children to “*almajeri*”