



## Research Article

Volume-01|Issue-01|2020

## A Critical Analysis of the Effect of Schism in Benin Baptist Church (1933-1934) and its Implication on Church Growth

Osarumwense Osarodion Kenneth

University Of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

### Article History

Received: 01.11.2020

Accepted: 10.11.2020

Published: 30.11.2020

### Citation

Kenneth, O. O. (2020). A Critical Analysis of the Effect of Schism in Benin Baptist Church (1933-1934) and its Implication on Church Growth. *Indiana Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(1), 1-7.

**Abstract:** Church Schism in Churches has become a reoccurring decimal in Christendom with its attendant effects and consequences on both the body of Christ and evangelization. This paper is an investigation into the immediate and remote causes of Schism in the Baptist church in Benin between its inception in 1921 to 1940 when a faction of the church seceded to found a parallel Baptist congregation in the same city. The study, employing the tools of historical research becomes proper and opposite since schisms weaken members' faith, creates confusion in their heart, enhances the possibility of returning to the world, inspires suspicion and fear amongst others. *Inter-alia* caution is recommended especially when handling issues that are rooted in a people's culture. A major constraint encountered in the course of this work is that many who could have provided vital information on the issue in question have been lost to death. Besides, bias was also noticed as each side spoke from entrenched positions. Notwithstanding, a rigorous effort was made to verify information that was received not only through personal interviews but also from the available literature. However, the study proffers some solutions to curb such reoccurrence.

**Keywords:** Schism, Congregation, Church, Polygamy.

## INTRODUCTION

The church as revealed by Christ's Apostles is perfect. However, the human being who has made up that Church was imperfect. Even in the New Testament, the human manifestation of the Church was far from ideal. Weakness and imperfection naturally continued in the post-Apostolic Church. These problems arose partly because the new converts of the early Church were of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, Greek philosophy and culture, paganism, mystery, and cult religions. Soon the message of Christ began to be interpreted in different ways in such a manner that the core of the Christian message was either obscured or denied. The wave of syncretism (the fusion of many beliefs in different gods into one) compounded the matter as people took bits and pieces from the various religious systems in their attempt to understand and interpret Christian beliefs, Usman (1999). This development led to divergent doctrines which culminated in the separation between the Latin and Greek or Eastern Churches in 1054, Adewale (2006). The primacy of the Pope became greatly limited to the West, Ngwoke (1987).

While the Latin which is also called the Western Church was yet to recuperate from the damage inherent in her break with the East, what was left of the unity of Christendom in the West was torn to shreds by the Reformation and the wave of foundations of Churches that followed. In 1524, Martin Luther disagreed with Rome and founded the Lutheran Church

in Germany. In 1534, Henry the Eight followed suit and began a process that culminated in the severance of ties with Rome, and the birth of the Church of England, Anglican Communion. In 1600, John Smith took his turned and founded the Baptist Church at Amsterdam, Ngwoke (1987). These Churches in their bid to gain converts and possibly outdo other Churches in number, visibility, and influence began to establish and export groups to areas that have not been reached with the gospel. The desperation for converts by the various missionary bodies on the mission field led to the use of tactics that were not often healthy. For instance, communities that were once united were split along religious lines. Scholars like F. Ekechi, O. Kalu, E.A Ayandele, I Enwerem, and several others in their well-researched work have decried the negative import of missionary enterprise and rivalry among communities, Taiwo (2005).

While the scenario of mutual antagonism among missionary agencies subsist, there arose in the first decades of the twentieth century, a new challenge intra church conflicts which resulted in secessions of factions in existing churches to form independent church groups. For instance, in 1888, the Native Baptist emerged from the American Baptist Church. In 1901, a faction broke away from the Anglican Church popularly referred to as the CMS (Church Missionary Society) to form The African Church. This was the longest and most influential of such churches. In 1917, the United African Methodist Church was formed out of the Methodist Mission, Falaiye (1993:20).

Reasons often adduced for this development include but are not limited to the need for adaptation, racial discrimination on the part of the foreign clergy, and conflict over control of the decision-making process.

The reality is that Christian Churches continue to divide and subdivide and spread like wildfire to the effect that, the world today stands aghast at the number of Christian Churches on the earth planet.

The popular pattern is that conflicts lead to fractionalization which in turn provides fertile ground for the formation of independent Church groups with distinct doctrines and hierarchy. However, cases that involve a split in the hierarchy and or doctrine abound. The existence of two autonomous conventions of the Baptist Church in America occasioned largely by the slavery question, to be abolished not, is a typical example of an economically motivated division, Ehianu (2017:78). The Baptist Church in Nigeria owes its presence to the missionary enterprise of the Southern Baptist Convention, the cooperative body of the Baptists in the United States of America, which sends and supports Missionaries of the Baptists Mission in Nigeria. Established in 1845, its pioneers' missionaries in Nigeria included but was not limited to T.J Bowen who arrived Ijaiye on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1850, and eventually settled down at Ijaiye, Abeokuta where he started Baptist Mission work. It was from Abeokuta the work spread to Lagos, Ogbomoso, Ibadan, Oyo, and different parts of Southern Nigeria such as Benin, a sprawling kingdom situated in South Central Nigeria, Uwagboe (2003:93). The seed of the Baptist Faith in Benin was planted in 1921. Within two decades of its presence in Benin, the Church recorded phenomenal progress as it was affiliated to the Nigerian Baptist Convention, (formally the Yoruba Association,) the umbrella body of Baptist Churches in Nigeria. The fledging growth also got its first ordained indigenous priest while new branches were opened. About twenty years after its establishment, the Church was embroiled in a crisis which resulted in a division that subsists to date, Okeanya-Inneh (2005:25).

Today, there exist two groups, both claiming to be Baptist operating under different congregational polity and differing in certain aspects of Baptist doctrine. A situation that further exacerbated the scandal of divisions in Christianity. This paper discusses the Baptist Church in Benin up to the schism that engulfed the congregation, issues in the conflict, and why reconciliation was impossible. We begin with the Anglican root of the Baptist Church in Benin City.

#### **Anglican Root of the Baptist Church in Benin City**

The conquest of the Benin Kingdom in 1897 by the British marked a turning point in efforts to evangelize the area. Having conquered the kingdom and exiled the Oba, the British effectively, administered the

area by establishing a Native Council Administration. Many foreigners who were hitherto afraid to enter the city over security concerns flocked the area as traders, businessmen, and workers. (Okeanya-Inneh, 2005:2) It is noteworthy that before 1897; Benin had acquired the negative epithet of “the city of blood” because of human sacrifices that had become part of the people's religious life. Again, the abolition of taxes and tributes paid by traders in Benin by the *defacto* British government facilitated the transition of the metropolis into a city that was host to all ethnic nationalities. (Ehianu, 2015)

The origin of the Anglican Church (commonly called CMS) in Benin, Sapele, and Warri is traceable to the missionary endeavor of Rt. Revd. James Johnson who was born in Sierra-Leone by two liberated Nigeria slaves. Johnson is credited with establishing the first Church in the Twentieth century in Benin City. This church was St. Matthew (CMS) Church at Sakponba Road and was dedicated on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1902. Johnson, like the Biblical Moses, was assisted in this task by individuals like J.A Oyesile, an Ora man, Madam Arokun Ovonramwon, an early Christian convert, and wife of Oba Ovonramwon who after spending three years with her disposed husband in Calabar returned permanently to Benin in 1900 resolved to be a committed Christian. She donated her late father's house to the CMS through Mr. Oyesile. The structure was demolished to give way for the erection of St Matthews Church. (Ehianu, 2008:38). St. Matthews been the only Church then in Benin beckoned to many young, brilliant men and women who became members of the church. Among these were Francis Emogie Iyamu, Cornelius Asemota, a member of the Agho Obaseki family.

The Church became the nerve center and fountain of the CMS form which other branches in Benin City and its environs sprang. As the songwriter says: “God moves mysteriously, his wonders to perform” (Sankey516). St Matthew also became the springboard for another Christian denomination-the Baptist church in Benin.

#### **The Baptist Church in Benin**

After two decades of its existence in Benin, the CMS went through an implosion. Three factions emerged in the church. The first was comfortable with the church irrespective of complaints from other members. A second faction was dissatisfied with the church for its refusal to admit representatives of the Young Men and Women Christian Association (YMCA/YWCA) into the Executive committee of the church.

The third force had an ax to grind with the station minister. It is reported that some educated Bini members demanded accountability and transparency concerning church funds. Uwagboe (2005.102) says it

also involved the management of school finances. The priest Rev. Kidd who interpreted this request as an affront on his person is quoted to have said “he was not an accountant and therefore not accountable to the inquirers. (Okeanya-Inneh, 2005:3) The dissatisfied group decided to seek justice in the court of the Anglican Bishop in Lagos, Rt Revd. Melville Jones. Again, the response of the Bishop was not satisfactory, the Bishop must have been a beneficiary of Revd Kidd’s corruption hence the indifference or tacit protection of Revd. Kidd.

Unable to get justice, Francis Iyamu led the group of twenty-nine young men and four women to work out of St. Matthews Church. These twenty-nine men and four women started to hold prayer meetings and fellowship at Urhokpota Hall, which was the courthouse. (Okeanya-Inneh, 2005:3). They wanted an absolute break with the Anglican Church. As the group was handicapped by a lack of trained persons in church work, Cornelius Asemota acted as a lay reader for the emerging church. At this juncture, Emmanuel Legemah told the group that he knows a Bini man who had worked as a Catechist in the CMS church Igbanke, Benin city, and Ubulu-Uku but had withdrawn his services and was then engaged in sawing timber at Ugbekun village along Sakponba Road. The group hurried to Ugbekun village and pleaded with Mr. Obadiah Emokpae, the catechist to join them and lead them in prayer meetings. To this request, Emokpae obliged. (Okeanya-Inneh, 2005:4).

It is however not clear if the reasons are given above jointly led to the breakaway of these members from the CMS or two independent factions left based on these reasons. However, research into the subject matter undertaken by O. J Uwagboe suggest that from the starting point of Baptist work in Benin, there was only one church that came out to be known as Baptist (Uwagboe, 2000:10).

It appears that. they were unsatisfied with the leadership of a Catechist, who goes by the Anglican doctrine could not administer the Holy Communion and perhaps severe her relationship and spite the CMS, the group sought affiliation with the Nigerian Baptist Convention, (here in after referred to as NBC). Two prominent members of the church, Emmanuel Legemah, and Francis Iyamu were mandated to go to Lagos and commence affiliation agreement with NBC. In Lagos, they spoke with J.R Williams, Head of the First Baptist Church, and requested him to visit Benin preparatory to the affiliation with the First Baptist Church, Lagos, later the Nigerian Baptist Convention. The outcome of their journey received unanimous approval. The group formally applied to the Baptist Mission Headquarters at Ogbomosho for affiliation. At a period of denominational rivalries and acrimony, one expert nothing less than outright acceptance and approval. On Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November 1921 the Benin

Baptist Church was officially inaugurated by Revd. Louis Duval, then chairman of the Baptist Mission in Nigeria in the company of Revd. J.R Williams, and Revd. Aghogin Omatshola of Sapele. Thus, began the Baptist faith in Benin and its environs. (Okeanya-Inneh, 2005:5) Members of the newly formed church were rebaptized by immersion in line with Baptist doctrine as a mark to seal the incorporation.

### **State of Acceptance and Consolidation**

The Baptist church was open to all and for this reason, it quickly grew in membership. Members were drawn from the traditional religious adherents and dissatisfied members of other existing church groups. There was tolerance for traditional religious beliefs that were adjured unoffensive to Christianity. The church through its lay leader Mr. Emokpae collaborated with Revd. Duval who was based in Sapele and was a member of the church inauguration team. Duval reflecting on the strength of the Benin church and the satisfaction of the congregation in Sapele wrote:

After the church was formed, some of the people in Benin began to think seriously about Salvation and sent a delegation to Sapele to inquire into these matters. They were received very cordially by the Pastor. They went back and imparted their teachings to their flock. (Duval cited in Uwagboe, 2000:22).

The new church experienced a meteoric growth so much that in the same year (1922), the church had to approach the Oba again for a piece of land on which to build a befitting auditorium and a school. The Oba again granted this request by donating a large piece of land at Ugbague area within the metropolis to the Baptist church.

Work on the new site started almost immediately and by the end of the following year, October 1923 precisely, the auditorium was completed and consequently dedicated. The church in the same year, at the same site erected buildings to start a primary school. Within a short period, the Baptist influence had pervaded the city and its environs. Some of the villages where Baptist churches were successfully established during this early period of expansion were: Uhi, Igeduma, Ekenwan, Iboro, Gelegele, Ofunoma, Ofunoma and Igiuovbiobo, Iru, Orior, Ugiamwen, Igbobi, and several others.

Even as external growths were recorded, the internal growth of the church did not wane; all the organizations in the church became well-founded and structured and this led to the continued visitation of Baptist missionaries to Benin.

Due to the impressive work of Pastor O. Emokpae in the church, he was recommended and admitted for a two-year course in theology at the Baptist Seminary, Ogbomosho in 1926. During his absence,

Mr. C. E. Asemota took charge as an interim pastor and on his return from the Baptist Seminary in Ogbomosho, was ordained into the full gospel ministry in 1930. With this investiture, Rev. Emokpae became the first ordained priest in the history of the Nigeria Baptist Convention in Benin.

### **The Beginning of the Schism**

A monocausal explanation of a complex historical event is an unscholarly habit, for often the motive which guides human actions are complex and elusive to non-participants in the events, sometimes also even to some participants. Against this background, a concerted effort was made to unravel the root causes, ramifications, and trajectory of the schism which resulted in the existence of two parallel Baptist church organizations in Benin. The pain taking research brings to the fore two intertwined and mutually reinforcing factors which include: Marital requirement, and ownership/management of mission schools, we begin with the marital requirement.

### **Marital Requirement/Regulation**

Polygamy (precisely polygyny) was an accepted form of marriage in Africa. It was a practice premised on the following grounds:

- The barrenness of wife: In most cultures, in Africa, the primary purpose of marriage was procreation to ensure the continuity of the family. It was considered a curse not to have a male child to sustain and propagate the family tree and a man would do whatever was possible, (often secure more wives) to produce a male descendant.
- Need to increase family labour-force: Traditional African Societies were primarily agrarian, thus there was the need to increase the labour force through having many children. This was only possible through the acquisition of many wives the more the number of wives, the more the prospect of many children.
- A lot of men have been compelled to have more wives as a result of insubordination, unwillingness, or inability of their wife to perform her matrimonial responsibility of meeting the man's sexual needs (Ehiain, 2003:38).
- Status symbol: A man's status was in part measured by the size of his harem.
- Menstruation: In traditional societies, a menstruating woman was adjudged unclean, whatever she touches equally become unclean. Menstrual flow was also believed to be destructive to a man's protective charms and spiritual coverage, for this reason, no traditional man would have sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman. Having one wife therefore consign a man to four to five days of sexual abstinence every month. Some men would go for second or more wives to ensure that sexual partner was never in short supply.

These beliefs were so engrafted into the social and religious fabric of the Binis that not even the Baptist Faith could winnow, S.N Ezeaya calls it the "endurance of conviction", (Ehianu, 2005:317). In most communities in West Africa, Islam was easy to market partly because it accommodated polygamy (Islam accepts up to four wives). When the Baptist church in Benin was planted, the church door was open to all, there were no strict rules regarding membership as was the case following the conversion of Emperor Constantine Adewale (2006). Rev. Emokpae who administered the new church remained indifferent to the fact that many of his members were in a polygamous state and all seemed well until his eventual returned from Ogbomosho after two years of theological training and eventual ordination as a priest.

Following Emokpae's return, there was the consolidation of Baptist work in Benin City and its environs. At first, all was rosy and the future of the church seemed bright. But between 1933-1934, there arose great turbulence that tore the church apart. The rift occurred as a result of Rev. Emokpae's insistence on keeping to the doctrine of the Nigeria Baptist Convention (an umbrella organization under which all Nigerian Baptist churches fall.) which frowned at polygamy, an issue that affected a good number of members in the church. This was made more complicated by the fact that most of those affected were influential personalities in the church and who were already polygamists right from the period they were in the Anglican Church. They could not imagine changing their status for obvious reasons. In the first place, and as Ehianu (2003:34) has observed:

Marriage involves social and cultural relationships that are so meaningful yet so profoundly complex. It is not just an affair between a man and a woman, but one that brings together many families and communities, and ethnic groups.

So, in traditional Africa, only an insane man would send his wife parking, such a decision is beyond him and therefore ultra vires (above given powers). The authority to divorce rests on both families and can only be exercised with uttermost caution. Besides, many of these men were prominent men and their wives of royal parentage. During the period in question, it was unimaginable, for instance, for a man to send the daughter of the Oba parking even with the most cogent reason, not to talk of when there is no reason. Again, Oba Eweka II was a member of the church. His membership had been of tremendous relevance as he provided the material and financial needs of the church. Even his membership had evangelical significance. His presence in the church was an invitation to all his subjects and by his position, as Oba, he cannot but be polygamous. Who on earth would excommunicate the Oba from a church built on a piece of land that belonged to him? For these and other reasons (of course



there were others), the polygamists in the church and their sympathizers were uncomfortable and vehemently opposed the one wife policy. The conflict was so intense that the missionaries had to intervene. The General Superintendent of the Baptist mission in Nigeria then, Dr. Green, and the General Secretary, Rev. Duval were sent to mediate in the matter. The protesting members raised phantom charges against Emokpae and demanded his removal. Realizing that the relationship between Emokpae and many church members had gone too sour, the former was transferred to Olla near Ejigbo in present-day Ogun State, to head the Baptist church there while S.A Lausibik was deployed from Ejigbo to Benin to take over as host pastor. This peaceful intervention by the Baptist Mission only succeeded in postponing and or suppressing the thorny issue that would later explode and bring about an irrevocable division in the church. Odiase (1985:28).

In 1937, the position of the NBC on polygamy was introduced into the constitution and bye-laws of the Baptist mission for the first time. However, the final decision and ratification of the principled stand of the NBC against polygamy did not come into force until 1938. The decision to enforce this doctrinal stand was the sequel to a letter from Rev. C. E. Muddry, who was secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, after he visited Nigeria. Part of the letter reads:

It is high time the churches of Nigeria Baptist Convention (NBC) purged themselves of every member, male and female who still practice polygamy.....(cited in Odiase 1985:30).

Acting on the above letter, the Execution Committees of NBC made the following recommendations to all the churches affiliated with it.

- That the churches of the NBC be urged to adopt the new constitution and bye-laws of the convention...
- That a period of two years from July 1, 1938, to July 1, 1940, beset within which every NBC churches should adopt...
- Any pastor or teacher who fails shall be dealt with .... (Odiase 1985:31).

It was a full-blown war against polygamy as the NBC rolled out one statement after another:

... only monogamists are eligible for baptism and church membership and a polygamist desiring church membership should be advised to put away all his wives but one, provided that can be done without injustice to anyone. (Okeanya-Inneh, 2005:26).

Expectedly, two factions emerged in the church- the Helpers Union, this was headed by Mr. James Odiase (later Deacon Odiase). They were in full support of the NBC on monogamy and the Foundation Members who believed the church was theirs and they cannot afford to cede its control to anybody.

Yes, they requested an affiliation but in affiliation, they got what they did not bargain for. They were being shown the way out of the church they founded. At best they could only “enroll their names as friends of the church” Okeanya-Inneh (2005:25) Worse still, some of their tribesmen had pledged their loyalty to NBC and for the women, most of whom were victims of the evils associated with polygamy, they were provided with a veritable platform to pull down the institution. The Foundation Members pleaded to the NBC to relax its stance on polygamy, assuring the body that the practice could only die a natural death and not by legislation. As all entreaties were rebuffed, the group was set for the worse. Non can deny them membership of the church they founded, not even the affiliation document they had signed. Those who support NBC were free to go elsewhere and worship. At this junction, the NBC applied the big stick, by withdrawing its financial and material support for the church and school. The result was that those loyal to NBC pulled out to form an independent church group.

### **School Ownership and Management**

There is no dearth of literature on the choice of schools as tools for evangelism in Africa. Thanks to the pioneering works of J.F.A Ajayi, F.A Ayandele, A.B Fafunwa, F. K Ekechi, L. U Nwosu, S.U Eriwo to mention but a few. A common trend in their works is that the purpose of missionary schools which included primary, modern teacher’s training and grammar schools was originally for evangelism and to catch the young at their early age (Ehianu, 2008:60).

Thomas Jefferson Bowen, a pioneer missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States remarked: the Africans must read the Bible and this implies instruction (Bowen cited in Ehianu, 2008:60) It is obvious from the foregoing that the primary reasons for establishing schools by the early missionaries in most parts of Africa were religious, to convert the children who would, in turn, carry the torch of the gospel to their families and communities.

Missionary schools that were often situated within the church compound were funded with grants from the propriety mission, tuition paid by students, and later with grants from colonial administration beginning from 1872. This was partly because mission schools were needed to produce the manpower needs of the Colonial administration (Ayandele, 1966:298). As stated earlier, it is imperative to note that wherever a church was situated, a school was built or located nearby; thus was the case with the Baptist Church along Mission road, (now known as Benin United Baptist church) which had a school called Benin Baptist Day School. The voluntary agency school was opened in the early 1920s by the American Baptist Mission to impact literacy and religious education to the children in the locality. Contemporaneous to the controversy over

polygamy in 1939, Miss Ruth Walden, Manageress of Baptist schools in Benin:

Directed and in fact, insisted that all schools hitherto belonging to the Benin Baptist Church in Benin should be transferred to the proprietorship of the Nigeria Baptist Convention. (Okeanya-Inneh, 2005:27).

Indigenous members of the church interpreted this development to imply given up:

title to the land (note that the said land was given to them by Oba Eweka II) acquired by the members for the church building all physical properties.

This was a pill too bitter to swallow but they were ready to shift ground. They would comply if only six of their members would be appointed into the committee to run the school with Miss Ruth Walden as the Manageress. A request that was rebuffed by Ruth Walden. As they consider the way forward, NBC in a letter dated April 15<sup>th</sup>, signed by William Carson, Grace Carson, and Ruth Walden withdrew their support for the Benin Baptist Church and school, Benin City. With the development, a situation reminiscent of the Elders of Israel and Rehoboam- "to your tent oh Israel" (1 kgs12:16) was recreated in the Baptist church in Benin. With the parting of ways, the Foundation Members renamed the church the Benin United Baptist Church and appointed the following members as officers responded to the church Elders Executive Committee, Osemwota Late-Chairman, Chief W N Gboghodo-School manager, S.I Usunalele Secretary S. O Odiase-Treasurer.

With this development, the group loyal to NBC pulled out of the church. Prominent among these persons were Mr/Mrs. I. A Odiase, Mrs. E.O Erhabor, D.D Amadasun, G.I Obayagbon, Job Isibor, Alfred Edo, Iyekekpolor Obatete, Geofrey Ogunbor, Mr/Mrs. Enadeghe Amayo. These people started holding meetings and church services at the residence Mr. Samson Okanka Obaseki's residence until they acquired a site for the building of their church. On request, Oba Akenzua II gave them a piece of land at Ogbe Quarters behind the palace. On this land, they built a new auditorium and adopted a new name, American Baptist Church, Benin City. They also built a primary school called Ogbe Baptist Day School in 1940. (Odiase, 1985:32) In the mid-1950s, the church acquired a large parcel of land in the main area of the city, and in 1959, the foundation stone of the church was laid. By 1962, the project had been completed and members moved in. the new environment (being at the king square) demanded that the church's name be changed to reflect her new location. It was unanimously agreed that the name Central Baptist Church, Kings square Benin city be adopted, while the parent church, as said earlier had changed its name to Benin Unified Baptist Church.

Members of both factions are united by blood and or by marriage because as Archbishop Obiefuna has observed, "In Africa, the blood of the tribe's man is thicker than the water of baptism" but in matters of faith, they had fallen apart. They would not accept a Christianity that is alienated from their culture and world view.

## CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in this paper to discuss the schism within the Baptist Church in Benin between 1921-1940. A history of the Baptist Church in Benin dovetails into the roots of the crises in the church which border primarily on the age-long social-cultural practice of polygamy. No doubt, the people have embraced the Christian religion and want to be saved. But insisting that they jettison all wives except one was a pill too bitter to swallow. After all, they reasoned, the Bible does not expressly condemn polygamy. A corollary to marital demand was the attempt by NBC to forcefully acquire the church schools and properties which was resisted by the foundation members. Expectedly, a faction sympathetic and loyal to the NBC succeeded to form a parallel Baptist church, ready to serve God according to Baptist doctrine and practices while the foundation members were satisfied worshipping God within their cultural matrix.

## Recommendations

- The Christian Church should properly address any form of crisis or conflict at its early stage so as to avoid Church schism.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) expert should be employed into the church institution.
- The Christian Bible indicates unity in the Body of Christ. This must be practice by Church leaders.

## REFERENCES

1. Adewale, O.A. (2006). *Church History 1*, Lagos: National Open University of Nigeria.
2. Ayandele, E. A. (1966). *Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914*, London: Longman Group Ltd.
3. Ehianu, W. E (2005). The Resurgence of Aiyelala Deity in Benin: An Independent on the Church and the Judiciary. *EPHA: Ekpoma Journal of Religious Studies*, 1(2).
4. Ehianu, W. E (2008). "Ecumenism in Benin and Environs in the Light of Vatican II's" *Unitatis Redintegratio 1965-2005* (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis). Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria.
5. Ehianu, W. E.(2017). Early Churches in Benin: From Early Missionaries to 2000. In A. Esimaje et al. (Eds.). *Perspective on the Humanities*. Benin City; Benson Idahosa University.

6. Ehianu, W. E. (2003). The Church and Social Development in Owa land 1980-1970. *Ado Journal of Religions*, 2(1).
7. Ehianu, W.E. (2008). Ex-slaves and Christian Presence in Nigeria. In J.K Ayantayo et al. *Readings in Religion No 1*. Department of Religions Uniben.
8. Falaiye, A. (1993). *History of Christianity in West Africa* (Unpublished Lecture Note). Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria.
9. Ngwoke, B. (1987). Ecumenism in a Divided World. *Bigard Theological Studies*, 7(2), 47..
10. Okeanya-Inneh (2005). *Benin United Baptist Mission*. Benin City, Nigeria: United Baptist Mission.
11. Sagie, G. (2001). *Life History of Rev. Obadiah Emokpae 1814-1935* (Unpublished work).
12. Taiwo, A (2005). Schism in Christianity: The Case of the Baptist Church in Nigeria. *Iroro: A Journal of Arts*, 10(1 & 2).
13. Usman, D. B (1999), *An Introduction to Church History: Judea to Nigeria*. Aba: Muse Book Publishers.
14. Uwagboe D. O. (2003). *The Baptist work in Edo Land: The Dawn of Baptist Work in Benin city*, Benin City: Edo Baptist Conference.
15. Uwagboe, O. J. (2003). *The Baptist Mission and Education Development of Benin City* (Unpublished Long Essay). Department of History, University of Benin, Nigeria.