

BAPTIST WOMEN'S MISSIONARY UNION OF NIGERIA: 1
YESTERDAY AND TODAY'S KINGDOM HELPERS IN HUMAN
CAPACITY BUILDING
THROUGH EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP

A PAPER PRESENTED BY:

MRS. GRACE EGO OMONI

Ph.D GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING

@

THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE GATHERING.

11TH JULY, 2024.

EKO HOTEL, LAGOS.



APPRECIATION

- ▶ The Convener of this august and all important gathering,
- ▶ Other Personalities here gathered here today.
- ▶ Permit me to stand on the existing protocols,
- ▶ Dear people of God, I am particularly grateful to the Leadership of Baptist World Alliance for inviting me to this august occasion to briefly talk on the History of Baptist Women's Missionary Union of Nigeria.
- ▶ It is indeed a very rare privilege and I must confess that I am not taking it for granted.
- ▶ Thank you!
- ▶ Key Words: Evangelism and Stewardship, Human Capacity Building, Kingdom Helpers.

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ BWMU Watch Word:
- ▶ " For we are Co- workers with God; ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's Building" (1Cor 3:9).
- ▶ God's desire is to use people for His greater Glory. Christians are under His Employment and Services.
- ▶ The Baptist Women's Missionary Union of Nigeria recognizes this desire of His, hence she sees the Proclamation of the Gospel as the central task.
- ▶ This vision was captured early enough by the Founding Mothers of the BWMU of Nigeria hence the zeal to enlist other women into God's work force to build people for God's Kingdom.
- ▶ Zimmerman in Ayegboyin (1996) asserts" In virtually all cases, women have had to demonstrate their dedication and calling to a greater extent than men" A beautiful compliment for the women folk!
- ▶ In this paper, the speaker will therefore briefly trace the History of the Baptist Women's Missionary Union of Nigeria since her establishment and her impact on human capacity building through Evangelism and Stewardship.

The topic will be discussed under the following sub-headings:

- ▶ **When and how the Union began.**
- ▶ **The Purpose.**
- ▶ **Methods of Operations**
- ▶ **BWMU of Yesterday and Human Capacity Building Through Evangelism and Stewardship.**
- ▶ **BWMU of Today and Human Capacity Building Through Evangelism and Stewardship.**
- ▶ **Conclusion**

How and When the BWMU of Nigeria Began:

- ▶ The Organisation dates back to early 1854-1919 when the Baptist Mission started in Nigeria with the name women's League.
- ▶ It metamorphosed into Women's Missionary Union on the 14th of March 1919 under the leadership of Dr. Mojisola and Mrs Adeotan Agbebi.
- ▶ The inauguration ceremony was presided over by E. G. Maclean a Southern Baptist Missionary
- ▶ That first Meeting was held under an "Idi Isin" tree.
- ▶ In the book "Their Legacy"(Vol3) Aduke Akinola(WMU Director 1984-2002) gave a Chronicle of notable indigenous Pioneer Nigerian Women who began WMU work.
- ▶ These include Mrs Adeotan Agbebi, Mrs Johannah Mobola Ayorinde, Mrs Grace Gbaden Ajani, DNS Rachael Boluwade, Mrs Ruth Asati Fagbohun, DNS. Beatrice Otolorin, Mrs Grace and Dcns. R.B. Famuyiwa and a few others.
- ▶ These were tutored and assisted to understand more about Baptist work by some Female Southern Baptist Missionaries such as Neal C. Young, Mary Yancey, Mrs. Patterson.

PURPOSES

- ▶ **BWMU exists for Missions- labourers in God's Vineyard hence I see the members as Kingdom Helpers**
- ▶ **Initially the vision was to:**
- ▶ **Enlist and establish women into the local churches;**
- ▶ **Mould women to be better housewives, godly mothers in the society and the church;**
- ▶ **Build lives who will emulate the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;**
- ▶ **Encourage women and girls to go to school;**
- ▶ **Train women to be self reliant;**
- ▶ **Prepare them to become potential wives to pastors, civil servants and teachers;**
- ▶ **The purposes have now extended;**
- ▶ **Train Women as Helpers in spreading the Gospel and winning souls for Christ;**
- ▶ **Empower fellow women for Kingdom Growth;**
- ▶ **Empower women to engage in aggressive and extensive Evangelism;**
- ▶ **Co-operate with the Global Mission Board in Church Planting;**
- ▶ **Assist in bringing succor to the disadvantaged and afflicted.**

Strategies for Achieving the Objectives

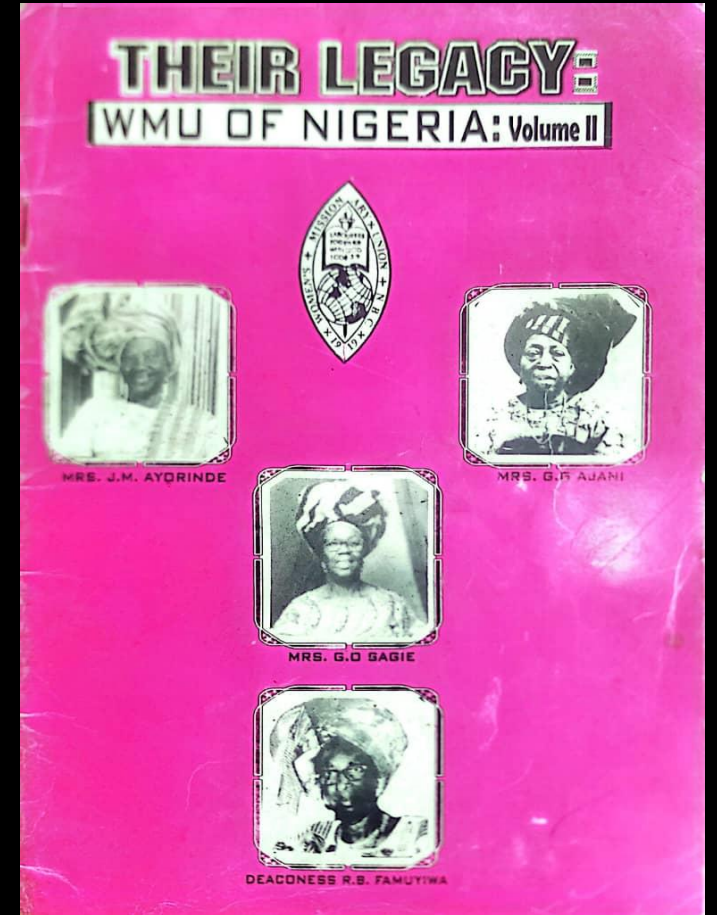
- ▶ **Division of the Union into four organisations: The Sunbeam Band for children between 4-9 years**
- ▶ **Girls Auxiliary for Girls between 10-16 years.**
- ▶ **Lydia's Auxiliary for Girls between the ages of 17 years till marriage.**
- ▶ **Women Missionary Society is for the Married women and widowed women.**
- ▶ **Evangelism and missions which include neighbourhood, school, village, personal, crusade and open air.**
- ▶ **Prayer, Camp meeting, Retreats such as widow's, Hannah's and Rebecca's.**
- ▶ **Stewardship and service**
- ▶ **Bible and mission study**

- ▶ **Visitations, Drama presentations, march past, quiz and music competitions.**
- ▶ **Engaging in Global Mission Activities.** Each year the Evangelism Department of the BWMU plans and allocates Mission Fields to each of the 34 Conferences who visits, meets the needs and carries the gospel to these mission fields
- ▶ **Trains women in different areas such writing skills, catering, soap, pomade, dressing and insecticide making, as well as tie and dye to empower them**
- ▶ **Conducts counselling, workshops and Seminars in various areas of life.**
- ▶ **Organizes Women's fellowship, associational, camp and prayer meetings.**
- ▶ **Encourages women to attend Local, National and International Conferences.**
- ▶ **Bible Study, Teaching, Symposium.**
- ▶ **Deliverance and Ministration.**
- ▶ **Scholarships and Sponsorship.**

BWMU OF YESTERYEARS AND HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP:

- ▶ **This segment covers the early period of WMU from 1919 with Mama Neale C. Young the longest serving leader and officer to 1984 when Mama Aduke Akinola took over from Miss Mary Yancey as the Executive Secretary. The title later changed to Executive Director: (Lateju, 2019).**
- ▶ **The beginning of WMU work in Nigeria was very tough because the Union lacked financial support;**
- ▶ **The transportation system was poor and travelling was tedious and dangerous. Getting to the villages for meetings and evangelism took days of trekking in very difficult terrain.**
- ▶ **Health hazards was rampant due to poor environments.**
- ▶ **Nevertheless, the WMU engaged in building up women, girls and children.**
- ▶ **Souls were won to Christ, so there was population increase in the churches.**
- ▶ **Supported female education.**

YESTERYEARS' LEADERS



NEAL C. YOUNG, MARY YANCEY, SUSAN ANDERSON THE LEGACY

- ▶ **Girls were sent to women's college at Idi-Aba, Abeokuta and some others to Iyawo School at Oyo.**
- ▶ **Raised up women to become wives to Pastors, teachers and civil servants.**
- ▶ **Gave Financial Assistance to Churches**
- ▶ **Engaged in Evangelism and used field workers to supervise.**
- ▶ **Invited women to their fellowship, Associational camp meetings and Retreats.**
- ▶ **Organized Bible study and encouraged personal service.**
- ▶ **WMU became a Helper to NBC through their involvement in spreading the gospel Lateju (2019)**
- ▶ **Contributed financially towards church planting and building of church auditorium.**
- ▶ **Women started attending International Conferences and this helped them to widen their knowledge spiritually, economically and socially.**

BWMU OF NIGERIA OF TODAY AND INVOLVEMENT IN HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP

This era spans through two stages:

- ▶ **Mama Dr Pastor Aduke Akinola and Dr. Rev Yemi Ladokun (1984 - 2010).**
- ▶ **During this period, human capacity building by WMU became more pronounced and impacting.**
- ▶ **Dissemination of information and the spread of the Gospel to different parts of Nigeria**
- ▶ **Using Yearly Evangelism Plans by the National Chairman helped in raising faithful women stewards for Evangelism and Missions.**
- ▶ **Mission Fields were allocated to different Conferences. Women visited these field, did House Evangelism, assisted in providing the needs and planted churches e,g Isoko Mission Field in the Defunct Delta Baptist Conference.**
- ▶ **Prison Ministry e.g. two WMU women in Ijebu-Ode through the assistance of Miss Martins, a Southern Baptist Missionary started the Prison Ministry. Visits to the Prison helped in the rehabilitation of the women inmates.**

THE SECOND ERA



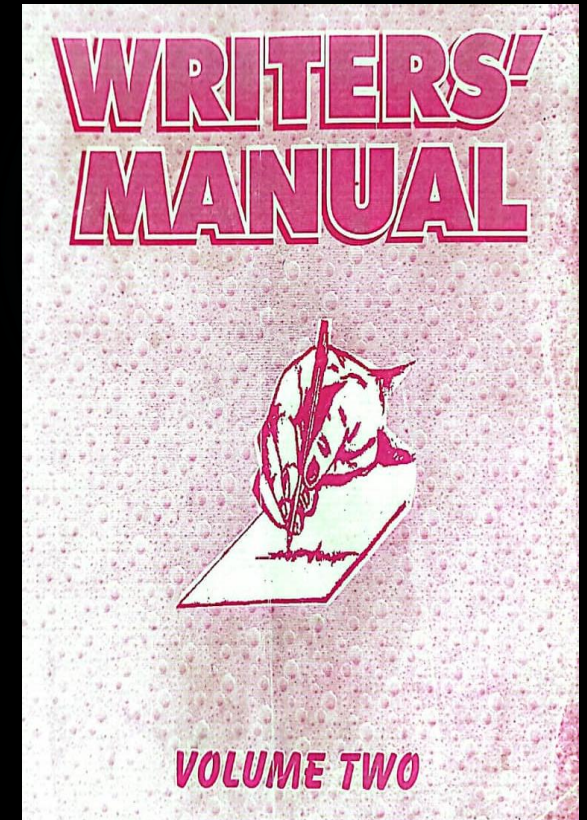
Pastor Dr Adukeke Akinola-
WMU Director 1984-2002



Rev. Dr Yemi Ladokun-WMU
Director 2002-2009



Dns Agnes Ofughara-
Evangelism Chairmam



- ▶ **Writers' Workshop started in 2003 at Camp Young, Ede and built women to become writers in magazines and authors of books.**
- ▶ **Since 2003 WMU has trained women who are periodically called upon to write in our quarterly , bi-annual and yearly Literatures for the different organizations.(The Seal, Proclaim Yearbook, Young People's Manuals).**
- ▶ **Establishment of Day-Care and Rehabilitation Centre**
- ▶ **Attendance to International Conference increased. Our women could now compete favourably with others.**

THE SECOND STAGE IS WHERE BWMU IS NOW: REV DR. MRS RACHAEL ADEPATE LATEJU'S, DNS BISI OLAGBEGI & DR MRS. JOSEPHINE ONOWHAKPOR ERA FROM 2009 TILL DATE:

- ▶ **An era of rapid development in Human capacity building through modernized aggressive, intensive and extensive Evangelism and Stewardship as a result of Research, attendance to Conferences, workshops and seminars**
- ▶ **More work on Village, school, neighbourhood, market, personal, social media and open air Evangelism during camp meetings conferences and Retreats.**
- ▶ **BWMU sponsors and rehabilitates the less privileged- girls, women , the mentally and physically challenged, as well as pastors for formal education.**
- ▶ **Provides food, clothing, books, Bibles, funds to converts, members and non-Baptist members.**
- ▶ **Offers free medical services to people during evangelism outreach, camp meetings, workshops and Retreats.**

BWMU TODAY 2009 to the Present

17



- ▶ Organises Bible study, Counselling, leadership training, workshops where women engage in skills acquisition training. These have helped produce women who are self-reliant and even employers of labour in their areas of specialisation.
- ▶ Sponsors girls, women, student pastors to Higher institutions of learning/ Nursing Schools.
- ▶ Organises Retreats for Widows, Single Girls and women facing challenges.
- ▶ Empowering and meeting their needs through Bible Study, Discipleship training/teaching, counselling and praying with them.
- ▶ BWMU, at times in collaboration with GMB through Evangelism engage in church planting, building of church auditorium, prayer grounds and provide musical instruments, projectors, television, bicycles, motorcycles and motor boats.

- ▶ **Building and evangelizing people through Prayer Retreats held periodically. Participants know about the challenges women of other races face as they join to pray during Women's World Day of Prayer and Africa Day of Prayer.**
- ▶ **Attendance to Leadership workshops International, National and Local Conferences such as BWA, BWUA and BWUWA for training, knowledge and learning.**
- ▶ **The Sunbeam Band, the Girls and Lydia Auxiliaries are trained to engage in Activities.**
- ▶ **Promoting awareness campaigns, stewardship services such as giving, going for missions, creating self confidence, self-reliance and self sufficiency in the girls.**

Conclusion

20

The History and Work of Baptist Women's Missionary Union of Nigeria is creditably interesting, tasking and undoubtedly beneficial to all and sundry because it extends beyond just preaching the gospel! Lateju 2019 acknowledges that BWMU is a Helper to the NBC because women as helpers in the home where they support, encourage and bring about Progress in the convention. Human Capacity Building has been and is still the focus of this wonderful Kingdom Helpers despite excruciating challenges. According to Ayegboyin (1996) Patterson acknowledged the fact that women bore the brunt of suffering by making personal sacrifices in the interest of the growth of Baptist Churches. However, from this paper, it would be seen that BWMU work has gone beyond that initial purpose. It is now building the people, the society and other nations. Today, BWMU has taken the Leadership in Human Capacity Building and other Conventions see her as a Kingdom Helper, a Pace-setter, Promoter and a Gigantic Pillar in the expansion of the Gospel in the Nigerian Baptist Convention through Evangelism, Stewardship and Missions.

Thank you for listening

REFERENCES

1. **Akinola, A(2002) Their Legacy: WMU of Nigeria Vol 2. Ibadan. Bezekos Printing Press.**
2. **Ayegboyin, D(1996) Expanding Horizon: The Challenge of the Christian Women's, Organisation in Nigeria in Africana Marburgensia Special Issue 16**
3. **Ayegboyin,D &.Lateju R.A.(2023) "Women's Missionary Union and it's Contribution to Mission Enterprise of the the Nigerian Baptist Convention" in A History of Global Mission Board of the Nigerian Baptist Convention 1953-2023. Ibadan, BWRIGHT Integrated Publishers.**
4. **JasperA. Evangelism Strategies Today. Ibadan, Ola- Oluseye Press.**
5. **Jasper, A(2019) Evangelism and Mission Work of the Women's Missionary Union of Nigeria. in The Baptist Deacon International Vol 8 no 1 p.26.**
6. **Lateju, R.A(2014)The Role of the Auxiliary Status of WMU and Quasi Autonomy Status o MMU in the Nigerian Baptist Convention in A CENTURY OF NIGERIA BAPTIST CONVENTION: A Call for Celebration an Renewal. Ogbomoso, Publishing Unit of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary.**
7. **Lateju R.A, (2019) Our Stewardship: The Historic Birth, Growth and Expansion of Baptist Women's Missionary Union of Nigeria (1919-2019). Baptist Women's Missionary Union of Nigeria Publishers**
8. **Lateju, R.A. (2019) Women's Missionary Union in The Minister's Manual: Biblical Practical, Contemporary, Comprehensive (ed) Nihinlola, E; Akintola,S.& Ijaola, A. Ibadan. Baptist Press.**
9. **Ladokun,Y(2018) Mama Ladokun in The Seal. Vol 7.no 7.**
10. **Omoni, G. E.(2018) Mama Omoni in The Seal Vol 7.no 7**
11. **Olaniyan, M(2019) Brief History of Women's Missionary Society in The Baptist Deacon International Vol 8 no 1 p.11**
12. **Oroniran D.F, (2013) The Baptist Heritage: A Nigerian Perspective. Ibadan, Titles Publishers.**
13. **Summary Report and Minutes of Proceedings of Women's Missionary Union of Nigeria: Auxiliary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention (2019)**
14. **Chats with DNS A. Ofugara Past Evangelism Chairman & Jasper, A. A.(Rtd) Director of Evangelism and Missions of the BWMU of Nigerian Baptist Convention respectively**

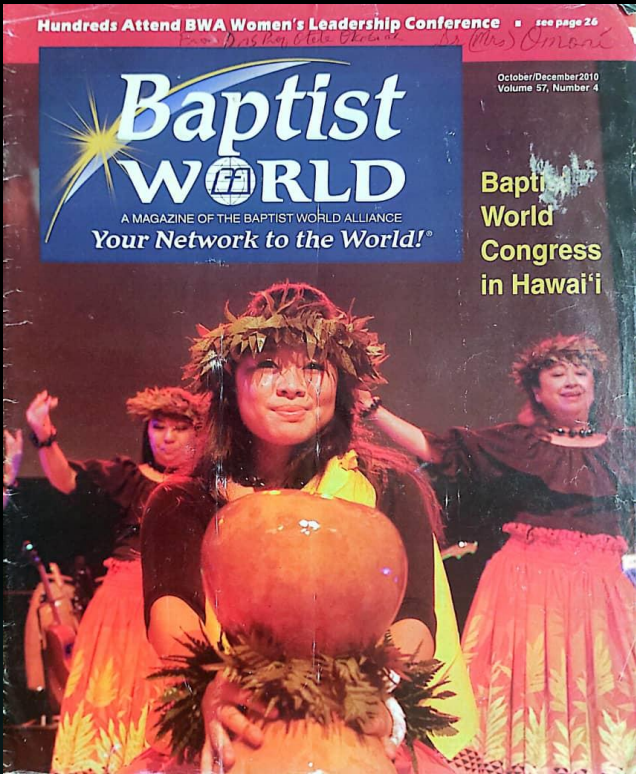
Evangelism with converts and church planting



Evangelism contd.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES



ZAMBIA



LIBERIA



HAWAII



GHANA



SOUTH AFRICA

PROJECTS



Church auditorium, Ibadan Conference



Prayer Ground. Eku WMU Camp



Church Auditorium, Ashaka. WMU Anioma

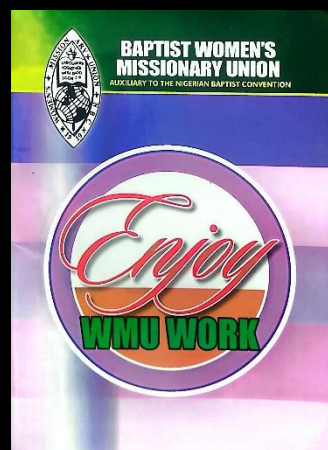
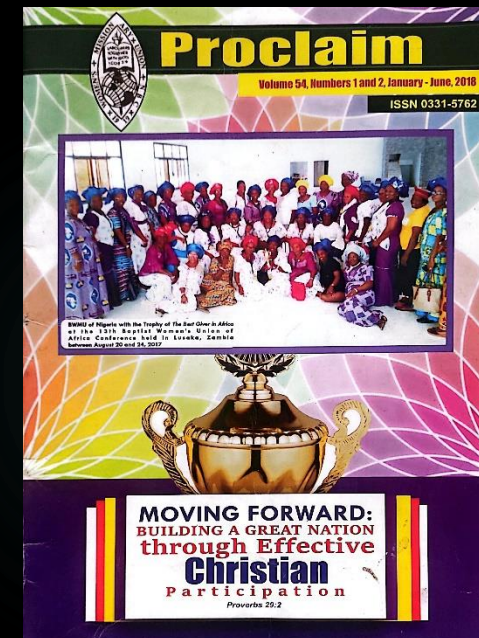
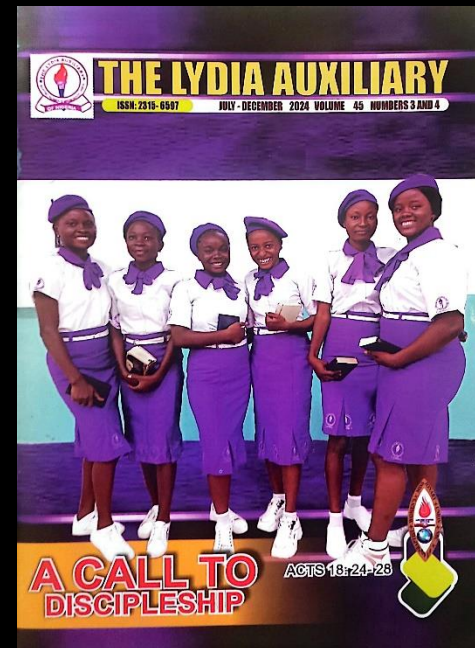


Church foundation laying, Ashaka. Anioma



Building projects through evangelism

Publications authored by members





THANK YOU