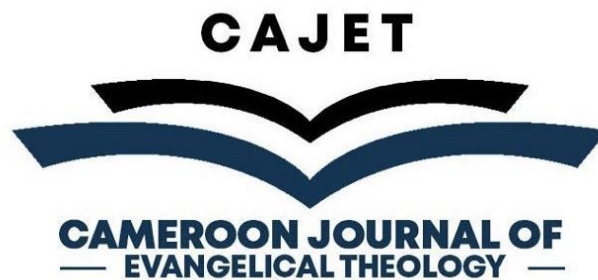


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The Contribution of Reverend Jove Ejovi Aganbi to the Growth of Baptist Work in Delta State, Nigeria.

La contribution du Révérend Jove Ejovi Aganbi au développement de l'œuvre Baptiste dans l'état du Delta, Nigeria.

Morrison E. Oshevire¹

Abstract

This paper examines the profound impact of Reverend Jove Ejovi Aganbi on the growth and development of Baptist work in Delta State, Nigeria. Exploring the historical context of Baptist missions in the region from 1917 to 2011 highlights the autonomous beginnings of the Baptist Mission in Delta State, initiated through an invitation extended to Reverend John R. Williams by Mr. Aghogin Omatsola and local church members in Sapele. The paper sheds light on the significant milestones etched by the Baptist Mission in Delta State, particularly in spiritual and societal transformation, education, and healthcare services. The biographical sketch of Rev. D. Aganbi traces his early life, education, and religious calling, providing insights into his relentless commitment to serving God and humanity. Aganbi's instrumental contributions to the establishment of churches, educational institutions, and healthcare services underscores his pivotal role in shaping the spiritual and social landscape of Delta State. This paper draws on historical accounts, first-hand narratives, and testimonies to illuminate the enduring legacy of Reverend Aganbi, a man whose dedication and compassion resonate within the hearts and minds of those who have been touched by his profound influence. It provides valuable lessons for contemporary gospel ministers, emphasizing the significance of leadership, community engagement, advocacy for education, and the spirit of selflessness in their mission. This paper adopts a multidisciplinary methodology, combining historical research, biographical analysis, and the examination of primary sources to comprehensively document the contributions of Reverend D. Aganbi and the broader growth of Baptist work in Delta State, Nigeria. The content sheds light on the profound impact of local initiatives and individual dedication in the context of religious growth and societal transformation.

Key Words: contribution, Jove Ejovi Aganbi, growth, Baptist work, Delta State

Résumé

Cet article examine l'impact profond du révérend Jove Ejovi Aganbi sur la croissance et le développement de l'œuvre baptiste dans l'état du Delta, au Nigeria. L'exploration du contexte historique des missions baptistes dans la région de 1917 à 2011 met en lumière les débuts autonomes de la mission baptiste dans l'État du Delta, initiée par une invitation adressée au révérend John R. Williams par M. Aghogin Omatsola et des membres de l'église locale de Sapele. L'article met en relief les étapes importantes franchies par la mission baptiste dans l'État du Delta, en particulier en matière de transformation spirituelle et sociétale, d'éducation et de services de santé. La biographie du révérend D. Aganbi retrace ses débuts dans la vie, son éducation et sa vocation religieuse, et donne un aperçu de son engagement sans faille au service de Dieu et de l'humanité. Les contributions d'Aganbi à la création d'églises, d'établissements d'enseignement et de services de santé soulignent son rôle essentiel dans le façonnement du

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paysage spirituel et social de l'état du Delta. Cet article s'appuie sur des récits historiques, des récits de première main et des témoignages pour mettre en lumière l'héritage durable du révérend Aganbi, un homme dont le dévouement et la compassion résonnent dans les cœurs et les esprits de ceux qui ont été touchés par sa profonde influence. Il fournit des leçons précieuses pour les ministres de l'évangile contemporains, en soulignant l'importance du leadership, de l'engagement communautaire, de la défense de l'éducation et de l'esprit d'altruisme dans leur mission. Cet article adopte une méthodologie multidisciplinaire, combinant la recherche historique, l'analyse biographique et l'examen de sources primaires pour documenter de manière exhaustive les contributions du révérend D. Aganbi et le développement plus large du travail baptiste dans l'État du Delta, au Nigeria. Le contenu de l'article met en lumière l'impact important des initiatives locales et du dévouement individuel dans le contexte de la croissance religieuse et de la transformation sociétale.

Mots clés : contribution, Jove Ejovi Aganbi, croissance, œuvre baptiste, état du Delta

Introduction

Within Nigeria's religious past and complex fabric, the Baptist mission in Delta State stands out as an inspiring tale of tenacity, cooperation, and unwavering commitment. This fascinating story of faith's regional growth, covering almost a century from 1917 to 2011, attests to the collaboration between local movements and Baptist missionaries. It occurred in an era characterized by widespread illiteracy and a lack of exposure to Western culture and education. This paper unravels how the Baptist Mission found its way into Delta State through the invitation of Mr. Aghogin Omatsola and members of a community church in Sapele to Reverend John R. Williams. The paper adopts a multidisciplinary methodology, combining historical research, biographical analysis, and the examination of primary sources to explore the profound impact of Reverend Jove Ejovi Aganbi on the growth of Baptist work in Delta State, delving into the historical context of Baptist efforts in the region, providing a comprehensive biographical sketch of Reverend Aganbi, and analyzing his significant contributions. By examining these aspects, the study not only highlights the pivotal role Reverend Aganbi played in advancing the Baptist mission but also extracts valuable lessons for contemporary gospel ministers seeking inspiration and guidance in their own pastoral endeavors.

Historical Context of Baptist Work in Delta State

The historical context of Baptist missions in Delta State provides a rich tapestry woven with the threads of local initiatives, missionary endeavors, and the dynamic interplay of faith within the unique landscape of this Nigerian state. This section surveys the history of Baptist missions in Delta State and highlights its major milestones.

Brief History of Baptist missions in Delta State

The Baptist Mission's remarkable journey in Delta State spans nearly a century, beginning in 1917 and extending through 2011. This extensive period witnessed the tireless efforts of numerous individuals who played pivotal roles in nurturing and advancing this noble mission.² At that time, Delta State was a part of the Western Region of Nigeria and was introduced to the transformative power of the gospel through an invitation extended to the *Southern American Baptist Missions* of the United States of America. This invitation marked a significant turning point in the region, opening the door to other Christian denominations like

² John E. Amromare, and S.A. Onofekohwo, *Pathfinders of Baptist Mission Work in Delta State* (Abraka: Functional Publishing Company, 2011), 35.

the *Christ Missionary Church* (CMS) of England, the *African Church*, and the *Methodist Church*. When the Baptist Mission arrived the Delta State, the State was characterized by widespread illiteracy, with western education and civilization being foreign concepts to the local population.³ However, the entrance of the Baptist Mission into this land was not initiated by the *Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board* but rather by the ambition of Mr. Aghogin Omatsola and some members of a community church in Sapele. They extended a heartfelt invitation to Rev. John R. Williams, a missionary from the *Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention* who also served as the pastor of the *First Baptist Church* in Lagos. Rev. Williams graciously accepted their invitation and embarked on a journey that would forever change the spiritual landscape of Delta State.⁴

It is worth acknowledging that there were no proactive efforts by missionary organizations to establish missions in this region at the time. Venerable E. Arawore astutely observed that the growth of the church in Urhoboland, which encompasses Delta State, was not primarily the result of white missionary activities. Instead, it was the product of an autonomous organization nurtured and fostered by those who had made Urhoboland their home, exemplified by the dedicated efforts of individuals like Mr. Omatsola and his associates.⁵

Reverend Thomas Jefferson Bowen, the first Southern Baptist missionary, arrived in Nigeria in August 1850, marking a significant milestone in the spread of Christianity. However, it was not until 1917, 67 years later, that the first Baptist missionary, Rev. J. R. Williams, set foot in Sapele, responding to the call of Mr. Omatsola and two other friends who were deeply passionate about sharing the teachings of the Baptist faith with the people of Delta State. This delayed entry into the region underscores the importance of grassroots initiatives and local commitment to spreading the Christian message, highlighting the enduring impact of individuals who wholeheartedly embraced their mission to nurture the Baptist faith in Delta State.

Major Milestones of Baptist Work in the Region

Baptist work in Delta State has a rich history and has achieved several significant milestones. Following are some of the milestones:

Establishment of churches: Baptist churches in Delta State have significantly impacted the region's spiritual and societal landscape. The establishment of these churches was a collaborative effort between Baptist missionaries and local leaders who aimed at spreading the Christian faith. The churches, which were designed to be accessible and socially and spiritually developed, became focal points for worship, prayer, and religious education. They also catalyzed positive change and development, organizing outreach programs like educational initiatives and healthcare services. The establishment of Baptist churches in Delta State represents the fusion of missionary zeal and local wisdom, showcasing the power of cooperation between diverse groups.

Education: Baptists have significantly contributed to education in Delta State, establishing numerous schools that offer a comprehensive educational framework.⁶ These schools provide academic instruction and serve as sanctuaries of knowledge and character formation. Baptist primary schools provide the foundational building blocks of literacy, numeracy, and moral values, aligning with Baptist traditions of integrity, compassion, and

³ Sylvester C Green, *New Nigeria: Southern Baptist at Work in Africa*, (Nashville: FMB Press, 1936), 56.

⁴ Duval, Louis M. *Baptist Missions in Nigeria: Richmond*, (Virginia: FMB Press, 1928), 204.

⁵ J. A. Atanda, *Baptist Churches in Nigeria. 18501-1950*. (Ibadan: University Press 1988), 56.

⁶ K.O. Dike, *Trade Politics in the Niger Delta* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 11.

service values. As students' progress to secondary school, they are encouraged to explore their talents and passions, aiming to produce well-rounded individuals. Baptist schools foster community and belonging, creating a diverse and inclusive atmosphere. These schools provide opportunities for countless students to acquire an education that opens doors to better prospects and improved life conditions. Graduates often pursue higher education or vocational training, becoming future leaders and change-makers in Delta State. Examples of Baptist schools in Delta State include *Ekú Mission School*, *Baptist High School* and *Ekú Baptist School of Nursing*.

Healthcare Services: Baptist hospitals and clinics have provided vital healthcare services to the people of Delta State. For instance, *Ekú General Hospital* that was taken over by the government was primarily established by Baptist missionaries. This facility has been instrumental in addressing health issues and improving the community's overall well-being.

Biographical Sketch of Reverend Jove Ejovi Aganbi

The biographical sketch of Reverend Jove Ejovi Aganbi unfolds as a testament to a life dedicated to service, faith, and community upliftment, shedding light on the profound impact this distinguished individual has had on the Baptist legacy in Delta State. This section retraces his early life and education as well as his religious pilgrimage and calling.

Early Life and Education

Jove Ejovi Aganbi made his entrance into the world in the year 1894, hailing from Eku, Nigeria. He was born into the distinguished family of Chief Agadama Aganbi and Mrs. Ahurhu Aganbi, who were originally from Abraka. This region now falls within the Delta State of Nigeria. Chief Aganbi held a prominent and respected position as one of the leading chiefs of his era and was known to have five wives. Ahurhu, a remarkable woman, was not only the mother of Ejovi but also the mother of Uwevwieghrevwa, her only surviving children.⁷ It is important to note that before Ejovi's birth, Ahurhu had endured the heart-wrenching loss of several children.⁸ As a poignant tribute to their son and a fervent prayer for his well-being, they christened him "Ejovi," a name imbued with profound significance that translates to "let him live." Ejovi's upbringing and life were marked by the weight of this name, reflecting the hope and resilience that defined his journey. Fragile health condition was apparent from the moment he came into this world. His frailty was so pronounced that many believed his survival was almost impossible. Even his own father was heard uttering the grim sentiment, "This child seems destined for neither life nor death, and we may find ourselves burying him alive."⁹ However, it became evident that God had a unique purpose in mind for him, which would ultimately safeguard his existence.

Dr. Howell, a trusted source, shared a remarkable tale of Ejovi's early days. It is said that his mother, desperate to discern the fate of her ailing child, sought the counsel of a local traditional healer. In a moment of profound significance, the oracle's proclamation was unequivocal: "Spare this child's life, for he is a divine emissary."¹⁰ At a particular juncture, a British administrative resident officer requested that one of Chief Aganbi's sons be trained by the government as a token of appreciation for his contributions to the community. During this era in Urhobo history, it was customary to send only enslaved people and the offspring of enslaved people to school. In light of this practice and fueled by his concerns for his son's

⁷ Ofuoku, P. E., *A History of Eku* (Ikeja: Functional Publishing Company, 2004), 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹ Amromare and Onofekohwo, 33.

¹⁰ John E. Amromare, and S.A. Onofekohwo, *Pathfinders of Baptist Mission Work in Delta State* (Abraka: Functional Publishing Company, 2011), 33.

frequent health challenges, Chief Aganbi promptly extended this educational opportunity to his son, Ejovi.¹¹ Aganbi's clear preference was for Ejovi, who was seemingly chosen because of his perceived unattractiveness. Ejovi explained that his father decided to send him to school instead of disowning him. His father's rationale was articulated: "Ejovi's life expectancy appears uncertain, but this choice will not affect the number of children available to work on the family farm."¹² Ejovi initially commenced his education at the *Government Day School* in Warri but later transferred to the *Government Day School* in Sapele, where he completed standard six in 1912. His wife, Ahurhu, found her husband's decision painful, so she fervently prayed to God every day, seeking protection for her son.

During that period, students were mandated to attend church services every Sunday. Initially, Aganbi felt uneasy about this requirement, but in 1909, he underwent a spiritual transformation and embraced Christianity. Following his conversion, he knelt one Saturday while tending to his garden. He prayed for God to use him according to His divine purpose and in serving God and humanity once he completed his education.

Religious Journey and Calling

Ejovi Aganbi's divine calling came to him while he was working as a Sanubi teacher. His classmate, Okotie, persuaded him to seek employment with the government. They drafted letters addressed to Governor Clifford, who, in turn, forwarded their correspondence to the residents in Warri. Consequently, both were offered positions and instructed to commence their duties immediately.¹³ However, the night before their departure, Ejovi experienced a peculiar dream. In his own words, he narrated the dream:

I dreamt that I passed away and found myself in heaven. Upon my arrival in heaven, I encountered an individual who began questioning me, 'Where do you come from?' I explained that I had passed away and was entering heaven. The man inquired whether I had greeted God, and he pointed, saying, 'God is over there.' I could only discern a shadow seated on a throne when I gazed in that direction. I knelt and saluted Him. Then, my companion asked if I had seen hell. He guided me to a distant place where we found a vast pit with a powerful, raging fire. Peering into the flames, I observed numerous individuals, among whom I recognized some of my relatives, including my cousin, even though he was still alive. I exclaimed, 'Okoro is in hell,' and I questioned, 'What have these people done to be consigned to hell?' My guide informed me that all of them were sinners. At that moment, I reflected, 'I too am a sinner. What about me? How is it that I have not been cast into hell? Perhaps I have committed the same sins.' Following this, I asked my guide if he would permit me to return to the world to preach to my people so that they could avoid this fate. My companion agreed, and I was granted permission to return to earth".¹⁴ At this point, I awakened from my dream.

From this dream, Ejovi deduced that God intended him to preach to his people rather than pursue another occupation. Consequently, he relocated to Sapele, where he crossed paths with Reverend Aghogin Omatsola, who inspired him to embrace the Baptist faith and become a pastor. He became a Baptist and underwent pastoral training at the *Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary* in Ogbomoso, a journey from 1927 to 1934.

¹¹ Tetsola, E. A. *Highlights of Delta State Baptist Conference at 10 (1993-2003)* (Ikeja: Functional Publishing Company, 2004), 99.

¹² John E. Amromare, and S.A. Onofekohwo, *Pathfinders of Baptist Mission Work in Delta State* (Abraka: Functional Publishing Company, 2011), 34.

¹³ Dictionary of African Christian Biography: <https://dacb.org/stories/nigeria/aganbi-jove/> accessed 30th Oct 2023.

¹⁴ John E. Amromare, and S.A. Onofekohwo, *Pathfinders of Baptist Mission Work in Delta State* (Abraka: Functional Publishing Company, 2011), 36.

Upon completing his studies at the Seminary, Aganbi was assigned to serve in Lagos. However, he objected to this placement, instead choosing to minister among his people.¹⁵ He emphasized that his people in Eku, the Agbon clan, and the entire Urhobo community lacked knowledge of Jesus Christ's salvation, and he questioned why he should leave them in such a condition.¹⁶ His refusal to accept the posting to Lagos displeased the authorities. As a result, he was asked to depart from the Seminary without any financial support from either the Mission or the Seminary, a departure from the prevailing practice.

Nonetheless, Aganbi had resolved to serve among his fellow Urhobo people in Eku. In 1935, he returned to his hometown, making Eku his base for reaching out to other villages. He enthusiastically embarked on his mission in Eku, traveling on foot and by bicycle, establishing churches, and overseeing missionary activities in Urhobo land, specifically in Delta State. He also trained laypeople in reading and writing to enhance their effectiveness in God's service. Reverend Aganbi died on September 25th 1957 at the age of sixty-three.

Contributions of Reverend Aganbi

Aganbi conducted survey trips to towns and villages with existing Baptist churches and places he deemed suitable for establishing new churches. Subsequently, he founded churches and educational institutions in those areas and appointed elders to oversee them. Additionally, he took on managing schools in the region for an extended period.¹⁷

When Dr. and Mrs. Casin, missionaries from the *Southern Baptist Convention* in the USA, visited the *Sapele District Association*, they were informed about the commendable efforts Aganbi was undertaking in Urhobo District 11 at Eku.¹⁸ Consequently, more Southern Baptist Convention missionaries began to visit Eku. They typically stayed in private residences upon their arrival, prompting Aganbi to construct a mission house in Eku. He oversaw its completion, and it served as accommodation for the visiting missionaries. Aganbi spearheaded the establishment of a Baptist school in Eku back in 1934. Moreover, he played a pivotal role in setting up churches and educational institutions in various localities, including Igun, Ovwere, Kokori Inland, Erho-Abraka, Sanubi, Ugono-Orogun, Edjeba, Asagba, and Obiaruku, all within the Delta region of Nigeria. He actively orchestrated weekly street evangelistic campaigns in Eku and engaged in personal door-to-door evangelism. His relentless dedication resulted in numerous individuals embracing Christianity and the emergence of several new churches.

The Baptist hospital's establishment in Eku can be attributed to his endeavors. Before the hospital's establishment in 1945, individuals who fell ill had to journey to distant places like Sapele for medical care. Those unable to access medical services in Sapele were compelled to turn to local healers who employed herbal remedies to treat illnesses, providing a more affordable alternative.¹⁹ Additionally, the community had a collective aspiration to have a hospital of their own that could match the facility's standards in Sapele. Nevertheless, this vision appeared to be a formidable, perhaps even unattainable, dream. J. E. Aganbi, the first Urhobo man to become a missionary, took it upon himself to engage Baptist officials from the United States in a unique discussion about the healthcare challenges his people faced. He recounted numerous instances where he had witnessed his people suffering and succumbing to preventable and treatable diseases.

¹⁵ Arawore, E., *History of the Church in Urhobo Land* (Ugheli: Akpovire Printing Press, undated), 103.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁷ Walking in Love Ministries of MKP, Inc.: <https://walkinginloveministries.org/8-early-eku-history/> accessed 30th Oct 2023.

¹⁸ Venerable E. Arawore, *History of The Church in Urhobo-Land* (Ughelli: Akpoviri Printing Press, 1999), 1.

¹⁹ Jonathan Ihwighu, <https://dacb.org/stories/nigeria/ejovi-oboberhie/> accessed 31st Oct. 2023.

He also emphasized, in his discussions with the *Southern Baptist Convention Board*, that there was a lack of readily available doctors to assist the local population. Aganbi efforts appear to have been fruitful, as they resulted in a delegation being dispatched from the *Southern Baptist Missionary Board* to Eku. This delegation, led by Dr. Maddry, was warmly welcomed by a thrilled community that had been fervently praying for the advent of that day for several months.

In 1938, Reverend Aganbi established a preaching station in Samagidi village. Among his initial converts were individuals named Ogun, Ogbetuo, and Okotie. In the same year, representatives from a previously inactive and abandoned church missionary society in Ozuoka approached pastor J. F. Aganbi, seeking to join the Baptist denomination. Reverend Aganbi refused to grant their request. Nonetheless, Mr. Ozanyedo and others later professed their faith in Christ, establishing a separate Baptist Church in Ozuoka-Abraka. Ejovi Aganbi also spread the Gospel to Obagie, crossing the river Ethiopie. During one of these journeys, while traveling with his members in a boat from Igun to Obagie, the boat capsized, resulting in the tragic drowning of a woman named Ominghe. Subsequently, a church was founded, and Dr. Caning erected a dispensary in Obagie.

Aganbi's legacy in the Urhobo Christian community endures due to his remarkable translation of songs from the *Broadman and Baptist Hymnal* into the Urhobo language. His translation work was of exceptional quality and remains cherished by Urhobo Christians. Benevolence, gentleness, and humility characterized Aganbi, and his commitment to peace positively impacted those he encountered.²⁰ He was a person of intelligence, talent, and devout prayerfulness, using his energy, possessions, skills, and time in the service of God. He collaborated effectively with others.

At a time when formal education for girls was not widely promoted, Aganbi stood out as a dedicated and unwavering advocate for education. His commitment to education extended beyond just boys, as he firmly believed in providing educational opportunities to both boys and girls. He was a source of inspiration for the community, encouraging parents and families to prioritize their children's education, regardless of their gender. Aganbi's passion for education went beyond mere words; he took tangible actions to support this cause. He was so deeply committed that he went to great lengths, such as organizing breakfast and study sessions in his compound. These sessions not only provided a conducive learning environment but also served as a motivating platform for students who were pursuing higher education. Aganbi's involvement in these sessions showed his dedication to nurturing the next generation of learners. Despite facing financial constraints due to his limited income, Aganbi did not let that deter him from supporting needy students.²¹ He extended financial assistance to some of these students, demonstrating his untiring commitment to ensuring that financial barriers did not hinder their pursuit of knowledge and personal growth. Aganbi's actions exemplify his selfless dedication to the cause of education and his determination to impact the lives of young learners in his community positively.

Aganbi employed various methods, including pulpit preaching, to impart health and sanitation knowledge to the community. He also conducted educational sessions on health and sanitation for students and school teachers. His guiding principle was "Dedication to serving God and humanity."²² His selfless commitment and service profoundly impacted numerous individuals, serving as a model for many to emulate. Notable figures that this dedicated servant

²⁰ E. O., Ejovi, *Rev. Jove Ejovi Aganbi: The Selfless Man*. (Ikeja: Functional Publishing Company, 2003), 29.

²¹ Erivwo, Samuel U. *Traditional Religion and Christianity in Nigeria: The Urhobo people* (Ekpoma: Bendal State University Press, 1991), 45.

of God influenced include Reverend E. A. Ejovi, Reverend P. E. Ofuoku, Chief J. E. Ukueku, and others.

Lessons for Contemporary Gospel Ministers

The paper about the contributions of Reverend Aganbi to Baptist work in Delta State offers valuable lessons for contemporary gospel ministers in Nigeria and beyond. These include but are not limited to:

Local initiative and collaboration: Reverend. Aganbi's work in Delta State began with a local invitation and initiative by Mr. Aghogin Omatsola and members of a community church. This demonstrates the power of local engagement and collaboration with the community. Contemporary gospel ministers can learn from this by actively involving the local community in their missionary efforts and working with local leaders and believers.

Persistence and commitment: The Baptist missions in Delta State spanned nearly a century, highlighting the importance of persistence and long-term commitment. Contemporary gospel ministers should be prepared for a long-term commitment to their mission, knowing that significant impact may take years to manifest.

Holistic approach: Reverend. Aganbi's contributions encompassed not only the spiritual aspect but also education and healthcare services. This holistic approach to community development is a valuable lesson for contemporary ministers. They can learn to address the community's broader needs, not just the spiritual ones.

Local language and cultural sensitivity: Reverend Aganbi's translation work of hymns into the local language made religious teachings more accessible to the local population. Contemporary ministers can benefit from a similar approach, ensuring their teachings and materials are culturally sensitive and available in the local language.

Advocacy for education: Reverend Aganbi's advocacy for education, especially for boys and girls, serves as a model for contemporary ministers. They can actively promote education and support students, advocating for equal opportunities for all, irrespective of gender.

Leadership and community engagement: Reverend Aganbi actively engaged with local leaders, missionaries, and the community to foster cooperation and collaboration for societal development. Contemporary gospel ministers should prioritize community engagement and leadership involvement to build a strong support network

Refusal to relocate: Reverend Aganbi's refusal to accept a posting away from his community emphasizes the importance of being deeply rooted in the community one serves. This commitment to staying in one's mission field, despite challenges or temptations to leave, can lead to a more significant impact over time.

Spirit of selflessness: Reverend Aganbi's selfless dedication to his mission is a crucial lesson for contemporary ministers. They should serve with humility, compassion, and dedication, prioritizing the community's welfare over personal gain.

Conclusion

From the paper on the "Contribution of Reverend Aganbi to the Growth of Baptist Work in Delta State, Nigeria," it has been noted that Baptist work in Delta State began in 1917 with a grassroots approach initiated by local individuals such as Mr. Aghogin Omatsola. Reverend Jove Ejovi Aganbi, born in 1894, played a pivotal role in the region's growth and impact. Aganbi founded churches, educational institutions, and advocated for healthcare services. His legacy includes translating hymns into Urhobo, promoting education for both genders, and establishing a Baptist hospital. The Baptist mission's enduring legacy in Delta State, exemplified by the remarkable contributions of Reverend Jove Ejovi Aganbi, highlights

the impact of local initiative, persistence, holistic community engagement, and selflessness. Contemporary gospel ministers can draw essential lessons from Aganbi's steadfast commitment to spiritual and societal advancement.

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