

The Man With A Vision

A Biography
of

Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya

Leader and First Africa Overseer

Of

Apostolic Faith Church

With headquarters
in
Lagos, Nigeria

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“Africa for Christ”

God, the God of Heaven and earth raised the man — Reverend TIMOTHY GBADEBO OSHOKOYA — and gave him the vision of winning Africa for Christ. But the task looked enormous and impossible. He was on a plane on his way back to Nigeria from the United States of America and on a Gospel tour of West Africa when the burden was laid on his heart. In his own words, “I felt that was a gigantic task beyond what human thinking, ability or wisdom could contemplate. Immediately, a verse of Scripture just rang in my heart, 'With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.' The burden is as fresh today as it was on the 25th July 1951.”

God in His infinite wisdom and compassion for dying souls on the continent of Africa raised this fearless, versatile and dynamic lover of souls to blaze a trail in preaching practical Christian living. It was a new dimension in the Christian faith in those early days.

There were many Christian denominations in Nigeria before God raised up this man of vision. But many had become social rather than Christian organizations, advancing carnality over spirituality in their Sunday services and other events: Christmas, Easter, wedding and funeral. They also indulged in bazaars and raffles to raise money. They neither preached nor experienced salvation. They tried to blend the worship of the true God with the worship of their idols. Consequently, the power of God was lacking in their midst; nightmares and fear of witches and wizards drove many worshippers from traditional, carnal churches to white garment churches, where the Bible was equally less important than their visions, prophecies and dreams. Divine healing was one of their doctrines, but they did not have the power of salvation to practice it. Into this religious atmosphere came this man of vision fondly called Brother T.

FOREWORD

The Scripture in Romans 5:18b, “By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life”, can be applied to the life of Rev. Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya. Through him, God brought the doctrine of practical salvation—freedom from sin—to Nigeria.

Without mincing words, we can rightly say that God raised up Rev. Timothy for the salvation of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Like Moses, his predecessor in spiritual leadership role, God made him pass through the school of experience where he acquired varied experiences of life. Those experiences made him an exceptionally versatile spiritual leader. The most outstanding leadership qualities and characteristics which propelled his work and ministry and made him stand tall amongst his peers were his undaunted spirit and indomitable disposition.

He was the only child of his parents. He was so dear to their hearts that they wanted him to be a clergyman. To realize this desire, they sent him to the Baptist Seminary at Ogbomosho, but a relation dissuaded him and so he came to Lagos instead. In spite of this diversion, God's eyes were upon him until He brought him to the realization of his need of practical salvation, which is deliverance from sin. He was thrilled by God's revelation to him and he acknowledged that he was a sinner heading for destruction. Consequent upon this conviction, he confessed his sins, renounced them and prayed pleading the Blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of his sins in 1939. Jesus saved him. When he came in contact with the Apostolic Faith where he learnt about all the fundamentals of the Gospel, he embraced all the doctrines wholeheartedly. He later prayed through to the deeper Christian experiences of sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He made restitution of his past crooked life.

That was how Brother T started his ministry with a humble beginning through these God-given induction course which was later strengthened by the contact he had with the Apostolic Faith with headquarters in Portland, Oregon. His work and ministry are best summarized by this verse from a song:

This perfect heav'nly seed

Shall grow to a big tree

Like the blessed leaven

Shall spread all o'er the earth

Till God the Son comes back again

It will go on Amen, Amen (2ce).

Through the special grace of God, the humble work begun by this illustrious son of Africa has spread far and wide on the continent. No wonder he himself gave the Church the motto, Africa for Christ.

Brother T preached and practiced practical Christianity until he breathed his last on November 16, 1983. As you read the biography of this great man of God, may you too catch a vision of what role God would want you to play in winning Africa for Christ.

J. O. SOYINKA

(Africa Overseer, 1983-1999)

PERSONAL LIFE



REV. TIMOTHY GBADEBO OSHOKOYA

Africa Overseer, 1955 -1983

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

On the 30th of March, 1912, Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya was born into the noble family of Chief Olowa of Imodu Compound, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. The parents—Mr Daniel Adolphus Ekineh Oshokoya Olowa and Mrs. Alice Taiwo Olowa (nee Osinuyi Asorooko of Ogbogbo, Ijebu)—were members of the Anglican Church. Timothy was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Oshokoya Olowa. He grew up with his aunt at Ogbogbo near Ijebu-Ode, where he was brought up in the Baptist Church.

EDUCATION

As soon as he reached school age, he attended an elementary school in Ijebu-Ode until 1919 when he was transferred to Ogbogbo Baptist School. He was very brilliant and his father had an ambitious plan for him.

Consequently, after his elementary school, he gained admission into Form One in Baptist Academy Secondary School, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, in 1927, with the hope that after the secondary school course he would enrol on a course at Baptist Theological Seminary in the same town and become a missionary later, according to his father's plan. In those days, he had to walk from Ijebu-Ode to Ogbomoso and this he did in the company of some elderly people because he was only 14 years old.

After a year in secondary school, an uncle came to talk Timothy into becoming an engineer in Lagos. Timothy could not resist what the future promised. Instead of going to Ogbomoso to continue his studies, he followed his uncle to Lagos. Rather than the rosy promise being fulfilled, he was greatly disappointed. There was no hope of schooling again. Timothy returned to Ijebu-Ode dejected, frustrated and thoroughly miserable. He was not received at home either, because he had disappointed his father.

ADULTHOOD

On his mother's suggestion in 1930, he was apprenticed to an auto 1 mechanic and blacksmith. In all this, God had a plan for his life and He was weaving the threads of the fabric into a wonderful pattern.

Marriage To Miss Hannah Emiola Onalaja



In 1933, he married Miss Hannah Emiola Onalaja of Erunwon Ijebu-Ode. By that marriage Mr. and Mrs. T.G. Oshokoya had two daughters—Mrs. Matilda Shelly and Mrs. Grace Anu Ogunlaja (of blessed memory). Grace was a full-time Apostolic Faith worker; a competent compugraphic machine operator in our printing department in her lifetime. She was very intelligent and hard-working. She took after her father, and she died on active service. Her husband decided to become a full-time worker after her death. She was very influential.

Timothy worked at an auto mechanic's workshop in Ijebu-Ode for a while before moving to Ibadan, where he became a salesman dealing in motor vehicle spare parts. While in Ijebu-Ode, he travelled to Sagamu to visit a friend—who was also an auto-mechanic—and whom he found busy moulding coins. Timothy “inquired how he came about that sort of illicit business of counterfeiting...” His friend narrated the whole story in full detail. In his words, “I was initiated as a member of the syndicate at once.” Later as he studied Gregg Shorthand, he transcribed a passage that was about minting and that seemed to teach him the details to perfection.

His Experience As A Counterfeiter

An intimate friend suddenly visited him at Ibadan to tell him how “money doublers” duped him and took all his life's savings. They both decided to go after the criminals to retrieve the money. He said, “The result of that mad venture was that we too started the illicit business of counterfeiting coins... Since we have established a more lucrative business than salesmanship, I resigned.” He went on, “We got money, lots of it, but the money went the way it came—easy.” They became very popular, had many friends and people held them in high esteem. They wore big robes and people called them “Sir”, “Esquire”. Timothy was nick-named “Daily Woollen” because of the expensive clothes he wore daily, but a few suspected them and wondered how they got into such quick money. Friends became innumerable and they went deeper into the world and into sin. This was the boy whom his father wanted to be a minister of God!

He went carousing from place to place and at Abeokuta in 1937, he met a cousin who introduced him to a law enforcement agent who pretended he was in financial straits. Timothy said, “The path was paved for my arrest. In the course of the deal I was suspected of being in possession of counterfeit coins. I was charged to Grade 'A' Customary Court at Abeokuta ... and locked up in a single cell. Alone in the solitary cell, I had, as it were, a panorama of my past life and a heavy remorse came into my heart. I reflected that I should have completed the Baptist Theological Seminary course and become the pastor of a church if my daddy's plans had been allowed to materialize. Then God spoke to me that it was pride that had brought me thus far. I admitted and started to plead for forgiveness. I entered into a covenant with God with vows that if in His mercy He would set me free without being imprisoned, I would give the honor and glory to Him alone. I would serve Him faithfully for the rest of my life. I promised God I would not be engaged in the illegal business again.

“Early 1938, I was acquitted and set free by the court. When I came out of police cell, I decided to stand on the vow I had made to God while in trouble and so I destroyed everything that had to do with counterfeiting.” That was how Timothy found his way back to God through the harrowing experience. Though he had thrown away his Bible when young, he bought a new Bible and started to hunger for more of God. He read his Bible and prayed, and the Lord continued to deal with his heart. He did away with his old life and friends.

He moved to Lagos in search of a job. He got one at the UAC (United Africa Company) as a tally clerk at the custom shed. “I put in a prayer request at the CAC (Christ Apostolic Church) so that I might keep my job. Since I grew up in the Baptist Church, I continued to attend the Baptist Church in Lagos. But as I went for prayers at the CAC, I got more and more involved in praying and before I knew it, I was attending the CAC regularly and so joined the Christ Apostolic Church in Lagos early 1939.” He cherished the time he had for prayer at the church premises whenever he was off duty.

CONVERSION

He said: “Whilst praying one day, I had a wonderful experience which flooded my heart with joy without bounds. I felt a great change in me and all about me. I knew I had one special blessing

from God. I felt the presence of God with me every time and everywhere. I lost the taste for anything flamboyant, though at that time I did not know it was the experience of salvation.

RESTITUTION

“I was moved to straighten my crooked past. Consequently I wrote a letter to my daddy and my wife, asking each of them for pardon for my past carelessness and maltreatment, though I did not understand the doctrine of restitution. God made changes in my life which were apparent. That experience put so much thirst in me that prompted me to begin to read all sorts of Gospel publications that came my way.”

Restitution is a doctrine of the Apostolic Faith as Brother T later came to know and teach. It means appeasing somebody who has been wronged or defrauded and restoring what has been stolen as contained in Ezekiel 33: 14-16: “Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he had committed shall be mentioned unto him: he had done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.”

Making restitution is a very delicate issue but with prayer and good counselling, God has always undertaken for His children in very difficult situations. After a meeting later in the Apostolic Faith Church where Brother T testified on how God took him out of counterfeiting, he was asked by the Reverend Peter van der Puije from Accra, Ghana, whether he had made restitution to the Government of Nigeria. Brother T then wrote a letter which he sent, after the letter was prayed over, to the then Secretary to the colonial Governor-General of the country. After waiting for a long time, filled with the fear of arrest each day, the answer came that he was completely forgiven. It is good to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man.

Thus from a life deep in sin, the conviction of sin which seized him in his single cell created in him a hunger for more of God and prayer. He became closer to God as he gave himself to praying more and more.

The custom shed where he worked was full of evil—stealing, fraud and other vices. One day God warned him that if he should join the sinful practices that were rampant in the custom shed he would go back to the jail whence he was delivered. He resolved to resign and stop working with them. He said: “I had more time to spend praying and reading my Bible.” Along the way God led him, he walked with God step-by-step.

As Timothy was always in the church premises, he got more involved in church activities. But he wanted a permanent job. He got an appointment at Papa across the Lagos lagoon. One day he had to take a canoe to cross the water to Apapa. As he was crossing, one boat passed by and the waves caused by the boat tossed the canoe up and down, pouring water into the canoe. The canoe got out of control and was driven far out into the sea. Before its passengers could come back to

shore, they were thoroughly drenched. Timothy prayed and consecrated, and the Lord delivered him.

He continued to write applications to several Government departments but none was successful. It was hard to understand what all this was leading up to. God was dealing with this young man but he was not willing to yield fully yet. He told the reason later. He said: "I detested the transitional training young men who were to become evangelists were given. They were made to live on charity and I hated the idea of living on charity. I have raised insurrections against erring evangelists who embezzled church funds and I had made up my mind I was going to work to earn my daily bread and then give the rest of my time to the Lord."

Suddenly he took ill. A little swelling on his neck developed into a big goiter in only three days. Since he had already tasted the power of God through prayer, he resorted to prayer for healing. Timothy said of this: "One afternoon I fell into a trance and saw a white man dressed like a Levitical Priest before me. He told me to stand up, dress up in my shirt and tie as usual and go in search of a job. How is it possible—with the painful goiter? I perfectly understood the message. Immediately, I asked for mercy, promising not to insist on having my own way any longer. He touched my neck and declared, 'This is removed!' He turned and went out through the door. I became conscious. The third day the swelling had disappeared completely."

All these experiences were pointers, step-by-step, to the plan God had for him and which his father had previously intended for him. Would Timothy yield? His zeal, his prayer life and his church activities did not go unnoticed by the church leaders.

He was completely changed from his past life as he was very rascally before his conversion. The remarkable changes which were apparent in his life after conversion gave Hector Elebute (who later became a minister) much inspiration and challenge to seek God until he too had the Christian experience of God's saving grace in the year 1939.

In February 1940, the General Superintendent of Christ Apostolic Church at that time, the Rev. D. O. Odubango called Timothy and sent him to join Evangelist Babalola on an evangelistic tour of parts of Ile-Ife, Ilesa and Efon Alaaye. He was not expecting this because he knew it was a call into the ministry. What he had been trying to avoid! He was in a fix. He could not disobey the General Superintendent as he did not want to lose the joy he recently had. Because of the promise he made to God during the goitre episode, he had to go.

Through one Evangelist Odutola, he had received some Apostolic Faith tracts which he read. Now he came across more of Apostolic Faith publications in the hand of Evangelist Babalola. This was another way of God leading him a step further in His divine plan for his life. In 1940, he was posted to Ibadan. His wife, Hannah, and newborn daughter, Matilda, joined him there. In March 1941, he was transferred as an evangelist and minister to Christ Apostolic Church, Gbogunleri, Agege. Of this posting, Brother T had this to say: "The leadership of the church was a big challenge to me for some reasons. I was relatively new in the CAC organization, how much more in the ministry. There were people older in age and in church membership, and who had been workers long before me. So, the situation called for much earnest prayers. One key blessing I had in Agege was time for deeper consecrations and intensive prayers."

As soon as he settled down at Agege, he wrote *The Apostolic Faith Mission*, many of whose publications he had read. In 1942 the first parcel of tracts was received by Brother T. He diligently studied the teaching as outlined on holiness. The doctrines of *The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon* so affected his life that from that point, his whole life and purpose were equally affected. His ministry under the Christ Apostolic Church and his theology were greatly affected too. From the teachings in that tract he realized that the blessing he had received was a genuine experience of salvation or being born again. It was now very clear to him beyond any doubt. He believed in the efficacy of the Blood of Jesus Christ to forgive one's sins by faith. He also believed in the power of the same Blood for the healing of the sick.

In his dealings with an elderly woman called the 'Church Mother' of the congregation at Agege, he started to have some opposition. People who came for healing were given 'sanctified' or 'holy water' to take away in containers to be used for their healing. But Brother T laid emphasis on the efficacy of the Blood of Jesus to heal by faith. Some members of the congregation believed and the power in the Blood availed for them. Some of the pregnant women witnessed the effect of prayer and trust in the Blood of Jesus and therefore stopped going to the 'Church Mother' for 'holy water'. It made the woman to oppose the 'new doctrine' and she did not hide her feelings. The situation seemed to disturb Brother T's peace of mind. This led him to know he needed a deeper experience in his heart. As he read about sanctification in the tract from *The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland*, he felt he needed exactly this experience. In his own words: "I prayed for the grace of sanctification according to Saint John 17: 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth' and God sanctified me through the Blood of Jesus Christ. I prayed for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as in the Acts of the Apostles Chapter 2 and received the gift of the mighty Holy Spirit and Fire. These were wonderful Christian experiences."

Having received these definite Christian experiences, he boldly taught them to his congregation. He preached more often on repentance. The result was the change evident in people's lives as they sought God. People made restitution one to another. Signs and wonders were wrought by power divine. People started to be brought from outside to try the Blood of Jesus. People testified openly in the church about the changes they observed in their lives. Brother T's wife who was pregnant was delivered safely without the use of 'holy water'. Thus his faith was strengthened and was surer of definite biblical doctrines and teachings as outlined in the tracts of *The Apostolic Faith Mission*. Materially, the church, though small, was blessed. Even in 1943, during the hard economic recession because of World War II, when the mother church had no land of its own, Agege branch bought 5 acres of land and in 1944 completed a new church building 63' x 33'. All these were God's own way of leading him further in building his faith for the task ahead.

THE BEGINNING OF THE APOSTOLIC FAITH WORK IN NIGERIA

Prayer Group Formed

As Brother T continued to grow spiritually, the Lord led him on. He said: "In 1944 I felt led of the Holy Spirit to organize a prayer group. Some people met with me to pray. We would lay our requests before God and pray about them. Later on, we added Bible Study—mainly reading of tracts—to the prayer programme." People got interested as the news of the special meetings

spread. People flocked in to join them. Later, two evangelists of the CAC from other groups came to join them and the attendance grew.

Meanwhile there were those who felt they were departing from the established traditions and doctrines of the CAC. Reports started to go to the authorities on their activities. One Ben Abbey who was a heavy smoker got saved and stopped smoking completely. The other two evangelists—D.T. Robinson and Lucas Obakoya—felt they needed more of the teachings and so the four decided to meet in Lucas Obakoya's house in Mushin.

APOSTOLIC FAITH DOCTRINES UPHELD

On October 14, 1944, at one o'clock in the afternoon, the first meeting was held. Thorough comparisons of the teachings of The Apostolic Faith with those of the other Pentecostal groups were made. Their individual spiritual experiences were also examined on the Word of God. The result of the meeting was the adoption of Apostolic Faith doctrines and teachings because they were (and still are) based on the Word of God. This was communicated to the international headquarters of The Apostolic Faith in Portland, Oregon, USA. Thus began the Apostolic Faith as an organization in Nigeria.

As the organization started, these three officers of the Christ Apostolic Church tendered their resignations from the CAC with a determination to walk in the fullness of their new-found light. It was not an easy decision. With no support from anywhere and with no means of livelihood whatsoever, it was a step of faith into the unknown.

What did the future hold? Would people be as enthusiastic as they were about the doctrines? Would they want holiness without compromise? As things developed and God revealed more of His will, we saw many virtues and outstanding qualities in this man of God. We realized that God knew His man and this man knew his God, and we understood why he determined to bring Timothy out of the miry clay of sin, clean him up and fit him for His high and noble service.

The resignation of these three evangelists was not taken lightly by the General Executive Council of the CAC at Ibadan. They tried to lure them out of the decisions but it did not work.



REV. OSHOKOYA, REV. ABBEY, REV. OBAKOYA

Finally, Timothy Oshokoya and Lucas Obakoya were called before the General Executive Council to openly defend the reason for their resignations.

They made plain that they had found the yearning of their heart for the Truth which could not be compromised, that the doctrines, as preached by The Apostolic Faith, clearly stood (and still stand) on the Word of God.

At last, the council meeting ended with one of the elders adopting the saying of Gamaliel in the Acts of the Apostles 5:38,39: “For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” With this, they let them go. Waves of persecutions and victimization followed in the wake of their resignations.

Realizing that the new-found faith would be more appreciated by a reading public, Brother T felt the group should be brought to town where the bulk of average elites—teachers, civil servants, and employees of private companies—were living in those days. In those days, Agege was just a village 22 miles from Lagos. So the group began to meet around 1946 at 26 Little Road, Yaba, Lagos, at the sitting room of one of the converts, Sister Juliana Shenbanjo. At that time, Sister Shenbanjo was holding prayer meetings in her house in the morning and Brother T and others came in the afternoon to hold their own meetings, during which they read tracts or large papers and prayed.

TEETHING PROBLEMS

The enemy of men's soul had plans to scatter this group because he saw the group as having a wonderful future if they could hold on to practical holiness without compromise.

When Brother Timothy and Brother Lucas went to meet the council at Ibadan, Brother Ebenezer D.T. Robbins was left in charge. Before they came back, D.T. Robbins had brought in Pastor J.L.

Hanson of the Apostolic Church. On finding out his background, Brother T's group discovered that he had been suspended from the Apostolic Church because he was living in adultery. The ministers met and told him to make his life straight as he could not labour in their midst with a crooked life. He promised to do this but failed. Robbins felt this was hard on him. Some in the group wanted the ministry to be lenient with Pastor Hanson and so there was a split. Robbins and Hanson and a majority stood together. Brother T, Lucas and very few faithful ones left them.

Brother T's records read thus: "On Sunday, 2 November 1947, we the following—T.G. Oshokoya, minister; L.A. Obakoya, evangelist; E.A. Oshobowale, M.B. Oduwole; Sisters Rebecca Oreolu Onanuga and Hannah Oshokoya—left the church at 26 Little Road, Yaba, because those left behind refused to hold on to the true Word of God, and sound doctrine. And as we determined to do the will of God to the end of our lives, we pledged to leave them according to what the Scripture says: 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?' (2 Corinthians 6:14)

"On November 5, 1947, morning prayer meetings started at 80 Denton Street, Ebute Meta, where we had some people who were thirsty for the Word of God. By the grace of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, on Sunday 16th November, 1947, we had the privilege to establish a new church in a single-room accommodation at 63 Ibadan Street, Ebute Meta, where we lived and held meetings.



SISTER RUTH ASHWELL IN HER OFFICE



WORKERS IN FRONT OF 22 SIMPSON STREET

“The morning service which started at 10am had 11 people in attendance—three girls, four women, and four men. The service was brought to a close at 12 noon and at about 3pm we as the body of the church went to the Boys' Hostel, Ebute Meta, as witnesses of Jesus Christ. And we thank the Almighty Father that we were joyfully received there by the 29 boys and their caretaker.

“After this, we held our evening service by 7pm with the attendance of three girls, five women, and five men. The following Sunday, 24th November, 1947 was the second service and we had 18 people in attendance in the morning service. After the service, we went to the Hospital and Boys' Remand Home, Lagos, while the two elders stayed back for house-to-house evangelism.”

As the congregation grew, they hired Lisabi Hall at Ebute Meta for special meetings. Thus The Apostolic Faith organization in Nigeria continued to grow from a very small beginning. Right from the inception, no collection plates were passed; it was determined that God's Work would be financed through tithes and offerings according to the Word of God. God did not fail them.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BY THE BODY OF THE APOSTOLIC FAITH
MISSION ON 29TH NOVEMBER, 1947**

“On this day the 29th November, 1947, we the under mentioned as the body of The Apostolic Faith Mission, held a meeting at 63 Ibadan Street, East Ebute Meta, under the chairmanship of Brother T.G. Oshokoya.

“The meeting which started by 7.30pm held some discussions about:

(i) How we would progress in this Ministry into which we were called by the grace of God.

(ii) How we would have the name of the church registered

(iii) How we would select church officers and trustees.

“Brother Oshokoya, the Chairman, rose up and suggested the choice of Brother Oduwole as General Secretary, Brother Oshobowale as Financial Secretary and Brother Obakoya as Treasurer. Other members of the body consented and the selected ones were asked if they accepted. They agreed to take the posts and promised to hold the posts faithfully by the grace of God.

“After this the whole body of six decided over the registration and the conclusion after the long discussion was to register the church as early as possible.

First Board of Trustees Appointed and Constitution Adopted “We then met to choose three trustees; but ultimately we could only get two and they were Brother T.G. Oshokoya and Brother L.A. Obakoya, to carry on the trusteeship presently hoping to choose the other one when available. This meeting that lasted for an hour was brought to a close by the Chairman who said the closing prayer and the grace by 8.30pm.

“The body of the church consisted of:

Brother T.G. Oshokoya (Minister-in-charge)

Brother L.A. Obakoya (Evangelist)

Brother E.A. Oshobowale

Brother E.A. Oduwole

Sisters R.O. Oreolu Onanuga and H.E. Oshokoya

Signed: M.B. Oduwole (Secretary)”

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD TODAY JANUARY 4, 1948, BY THE BODY OF
THE APOSTOLIC FAITH, LAGOS**

“On this day the 4th of January, 1948, Brother T.G. Oshokoya, minister; Brother L.A. Obakoya, evangelist; Brother E.A. Oshobowale, Brother M.B. Oduwole; Sister R.O. Onanuga and Sister H.E. Oshokoya, as the body of the Apostolic Faith Mission, held another meeting which started at 3pm at 63 Ibadan Street, Ebute Meta, under the chairmanship of Brother T.G. Oshokoya.

(i) The Chairman gave words of advice to the other members about how we should try our best to do the Work of God faithfully till the church land at 28 Yaba Road, Ebute Meta, is secured, in order to hold meetings there as early as possible, and do the work to which we were called so satisfactorily that it might be the will of Him that has chosen us to give us power that we might show transgressors their ways.

(ii) Another man, Brother Oduwole was selected by the body as Auditor. The meeting closed at 5pm.

Signed: M.B. Oduwole (Secretary)”

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MEMBERS HELD TODAY THE 27TH AUGUST, 1948

“A meeting was held today by the Apostolic Faith elders and the saved souls, wherein the constitution and by-laws for incorporation were read to the hearing of the congregation.

(I, the minister-in-charge, Brother T.G. Oshokoya gave us some words of exhortation which were very inspiring.

(ii) The Secretary was given the papers to read while the minister interpreted and illustrated the wordings therein. After the reading of every sheet, the attendees were asked if anyone needed explanation, and to those who needed, explanations were given.

“After this, the minister again gave words of explanation and commented on all that were read so that nobody would be ignorant of anything concerning the constitution and by-laws. The papers were said to be taken away to the L.E.D.B. for registration.

“This meeting of the saved souls was brought to a close without argument or dispute. The attendees said a general prayer of thanksgiving to Jesus through Whose grace things were done amicably.

Attendance: T.G. Oshokoya (Minister-in-charge) L.A. Obakoya (Evangelist), E.A. Oshobowale, M.B. Oduwole (Secretary) Shipeolu, Adeleye, Michael O. She, James, Orimi, Oshikominu, Samuel, Sisters Oshosanya, Shyllon, Oshokoya, Odu, Oshobowale, O. Adeleye, Ayinke, F. Olajide.”

MISSIONARY VISIT FROM PORTLAND

In January 1949, Rev. George Moore Hughes from the 15 international headquarters of The Apostolic Faith Mission in Portland, Oregon, USA and Rev. van der Puije from Gold Coast (now Ghana) arrived Nigeria for a visit. All meetings were held at Lisabi Hall. Brother Robbins and Hanson's faction was invited. A reconciliatory meeting was held at which full explanations were demanded by Rev. George Hughes. Robbins and Hanson were advised to put things right. After the Devotional Service on Sunday, 6 February 1949, Rev. George Hughes held a business meeting with the children of God (those who were saved). He asked if the body of the Church accepted all the doctrines as preached and practised by the Apostolic Faith Organization, there was an affirmative answer with a raise of hands.



BROTHER GEORGE HUGHES

He charged the whole assembly to cooperate and pray for the progress of the work in Nigeria. He advised all to play their parts in paying their tithes and free-will offerings, the only means by which the work could be funded as written in Malachi 3:10:

“ Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” The tithe-box was introduced to the assembly.

He then read a letter from the General Overseer, Rev. Raymond Crawford after which he appointed Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya to lead the church and Lucas Adebayo Obakoya to assist him. Then he ordained Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya and Lucas Adebayo Obakoya as ministers and credentials were given to them immediately. The rest were asked to line up so that God might make use of them. There were 85 people at that meeting. After this, Rev. George Hughes, Rev. Peter O. van der Puije with Brother T.G. Oshokoya undertook a tour of the Apostolic Faith churches in the Southern parts of Nigeria. They were joined by Rev. Philip O. Inyang. God continued to reveal His will to Brother T, a plan which the devil used various agents of his to thwart unsuccessfully. On the 10 of February, the missionaries left Nigeria for Ghana through Cotonou, Benin Republic. Immediately the missionaries left, Robbins and his factions also left the group. But Sisters Shenbanjo and Evaristu came out from Robbins's group to join Brother T's group.

In 1953, Rev. George Moore Hughes visited Nigeria again on his return from a world trip. He went with Brother Timothy and Brother Peter van der Puije on a trip to the Western parts of Nigeria. On his return, Brother George Hughes held some revival meetings in Lagos, then left for Accra Ghana. From Accra, he boarded a plane for the USA. He took ill and while in the plane he became critically ill. The plane had to touch down at Roberts Field Airport in Liberia from where our great missionary passed on to glory and he was laid to rest there.

GROWTH OF THE WORK

The Yearnings and Aspirations of Brother T

His record of July 1949 reads:

“Immediately I received from Rev. George Hughes that the authorization had been given to baptize and observe the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Washing of the Disciples' Feet, I advised the saints to hold our week night meetings and services as Revival services instead of the Camp meetings as we had no facilities to go out of the town for camping. These meetings brought unforgettable remarks in our records. During the period of these services, two souls were saved, seven sanctified and six saints were baptized with the Holy Ghost and Fire. Three more were praying for salvation and other experiences.

“Early on Thursday at 5am, we had seventeen saints for Water Baptism by immersion. Their names were:

1) Brothers Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya, 2) Lucas Jonathan Obakoya 3) Jettye Benedict Abbey, 4) Michael Bandele Oduwole, 5) Samuel Sampson Adetunbo Orimi, 6) Hector Abimbola Elebute, 7) Emmanuel James 8) Sisters Rebecca Oreolu Onanuga, 9) Elizabeth Oyebola Abosede, 10) Hannah Emiola Oshokoya, 11) Henrietta Aina Pears, 12) Florence Sonein, 13) Abigail Adunni Odu, 14) Marie Olubunmi Shylon, 15) Alice Olateju Akodu, 16) Roseline Bridget Lydia Hall Thompson, 17) Margaret Rachel Lathbridge.”

30, IBADAN STREET

Brother T's life cannot be severed from the growth and progress of the Apostolic Faith work in Nigeria and all over Africa. More than anything, he wanted the sound doctrine to be spread abroad all over the continent. He and his colleagues were determined to stake their lives for the cause of the Gospel in the face of meager resources. But God did not fail them. Tracts and magazines arrived from Portland headquarters from time to time and these were faithfully distributed free of charge. Soon, God in His faithfulness provided a bungalow at 30 Ibadan Street. They moved there on 30 June 1949. In November of the same year, the first-ever Camp meeting was held. It was a prelude to the annual Camp meeting that has held ever since. It was at this same Ibadan Street where late Sister Dorcas Okuyemi, our first organist was converted.

22, SIMPSON STREET

From there, the Church moved to a bigger premises at 22 Simpson Street. God placed His unction on Brother T's ministry and very many souls were converted at Simpson Street. A strong pull of the Spirit was always felt at the end of each meeting and this led people to the altar of prayer with sobs and anguished cries of penitence. His own ministry was characterized by tears when he preached or prayed. Heaven would come down our souls to meet. And at last shouts of victory and rejoicing would be heard around the altar as people prayed through to victory and made their peace with God.

Before the group moved in, 22 Simpson Street was a bungalow occupied by some people. One of them was a renowned herbalist. He did not want to leave the premises, therefore he resorted to threats to scare Brother T and his group. One day he lifted up his hands and touched Brother T's forehead and bent down to touch the ground, giving Brother T only seven more days to live. The brethren met daily in front of the house at Simpson Street to sing and pray. After a few days, the herbalist lost his son, and his wife became seriously ill. Then, the man called Brother Tand made request for prayer. The people of God eventually prayed for him and in no distant time the man got accommodation somewhere else and he moved out. Immediately he moved, renovation work began on the building and services started there in earnest with a few rooms behind for lodging.

Things were very hard at the beginning. When the saints were not sure of their next meal, they would leave home in the mornings to distribute papers in Lagos Island and other places. But before leaving, they would pray telling God their needs. By the time they returned, they would find the food they needed placed at their doorsteps. This happened several times. This is what childlike faith in God's own promises can do.

Brother T was determined that there would be no soliciting for funds for the Lord's work. No distribution of envelopes asking for help for the Lord's work. No harvest, no bazaar, no memorial services or thanksgiving services for raising money. The Church stuck to the biblical injunction of financing the Church with tithes and offerings.

Brother T spent as much as he could on the development of the church instead of on food and clothing items for himself. The result was that he wore only one long, faded robe. But God taught him he needed new clothing items in conformity with his calling as a leader of men. One day, he went to the bank to cash a cheque sent to him from USA. On seeing his shabby appearance, the bank official asked him to bring someone known to the bank to identify him though he had presented the relevant correspondence. He had to do this before he could be paid. That day, he got the message. From then on, he was well but modestly dressed like the gentleman that he was.

TRIPS TO PORTLAND, OREGON

In February 1951, instructions came from Portland headquarters that Rev. Timothy Oshokoya should visit correspondents and groups who were worshipping in the name of the Apostolic Faith. On 20 February 1951, Brother T left Lagos by ship, went on shore at Port Harcourt to go inland by road to visit many groups in what we know today as Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Abia States. On this trip, he met Rev. Philip Inyang, the man whom God used to start the work at Ikot Enwang (which is now the regional headquarters of our work in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States) and Ikot Ekpene. Brother T also visited Aba, Owerri, Onitsha and Asaba with Brother Philip Inyang. Most of the journeys in those days were on foot, by bicycle and in trucks because motor vehicles were very few and vehicular transport mostly unaffordable. Later he visited Ibadan and Saki with a Gospel team.

On his return, he found a letter from Portland headquarters inviting him to their annual Camp meeting. He went to board the plane at Ikeja, Lagos. He arrived Portland on 9 June, 1951. The Convention started on 1 July, so he spent the three-week interval learning music and getting acquainted with the work. During the Convention, Brother T was called upon to give a report of the work in Nigeria to a congregation of over 3,000 comprising people from different parts of the world. His talk gave the international headquarters the incentive that Brother T was the chosen man for African work. On the score of that, he was given the backing to take up the African work from then on.



REV. OSHOKOYA IN PORTLAND, OREGON, USA



REV. RAYMOND CRAWFORD WITH BROTHER T.G. OSHOKOYA

He left Portland, Oregon, on 25 July 1951 with a commission to tour some West African countries and meet Apostolic Faith correspondents. It was while on this return flight that Brother T had the wonderful burden of winning Africa for Christ.

In 1955, he was again invited to Portland, Oregon, for their annual international convention and in May/June 1955, he was in Portland the second time for Camp meeting. He wrote: "One morning before the Bible teaching I was asked to give a talk on the African work. But the talk overlapped into the time for Bible teaching and by the time I finished God used it wonderfully.

"Many came to the altar weeping and consecrating their lives to God. Brother Ray came out and said: 'I have caught a vision. God has raised up Brother Timothy for the African work'. And he mentioned a lot of things they would do for the work in Africa. Most of these he was not able to fulfil before he passed on to glory. I was told to visit Liberia again on my way back from Portland, Oregon."

By the time he came back from the international headquarters of the Apostolic Faith in 1955, Lagos had been made the Africa headquarters of the Apostolic Faith work in Africa and Rev. Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya was named Africa Overseer of the work.

49, MOLONEY STREET

By this time, 22 Simpson Street, after renovation, was full to overflowing and the Church had purchased another location in Ebute Meta for a church building. Preparations were on hand to build a bigger church at 49 Moloney Street near the Apena Cemetery, Ebute Meta.

On the 8 of November 1955, construction work started on the new site. The topography of the land allowed for a basement to be dug providing a basement hall half the size of the upper auditorium.

Brother T and his team carried out a big crusade called "Africa for Christ" in 1956 and whilst the campaigns were going on, the Gospel was rapidly expanding in Lagos. Brother T, the man of vision had the foresight of the need for a campground in Africa headquarters, having attended the Portland Camp meeting twice. Negotiations to purchase a three-acre land at Onigbongbo began and it was later secured for a campground.



MOLONEY CHURCH, EBUTE-META



FIRST WOODEN TABERNACLE, ANTHONY VILLAGE



LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF THE GREAT TABERNACLE, ANTHONY VILLAGE

It was a great day when the Church moved into the basement at 49 Moloney Street, Ebute Meta. The first Sunday service was held there on 30 November 1958. The attendance was 657. The saints greatly rejoiced at having a very large space for their services. In the following year, on the 2nd of August 1959, the first Sunday school of the annual Camp meeting attracted a crowd of 1,500. People were lodged in rented apartments and with the saints.

Onigbongbo and Adam's Village (now Anthony Village)

In the meantime, the three-acre campgrounds at Onigbongbo was being developed. Three long dormitories were built and campers were lodged there and transported to 49 Moloney Street for Camp meeting services. At this time, the church had moved up to the auditorium on the ground floor which was 60' x 120'.

God continued leading Brother T step-by-step in the expansion of the Gospel work. When traffic congestion slowed down the transportation of campers to 49 Moloney Street Church at Ebute Meta, leaders thought of developing a bigger church building at Onigbongbo. By now Brother T had realized the three-acre for a campground would be too small. Already, he had started negotiations for another campgrounds, a 10-acre expanse of land at Anthony Village – Adam's village as it was called at that time – off mile 8 Ikorodu Road, Lagos. Soon, this materialized and a road was constructed through a thick bush into the place we now call Anthony Campgrounds.

ERECTION OF A WOODEN TABERNACLE

The foundation of a wooden Tabernacle 100' x 150' was laid on 12 May 1966 by Rev. Timothy Oshokoya. The wooden building was quickly erected with big wooden posts supporting the roof. On 20 August 1966, the wooden tabernacle was dedicated by the General Overseer of the Apostolic Faith Mission, Rev. L.C. Carver during his first visit to Nigeria. This looked like the ultimate answer to the prayers for a really big church building. But within two years, the tabernacle was full to overflowing and plans were made to build a bigger, larger and more permanent structure.

BUILDING OF THE GREAT TABERNACLE AT THE ANTHONY VILLAGE

On the 2 of March 1972, the foundation of the Great Tabernacle (240' X 150' with a basement and a gallery) was laid at Anthony Village, Lagos. With the commitment and enthusiasm of the children of God at the headquarters in Lagos, the saints from Ibadan, Ijebu-Ode, Abeokuta and Cotonou, the building of this super-structure took only five months. Through the help of God, the Great Tabernacle was first put to use on the 6th of August, 1972, being the opening of our 22 annual Camp meeting.

Only God can give the accurate number of souls that have been saved from sin and bodies healed of diverse diseases. Uncountable are the answered prayers, wonders and miracles God has performed in this tabernacle.

The finance of the Tabernacle came from the widows' mite of the children of God as their obligation to God. All the labour exerted in the building project came from the saints who voluntarily gave their time and talents with which God had endowed them for the work. The gigantic task of building the Great Tabernacle was accomplished without passing collection plates, levying pastoral dues, soliciting for a special building fund or oversees financial aid. But God supplied all our “need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

By human calculation, the amount expended on the building up to the time of its dedication (excluding the labour of members) was N2, 265,386.50 (Two million, two hundred and sixty-five thousand, three hundred and eighty-six Naira, fifty kobo) and this was “an odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God” from all the members of the Apostolic Faith Church throughout Nigeria, “for the people had a mind to work”. The Great Tabernacle was dedicated on Sunday 1 of August, 1981 with 8,020 people in attendance to offer praises and thanksgiving to God realizing that, “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it”.

Dedication prayers could be summed up as follows:

“LORD God, ... there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart....That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day.... If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people,... which shall spread forth his hands toward this house: T h e n hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers” (I Kings 8: 23, 29, 37-40).

The mighty presence of God was felt as in the case of King Solomon’s temple dedication.

IGBESA LAND

God's leading of Brother T continued. He was convinced that another bigger land for campground was needed because he believed that, in answer to prayers, Anthony Village Campgrounds would soon become too small to accommodate the campers.

He called on one Brother Gideon Adeta who had prayed through to his three Christian experiences in 1971 in the old tabernacle of the Apostolic Faith, Anthony Village, to search for a vast area of land in their area. This search for land started in 1981 and continued until God wonderfully led Brother G. Adeta and Rev. Augustus Omole (who was later asked to join Brother Adeta in the search) to Igbesa where they got a very big parcel of land.

Brother Timothy was informed and negotiation was made. Brother T insisted on paying only N1, 000 (One Thousand Naira Only) per acre as the land was (and still is) for God's use and not for business. The land owners had no choice but to accept the offer.

On 25 March, 1982, half of the money for 50 acres was paid in the presence of Rev. J.O. Soyinka, the then church Secretary-Treasurer; Brother Akande, the surveyor; Brother G. Adeta, Brother Augustus Omole, Rev. T.G. Oshokoya, Sister Esther Ogunfowomu, Chief Odagi, Alhaji Itire and some others. Later on additional seven acres and 22 acres were bought and paid for after paying the balance for the first 50 acres.

Before long, a building was erected on the land by Rev. T.G. Oshokoya with the hope that development would soon begin.

EARLY EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS AND TRIPS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE NIGERIA

Establishment of Branch Churches

Ibadan church was the first to be established after that of Lagos. Churches were subsequently built at Ijebu-Ode, Abeokuta, Ikirun and many other places.

In 1956, a big crusade was planned to take the Gospel to many parts of Nigeria. It was called “Africa for Christ” crusade. It was a crusade planned and carried out by faith and God's leading. An old four wheeler Willy’s Jeep and an old Chevrolet of Ford Suburban Carryall were the vehicles used. The Willy's Jeep pulled a short trailer carrying the load of the team, instrumentalists, teachers, singers, and ministers. Rev. Ezekiel Oshobowale assisted Rev. Timothy Oshokoya to manage the team and he drove the Willy's Jeep. Rev. Francis Adisa Akinboye, Sister Olive Dosumu, Florence Bolurin, Dorcas Okunyemi who played the organ as well as Brother Emmanuel Shotade were in the team. They went as far East as Ikot Enwang in Ikot Ekpene, visiting some branch churches there.



AFRICA FOR CHRIST CRUSADE MISSIONARY VAN

Another trip was made to the northern part of the country. They visited Kabba area including Aiyetoro Gbedde in the then Kwara State. One night, a bridge was broken at Isanlu after a heavy rain. Miraculously, God stopped the team from crossing the bridge that night in the dark. God laid it upon the heart of the leader, Rev. Timothy Oshokoya, to discontinue the journey that night. The following day the team took off after it had stopped raining.

When they got to Kabba the following day, the saints at Kabba rejoiced at God's wonderful protection by stopping the journey the previous night. They reported that one white missionary had lost his life as a result of the broken bridge. They lifted their Ebenezer to the Lord for His leading.

All through Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ile-Ife, Oke Igbo, Oke-ho, Ondo, and a lot of other towns and villages, the wave of the Gospel blew. They held open-air meetings and distributed Apostolic Faith magazines as the team moved from place to place. It was a time of sowing, which yielded rich dividends in the numerical growth and geographical spread of the Church.

Apart from meticulously planned longer-term outreach programmes, ad-hoc evangelistic outings and house-to-house campaigns to distribute magazines and tracts were also undertaken from time to time in towns and villages. Later, the riverine areas of Ikorodu, Ito-Ikin and Ejinrin were also covered and thousands of Gospel papers were distributed there.

In the then mid-Western and Eastern parts of Nigeria, trips were made to Benin City, Agbor, Asaba, Onitsha, Enugu, Umuahia, Ikot Ekpene, Calabar, Aba, Port Harcourt, Ahoada, Eket, Okporowo, Oron and others. In almost all these places visited with Gospel paper distribution, Apostolic Faith Churches have taken firm roots and are growing considerably.

IKIRUN BRANCH CHURCH

Brother T and his team comprising Brother Paul Ibikunle, Sister Esther Ogunfowomu, Sister Yemi Dahunsi and Brother Benjamin Kehinde went on a Gospel trip to Ikirun for dedication of the new church there. Late Rev. S. A. Akinola, the pastor of the Church gladly welcomed the Gospel team and two weeks of revival followed.

Brother T noted in his diary: “The Apostolic Faith was established at Ikirun on 4 September, 1960. The foundation of the first church building constructed was laid on 1 December, 1963 and that of the new church building was laid in the year 1969, which was later dedicated on the 13 January, 1973.

“The attendance for the dedication was 670. As from the morning 29 hours, brethren from different parts of the Western States began to arrive here for the dedication. Early in the morning, our choir members and workers from Lagos who arrived 1:30am had prepared for the street work while workers led by Brother Ogunnaike from Ibadan, and workers led by Brother E. O. Aina from Ijebu-Ode (who were the first to arrive in the morning) were already set for the street work also. From Abeokuta came workers led by Brother Oshobowale. The dedication took place at 3:10pm with people from different walks of life in attendance.”

House-to-house evangelism was also arranged to invite many people into the services starting from Tuesday as there were two weeks revival meetings to boost the work there after the dedication.

At the time, the Gospel team went to several villages around Ikirun—Ila Orangun, Otan Ayegbaju while other people went for campaign and distribution of the Light of Hope. Several souls were won into the Gospel through these media.

From Brother T's records: “This evening we closed the revival services and shall return to Lagos the next morning. We thank the Lord for what has been accomplished for His mercy endureth for ever. Hope to return here for the dedication of another church very soon should the Lord tarry.” Since then the work continues to progress.

Another Africa for Christ crusade was organized by Brother T in 1974. This time Brother T went with his team and some ministers. On September 3, 1974, the team left the Campground in Anthony Village, Lagos for a three-month tour. The places visited included:

1. Ijebu-Ode and neighboring villages: They were there for a two week revival and campaign round the neighboring villages. Thousands of English and Yoruba Gospel literature were distributed. Many people responded and were greatly blessed.

2. Akure: Revival meetings were held in the church and campaign was made in many of the villages. People were blessed, especially students from higher institutions. One of them who was an alcoholic got saved the same day the team arrived in Akure.

3. Ado-Ekiti: A church formerly called 'Full Gospel Mission' affiliated with the Apostolic Faith Church. The leader stepped down and handed the church over to the Apostolic Faith. Revival meetings followed and many were saved. There was much joy all over the place as sinners decided for God.

4. Ilesa: There were revival meetings and campaign in the town and its suburb. Many were blessed.

5. Ibadan: There were campaign and revival meetings and many people decided for God.

6. Abeokuta: Many were blessed here including a policeman who was wonderfully converted.

7. Kwara State: Many were blessed in Kwara State, especially at Aiyetoro-Gbede where a witch decided for God and was wonderfully delivered. Lokoja, Offa, Omu-Aran, Okenne, Jebba South, Ilorin and many other stations were visited and God did bless them.

8. Lagos and its environs: There were campaign and revival meetings which yielded much fruit.

9. Ghana (Sege): Campaign started here in earnest. There was a lot of distribution of Gospel literature. Recorded songs in Ga language were being relayed all along and this was a big inspiration to the people.

10. Accra: Revival meetings were held and people were mightily blessed.

11. Nsawam and other branch churches were equally visited.

EVANGELISTIC TRIPS TO OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES

LIBERIA WORK

In August 1951, Rev. Timothy Oshokoya was asked to visit correspondents in Liberia including Apostolic Faith Church in Monrovia founded by one Mr Williams, a black man. By the time he got there, Mr. Williams had passed away and the group had ceased to function. But he was introduced to President Tubman of Liberia who offered him a motorcycle to take him around.

Manley and other Apostolic Faith Church Assemblies of Africa in Liberia affiliated with the Apostolic Faith of Portland, Oregon.

On his second visit to the Portland annual Camp meeting in 1955, he was instructed to visit Liberia on his return to Nigeria. He wrote: “In Liberia, I met Brother Peter Zacheaus Manley. Brother Manley has established an Apostolic Faith Church in Manley Village, near Roberts Field Airport, Liberia. I held two revival and evangelistic services with them before I continued my flight to Nigeria. But we kept up contact after that.”



REV. T. G. OSHOKOYA & BROTHER SIMON- PIERRE M'BENGANI FROM ZAIRE



REV. TIMOTHY IN LIBERIA

Towards the end of 1958, five ministers came to Lagos from Liberia with Brother Manley. They spent some time with Lagos brethren, honing their writing and reading skills. They attended Christmas activities and revival programmes. They went back to Liberia laden with rich spiritual blessings.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)

In February 1955, Brother T was directed by the General Overseer in Portland to visit South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). He wrote "I took a local plane to Kano airport where I was to take the plane to Johannesburg in South Africa. I had a few days' delay at Kano airport where I was to regularize my visa. Nigeria, at that time, was under the British rule. In the chalet where I was lodged at the airport hotel, I had time to pray. As I lay down on my bed it seemed as if an insect bit me. I got up immediately and searched for the insect but there was none. But later, the pain was felt all over my body, in my head and brain. I resorted to praying and kept this to myself. I started to feel a certain numbness from my loins down to my legs. I did not know how to place the sickness. It seemed my legs were getting paralyzed. This set me to pray more and more. I consecrated and this made my heart to be more tender and humble. I did not know God used this to prepare me for the task ahead.

"When I got to Johannesburg, the Africans were discriminated against in those days. They called it 'colour bar'. I started to feel this from the airport. I had to wait for all the white passengers to go before 'a combi' bus was brought to take me. One could see abject poverty on the faces of the Africans. Their overlords felt they should be hewers of wood and drawers of water and therefore would not give them any considerable education. I had to live with them in the African township. I thank the Lord that because of the 'thorn in my flesh' my heart was humbled to accommodate them and bear with them. I was given only 7 days to stay there. As I held revival meetings and went to town (Johannesburg) to buy films and post letters, I had no feelings in my legs. I felt they were wobbling under me as I walked. I did not mention this to my hosts but kept on trusting the Lord.

"From South Africa, I went on to Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and landed in Salisbury (Harare). Here also I went to live in the African township. I could not control my bowels, it seemed the sickness became worse. But I kept on praying, and I continued holding services and meeting people. One day, I went to town to buy stamps and films to carry on my correspondence for inviting people to the services. As I was returning from town, I started to cross a dual carriageway and suddenly a trailer was approaching. With this 'thorn in my flesh' would I be crushed? I found myself running across just in time before the trailer got near. On the other side, it surprised me that I could make that dash. How did I do it? It must have been God has healed me! From that time on, that was the end of the sickness.

"I visited many towns in Zimbabwe – Gwello, Gatooma and finally Bulawayo. It was at Gwello that Brother Morgan Sengwayo met me and interpreted for me in the services. He was already saved. He went on with me to Bulawayo where after a series of revival meetings held, Sengwayo prayed through to sanctification and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Whilst still holding meetings at Bulawayo, in March 1955, I got the news of the passing away of Brother Peter van der Puije in Accra, Ghana. There was an abrupt break in our revival meetings and I hurriedly left Bulawayo for Accra, Ghana. At the airport I told Brother Morgan Sengwayo to carry on the work where I had stopped." It was on Brother T's return to Nigeria that he was invited to Portland, Oregon, again for the annual international Camp meeting in June, 1955.

In the year 1981, Rev. Sengwayo and his wife attended camp meeting convention in Lagos. They came along with some of their children – Freedom, Kingdom, Wisdom, and Seldom.

BROTHER T'S SECOND VISIT TO ZIMBABWE

On Monday, December 11, 1981, Brother T received a letter from the saints in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, inviting him to their Camp meeting. Their meeting was to start the second day 12 December, 1981. As from that Friday, Brother T started his preparations for the journey, having seen the green light from God. He made up a team of five to go with him – Rev J.O. Soyinka, Rev. P.K. Ibikunle, Brother John Aina, Sisters Esther Ogunfowomu and Bunmi Onabolu. On the 15 December, 1981, the team left for the International Airport and the aircraft took off at 11.15pm.

Brother Brooks Muyambo was at Salisbury Airport to welcome the team as instructed by their Overseer, Rev. Morgan Sengwayo. The team later left there for Bulawayo. At the Bulawayo Airport, Rev. Morgan Sengwayo and his family and the ministers were there to welcome the team. Oh, the joy that overwhelmed every heart, most especially Brother Morgan Sengwayo! They embraced the team members and showed their happiness and appreciation for the visit.

The team was taken to 52 Lolly Street in a house called 'Nigeria House' prepared for them in a suburb where the white people used to live and the black were not allowed to enter without a pass. When Zimbabwe became independent, black people had the opportunity of going there and eventually, the Church bought the house and named it 'Nigeria House'.



Rev. M. Sengwayo and Rev. T.G. Oshokoya

When the Gospel team arrived, the choir members lined up, right and left in their robes holding a white handkerchief each and saying, “Welcome, Welcome...” and the team passed through their midst. Mr. Rose Sengwayo led the visitors round the house and took very good care of them.

A car for six passengers took the team members to the church the following day for Bible teaching. Immediately the visitors arrived, the choristers and the saints lined up raising their white handkerchiefs and as the team stepped into the church, the shout of “Hallelujah! Amen!” rent the air.

Rev. Morgan Sengwayo climbed the pulpit to tell the congregation that the greatest joy in his heart that day was that his angel (Brother T) whom he had described and talked about to the congregation as the one who preached the Gospel to him had at last arrived and this, in his lifetime. He gave a short address that it was Brother T who had sent him to do the work in their midst. Since he had arrived, he said, he as a son would withdraw and hand the work over to him. As he was saying this, he was in tears. He told the congregation that they should listen attentively to the Africa Overseer, Rev. T.G. Oshokoya, and the members of the team and that whatever they were taught should be taken seriously, for Brother T and the team had the fullness of the Gospel and the Word of God. After this, he stepped down from the platform and went to sit in the congregation.

The Africa Overseer, Rev. T.G. Oshokoya, stood up to address the congregation but he first of all called Brother Sengwayo back to the platform. As he stood up, the shout of joy filled the house. He confirmed all that Brother Sengwayo had said about his first visit to South Africa in 1955; how he had met Brother Sengwayo and some people who were blessed through his ministry. Brother Sengwayo was saved and during the Bible teaching by Brother T on the subject of sanctification one day, he prayed through to the experience of sanctification and later got the third Christian experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. He confirmed also that he received the shocking news of Rev. van der Puije's demise in Accra, Ghana, and had to leave immediately for his burial. Brother Sengwayo was with him at the airport when he handed the work of evangelism in that area over to him that he should continue where he had stopped at Brother C. D. Petros' house. Before this time, Brother Sengwayo was a minister of a church, but since he received this call, he left that organization and resigned his work with the government and faced the work of evangelism of the true Gospel in Southern Rhodesia. Though tedious, God backed Brother Sengwayo up and the work grew amidst troubles and trials. After the speech, people went on their knees with tears.

After this, Brother Sengwayo led Brother T and the members of the team to the church office where he introduced the ministers to them. Among them were those who met Brother T in 1955. It was a big surprise and wonderful reunion. Brother T was very happy to see them still in the Gospel. One of them said that he would have died long ago were it not for the Gospel he came across.

One of the ministers there was Brother Sanana from Zambia who was Brother Sengwayo's convert. He was a drunkard who would leave home for days.



REV. T. G. OSHOKOYA & REV. ROBINSON SANANA

At a time, his wife got fed up and kept his food for seven days during which he did not return home from work to eat. She put the seven days' heap of food into a wheelbarrow and carried it to his office to show his colleagues as proof that his husband had not been home for a whole week. But wonderfully one day, the Lord led the people of God to preach in front of their house when he was around. He heard the Word of God and gave his heart to God. God saved him and he began to enjoy his family. He was very fervent in the faith and became the first Overseer of the Apostolic Faith Churches in Zambia.

Brother Sengwayo led the team to Stand 39E Pelandaba, where the work of the Gospel started in Bulawayo. It was a house of two rooms which was later expanded and used as the church. Neighboring households complained about the disturbing noise of the prayers of the congregation and therefore, decided to sell their houses to the Church and move elsewhere. God used this to provide more houses to the Church for lodging people during their convention and for other purposes. The place later became the general office for the Church. While still in the office, some of the ministers testified and showed the team members where they prayed through to salvation when the place was in use for services. After this, Brother Sengwayo took the team members and Brother T to their campground – Green Gables of 101 acres. God wonderfully provided this already developed portion of land for them and they walked into it. As at the time of the visit, the Church had already built 12 dormitories of 25 by 100 feet there. Each dormitory was built with cement block and roofed with asbestos slates.

The missionaries were taken to several branches of the work in Zimbabwe – Gatooma, Kwekwe, Hartley, Salisbury and others before they returned to Nigeria.

GHANA WORK

On 18 April 1954 Apostolic Faith Church in Accra, Gold Coast (now Ghana) was dedicated. Rev. T.G. Oshokoya, Rev Peter Manley of Liberia and Rev. Nyamoh of Freetown, Sierra Leone

were all present in the dedication. Rev. T.G. Oshokoya preached the dedication sermon. He later made several trips to Ghana with his team members and the work there has continued to progress.



REV. T.G. OSHOKOYA AND REV. van der PUIJE

COTONOU

Brother T made several trips to Dahomey, now known as the Republic of Benin. But two of these trips were very remarkable. In 1967, at the burial of late Brother Abbey, the founder of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Cotonou, Brother T led a team of choristers and workers to Cotonou. As usual, he turned the occasion into an evangelistic outreach by sending some evangelists out early in the morning on the day of the burial to invite the whole city to come and witness the befitting burial organized in honour of the deserving soldier of the Cross. Many people attended the burial and, as a result, the church membership in Cotonou rose remarkably.



REV. T.G. OSHOKOYA AND REV. ABBEY

On the 24 of January 1973, Brother T and his team travelled to Cotonou for the foundation laying of the church that was to take place the following day. Extract from his records: “This morning, before laying the foundation of the church, we began to work on the trenches to make it ready for concreting. At 10.40am we were able to start the service for the laying of the foundation. Prelude was given by the orchestra and choir, followed by congregational songs and prayer by Rev. I.O. Sokeye. The Scripture reading, Psalm 84, was by Rev. E.O. Shobowale. The sermon was preached by me (text was taken from St Luke 6:46, 47; I Peter 2:1-3). The foundation prayer was said by Rev. Lucas Obakoya after which the foundation laying was started by me. We all worked along with the members from Lagos congregation.” The Gospel team returned to Lagos to prepare for another trip to Upper Volta.

UPPER VOLTA (NOW BURKINA FASO)

This is from his record: “30 January, 1973: We all called at the Barclay’s Bank, Tinubu for travellers' cheque for our trip to Upper Volta. Each of us – Paul Ibikunle, Olive Dosumu, Esther Ogunfowomu and myself collected N50, 000 each which amounted to 31 pounds sterling. The following day, 31 January, we left Igbobi, Isaac John Street at about 3pm for Idiroko and Igolo border. Having finished with the formalities, we travelled to Cotonou. At Cotonou, 62 pounds sterling travellers' cheque was converted to 33,170 Francs. We worshipped with the Cotonou saints the following Sunday and many souls were blessed with Christian experiences.

“Monday 5 February, 1973 we left at 6.45am on our journey to Upper Volta. We drove through Bohicon to Savalou – Jougou, passing many villages to Nattintigou Kattintigua where we hoped to pass the night but eventually discovered that there was only one petrol station there. There was no hotel nor any lodging centre. We met a man who advised us to continue to Porga to pass the night. We continued our journey and got there in the night at about 9.45pm. There was an international camping ground there but things were very expensive.

“Wonderfully we came across one of our old Lagos afternoon Sunday school pupils. He introduced himself to us and lodged us in his apartment. His name was Mogaji. It was a miracle. And that was how God took care of us in a strange land.

“From Porga the following morning, we left for Pama—Fada— Ouagadougou. The road from Porga was very rough and the speed was completely slowed down. At last we got to Fada where we had a better road like that of Jougou and finally entered a tarred road which we enjoyed all the way to Ouagadougou, arriving at about 4.15pm. God led us to a boy who showed us Mission de Apostolique, where we met Brother Lambert and others.

“The minister of the work there, Brother Isiaka brought in the elderly man who was the director of the organization by name Kafando Peter, and Brother Daniel Kompaore came in with the minister to arrange schedules for the visit. It was arranged to hold revival meeting every day in the evening and Bible teaching for workers every day at 11am.



REV. T. G. OSHOKOYA IN OUAGADOUGU, BURKINA FASO

“Workers from the branch churches—Bobo, Tema, Banga and Ouagadougou all gathered for Bible teaching. Brother Daniel Kompaore was the interpreter. This continued to the third day when we started with questions to know if the workers understood what were taught for the couple of days.

It was discovered that many had only vague idea of sanctification. Hence I had to dwell on the meaning of it very carefully till it was understood.

“There were teachings on: 1) Three Christian Experiences – Salvation, Sanctification and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost 2) No Divorce or Remarriage 3) Divine Healing 4) Brotherly Love 5) The Second Coming of Jesus.

“Some of the branch churches were visited before we left places like Bobo, Banga, Tema and others.

“One of the pastors from the branch churches, Daniel Nkieme said that he felt the tremendous power of God in his life through God's salvation which he had never experienced before. He was brought up by the Assemblies of God.

“It was arranged that the evenings of Tuesdays and Thursdays be spent for youth meetings. Brother Paul Ibikunle and Sister Esther Ogunfowomu took charge of that. Those saved among the youths were taught music and musical instruments after which they were addressed in the Word of God. One evening, revival broke out and at the altar of prayer, Evan Kere prayed through to salvation while his sister, Mary Kere also prayed through to sanctification. At another time, about 4 young people prayed through in their meeting.

“Before we left, we tried to set up a Choir and Orchestra for them in Ouagadougou. The following were selected to start singing in the choir at Ouagadougou: Sister Mary Kere, Eva Kere, Mart Kere, Magdalene Kompaore, Simon Kompaore, Lambert Sakande, Daniel Nkieme, Dennis and Daniel Kompaore to lead them. On the 19 of March, 1973, we left Ouagadougou for Ghana.”

HIS MODE OF EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH

Music

Rev. Timothy Oshokoya in his own words said: “Our orchestra started with a very humble beginning but I must add that discipline and seriousness are the pillars of any good work and whenever the Spirit of God is at work, success is sure. Back in the year 1945, while the cottage meetings of this organization started at 26 Little Road, Yaba, the orchestra was born with a guitar and a mandolin. It was an orchestra of two pieces of musical instruments whose players were the two leading ministers: Timothy Oshokoya playing the guitar and Lucas Obakoya on the mandolin.

“In 1947, we had two more musical instruments: banjo and piano accordion. In 1949, we purchased two violins, one for L3 (Three pounds) and the other L3.10 (Three pounds and ten shillings) for church use.

“One Sunday morning after a sermon on 'The Divine Call', the Lord spoke to the saints and eight people dedicated their lives to join the orchestra band.

“In 1951, when I went to Portland, Oregon, we were given a good number of musical instruments: trumpets, cornets, horns, trombones and violins. During my stay there, I learnt the use of the different instruments and came back to teach others. We bought more violins, cellos and a piano. I became the instructor and the conductor of the orchestra. Many of the children of God were inspired and developed interest in music. There is no age limit in the music classes organized by the Church. Most of the players who cherished the wonderful privilege were adults whose age ranged between 30 and 50 years. Since then, there has been continuous and increased inspiration among the generality of the saints who take the advantage of the organized classes for the learning of music and playing of instruments.

“In December, 1952, we held the first musical concert. Since then, three concerts presented to the public in the year during Easter, Camp meeting and December have been a regular feature.

“I cannot forget some of our musician friends who have been of tremendous assistance to our music department over the years at different times. We are grateful to them for their counsel, constructive criticisms and training. Special tribute goes to Messers Crepp, Pedro, Kusano, Mrs Wolffe, Pa Smith, Mr Derby to mention a few.”

Brother T was a great lover of music and he did all he could to build up the music department. He was very regular and punctual at the practice of the choir and orchestra. His words of encouragement, instructions, advice and fatherly interests in the personal welfare of every member of the choir were a very great inspiration to the group. The post concert briefing of Brother T to the members of the choir and orchestra was a very pleasant experience indelibly printed in their memory. This helped them to consecrate deeper and be more dedicated to their call.

By nature, Brother T always desired the best for the Gospel and he was prepared to pay the price to achieve this. He showed this attitude towards the development of music right from its cradle by regularly buying organs and pianos to meet the need of the choir. Some of the ones he bought were:

1. Grand Piano in the year 1954
2. Manual Reed Organ with Pedal
3. Solina Model 110 in 1966
4. Eminent 650 Classique
5. Wurlitzer in 1977
6. Eminent Grand Theatre 2,500
7. Krumer Dp 30 Piano
8. Krumer Dp 80 Piano

He was planning to buy Kienle Electronic Pipe organ before his demise.

He encouraged members of the choir and orchestra to get their personal instruments and in order to facilitate this, he made arrangements with some saints for the regular supply of instruments at affordable prices. He also got some people trained in order to service and maintain the instruments.



As an instrumentalist, singer and conductor of the orchestra, Brother T's interest and devotion to music inspired a lot of people to develop interest and be devoted to the learning of music.

PRINTING

“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it” (Psalm 68:11).

Brother T, the man of vision, saw the need to establish a printing press as the work grew. A record reads: “Right from the early times, we saw the need to get the sound doctrine of the Word of God to our people in their own language for faith comes by hearing. We already had Sunday school books which were written in English but in order to reach the bulk of the people among whom we work, we saw the need to publish the lesson in our own language. We started with an old Letter Press which was used to print the senior Sunday school lessons and later the junior lessons. Other items are: a Guillotine which was operated manually. Types were composed by hand. 'Speed – O – Print,' a second-hand duplicator was given to us by Portland headquarters when the Africa Overseer, Rev. T.G. Oshokoya went there in 1951. Sunday school lesson outlines for adults, small slips of paper containing the caption for each Sunday school lesson, Bible text and memory verses and leaflets for primary lessons for children were rolled out on the duplicator. In 1952, a 'Banda Spirit Duplicator' was bought locally and this was used to roll out children's lessons in two or three colours. This was used up to 1961.



SISTER GRACE OGUNLAJA (Nee Oshokoya)

COMPUGRAPHIC TYPESETTER



Compugraphic Machine first bought in Anthony Village, installed in Brother T's Cabin.

Brother John Aina & Sister Esther Ogunfowomu sent for training on it in 197.....?



RUTH ASHWELL AND BROTHER CLIFF PAULSON

IN THE PRINTING PRESS

“In 1965, we bought an Ellams Duplicator with interchangeable ink drums – using a drum each for a change of ink. In this same year, one Gestilith offset printing machine was purchased so that the elementary lessons could be produced with better quality and with greater speed because the lessons were used in Kwara State and many schools in the northern part of Nigeria.”

Yoruba Paper – Igbagbo Aposteli

Brother T wrote: “In 1955, I was called to come to Portland, Oregon. Brother Ray, the General Overseer of this organization at that time, said that he caught a vision and that he felt our need was a Printing Plant and periodicals in Yoruba language. From that time the Yoruba paper was printed in Portland and sent to us. Sermons, testimonies, tracts and other articles were typed out and sent to Portland where they were set to type and sent to us for proofreading. After this had gone back and forth for a considerable length of time, Yoruba paper was printed in Portland and shipped to us. Twenty thousand copies were shipped at each printing. Tracts were also printed for us in Yoruba. But we also received the Light of Hope. Sunday school books, Camp meeting teaching booklets and numerous tracts in English were also shipped from Portland’.

DEDICATION

On Monday April 14, 1975, a short but very impressive dedication service was held at the machine room at Onigbongbo, Maryland, Lagos. Present that day were ministers and some saints from our branch churches at Abeokuta, Ibadan and Ijebu-Ode. The attendance was 51.

In the dedication message delivered by Brother T, he said, “Our dream of 20 years has come true today. We shall continue to send our praises to the Almighty God.” He then traced the story of how the printing plant had developed from the small stencil duplicator, which had then been transferred for use in Cotonou, Dahomey, for duplicating of the French translation of Sunday school lessons. Thereafter he went on to mention the other equipment in the printing plant: a Letterpress with suction feed, electric guillotine, a small Offset Gestetner 201, the new Heidelberg Kord offset machine, processing camera, exposing unit and a photo enlarger. Though we had all these machines, we read in the Scripture:

‘Who is ...willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?’ (1 Chronicles 29:5) “What about the hands who will consecrate themselves unto the Lord to have part in the work?”

He also traced the story of the hands that had worked in the printing of materials, typing, preparing, translating, checking, parceling and posting. Since we had no die-cutting machine, children lessons and memory verses which come in various shapes and forms had to be cut out by hand. Though slow and painful, yet it was most rewarding.

Rev. Lucas Obakoya prayed, dedicating the new offset machine, other machines and equipment to God's glory and for the salvation of souls. He prayed that more and more languages be run in the press.

After that, it was pointed out that there was still need for more equipment such as photo-type setter, folding machine, tons of printing papers and other small items. Brother T said, “We trust that the Lord Who has made a dream of 20 years come true has a divine purpose in providing for the establishment of the printing plant.”

EXTENSION AND PROGRESS

“As more churches grew up through the years and the work expanded, the need for the distribution of more copies of Yoruba tracts, Sunday school books, Light of Hope (Igbagbo Aposteli) and other Yoruba Christian literature became more apparent as the demand increased. Labour unrest and dock workers' strike all over the world were causing a lot of delay in the shipment of our literature from Portland. A tour of the Western, Kwara and Lagos States was to be undertaken and thousands of copies of Imole Ireti were to be distributed. We had to reprint 1,000 copies of Imole Ireti locally. We prepared the plates in our printing plant and gave the actual offset printing job to a commercial printer. The plan worked out well and we had enough paper in good time to distribute in the three states visited. From then on, we had a burden to have our own machine that could print the Yoruba magazine and other materials.

“The saints were told of the project and despite inflation and spiraling prices, the Lord gave the saints the will to work. The amount was made up and the machine, a Heidelberg Kord 64 offset machine 18 x 25 ¼ was purchased with the widows' mite in the year 1975. Our printing plant darkroom was built on the old Campground at Onigbongbo where a processing camera and a double-sided exposing unit had already been installed.”

MODERN EQUIPMENT

By the grace of God, in the year 1978, an Atlas Edit Writer was bought and two people - Brother John Aina and Sister Esther Ogunfowomu - were sent for training on this machine and this made for the progress of the printing department. Soon, a compugraphic machine was bought. God laid hand on Brother T's second daughter, Sister Grace Ogunlaja who surrendered her heart to God in 1967 and joined the full time ministry in 1978. She was trained on the compugraphic machine. She travelled to the USA several times for more training thereafter. She was mightily used by God in this regard until she died on active service in 1985 after a brief illness.

School Visitation (now Association of Visiting Secretaries)



THE NEW OFFSET MACHINE KORD 64

In the year 1947, when the church was still at 63 Ibadan Street, Ebute Meta, Gospel workers started visiting institutions with the Word of God. Brother Timothy in his records wrote: “After 3p.m. on a Sunday, we, as the body of the Church, went to the Boys' Hostels, Ebute Meta as witnesses of Jesus Christ. And we thank the Almighty Father that we were joyfully received by the 29 boys therein together with their caretakers.

“Many years after the work of The Apostolic Faith started in Nigeria, I developed a burden for the work in the schools. I made quite a number of visits to several areas of the northern region of Nigeria together with the Gospel team. Among the places visited were Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Ilorin, Aiyetoro Gbedde and Kabba. We went with Gospel literature which were distributed to all and sundry wherever we had the chance to do so. But we were not well received in the northern towns at all because they were predominantly Muslims. In some places, they collected all the papers we distributed to people and set them on fire. Even in some of the areas of the north

where there were some Christian groups, we were not received either. The mere sight of the magazines with the name 'Apostolic Faith' was very distasteful to many.

“In 1959, we made several visits to quite a number of schools in Kabba area of the north. Through the school authorities, we were able to meet the pupils in their classes with the use of small pamphlets of mainly simple Bible stories which were distributed and taught to the children. These pamphlets were produced with our duplicating machine. The children and their teachers enjoyed this very much.

“In the 1960s, we extended our field of operation to the then Western Region of Nigeria. We visited several high schools and colleges of education and made brief calls at the universities.

“We considered that it would be beneficial if the teachers could have interest in the Word of God. This would help them to pass the message to the pupils. Hence, our first retreat ever was held in 1970 in Aiyetoro, Kwara State. It was organized then for teachers only. It was very successful and it was an eye-opener to us that we could have something organized on a large scale in future.

“In 1973, we had the first general retreat on our campground here in Lagos. The classes of people represented were school teachers from high schools, teacher training colleges and primary schools. We had quite a number of university students in attendance also. The total number that came to the first general retreat was a little under 200. Several of them prayed through to victory. Among the university students were those who came heavily bearded but went from the retreat clean-shaved, having come in contact with the Lord. Our retreats have ever since come to stay, holding at our Lagos headquarters twice or thrice every year.

“When we visited schools, one of the questions people asked was, 'Which organization or church do you come from?' When we answered, 'The Apostolic Faith,' they immediately grew cold and sometimes hostile. This is because of their bias against The Apostolic Faith. As a result, we had to go to schools sometimes with private vehicles without church label at all. Our experience of the fifties and sixties convinced us beyond any reasonable doubt that we could not make any headway in schools as long as we went in the name of the Church. Eventually, it dawned on me that we could choose a name for our school visitations. Hence, the name, 'Association of Visiting Secretaries' (AVS). This has gone a long way to give us open doors in many institutions unlike before.”

The visiting secretaries who represent the association are drawn from all walks of life—civil servants, teachers, students, technicians, housewives and so on. They are men and women who are born again and who have been sanctified and baptized in the Holy Ghost and Fire, and whose daily lives agree with the profession of their faith. While we do not go to schools to parade The Apostolic Faith, it is pertinent to say that all the visiting secretaries are members of The Apostolic Faith, and they are required to uphold the doctrine of the Bible.

The work of the AVS in each state is headed by a Chairman, who is the state Overseer and under him are the secretaries. The Bible lessons that are used in the schools as well as during retreats are prepared and arranged by a panel comprising some of the ministers and Sunday school

teachers from Lagos headquarters. All the materials used in the preparation of the Bible studies are derived from The Apostolic Faith Bible teachings. The Bible Study outlines used at the retreats are produced in different languages.



Our retreats have become very popular with attendance reaching 7,000 upwards. The publicity through the aid of banners, posters, handbills as well as print and electronic media is usually very intensive.

Apart from the effects which the AVS work has had in many schools, it has also given a very big boost to membership growth in our branch churches. By the grace of God, the work has grown and gone round the states and outside the country where we have our churches. Retreats have been organized and held, and this has boosted the spread of the Gospel as thousands of souls have been won to the Gospel through AVS work. TO GOD BE THE GLORY.

STREET WORK

Street work or open-air service was Brother T's other mode of evangelistic outreach. Before each evangelistic service, two or three teams were sent out for street work at a time in vehicles or on foot. They were equipped with bales of Light of Hope both in English and Yoruba, a few hymn books and some instrumentalists. A convenient spot was sought out on a busy street. A prelude of music by the instrumentalists quickly attracted the crowd. The song by the workers led by the instrumentalists also followed. Then testimonies were given by team members in different languages. These were interspersed by choruses. After a little exhortation by the team leader, copies of Gospel materials were then distributed to the crowd.

CHILD EVANGELISM

Brother T's policy concerning child evangelism is, **“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6)**. That was why he often emphasized that parents should teach the Word of God to their children right from cradle and the Church has since paid a great attention to the elementary department of our Sunday school.

A child was admitted into the Sunday school class at the age of four. He encouraged the use of visual teaching aids such as pictures, flannel graph, slide projectors and concrete objects to make the lessons interesting to the children. He instructed that simple language should be used to teach the children and their lessons should be short and straight to the point so that they would grasp what they were taught.

He planned that children should be involved in many worship activities such as singing, reciting memory verses in their classes and learning of music and how to play musical instruments. Moreover, they should have services in their own church and their teachers must organize special programmes for them for Easter, Christmas, Camp meeting and special days such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Children's Day and Independence Day. All these, according to him, would enlist the children's interest in the things of God while they were still innocent, tender-hearted and eager to learn.

He launched campaigns to make parents release their children to the Church so that they could be taught the Word of God. Here is an example of such campaigns: “To boost children Sunday school work, teams were chosen from the elementary teachers and Sunday school children collectors for campaign. On one occasion, the team went out in an automobile to a place called New Lagos.

“The public address system which was carried along was used in calling both children and adult. When the children gathered had reached a sizable crowd, they were taught a verse from the Scriptures to memorize. This was repeated over and over. ‘This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins’ (Matthew 26:28). The teacher then asked for who could recite the verse. The children who were able to recite were encouraged with small gifts. This continued till more children arrived. After a large crowd had gathered, the flanelgraph board was set up and the Plan of Redemption was briefly taught with the aid of the flanelgraph picture. At the close, 190 children were given the children tract, “When I Was A Child” in English and Yoruba. A few copies of literature were also given to the adults. A total of eleven prizes were given to those who recited the memory verse very well. An announcement was then made of the morning and afternoon Sunday school classes. Transport would be provided and they were told the location where to gather for the Sunday school collectors on Sundays.”

So, children were brought from different homes for Sunday schools, taught, given leaflets containing the Word of God and taken back to their homes freely.

HOUSE-TO-HOUSE EVANGELISM

House-to-house evangelism was another campaign. Brother T arranged for different teams for early morning and afternoon campaigns. Pairs of males and females with Gospel materials would visit different homes, inviting them to the services. All these have yielded great fruits in spreading the Gospel.

ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

People who were far away were reached through correspondence. Copies of the Light of Hope, newsletters or any other Gospel materials that would lead people to God were mailed to several addresses on the mailing list.

The office had its small beginning at 22 Simpson Street, Ebute Meta, later to the home of Brother T at 53 Isaac John Street, Igbobi. It later moved back to 22 Simpson Street, Ebute Meta, after renovation and now to the campground at Anthony Village.



THE AFRICA OVERSEER IN HIS OFFICE

We send literature in different languages to different parts of Africa and beyond. Through the years, our mode of operations has been enhanced through technological advancement. The office work started in 1940s with letters written longhand. Later the Church secured a manual typewriter.

These were in use when electric typewriters were bought to supplement. Where there was the need to have multiple copies of any document, we typed on stencil and used a manually operated duplicating machine. The Church later acquired a photo-typesetter, which produced the camera ready copies of materials used to print the Sunday school books in various African languages. Latest in the series were microcomputers which were faster.

At various times, the Church sent out some of the full-time office staff to the United States of America for computer training. With the increase in recent years of computer literacy in Nigeria, staff members are being trained locally.

The Church maintained three standby electric generating plants to supplement the public supply. This made the flow of electricity to the campground offices pretty steady. Hence, the various sections of the office—typesetting, editorial, accounts, architectural, dispatch and printing press—all work together as one happy family.

CATERING

As Jesus did not allow those who came to listen to His Words go with empty stomach but said to His disciple, “Give ye them to eat”, Brother T, also like His Master, was always concerned to see the people well fed, both in quality and quantity.

He started the kitchen department of The Apostolic Faith by organizing the making of snacks at 49 Moloney Street, Ebute Meta, for the Sunday school teachers who came for the Teachers' Conference on Saturdays.

Knowing the importance of good food, he encouraged the youth to learn about cookery. He organized picnics where he made both male and female to practise cooking. He used to read a lot about cookery. He invited professional caterers to lecture the saints and encouraged those who were trained to teach others by making them to come and work in the kitchen.

Soon the provision of food to Sunday school teachers which started with snacks developed into serving real meals. Brother T used the opportunity to teach the congregation how to eat balanced diet. As soon as activities began on the campground, the kitchen became an important department. It continued to develop as the AVS residential retreats were introduced. In order to cater for the large number of retreaters, Brother T equipped the kitchen with the latest modern kitchen equipment, very large quantities of plates, cups, cutlery, kettles, food warmers, trays, fridges and deep-freezers. He catered adequately for the spiritual and physical needs of his flock. What a good shepherd!

PERSONAL CONTACT

Brother T's mode of personal contact endeared him to the heart of many people. He was always prompt to visit whenever there was a need to do so. In case of illness or accident, he would be there personally to take care of the victim and would voluntarily spend whatever was necessary to save the victim's life. He was also available for personal contact any time of day or night.

He had a very sharp and retentive memory, which enabled him to recognize whoever he had once met. He was courteous and caring enough to give attention to everybody. He was never too busy nor too much in a hurry to exchange greetings. He had time for the chatters of the children as well as the deep and serious discussions of the adults. He admired consecration, especially in the youths and he did all he could to encourage them to give their best to the Master. He took

personal interest in the progress and well-being of every individual so much so that everybody had a sense of belonging. He loved unity and he had a unifying personality.

SPIRITUALITY AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physically strong, bold and resourceful, Brother T was a good planner with a very keen foresight. He was very intelligent and naturally endowed with great talents, which made him to be a jack of all trades and master of all: carpentry, building, farming, architecture, cooking, nursing, midwifery and music to mention a few. He was very dutiful, reliable, patient and calculating, always weighing the far-reaching effects of his decisions before he acted. He was very neat, a lover of beauty who had a very high taste for the best in all things. He was a great disciplinarian but very tolerant, loving and generous.

He was a humble man of God with unshakable faith in his Creator. He followed God blindly till the very end of his life. He was a prayer warrior, a lover of the Word of God and a diligent Bible student. He was blessed with a rare nature of being able to sleep late and wake up early. He usually got up at about 3am to spend the early hours quietly with the Lord and Saviour by praying and studying the Bible. He was dedicated, deeply consecrated and full of self-denial.

He threw himself into the fray of the Gospel not minding the cost. He was a prolific soul-winner, talented teacher and preacher. He taught and preached the Word with authority and lived by it. He was a stalwart soldier of the Cross.

As a disciple of Jesus Christ and a leader of the Gospel work of this organization in Africa, Brother Timothy Oshokoya led a unique life of hard work and outstanding evangelistic zeal. He was gifted with a rare sense of responsibility and sagacity which qualified him as a competent supervisor in all the phases and sections of the Gospel activity. He was very conscientious and scrupulous in Church business. Rain or shine, in season and out of season, he was at work. He often expressed his wish to die on active service for the Lord and indeed God graciously granted his desire.

Reverend T.G. Oshokoya was a minister of indomitable faith in God. He was well known to be optimistic and unruffled in time of emergencies. "Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swellings thereof," he was always calm, collected and patiently waiting for God's guidance before he moved. He made the Word of God his chart and compass in all the events of his life, whether they were pleasant or difficult. He trusted implicitly in the power of the Word. His prayer life too was worthy of emulation as he followed in the footprints of his Saviour.

Brother T was a dear friend to his congregation. He was a man rich in experience, courteous, and had good human relations. He was a leader of great intelligence, a wise and prudent minister of God who made himself accessible without protocol to the young or old, church members or visitors. He was also a broad-minded father to everyone. People could safely divulge their personal secrets to him and he would keep them. In counselling, he opened his mouth with wisdom being led by the Holy Spirit. Only Heaven can enumerate how many burdened souls he prayed with on his knees until solutions were found and victory won.

From his records – “February 28, 1949 – On Monday I went to Abulenla, Apapa, to assist Sisters Lydia and Mary in prayer. Sister Mary was lectured on salvation and she was saved. Sister Lydia was lectured on sanctification and was sanctified. Praise God.”

Although he was that much compassionate and burdened for others, he was a Christian of strong principles, a faithful watchman of the Gospel standards and passionate keeper of the policy, principles and methods of the Apostolic Faith Church. As a good disciplinarian, he himself was a well-disciplined man.

In many respects his fortitude, exemplary dispositions in health and in sickness and his method of executing missionary undertakings are really challenging. He did bequeath a heritage which should inspire his successors to continue to strive to win Africa for Christ.

From his total commitment to the Lord's work, before his death he willed his own house at 35 Isaac John Street, Igbobi, Yaba, to the Apostolic Faith organization, the Church he loved, worked and died for.

Miscellaneous Admonitions

On Practical Christianity

Brother T taught that Christianity is not a religion practiced only in the church on Sundays but a way of life that should be lived practically by each Christian every day. So, in the office, in the market, at home, among neighbours, people knew (and still know) the Apostolic Faith folks as practical Christians. No wonder employers of labour sometimes got in contact with Brother T to request for his Church members to work for them.

On Women's Adornment

He taught women not to be conformed to the fashion of this world, but to dress modestly as becometh godly women. As a result of His Spirit filled teachings, Apostolic Faith women were known and still known by their godly, neat and simple appearance. There were those who were opposed by their families and their unbelieving relations, especially when they refuse to follow the fashions in vogue but the Christian women took their stand and would not join the bandwagon of the worldly. Adorning the hair, body or dresses were left to the ungodly, while they concerned themselves with “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit”

On Honouring God with our Time and Resources

“Many of us by the time we started to read the Bible, the Bible was just about one shilling and six pence or two shillings but these days a copy of the Bible will not cost less than three to five naira upward. But the production cost of the Bible in those days which we bought at the rate of one shilling or two shillings will not cost less than two pound sterling. There were some people who came together to make up for the printing of the Bible so that the copies of it might be made available and affordable to people. The people who made this money available are not

known to you, neither do I know them not to talk of paying them back for the kindness they have done to us. But they have done it and have gone on to their rewards.

“This is the type of things to which we are called. We do not need to keep doing something which will catch the eyes of the public. If God gives us money, what we need to concern ourselves with is how we are to spend the money for His cause. Those people in their time and age have sown their seed to the spirit and they are surely going to reap it. It may be that God endows you with some finance and you begin to wonder what you are going to do with the money: and you finally say 'I'd better expend it upon my children after all I must give them sound education'. Yes, you will give them sound education but they will not believe the Bible and that will be your own problem.

“For many years now we have been receiving literature and tracts for distribution in our country here without paying for them. The people who are responsible for the production of these papers do it sacrificially. There are people in the printing department who volunteered their entire time and hazarded their lives for the sake of the Gospel. Sometimes there are accidents, maybe, the guillotine cutting one or two fingers but in spite of this you still find these people carrying on this great work. What about financing the printing project, not that the money is forced out of the purses of people but people willingly give of their substance for the maintenance of this department hence we are able to get all these tracts and literatures for distribution.

“What about our Sunday school books? There was a man who came in contact with the Apostolic Faith in Portland, Oregon. It happened that he came to town to hold a religious conference of his own organization. He was been a highly educated person with a university degree. He had studied the Bible in different languages but all to no avail. Incidentally at this time, he came to America to hold a conference of his own organization and he ran into our people holding a street meeting. He heard them testifying that it was possible to live a life above sin. It appeared he could not believe his ears. He was told that if he could follow them to their church he would hear more of this. This man followed them to the service and he heard the details of the Gospel and God touched his heart.

“When he got back to his apartment, he told the leaders of his group 60

That he was going back to relinquish his post in their midst. The leaders asked him why he wanted to do so; he said he had found a better way of worshipping God and that he was not under any circumstances going back into the former employment. This was how this man left his job and location and came to America. When he came to America he did not present himself as the leader of a group before and that he should therefore be given a position in the church. Rather, he took a secular job where he received a meagre amount to live on. He was very regular in church services and soon prayed through to his Christian experiences. He acquainted himself with the people of God – going in and out with them—and the people of God started to wonder, “What type of man is this? He was very zealous, very earnest, very interested in the things of God. By and by he became a worker, by and by, he became a Sunday school teacher. He dedicated his life to skillfully planning our Sunday school books as a result of which we have all the Sunday school books which you and I are using now.

“This man is now dead and he has gone unto his reward. Neither you nor I know him but he has done a great thing for which his name will be immortalized. But what are you doing with your money? What are you doing with your education and what are you doing with your talents?

“We do not need to start writing tracts now for distribution, we have quite many of these. We do not need to sit down and start writing Sunday school book, we have this in series. But we have Igbo speaking people among us, we have Efik speaking people among us but I do not know what they are doing with their education. They cannot sit down and translate some of these tracts and Sunday school books into their own languages to make them available to their members who cannot read the English language.

“For many years we have been contemplating having our own printing department and God has answered our prayers and we have started printing papers here in Nigeria. But we are not doing this on commercial basis but for people's use without getting anything from any of these people.

“For many years since the life of Brother Inyang we had thought of printing the Sunday school book in Efik language but since his death, because of lack of cooperation we have not been able to get anything out. I wonder what our Igbo and Efik people are doing. Even if many of you aspiring to be teachers do not understand the English language you should be able to read the Bible in your own language. If you are not able to do this, I wonder what kind of teachers you will be. It appears we are not cooperating with God and we are going to be judged for negligence.

On 'Africa for Christ'

“When a brother was leading in prayer he mentioned that God might empower us so that Africa might be won for Christ. 'Africa for Christ' is our emblem and it is registered as that. In 1955, our mother church in Portland sent me to South Africa and South Rhodesia. When I paid that visit, I had the opportunity of visiting and calling at many places. But the last place I visited was the very room where I lodged, I held a revival meeting there and during that revival meeting our present Overseer in South Rhodesia, Morgan Sengwayo prayed through to sanctification and the baptism of Holy Ghost. My sudden departure from that place was necessitated by the sudden news of the passing to glory of the Ghana Overseer, Reverend van der Puije.

“Because of my sudden departure, there was no time for me to make any arrangement. I was only seen off at the air-field –that time they did not have any large air-port but they had a field which can take an aircraft. Reverend Segwanyo saw me through all the formalities and I told him to go back home and take charge of the work which was started in the house of Brother C.D Petros.

“I came back home in 1955. The following year, 1956, we undertook an evangelistic campaign throughout Nigeria and it was since then we have had this emblem 'Africa for Christ'. We pasted it on vehicles and it was with this that we went round the whole country. After that time we began to realize that God really wants to win Africa for Christ. “AND

IT SHOULD BE THE DESIRE AND THE GOAL SET FORTH BY EVERYONE WHO COMES INTO THIS ORGANIZATION – THAT IS, TO WIN AFRICA FOR CHRIST”

On the Importance of Mother Tongue for Gospel Growth

“Ministers must upgrade themselves in reading their native language to their understanding so that we do not lose our work on the ground of illiteracy and false teachings which can easily sweep away after our death all we labour to sow in our field. They should give more time to the study of the sound doctrines as outlined.

On Gentleness of Pastors and Ministers with Members

“The ministry should not interfere or force anyone to live contrary to his or her choice. It is the responsibility of the minister to pray and advise anyone who is failing God, but cannot force anyone against his or her own will. Ministers of God should not drive but lead gently.

On the Method of Financing Gospel Work

“There are different organizations with different propagandas to convert people to their groups. There are lots of organizations which use different methods to raise money. They arrange bazaar where they sell a lot of things, they beg for money proclaiming that they are using it for the spread of the Gospel and so on. We do not follow their methods or customs, because we do not have room for them in the Word of God which is our foundation. We stick to tithes and offerings as God's method of financing His work. Some people will bring the methods of their former churches to the Gospel, thinking that is the way things should be done. Since we know that the Bible does not confirm it, we get away from them. We bring them here to be taught the new method of how to spend and be spent for the Gospel. We need money for the spread of the Gospel, to print Gospel materials, to buy vehicles for the propagation of the Gospel, and so on. Why should people continue to spend extravagantly on funerals, marriages and other worldly pursuits? Whatever the believers have belongs to God. If we spend all that we have in obtaining all the material things that will be burnt up by God in the end, what will be our reward in Heaven?

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

On the Christian's Attitude to Opposition

“We must realize that people may try to reproach the Gospel. We should not be afraid of what people will say. A lot of other groups will campaign against us that we do not do this or that, but in spite of their accusations, God will continue to add to us. If we do not give up saying the truth, but continue to preach and live it and stand firm in the Gospel, God will back us up. If we follow Christ, Christ Himself will make others follow us.

On Marriage

“Marriage is God's institution and it is purely built on love. From Genesis 2:23 we read:

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

“This does not refer to many wives but to a single wife from the rib of Adam and he loved her dearly because she was part and parcel of his bone and flesh. God called Eve a help-mate. That is the fundamental purpose of marriage.

“Our fore-fathers or parents in their own way of idolatry tried to know the right partner before they took a wife or husband. They would appeal to their gods, either ifa or some other fetish priests to know if the man or woman would be the right partner for them. As Christians since we do not go to idols or any fetish priest to know about our future, we need to go to God in prayer. We can talk to God from the bottom of our hearts and ask Him to reveal Himself to us concerning our life partner and whatever is His choice for us will satisfy us.”

On Doing the Will of God

“Jesus saith unto them, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34).

“We should not be seeking to do our own will but the will of Him who redeemed us. The highest position in the world is to be where God wants us to be, to do what God wants us to do, to stand where God wants us to stand. To be for Christ, 'Just to hear Him softly say: Fear not, though the world forsake you, Lo, I'm with you alway.' God is never ashamed to come down to abide with, and endue with all heavenly power, anybody who resolves with fear and trembling to be wherever God wants him to be.

“Standing upon the Word of God gives us matchless joy and His grace helps us to do what pleases Him. The overcomers of old were joyfully passing through death into Heaven. The Bible makes us to understand that they left this world for life eternal. It may cost us affliction and persecution. Jesus Himself faced bitter opposition while he was on earth but that did not matter to Him at all. What mattered to Him was that the will of God should be done and should prevail. When a great agony was very close to Jesus, He prayed for a full surrender of His body, heart and life to God in order to do God's will. This is an example for us too.

“A Christian must not run away from whatever comes his way along this narrow road. Indeed, it is a strait road but we must have faith in God, come what may, and make sure that we are on God's side. We shall have victory no matter the seriousness of any situation. Jesus overcame, and we too shall overcome.

On Payment of Vows to God

“For I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back” (Judges 11:35).

“We read in Judges 11: 29 that, “Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah.” This shows us that he went into his vow to the living God with all the leading, inspiration and guidance of God. God was with him because He knew that Jephthah would not deny Him anything, not even his own heart and life. The covenant we have individually made with the Lord is not to serve Him for a given number of days or years but to the end of our lives.

“You can remember your resolution and promises unto God both in the secret of your heart and before many witnesses on the day that God gave you victory over the enemy, made you pass from death unto life, and filled your soul with joy. Remember how you opened your mouth unto God. Maybe you are one of those who do not want to make vows at all, but then God has commanded you that:

“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of thy increase” (Proverbs 3:9).

“The Lord is making you to realize that you should honour Him with all your possessions, all your treasures and riches without any exception. Out of all that God has given to you, with what have you honoured Him? Which of them have you taken before God in line with the examples of Hannah and Abraham? People who honour God with their substance are those who have made a covenant with God by sacrifice. That day will dawn when God will gather them together unto Himself.

On Divine Healing

“Our organization does not build faith homes or healing homes for the sick nor build community centres to live freely.

“Let us consider what God committed into the Apostles when Jesus Christ the Son of God was about to leave this earth. Let us see this in the Gospel according to St Mark, Chapter 16: 17, 18:

'And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

'They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.'

“This was what Jesus Christ told the Apostles when He was about to leave this world. This is the privilege which Christians have that if they fall sick, and the ministers of God lay hands on them and pray for them in the name of Jesus, they shall recover.

“Moreover, Apostle James also tells us in his Epistle, James 5:13-15: 'Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.

'Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 'And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.' “Here we can see the great privilege which Christians have. If anyone is afflicted, he should himself first of

all pray. Should the affliction be sickness, the Word of God tells him to call for the elders of the church to pray for him. It is not said here that they should call for Luke, the physician. Luke was a disciple of Jesus, being a physician before he became a disciple of Jesus Christ. Apostle James did not say here that they should go to Luke because he was a physician before, for medication in order to recover. Rather, he told them to go to the elders of the church.

“There are many people who go to men after the flesh for help. Certainly, such people are not children of God. If they had once been children of God, as long as they could no longer trust in God, their love for God has been drawn back. Therefore, they are no longer children of God.

“Sometimes when the ministers of God want to pray for us, they ask us to search our hearts and critically examine our lives; because God may be speaking to us through the problem which we have. We should surrender to God. Otherwise, our affliction will persist. But if we search our hearts, the Word of God will tell us to confess our sins, if our sickness has come because of sin, so that our prayer may be answered. We should not find this a difficult thing to do if we sincerely desire to be healed.

“Sometimes God talks to us about the vow which we have made but failed to pay. God will want us to pay our vow so that He could heal us. Let us see Psalm 50:14 and 15:

'Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: 'And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.'

“Which vows have we made that we have not paid? We certainly talked to God when we were praying for our salvation, sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All the things which we told God then that we would do or be for Him are vows. If we have defaulted after God has saved us, God may bring us into compliance through sickness.

'Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows.'

“God says that thereafter you should call upon Him, He will deliver you, and you will glorify Him. God will then answer your prayer. When we pay our vows and walk right with God, He will undertake for us in moments of need and affliction. There is no ailment in our body, no matter the nature, that the Power of Jesus cannot remove.

On Repentance unto Salvation

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).

“It is not the nominal worship of God that makes us children of God but repentance unto salvation or the new birth. A born-again Christian is one whose heart has been changed through faith in Christ Who shed His Blood for our redemption. Salvation is a must for everyone who wants to enter Heaven at last. Have you tasted of God's saving grace and the accompanying life-changing power? If not, delay no longer. Repent of your sins today with godly sorrow and plead the Blood of the Lamb and “thou shalt be saved.”

“My friend, this plan of God has not changed. God wants everyone everywhere to repent. Any soul that fails to repent is awaiting the day of God’s judgment and the fierceness of the anger of the just God. Failure to repent is tantamount to saying, “What can God do?” That means you are saying that there is nothing God can do to you if you refuse to obey Him and keep His commandments. This is dangerous! My friend, God can do a thousand and one things.

“Right now, throughout the whole wide world, God is doing a great deal. Many travellers do not safely reach their destinations. Through accidents, they leave the world without being reconciled unto God for a doomed eternity. The end can come when it is least expected. What about someone who was kidnapped in his house and then murdered? Ah! Tell me, where would his soul go if he had no salvation? Suppose you are the one? God has commanded you to repent. God has a piece of advice for you from Job 22:21-25:

'Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.

'Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.

If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

'Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.

'Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.'

“Here Job is telling us what we have to do: that is, we must acquaint ourselves with God. It is repentance that can make us acquaint ourselves with God. What this means is that we must forsake our own way which we once loved and take to God's way. When we do this, God Himself in His mercy will draw close to us and save us. As I said earlier that repentance is the first step towards receiving salvation, it is the same thing that Job is saying in a simple language which we can easily understand:

'Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace: thereby good shalt come unto thee.'

“The only way which is open to the peace and blessing of God is repentance, which brings us to God's forgiveness.”

His Latter days

Latter Days

Brother T was a man endowed with good health and he enjoyed this robust health consistently until the latter part of his life.

Sometimes in 1977, he was indisposed but the illness disappeared as soon as he started the renovation of Ijebu-Ode church. He worked so hard that everybody present was amazed at the rate his sledge hammer was felling the concrete walls which young men were unable to pull down.

As he was a man who was always busy at his Father's work, as soon as he finished the Ijebu-Ode work, he facilitated the finishing of the Lagos Great Tabernacle to get it ready for dedication, which took place on Saturday 1 August 1981. The collected Gospel Songs compiled by the Apostolic Faith in Nigeria was first used at the dedication of the tabernacle. This dedication of the tabernacle, the use of a hymn book owned by the Apostolic Faith and the combining of the adult and junior Yoruba Sunday school lessons into a booklet which was printed in 1983 were some of his dreams that came true in his latter days.

Taking care of letters written in French from French-speaking countries in Africa became a challenge for Portland but Brother T saw the challenge as an opportunity and readily accepted to handle it.

He had laboured much to evangelize some of these French-speaking countries such as the Republic of Benin, Togo and Burkina Faso. As an answer to his prayers, an Apostolic Faith Church started in Ivory Coast. In August 1981, Brother M'Bengani of Zaire (now Congo Kinshasa) came to Lagos camp meeting, got his Christian experiences and went back to start the Apostolic Faith work in his country. Thus Brother T was very delighted in the French correspondences. Creating a French Department in the Apostolic Faith in Nigeria was another pleasant dream of Brother T's fulfilled before he died.

In April 1981, Sister Ruth Ashwell, accompanied by Brother and Sister Cliff and Cheryl Paulsen visited Nigeria and participated in the Easter Retreat of that year. Shortly after their visit, Brother T suddenly had a stroke. Earnest prayers from all the saints went to the throne of grace on his behalf. The God of miracles healed him completely, renewed his strength and gave him new visions about the Gospel work. He again launched himself unreservedly as never before into the work. It was a mighty revival to see him occupy his seat at the ministers and workers' conference in August 1981.

Reverend Morgan Sengwayo of Zimbabwe with his wife and four children came to Lagos Camp meeting during the last week of that camp meeting. It was a very pleasant and exciting surprise for Brother T to meet his convert, Brother Sengwayo whom he suddenly left behind on his trip to South Africa in 1955 because of the shocking news of the demise of Reverend van der Puije, the leader of our work in Gold Coast, now Ghana. In return, Brother T and his team went to the camp meeting in Zimbabwe in December 1981 and returned in January 1982.

As Brother T was preparing to go to Liberia in March 1982, news came that Reverend Sengwayo had died in Zimbabwe. Brother T led a team of ministers to participate in his burial. This happened to be his last trip outside Nigeria.

He took ill again in 1983 and this reduced his activities. However, he managed to continue with his work of administration, counselling, correspondence and receiving of visitors. Reverend J.O. Soyinka became the major link between him and the congregation.

Sometime during the illness, he travelled to Jos to have a rest. While he was there, God spoke to him about a lot of things. He appointed some ministers in Lagos and out-stations and forwarded their names to Portland for credentials and copies of minister's manual. He was coming occasionally to supervise some works being done on the campgrounds. One such work was the fixing of the light into the pinnacle of the tabernacle. He opened the first meeting and was present for a few meetings during the camp meeting of 1983.

When he returned to Lagos, he reviewed his will in which he surrendered his buildings at 53 Isaac John Street to the Apostolic Faith Mission, wrote a letter of encouragement to the Board of Trustees and named Reverend J.O. Soyinka as his successor, in a sealed letter to be opened after his home-call.

As a loving and caring shepherd, knowing that his days were drawing to a close, he became very concerned about the Church. The Lord spoke to him, calmed his fears with the words of the song, "Be still my soul." He was confident and as mentally alert as ever. He never missed his early morning devotions for a day.

HOME CALL

As the time drew near, he became more and more home-sick for Heaven even as the saints intensified their prayer for God to spare his life. A few days before his death, he had to beg some ministers to stop praying for him so that God might allow him to go Home. His last day on earth was filled with activities. Very early in the morning on that day he was busy receiving visitors and counselling those who came for advice.

Later in the night, he consoled and counselled a minister who had just lost one of his parents. By 10pm on that day, he prayed with the four ministers he had invited and bid them goodnight. Three hours later, at about 1:10am on Wednesday 16th November, 1983, he breathed his last and went Home to meet his Saviour Whom he had faithfully served and dearly loved. Thus ended the life of our man of vision. He died on active service as he had wished.

As the news of his death spread around, thousands of saints could not restrain their tears having realized that they had lost a dear friend. He was a kind, loving and sympathetic father. He was also a spiritual, prayerful, and a great teacher of the Word of God. He was a highly disciplined and dynamic leader.

All roads led to Lagos and his residence as people from all walks of life trooped down to express their sorrow and sympathy. The General Overseer, Reverend Loyce Carver and his team came from the international headquarters to take part in the befitting funeral service that took place on Friday December 2, 1983.

The choir and orchestra put in their best at the funeral in spite of their sorrow and loss of their father and founder. The sermon was preached by Reverend Carver to the unusually large congregation of people from all parts of Nigeria, Africa and beyond.

On Saturday, 3rd December 1983, after the Sunday school teacher's conference, it was announced that Brother T had chosen Reverend J.O. Soyinka to be his successor. He was accepted by all who were present. On Sunday, 4th December 1983 the new Overseer was introduced to the body of the saints and was unanimously accepted. And thus began the second era of the Apostolic Faith in Nigeria and Africa.

Sister Hannah Emiola Oshokoya

The biography of our Rev T.G. Oshokoya will not be complete without reference to his dear wife, Sister Hannah Emiola Oshokoya.

She was born of a noble family. Her both parents came from two different ruling families, from two villages around Ijebu-Ode. Her exact date of birth is not known.



Hannah Emiola Oshokoya

She got married to Rev. T.G. Oshokoya in 1933. Although she was a few years older than her husband, she gave him due respect and honour as the head of the family and she was loyal to him throughout his lifetime.

She got converted and wholeheartedly accepted the doctrines of The Apostolic Faith after the conversion of her husband. Thus she became one of the pioneer members and pillars of The Apostolic Faith work in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Hannah Emiola Oshokoya

As a youth, she was trained to be hardworking, tolerant, patient, organised and prudent. Although she had very little formal education, she trained herself in many areas such as sewing, home management, modern catering, nursing, midwifery and singing to mention a few. She was thereby a good helpmate for her husband who cherished and appreciated her industrious life.

She was respected and recognized as 'Mother of Africa' not merely by virtue of her being the wife of Africa Overseer but because she caught a vision of Heaven herself and she received her own personal call in winning of Africa for Christ. She grew along with Brother T in the work. Her prayers as an altar worker were very inspiring and challenging. As a good Bible student, she studied to show herself approved unto God and became a successful Sunday school teacher.

She ardently laboured in the preparation of teaching aids for the elementary Sunday school department. She was very skilful in the cutting of the pictorial memory verse slips given to the children on Sundays. She worked diligently at this until she became too old to work.

She was very accommodating and consecrated. She was also a great blessing to those who had cause to interact with her or seek her motherly counsel. She always gave good advice to young people, especially women and taught them to be keepers at home so as to be good Christian wives and mothers who would enhance the spread of the Gospel.

Sister Emiola Oshokoya was very humble and contented with what she had. When times were hard at the beginning of the Gospel work and resources were lacking for a decent living, she cheerfully endured and suffered with Brother T.

She was never worldly as her affections were set on things on high. She clothed herself with “a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.” Her conversation was always chaste and laden with the fear of God.

She was very generous and hospitable. None could visit their home without being served even if it meant giving out her own meal. She was a modern-day replica of the holy women in the Bible.

The saying that, “Behind every successful man there is always a supportive woman” is quite true while considering the success of The Apostolic Faith work in Africa under the leadership of Rev T.G. Oshokoya.

The great achievement of the husband in his call and missionary work was greatly attributed to the committed and unflinching moral and spiritual support of his wife. Truly, Sister Hannah Emiola Oshokoya's "Price is far above rubies."

HOME CALL

Our beloved mother, Sister Hannah Emiola Oshokoya slept in the Lord on Saturday, 28 May, 1994 after a brief illness. Her funeral service took place at the Apostolic Faith Tabernacle, Anthony Village, Lagos, on Friday 17 June 1994. It was well attended by the saints from the different parts of Nigeria and other countries.

The work in Africa after Brother T

To God be the glory that Apostolic Faith work in Nigeria and Africa has continued to expand after Brother T. Many more branches, Sunday school stations and Bible study centres have sprung up all over the country and continent. Indeed, membership has more than quadrupled and hundreds of pastors, ministers, Sunday school teachers and other workers have been appointed. Decentralization of Sunday School Teachers Conferences and centres has taken place. The number of the members of the choir and orchestral has increased manifold. The printing department has been expanded and equipped. More publications of various types and languages are being churned out to keep pace with the expansion of the work.



Rev J.O Soyinka, Brother T's successor



The Wooden Tabernacle at Anthony Village

Tributes to Brother T.G. Oshokoya

Brother T was an acceptable leader cherished by people from far and near. This is indicated in the many tributes sent to the headquarters church and his wife.

Letters, cards, telegrams and cablegrams came from people all over the world expressing the sorrow that filled their hearts. Quoted below are just a few excerpts from the condolence and tributes received.

“The news of the departure of Reverend Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya brings unavoidable gripping pains, but I thank God that the godly impact his life has made cannot depart. He acted as a father to the fatherless and a counsellor to the confused. He exhibited deep love to those who desired the Truth of the living God. We must meet when the roll is called up yonder!”

Others from different places all over the world wrote:

“We give glory and thanks to God for Brother T's exemplary life and his bequeathing to us and the generations yet unborn throughout Africa, a rich and godly heritage in terms of the real Gospel based on sound doctrine. He was an exemplary leader, a preacher of righteousness who maintained a consistent and continuous uncompromising stand for the sound doctrine which he preached and lived for all to see. His life was a transparent example of a sinner saved by grace and mightily used of God.”

“His entire life is a life-long challenge, so dear and caring. A father to be remembered till we meet to part no more. He was—and still is— a source of inspiration to me.”

“The Moses of our age. An example of self-sacrifice. A great warrior. The Light bearer.”

“A great Elijah of our time. A giant of faith. An appointed man of God.”

“Africa for Christ pioneer. The Job of our time. A father too dear to lose. An inspiring leader. A unique man of God.”

“I wish my heart to be like your heart, Brother T, for you held on until you rested in your peaceful sleep. May the Lord make me see the glory you have seen.”

“Brother T has shown us the way to be saved and die in the Lord. We shall meet in Heaven.”

Photos Speak



Rev. & Sister Obakoya, Rev. Sokeye and others - Cotonou



Water Baptism



**Foundation Laying Service of the Great Tabernacle
Anthony Village, Lagos**



On a Gospel Tour



During a Camp Meeting

Picture Speaks



Some Veterans:
(L-R) Beos, Abbey, Lucas, Thomson and Akinboye



On a Gospel Tour



Brother T. and Brother Sone of Cameroon



Brother T



Brother T., Lambert from Ouagadougou,
Paul Ibiakule and Sister Akodu

PICTURES SPEAKS



The Sengwayos at the Camp Meeting, Lagos, Nigeria



Brothers T. and Inyang



A Foundation-Laying Ceremony



Water Baptism



Brother T. and Brother Willie Kago of Kenya



Brother T. and Brother Victor Cole of Ghana



Gospel Tour of Ghana



(L-R) Bro. and Sister Akinboye, Bro. Sotade,
Bro. T., Sister Olive, Bro. Abbey and Bro. Ibikunle



Bros. Grant and Marteye from Ghana, (Back row),
Bros. Lucas, Inyang, Abbey, Bro. T., Sobowale and Elebute



On a Gospel Tour to Rivers State, Nigeria



Bro. and Sister Oshokoya



(L-R) - Bro. T., Sister Olive, Bro. Herbert and Bro. Elebute.



At Ilorin with Sister Yinka Osunbunmi



Bro. T. in Portland, Oregon



Foundation Service of the Great Tabernacle, Anthony



Bro. T., Bro. Lucas and Bro. Olu Adepegba
on an inspection of Anthony Land



Ministers at the Camp Meeting, Anthony



Tour of Ondo/Ekiti



Tour of Zimbabwe Branch Churches



With the Sengwayos



Bro. T. in Liberia



Bro. T. and Team in Zimbabwe



Gospel Tour



Bro. T. G. Oshokoya



Rev. T. A. Ogunnaike



Brother T. conducting the Choir



Members of the Choir and Orchestra



At Aiyetoro Gbede



(L-R) - Bro. Ruel Green, Bro. and Sister Oshokoya, Sister Ruth Ashwell, Sister Dorcas and Bro. Carver at Isaac John Street, Igbobi, Lagos



Sister Evaristu (*Sis. Obakoya's Mother*)



Tour of Rivers State



Bro. T. in Cotonou, Dahomey



Bro. T. & the Gospel Team on a tour in the early days



Bro. T. in Columbia, Delaware



Visit to Jobbs South Branch Church, 1976



Bro. T. & the Gospel Teams on a tour in the early days



Gospel Vehicles used in the early days



Campers preparing for a convocation from Odeghofo to Ebute-Mesa during a Camp Meeting



Brs. Okolegha, the pioneer pastor of the Foundation laying of Avian Church, Delta State



Means of transport used by the members of Ebute-Mesa Church, Lagos



Foundation Laying Service of Ijebu-Ode Church



Brs. Debatu and team members on a street work



Brs. T. and the Gospel team at Olesu, Kogi State



Van of Miss Ditt



Miss Quartet: E. W. Brown, Adonys, Aggie, Rebecca and Odessa



At a Business



Miss Quartet with the Organist: Brown, Adonys, Rebecca, John, Aggie, James and Odessa



The Apostolic Faith String Orchestra Band with their instruments in the beginning



Water Dispenser in the early years of the Gospel.



Gospel Tour of the Eastern part of Nigeria



Beginning of the Apostolic Faith work in Enugu Ekiti, 1954



Francis I. Smith
State Under Development Officer



First Tabernacle, Anthony Village



Inside view, Woodley Tabernacle, Anthony in the file



Brodley Carver, Sister
adrienne and Brother E. Green



The Gospel Tours at Oporowo Ogboko, Rivers State



Laying of Tabernacle Foundation



Rev. T. with Sister Janet Oka in Oporowo Ogboko, Rivers State



Gospel Tour Continued



Brother Davies Ojo (Beside the Palm Tree), Brother Sebestak Jr. (Lower Left) Sister Seaborg (Far Left) in their Elementary Sunday School Classes in the 60s.



Brother T. greeting the Ogbokos at a Church Service in the 1970s during the 1977 Tour

Three members of the at Simpson Street, Oporowo



Camp Meeting in the early 1930s.
Tents for accommodation, Anthony Lagos



Brother T. (Richard the Steering wheel), Brother Lucas by the Gospel Van



Evangelists



Brothers T., Abbey and Lucas



Children Evangelism



Brother T. with the state choir



Brother ~~James~~ at Printing Department, Simpson
Street, Uasin Gishu, Lagos



Inspection of Corp Members by Brother ~~James~~ T.



Rev. T. and Gospel Team in 1916



Ladies from Ongebohague visited Lagos



Rev. T. (center),
Mr. Isaac Sakor - (left), Brother Adeniji (right)



Gospel team to School of Agric. Sibiye in 1977



Water Baptism



Sister Edeboke (Wife of Pastor from Portland), Mrs. Hilda & Esther



Bro. T. & the Gospel team at **Ikogosi-Odelele** (Odelele Division), Rivers State - 1977.



Bro. **Peter Odehinde** on tour with Bro. T.



Installation of a New Generating Set at the Power Station, **Ikogosi-Odelele**, Rivers State.



Bro. Ode of New York in 1971 Camp Meeting, Lagos



Bro. Samuel **Odehinde** on tour with Bro. T.



Bro. **Faithful** (Translator of Sunday School Book into Yoruba Language) with Bro. Solomon **Odehinde**



At Dexter Church, Sag Harbor



Brother T. with Brother Carver and wife



Brother T. and Brother Carver



Brothers working outdoors at Dexter Church in connection with the Library



Brother T. preaching during dedication service in Adelphi, Arva Church - 18454



Brother T. with Ghana Brothers in the early days



Music Concert in Lome, Togo. Brother Marcus Aggrey, the pioneer leader, addressing the audience - April, 1900



Present Apostolic Faith Church Building, Badagry, (227 State Headquarters) 1976



Rev. V. A. Odejobi, Badagry Pastor for many years



Rev. Robert Ogunbaye, Pastor Faith Apostolic Faith Church, Sapele, Delta State, Nigeria



Sister R. W. Yisa, Former Pastor, Badagry Church, Nigeria



Brother E. D. Moses, former Transport Officer



Brother Salaku, Pioneer Leader, Akosofe Church



Rev. Timothy G. Oshokoya & Rev. Sampson E. Ekanem

Rev. B. U. Ekan, Ibot Ewong



Water Baptism in a stream called Mbiama Stream, (about 5km to the church)



l-r: Rev. Sam Ekanem, Rev. Oshokoya, Rev. Oshokoya, Rev. Oshokoya, Rev. Oshokoya, Rev. Oshokoya, Rev. Oshokoya, Rev. Oshokoya, Rev. Oshokoya, Rev. Oshokoya



Apostolic Faith Church, Ibot Ewong, Ibot Ewong, Aloma River State



Brother Bolanle at Apostolic Faith Church, Bolan, Calabar, Cross River State

Rev. Bolanle, Apostolic Faith Church, (Ibot Ewong) 1975-1977



Apostolic Faith Choir & Orchestra in the 70s



(L-R) Brothers T. P. Iyong and Sister Akoko



Brother Carver having a handshake with Brother Okorie



Brother T with some Camp Delegates @ Anthony



Brother T with Brother Victor Okusanya,
the Pioneer Pastor of London Church



Brother T and some members on tour of Eastern Nigeria