

LATE JOSIAH OLUNOWO OSITELU



MOTTO: FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY

Prophet General Dr. Josiah OlunowoOsitelu (1900-66) of blessed memory was the Founder and First Primate of “The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide”.

Like the word of the Lord concerning Jeremiah that before he was born the Lord God has appointed him to the nation of Israel, the same can be said of our great Leader and Founder of The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide, Late Dr. Josiah OlunowoOsitelu.

No wonder, it was predicted at his birth that he would be a strong, wise, wonderful counsellor and head of his people.

He was born to the family of AshayeOnakoyaOsitelu of Lisa Chieftaincy House in Ogere and Ejironike who was a daughter of one Adeyemi of Owo royal family, on 15th May 1900 at Ogere.

The late founder of the Church started to manifest the great calling on his life at a very tender age. He was soon found to predicting and telling people about their future. He had a very sound educational career, even though his father refused to send him to school initially. He first attended Church Missionary Society (CMS) School in Ogere and later Christ Church School, Porogun, Ijebu-Ode. After the completion of his primary education in 1919, he became a pupil teacher and later became the School Master (1921-23). The foundation of his priesthood career was laid when he was trained as a qualified Catechist. He worked as a catechist at Erunbe and Erukute in Ogun Sate under the late Rev. D. M. George. Late Dr. J. O. Ositelu was much beloved by the Minister-In-Charge of the district, the elders of the Church as well as many other people who had dealings with him.

He received his calling on the night of 19th May 1925. On that very day, while on his bed, he saw a GREAT LIGHT flashed unto him and in the light he saw a LARGE EYE, reflecting as a great orbit of the sun. He was so frightened and quickly jumped out of the room in panic and ran to the elders of the Anglican Communion, just like Prophet Samuel of the old. He later learnt that the incident indicated a **CALL TO SERVICE**. From that time, like the Biblical Moses, late Dr. J. O. Ositelu began to hear voices and God spoke to him directly. He began to see visions and receive revelations concerning men and matters, which volumes of books cannot contain. On the 18th August 1925, he heard a voice saying, "as Elijah and Elisha have been anointed, so thou has been anointed and appointed from above."

On the 18th September 1925, it was revealed to him that "gradually the seals of power will come to you and your goodtime draws on space." Likewise on the 5th of November of the same year, he heard a voice saying, "I will give a rule of worship like unto Moses and I will bless you like Job." These divine revelations were a drawing force that propelled him to do the will of God, even the Anglican Council as predicted could not stop him in fulfilling the will of God in his life.

He started fasting and praying for about a year and was in the process of preparation as inspired by the Holy Spirit to go back to Erukute where he remained till 9th June 1929 when he started to minister unto people and spreading the Gospel of God to all people of all races.

On the 29th August 1928, God revealed unto him that Zion and the Salvation will be "The Church of the Lord" in the time of the next. A valedictory service was held for him at Erukute on the 2nd June 1929. He conducted his first Open Air Revival on the 9th June 1929. At all the Open Air Revival meetings, he expatiated on the gospel of joy by warning his audience to obey God's

Commandments and that “the ark of safety is right here and for the people to board it quickly and thus avoids regrets as in the days of Noah.” He also predicted what will happen to idols and that idolaters would perish and all shrines would go to oblivion.

The fame of these Open-Air services spread all over the Western Region of Nigeria especially in the districts of Lagos, Ibadan, Ijebu and Remo. Many well known and less known people from all nooks and crannies of the country came to Ogere-Remo to witness the work of God and all of them worshiped God and witnessed the marvellous manifestation of God’s spiritual work through His Servant Late Dr. Josiah Olunowo Ositelu. As a result, The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide, which started on the 29th August 1928 in spirit, was formally inaugurated on the 27th July 1930 at 10.00 a.m. in the LISA COMPOUND in Ogere.

Since the inauguration of The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide, late Dr. J. O. Ositelu inaugurated, dedicated and laid foundation stones of many branches of the Church in many part of the world between 1930 and 1965. These include foundation laying ceremonies and inauguration of many branches in Sierra-Leone, Liberia, Ghana and Nigeria as well.

The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide was not to be confined to Nigeria alone. Other parts of Africa and the world in general were to benefit from the mission assigned to Ositelu, the founder of the Church.

In fulfilment of the revelation given to the late Prophet General J. O. Ositelu on the 10th October 1925 that, “the Church will spread beyond the sea,” he sent his top aides – the duo of late Apostle Emmanuel Adeleke Adejobi (2nd Primate of the Church) and late Apostle Samuel

OmolajaOduwole (2nd Apostle of the Church), in the year 1947 to Sierra-Leone and Liberia respectively. The first branch of the Church in Freetown, Sierra-Leone was thus inaugurated on the 6th April 1947, while the first branch of the Church in Monrovia, Liberia was thus inaugurated on the 20th April 1947.

Prophet General Ositelu preached the gospel of repentance and regeneration from town to town. His first converts were his parents and cousins, and right from the beginning, he started training Christians (males and females) for active ministry.

In 1937, he established through divine revelation the HOLY MOUNT TABIEORAR (pronounced Taborah) RETREAT, which is since then being celebrated every year on the 22nd August and attracts millions of believers.

In spite of opposition from other Christian churches and resistance from African Traditional Religion (ATR), The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide grew steadily. Today, The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide has spread over many parts of the world, including Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Ivory-Cost, Liberia, Sierra-Leone, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Luxemburg, Australia and the United States of America.

The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide introduced a good deal of African culture and many African customs – singing, drumming, clapping and dancing – into its liturgy and church life. This has now become a common phenomenon among many churches of diverse background on the African continent.

The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide is of the opinion that these customs and traditions of the African, or of any other peoples of the world, are to serve as beautiful compliments to the Christian faith and belief, and are not diametrically opposed to it. The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide subjects itself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide is conscious of her mission to spread the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ to every nooks and corner of the world. The cross of Christ Jesus is our Guide.

The Church of the Lord (Aladura) is a revealed Covenant church from above. The solid foundation of the Church is laid on LOVE, FAITH and HOPE. Every adherent of the Church is enjoined to abide and practice these virtues.

The four tenets of the tenets of the church as supplemented and explained by the incumbent Primate – The Most Reverend Dr. Rufus Ositelu - can be described as:

- * PENTECOSTAL IN POWER
- * BIBLICAL IN PATTERN
- * EVANGELICAL, PROPHETIC and SOCIAL IN MINISTRY
- * ECUMENICAL IN OUTLOOK

Brief Words

Biblical in pattern in the sense that in all matters of Faith, Conduct, Doctrine, Rituals, Character and Discussions, our Supreme Court of Appeal is the Holy Bible. Thus the Holy Bible is our Spiritual Constitution.

Pentecostal in power in the sense that the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Administrator of the Church through which the Church is guided, directed, filled, influenced, administered and managed

Evangelical in the sense that we carry the Gospel to the nooks and corners of the world, and we preach the good news to all irrespective of background, race or gender.

Prophetic in the sense that God endowed the Founder of the Church and promised to endow all that will follow him with prophetic virtue for the benefit of mankind.

Social in the sense that the Church believes it should be a blessing to the community where the Church is situated.

Ecumenical in outlook in the sense that we embrace and encourage brotherly and sisterly love among the believers, and we do not forsake the saints, for the prayer of the High Priest - our Lord Jesus Christ – for the church is, “That they may one” (John 17:21). The Church accepts all who believe and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, as brothers and sisters.

The major concerns of the Church in the 21st Century are to train more efficient Church workers, and to expand its social contributions to the society at large. The Church’s Seminary –

AladuraTheological Institute (ATI) – has now been affiliated with the Lagos State University (LASU), offers diploma, graduate and post-graduate degree courses in Theology and Christian Education.

The Founder and first Primate of The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide, late Dr. J. O. Ositelu, while conducting his last Tabieorar Festival on 22nd August 1965, remarked that, “the heavenly hosts were weeping”.

Thereafter, there were also instances where in visions he saw angels in white robes surrounding him saying, “the time has come”, and replied, “if you are ready, I am ready.” And it became obvious to Prophet J. O. Ositelu that he would soon answer the call of the Lord to higher glory. Some days before his death, he ordered that a Thanksgiving Offering be made signifying his gratitude to God for a life well spent. He later changed mortality for immortality on the 12th day of July 1966.