

Rev. Josiah Olubode Soyinka (1930 – 1999)

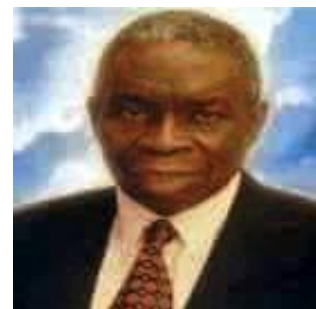
He came to The Apostolic Faith on espionage. Soon he found something amazing, great enough to win his heart. He settled his case with God and quit the way of the world. As time went on, Reverend Josiah Olubode Soyinka became the second Africa Overseer of the Church. **He was the helmsman between 1983 and 1999.** Before going to his reward, “**Brother Soyinka,**” as he was fondly called, gave a testimony, at a national camp meeting concert. We bring you an excerpt.

I have a testimony down deep in my heart as I am standing before you this evening. There is peace and joy unspeakable in my heart, because of one thing. About this time 44 years ago, in this very city of Lagos, I was a member of a Pentecostal church, where we were clapping and dancing. I was on a delegation from that church to come and see what The Apostolic Faith was doing. I thank God I did. When I came, I heard the undiluted Word of God - sound doctrine. I was made to know that the soul that sinneth it shall die.



I was born in a nominal Christian home. As a young man, I went to church and sang in the choir. I did my best, but at the time I came to The Apostolic Faith at age 23, I was deep in sin. Before then, I had looked for avenues whereby I could be free from sin, but alas, I couldn't get any. When I came into the Church, nobody knew me, and I knew nobody. But what happened 44 years ago, is what has made me to stand before you this night. The Word of God touched my heart, and revealed to me that I was a sinner. I wondered, how come, nobody knew me here! Then the Spirit of God started dealing with my heart. He started to number my sins before me one after the other. He told me I was a thief. I was sitting just as you are seated here tonight. It is my prayer that the Spirit of God will deal with your heart. God started to tell me one by one the sins I had ever committed.

I was a teacher all my life. But in the village school, where I taught before I came to Lagos, I cheated my pupils. I took money from them, promising to buy them some textbooks. I did not buy the books; I did not return their money. God reminded me again of another incident in 1953. Many people here would know there was a bank in the 50s called the Farmers' Bank. That was the next place I worked before I came into this Church. I started work there as a banker, just five months before the bank went into liquidation. But in this very Church, God told me I had robbed that bank. I was wondering, what type of Church is this?



Furthermore, the Spirit of God told me, that I had cheated the government. I asked, in what way? He reminded me that for the past five years then, I had not paid tax. The last straw that broke the camel's back was that the Spirit of God took me to Tinubu, where we have the Central Bank now; then, there used to be the Central Police Station. God told me I had impersonated the police. Then I said to myself, “If this is the only church in the world, count me out.” I asked the leader of our delegation, “What kind of church is this?” It wasn't a prophet speaking to me; it was the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is active; the Spirit of God is alive; the Spirit of God is everywhere! You know what I did? I said, I would never come back to this Church again and I did not come for three months. But let me

tell you something, you can quarrel with your neighbour; you can quarrel with your friend and part ways; but there is no way by which you can part ways with the Spirit of God.

Wherever you may be - travel abroad, climb a mountain, go to the valley, enter into your chamber - you can't lock the Spirit of God out of your life.

The Spirit of God started to deal with me. Wherever I went, I used to hear His voice, "Olu , ole, Olu, ole" (Olu, you are a thief, Olu you are a thief). Olu is an abbreviated form of my middle name. I was trying to ward it off, but each time I went out again, I would be hearing Olu, ole, Olu, ole. When I could not suppress the Spirit, I decided to go back to the Church. I heard the same Word of God again.

The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. He knows your thought; He knows the intent of your heart; even those things you are planning to do tomorrow or next year, the Spirit of God knows all. The Word of God told me that, he that covereth his sin shall not prosper; but he that confesseth his sin, shall obtain mercy. What did I do? I started to confess my sins, not to man, but to God. I wrote Abeokuta tax office that between 1948 and 1952, I did not pay tax. Then I was surcharged, but by that time I was jobless. I prayed and God gave me money to pay the surcharge. I wrote to the parents of my pupils at the village where I taught; I told them how I cheated the children, and I paid back the money. At that time, the Farmers' Bank was in liquidation, at the office of the Administrator General, Ikoyi. The bank had been demolished and a petrol station is there now. I had some of the things belonging to the bank which I stole. I had kept them at home. I could not use them because I was afraid. I carried all the things and went to the Administrator-General. He was a white man. I told him, "Sir, I used to work in this bank, which is now in liquidation. These are the things which I stole when I was with the bank, and I'm here to face the consequences because I don't want to go to eternal hell." The white man looked at me, and said, "Young man, you are forgiven." That day, I didn't know whether I flew, ran or jumped. I just discovered that my heart was bubbling with joy. What about the impersonation? I had to go to Tinubu, where we had the Central Police Station in the 40s and 50s. When I got there, I met the big policeman, and I told him my mission. He loosened his belt and walked up and down. Then the devil came, and said, "You are going to Kirikiri Prison today." I said, "I prefer to go to Kirikiri rather than go to hell." He read my letter of restitution. Then he came back and said, "Young man, I congratulate you, you are forgiven." That was how peace came into my heart! Ladies and gentlemen, the Bible tells us that no unclean thing will enter into Heaven. It is the Blood of Jesus Christ alone that can wash away our sins here, not on the other side. If your eyes are closed in death without having the assurance of salvation, no matter who you are, no matter what you do, the gate of Heaven will be locked against you.



Those whose sins have been washed away by the Blood of Jesus are the people that will make Heaven. This is the message that The Apostolic Faith is proclaiming. I came here 44 years ago; I heard the message; I was a sinner; I confessed my sins; I went to God in prayer and I pleaded the Blood of Jesus. There is power in the Blood of Jesus; power to save from sin. When I first came, my problem was how would I know if I got saved.

Salvation is a practical experience; a real experience. When you are saved, there is going to be a right about turn. The things you used to do, you can't do them again; the places you used to go, you can't go there again. That is salvation; that is what The Apostolic Faith preaches. Of course, it doesn't cost you anything. Let me tell you something. The day I got saved in this Church, I had only one kobo. We were spending pounds, shillings and pence in those days. I had only one penny, no job, no education, nothing at all. But thank God, the poor man that has salvation is greater than the richest man on earth. That night when I got saved, with the one kobo in my pocket, I bought beans and gari and ate it. The following day, I woke up in a state of penury, but glory be to God, I had God in my heart. Today, I have the peace of God in my life. This is our story. When we hold concerts and give out our publications, we are telling the world that there is a way out of sin. Our seats are free: no collections, no donations. Your spiritual welfare is our concern.

Brother Josiah Olubode Soyinka (January 4, 1930 - September 4, 1999) was married to Sister Nike Soyinka and their marriage was blessed with children.