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A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF
PAPA SAMUEL BILEHOU
JOSEPH OSHOFFA
IN RELATION TO THE
CELESTIAL CHURCH OF
CHRIST

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Introduction

After the second world, war Africa was split into colonies. As a result, there were many situations whereby people and lands were split despite their common language and culture. This leads us to the separation of Imeko, hometown of Papa SBJ Oshoffa's mother, and Dasatre, his father's hometown. Imeko was thus placed under British authority in the colony of Lagos while Dasatre was made part of the French colony of Dahomey, which is now called Benin.

The grandparents of Papa Osoffa namely Pa Ojo and Mama Kosina emigrated from Abeokuta and settled down at Dasatre. It was at Dasatre that Daddy Osoffa was born. The name Oshoffa is obtained from "Oju kii se ofa ti ota le ta bani ka subu" or, for short, "oju ko so fa," which was shorten further to Oshoffa, in yourba language and it means, in English, "The human eye is not a missile that an enemy can fire at one to make one fall." (Constitution pg 4.)

Birth of SBJ

According to Papa SBJ Oshoffa, his father was a polygamist (Constitution pg 4.) and all of his wives had children who died before reaching adolescence leaving only one daughter behind. This caused him to "entreat God according to Methodist doctrine 'O Lord if Thou would give me a boy, I shall give him unto Thy service just as Hannah and Elkanah did.' As a result, [SBJ] was born in 1909 in Port Novo of a Nigerian mother named ALAKE IYAFO from Imeko, Egbado division, Abeokuta province. [He] was named SAMUEL BILEWU (Bi 'le aiye ba wu o ko gbe, sugbon mo mo wipe mo ti toro re lodo Olorun) which means 'if you prefer to live in this world, then you are welcome but if you prefer to live above in heaven, then you are equally welcome to go, but I know I specially requested you from God.'" (Constitution pg. 4).

In fulfilment of his vow to God, Daddy Osoffa sent SBJ to a Methodist catechist called Pastor Nathaniel Yansunu of the Methodist mission in Porto Novo when he was seven years old, for spiritual training and to learn Christian principles. Eventually he was sent to Revd. David Hodonu Loco, Methodist Bishop of Porto Novo who was replaced by Bishop Garner from London. After SBJ and his mates at the church refused to participate in making blocks for a new College building, the Bishop sent them back to their parents. Upon SBJ's arrival at home, he was admonished by his father that he ought to be different because he was specially sought for from God. When he returned to Bishop Garner he was refused and thus became an apprentice to his father in carpentry. He became a proficient carpenter and continued in that industry until his father died on June 15th 1939. SBJ also always had his bible with him and loved to pray.

The Founding of the Celestial Church of Christ

From December 1946, SBJ went on to trade in ebony. He would go to the forest to purchase ebony to take to town and sell to carpenters. He continued in this until one blessed day in May 1947. He was rowed into the forest by a hired canoe paddler and left him to pray.

On 23rd May 1947, the day of the eclipse of the sun, as SBJ was praying in the forest on this trip, he heard a voice and could not open his eyes. The voice he heard was 'LULI,' and the same voice told him 'This means The Grace of Jesus Christ.' When SBJ opened his eyes, he saw a white monkey with two teeth each top and bottom with winged hands and feet, yellow beak and long tail. It would sometimes fan out its tail like a peacock does, and it multi-coloured. It was also stationary. He also saw a short snake about one foot long. As it stood stationary, it was curled and its mouth was puffed like a cobra. When he heard this voice, he noticed he felt quite different from his normal self. SBJ now found myself toying with the snake. The bird stood for a time and they went into the bush. The monkey also flew away and then he noticed that there was a complete change in him. (Constitution pg. 5).

It must be mentioned that these two creatures are abnormal because in Africa, there are no white monkeys and no monkey has wings. Upon SBJ's return to shore, he found the paddler groaning in pain. He laid his hands on the paddler and the pains left him, after which the paddler ran away leaving SBJ alone. As SBJ could not paddle he was stranded and wandered about the forest for three months. During his time in the forest, SBJ lived on honey from a tree and water from a stream nearby. He saw many visions and went through many changes.

He continued wandering in the forest and he came to a place called Fagbe located after the township of the village Zinvie. At this place he met a man called Michel who later became "senior leader Michel when he subsequently joined the church." (Constitution pg. 6) As he continued in the forest looking for his canoe he eventually found it tied up on a narrow stream (an isthmus).

As SBJ did not know how to paddle he entered his canoe and was carried along the stream when he ended up at Agange.

It was there he found a man called Kudiho who was very close to death. SBJ simply touched the man and Jesus, through SBJ, rose him up. The people of Agange were amazed and wanted to follow him to his church, although he had told them he had no church. He prayed for them. He dwelt in Agange for some time and stayed with Yesufu who was his neighbour in Port Novo. Yesufu went to Port Novo and described to SBJ's family that SBJ was a man who raised the dead by touching them, he was unkempt and untidy. In essence he looked mad.

SBJ engaged a new paddler called Zinsou and returned to Port Novo to find out that his nephew Emmanuel Mawuyon Guton was dead. SBJ went to him where he met native doctors who had wasted their efforts to raise him up. When they saw SBJ they ran away. SBJ touched the body and once again Jesus, through SBJ, raised a man from the dead. His nephew came back to life. This miracle led his sister to leave her church and follow him. Her son (his nephew) received the gift of prophecy and became the first

prophet of Celestial Church of Christ.

Divine Order

On the blessed day of September 29th 1947, SBJ had a divine encounter. He describes his experience as follows:

On the 29th of September 1947, while I was praying in my house with some visiting friends I saw a strong ray of light, rather like that from the headlamp of a car. I then saw a winged being whose body was like fire and whose eyes were tiny flying towards me behind the beam of light. As it approached me, the beam of light shortened until the being stood about a yard from me. This being then proceeded to say to me: 'God wishes to send you on an errand of preaching to the world. Many Christians there are who, during their life time, when confronted by problems and difficulties of this world they seek after fetish priests and other powers of darkness for all kinds of assistance. On their death, they think they are Christians, but they are no longer Christians because satan has left his mark on them. For this reason, such people, after death, cannot see Christ. God wants to send you to the world on a mission of preaching and exaltation, but the world will not believe you. To assist you in your work so that men may listen and follow you, miraculous works of holy divine healing will be wrought by you in the name of Jesus Christ. These works of divine healing and God's spiritual mark on you will testify to the fact that God sent you.' (Constitution pg. 7)

This was SBJ's commission. The appearance of the angel of the Lord was confirmed by a woman called Marrie Zevenu who saw Jesus Christ visiting Oshoffa. She said she saw SBJ dressed in a white tunic full of stars and his eyes full of blinding light. SBJ told her of the above mentioned encounter.

After a sleepless night due to "various heavenly visitors" Marrie's husband Frederic met a group of young people playing a game called ayo (constitution pg. 8). He related to them the events of the previous night concerning SBJ and his wife, including the fact that his wife had not slept all

night but kept talking and saying things far beyond her. This encouraged the young people to run to SBJ's house as they couldn't believe that things as such could still happen. Upon their arrival, seven of them were possessed by the Holy Spirit and delivered several messages about the tenets of the church whilst the five remaining young people went back to Port Novo and spread the news. As a result, many others ran to his place because they could not believe that such things could happen and "they also experienced some of the things the first lot experienced" (Constitution pg. 8).

Oschoffa in Public

As expected, Oschoffa's residence soon became a centre of attraction as more and more people visited him daily, this included Muslims, Catholics, Methodists and idol worshippers. An attempt made for police control did not materialize. However, a suggestion by the police officer in charge of the town that an open-air meeting should be arranged with the people seemed to have helped. Consequently, an open-air convention was arranged and people in the thousands thronged to Porto Novo. It undoubtedly offered an opportunity for those sceptical about the authenticity of the happenings to SBJ and credibility to speak to him themselves and ask questions.

During the meeting, he was led spiritually and given answers from above. Papa SBJ Oshoffa himself explained that "Whenever a question was asked, one of my ears gave a high pitched noise while the other was silent, the noisy ear did not hear what was being asked, while the quiet one did." (Constitution pg. 9) The noisy ear would then become quiet and he would hear the response he ought to give. "[He] answered as [he] was instructed." (Constitution pg.10)

Oschoffa and Rev. Parrinder

Rev. Parrinder was said to have asked SBJ why he didn't use what he was given for use within the Methodist Church. SBJ replied that if the Methodist pastor, Rev. Gbeyangbe had made the effort to inquire sincerely about his

new powers, rather than reject him, he would have joined forces with the Methodist church. SBJ admitted that he did not understand the whole episode initially and was overwhelmed by the spontaneous followers that he had.

The Name "Celestial Church of Christ"

The name of the church came down from heaven by divine revelation through a certain Alexander Yanga. He was one of the early followers of Prophet Oschoffa going through spiritual healing at his residence at the time. Yanga had been in a trance for seven consecutive days. At the end of the seventh day, he asked for a piece of chalk and wrote Eglise du Christianisme Celeste [26], which means 'Celestial Church of Christ.'

"Apart from also being a prophet, the Founder was allowed by divine order to use the name 'Epastoral' in angelic language, which also translated for him as 'Pastor.' This was after he had spent the first five years since the birth of the church as 'Evangelist.'" (constitution pg. 3).

Miracles and Reactions

While a lady called Tinavie from Zevu, Port Novo was certified clinically dead by one Dr. Alexander. Her younger sister Mawulowoe--a name which means "God will oblige"-- prophesied that Tinavie's body should be brought to SBJ and that he would raise her from the dead. Papa Oshoffa accordingly requested that Tinavie's body be brought to him. When the corpse was brought in, he told the bereaved family to put it on the floor. The other residents of Papa Oshoffa's compound were predominantly Muslims who reacted in shock to SBJ bringing in a corpse. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ raised Tinavie from the dead. Papa Oshoffa asked that she be taken to the Dr. Alexander who upon seeing and recognising her ran thinking a dead person was about to speak to him. Both Tinavie and Mawulowoe remained faithful members of Celestial Church of Christ.

The news of this miracle had hardly died down when another miracle was performed by SBJ. A close friend of his named Moishe Suru Afoyan from Zevu, Port Novo died unexpectedly and his relatives accordingly sent a message to Papa Oshoffa to mourn with the bereaved family. SBJ went to his house, saw his friend's dead body on the floor and removed one of his three sets of clothings to cover the dead body. Once the body was covered by Papa Oshoffa's clothing he ordered everyone present to leave the room where the dead body was laid. By twelve midnight, Moishe Suru Afoyan was revived. He accordingly joined the Celestial Church and remained a devoted member until his death.

The next day Moise communicated to Papa Oshoffa what had happened. He informed him that:

He [Moise] saw an old man with a beard all white standing on the balcony of a storey building. The old man brought SBJ to show him (Moise) and asked him whether he knew [SBJ]. He said he replied that he did. The old man then told him that he [Moise] was already dead but because of and to honour him [SBJ], he would be returned to life; and moreover, he [Moise] would not die again until [SBJ] who raised him from the dead shall have built a storey building. (Constitution pg. 12 sec 36)

Another noteworthy miracle is thus. This time it was a call from Grand-Popo, a town located near the border between the Republic of Benin and Togo. Grand-Popo's land was being eroded by the sea and many houses along the shore were gradually being washed away.

In 1949, the chief of Grand-Popo solicited Papa Oshoffa's help as he had heard about his power to work miracles. A delegation was sent to SBJ by the chief of Grand-Popo imploring him to come to their aid as they believed that God had sent him. SBJ took about six of his followers with him and left his base in Porto Novo for Grand-Popo. Among the elders of the church who accompanied him were Wolida Afose Yanga and his wife Elder Silvestin, Yaman and Leader Mathias.

Once at Grand-Popo, Papa Oshoffa came across a white Roman Catholic priest who was being pushed back by the sea as he prayed with his staff. SBJ was told by God that an egg was like the whole world to Him and similarly the sea was like a needle. He was thus instructed to pierce an egg in front of the inhabitants of that land and throw them into the sea which would solve the problem. The sea receded immediately.

As a result of the rapid growth of the Celestial Church and the popularity of Papa Oshoffa's miracles, reactionaries and detractors began to mobilize against him. Catholics, Muslims and Methodists sent spies to Papa Oshoffa's house. Consequently, SBJ moved to Weme, a district of Toffin.

Papa Oschoffa in Nigeria

By 1950, the Celestial Church (C.C.C.) had spread from Agange across to Toffin district to Gbaji from where it entered into Lagos, Nigeria through some fishermen who were Celestials. The growth and wonders of the church led to constant demand of members wanting to see Papa Oshoffa and so eventually after two refusals to go to Lagos, SBJ escorted by Moses Ajovi left Porto Novo for Lagos during the passion week of 1951. SBJ had initially feared to go to Nigeria, being the only surviving male of his father and he had heard that Nigeria was a "fast and difficult country," (Constitution pg. 13).

After his arrival in Nigeria clergymen from various churches wanted to meet SBJ on Good Friday in a hall in Yaba. They explained to him that they needed to see him perform miracles before they could believe that God had sent him. At which point Papa Oshoffa selected two women from among them, one married and the other unmarried and asked them to lie down. He removed two of the clothes he was wearing and placed one on each. They both experienced a sense of something about to happen but it never manifested. Papa Oshoffa then sang a hymn given to Celestial church of Christ:

Emi mimo sokale sarin wa, awa nse ireti re, Wa wonu wa ko wa fun wa l'agbara, agbara t'awa yio fi segun, O ki ise 'leri re lai mu u se, Ranti ileri re to se.

In English this means; O Holy Ghost descend thou upon us, We wait upon thy coming down, Come enter us and give us thy holy strength, The strength with which we shall overcome, Thou never makes a promise without fulfilling it. Do thou remember thine promise!

They all began to sing the song with him. The song is now known as hymn 229 in the celestial hymn book.

"Suddenly, as they sang, the Holy Spirit descended upon them. Among them, somebody said: 'He is my beloved. I sent, hear ye him,' another said: 'you married woman, you are in your menstrual period, you want to see the glory of God, do ask her whether or not she is on her period.' Still another said: 'you young woman, you know very well you have just had sexual relations and you have not bathed to cleanse yourself. I am a selective God.' They were all bewildered at all they saw and heard coming from among them. The whole hall shook and they saw the power and the glory of God," (Constitution pg. 15 sect. 48).

When this had happened there was a downpour of rain. Papa Oshoffa explained that it was part of God's work and that the rain would stop when he wanted to go home. Truly, when he wanted to leave he stretched his hand in the rain, it stopped and he left. This is what promoted a rush to the church in Nigeria and how the church grew in Nigeria.

Papa Oshoffa raised two more people in the presence of many. After a woman named Theresa Humpe was raised, a Muslim lady by the name of Ramotu Emmanuel went to speak to SBJ. She was the owner of Makoko who had had a dream that a holy man had entered Makoko and if she wanted it to remain hers, she should go to see the man. When Ramotu went to see him, he prayed for her and in three months the town of Makoko became "her undisputed land," (constitution pg. 16). In

remembrance of what God had done for her, she dedicated the land that CCC Makoko parish is presently situated to the church. She conveyed the property to the church and received one kobo in payment.

Olusola Miracle

One Sunday at 10am just as service was starting, a member of the church reported the death of a woman who had died the Saturday before at 3pm. He assured Papa Oshoffa that he believed he could raise her up especially after all the miracles he had performed. Once service was finished, around four in the afternoon, Papa Oshoffa sent (a leader at the time), Baba Bada with one of his robes to the house where the dead body was and put the robe on it. He instructed him to tell the relatives that once the body moves they should bring the body to church. At five-thirty pm the body was brought to the church vestry because it had turned over although still lifeless.

Papa Oshoffa went on about his day whilst the body remained in the vestry. One man from another spiritual church who was around encouraged Papa Oshoffa to pray for the dead body rather than doing nothing as the body had started stinking. Papa warned him not to go near the dead body and if he did, he would need to accept responsibility for whatever happened to him. He heeded not. At about twelve am the man went to see the dead body and ran due to having seen a "man clad in white with his hair parted into two standing at the head of the corpse," (constitution pg 17). Papa Oshoffa scolded him. Papa understood that these miracles were not done by him, God lead him and so there was no need for him to go about fasting and praying. God would do what He wanted.

At nine am the next day, the mother of the deceased went to meet Papa Oshoffa asking if she could take the body home for burial as it was still lifeless and ants had even begun to crawl over it. As she said this her loin fell off her which stirred sympathy in him. Papa stood up and followed her to where the dead body was, asked for her name. "She replied that her name was Olusola. [He] struck the body and called Olusola and the dead

girl replied 'sir.' [He] struck her again and said, 'In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk.' She immediately got up and walked." (Constitution pg. 17).

Jesus appears to Papa Oschoffa physically

On the Friday after the Harvest Thanksgiving Service of CCC Makoko in 1954, Jesus Christ appeared in the form of a man. Months prior to this, there had been messages prophesying His coming suddenly into their midst and that members should be prepared.

Between the hours of 3am and 5:30am, Papa Oshoffa was witnessed continuously uttering "Jesu, Jesu eniti iri re dabi iri oju omo kiniun eniti nti ori ekanna re tan imole." In English, "Jesus, Jesus, thou whose eyes are like those of a lion cub, and from whose finger tips light beams out."

Papa Oshoffa describes Jesus' appearance as thus:

The Lord came as a blindman. He appeared walking towards the Church at about 9.00 a.m. He spoke first to my wife CHRISTINE and asked her for tobacco. She replied that she had none. Then He asked her for cigarettes, and again she replied that she had none. Then He asked her for kolanuts, to which she replied angrily that she should be left alone, particularly as the three things He asked are forbidden to Celestians. At this point YAMAN, who was nearby, intervened and offered Him some money to buy the things He wanted will never be empty. He, then, told YAMAN to caution her daughter CHRISTINE to beware because the world is delicate. He left them.

I was not there, I was in the other house some fifty yards away. I saw a man coming towards me. He was tall and graceful and covered Himself with a single piece of white cloth wrapped round His whole body from Head to toe. As He approached, I saw spiritually a sudden beam of light before Him, and recognised at once that He was the Lord whose coming had been foretold. I went to meet Him. He was blind, the usual black spot being totally absent from the eyeball which were totally white. I then asked: 'My Lord, whence

comest thou and whither goest thou?' He replied: 'the son of Man comes from nowhere in particular nor does He have any destination but goes wherever the wind guides HIM" I replied: 'I thank you my Lord'. I then said: 'Very well, my Lord, would you not like to come with thy son into the house?' He replied as He walked with me: 'Art thou not the prophet? You had been given to know me because of your loving kindness. I will come with you to your house'. As we walked, I put my hand in my pocket and offered HIM money as alms. He declined and said: 'Mine is not money but Love. May it be so for you as well'.

We walked together, I on the left, He on my right. Now, there was a trench at the time near the entrance to the Church to drain away underground water oozing from under the Church into the lagoon. As we got to the trench, I said: 'My Lord, take care here, there is a trench, let me take your hand so that you can cross safely'. He replied: 'Not at all, the Son of Man may not have visible eyes, but He has spiritual eyes which see better than yours'. Before He had finished, He had smartly crossed the trench ahead of me. We walked along and entered my house together.

When we entered, He asked me for water, and I gave Him water in a bowl. He asked for sugar. Makoko was not as developed as it is now. I saw this as an opportunity to please Him. He did not accept alms from me, but perhaps I could please Him with a whole packet of sugar. I searched through Makoko for sugar to buy, but there was none so I came back to tell Him I could find no sugar. He then said the lumps in my room would do. I went into my room and searched and indeed found seven lumps there and brought them to Him. He asked me to put them in the water and said; 'As from today, let there always be sugar in your house'. He stirred the water with his hand, sipped seven times and gave to me saying, 'Men will rush to you with various problems...' and went on to tell the various uses to which water could be put. I also sipped seven times and kept the remaining water which I retain till this very moment.

He then asked for a cloth large enough to wrap, around a dead body. I looked round and could only get a yard of white material from my wife CHRISTINE. I wrapped it with paper, and as I was approaching him from behind, He asked:

'Could this be enough to cover my whole body from head to toe?' I became baffled, and was going to return it. But He said: 'Since you intended it as a gift for me do not take it away. Leave it and go look for something bigger'. Then Evangelist BADA who was nearby drew my attention to a new- soft white cotton material which was wrapped round the altar for the Harvest the previous Sunday. Then our Lord cut in and said: 'Yes, that will be big enough to wrap' round me from head to toe'. Whereupon I went into the Church, removed it from the altar, folded it, wrapped it in paper and brought it to HIM. He said: 'Yes, this is my own portion (share) of this year's Harvest'. He did not touch it, but asked me to pack it together with the earlier material. Also present at this time was EMMANUEL YANSUNU who was a Methodist and had only escorted his brother Evangelist Nathaniel Yansunu.

He spoke many things with me. Among other things, He confirmed: 'All your services of worship in the Church are acceptable unto the Father. Tell all members of the Celestial Church that they should be steadfast in their services of worship because worship will be the ultimate salvation of mankind. The love of money will constitute the downfall of many in their bid to enter the kingdom of God'. He said I should fix my eyes on Him as much as I could because I would not have the opportunity again of seeing Him as I saw Him then and talking to Him in this fashion. He said I would surely see Him again, but how He could not tell me at that point in time. This referred to the time when I myself would leave this world.

He then sought to take leave of us and urged us not to announce his departure. Evangelist BADA, who remained present throughout, then rejoined: 'Who can fail to see the glory of this sunshine?' To which our Lord replied in surprise: 'What?' Then, BADA repeated: 'FATHER, who can fail to see the glory of this blissful sunshine?' Then our Lord chanted: 'Halleluyah' seven times. Evangelist NATHANIEL YANSUNU from Porto -Novo (he was not even Leader then) was sleeping in the other room. He was paralysed on one leg. But as soon as he heard us talking in the other room he woke up and sprang up his leg straightening at the same time. It will be recalled that this NATHANIEL YANSUNU was the son of MOSES YANSUNU with whom I stayed when I was at the age of 7.

Continuing, He said He came to talk to me because there was a lot to talk about but I would have to walk with Him a little, just the two of us. We left the house, leaving the others behind. He asked me to bring both cloth parcels I had brought for Him. I brought them along. We walked along Church Street in broad daylight and yet we met not a soul all the way to Makoko bridge. He talked to me a lot giving explanations and specific injunctions on a number of matters relating to the Church. One of these injunctions was that we should hence forth celebrate Holy Communion at our annual Christmas gathering at Porto Novo beach and that He Himself would be present and partake. Previous to this we had not celebrated Holy Communion at our Christmas gatherings which was the seventh in the history of the Church.

At that time, logs of palm tree were positioned either side of the bridge to retain the road and stop it being washed away by the stream. We stood on the palm tree log to the right and we both faced the West. He then requested me to bring out the clothes and drop them in the mud. I did so and He put His left foot on the cloths while His right foot remained on the log. I remained standing on the log. Then with His left foot still remaining on the cloths which were bubbling under His foot, He said: 'SON OF MAN, HERE AT THIS SPOT WE PART. GO AND DON'T LOOK BACK'. I turned round and started to go. After taking three steps, I felt curious to know how He would go. I turned round and could no longer see Him. He had disappeared.

A second appearance of Jesus Christ was also described by Papa Oshoffa as follows:

Another appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ was at the Lagos Bar Beach in 1954 on the occasion of the anointment of some members of the Church in Nigeria amongst whom were LEYON, SAMUEL and a few others. (It is pertinent to mention that LEYON and SAMUEL were the first to be elevated to the rank of LEADER in the Church in Nigeria). Our Lord appeared from the sea. "As had happened prior to His first visit to us in Makoko, I was possessed by the Holy Spirit at about 3.00 a.m. on the day and reportedly prophesied His coming in my sleep. At about mid-day while we were on the beach performing the anointment, a boat suddenly appeared lying far out to sea. In the twinkling of an eye, it came within about two hundred yards from the

beach. The next moment we saw a man on the beach in a reclining position wearing a piece of blue loin cloth round His waist reminding one of the one on Him in the usual picture of Him on the cross. His body showed signs of having come out of the sea. He had by His side a well worn old Bible wrapped round with a piece of string, a copy of the Koran and some sun-dried crayfish. I knew it was our Lord and I went immediately towards Him. He spoke to me giving me further injunctions and explanations on a number of things. In particular, He directed me not to engage in any form of eye service to anyone.

While this was happening, a woman wearing a simple apparel moved around Him, coming not too close, to look at Him with some concern, then moving away again. She did this repeatedly. I knew it was MARIA, the gracious mother of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. It was midday and the sun was high and we had sought to assemble under the shade of the trees which were still on the beach at the time. As I walked towards Him, the sand burned under my feet, but immediately I got near to Him, everything became cool as if under a shade. After He spoke to me, I returned to the congregation of our members and disclosed to them that He of whom I had prophesied had arrived and was reclining up there. Members present rushed towards Him and He spoke to many of them. Notable among them was a particular lady, Mrs. Adedoyin Adekoya, who was gorgeously dressed in Yoruba attire. When she related her own experience, she told us that our lord queried why she came naked. This puzzled her. At this juncture, YAMAN cut in and pointed out that it was because she was not dressed in her sutana like the others. Some members of other spiritual Churches worshipping on the beach that day also saw Him and many of them rolled on the sand in spiritual turmoil, digging the sand with their hands and testifying to His identity and presence. Various fishes, whales and other animals of the sea dipped in and out of the water in salute.

We went on with our prayers and all the time, I kept an eye on Him and continued to see Him. We closed our eyes to say the grace. After the grace, we opened our eyes and discovered that He had disappeared. So also had the woman MARIA and the boat. Members searched up and down for Him but He was nowhere to be found.

(Constitution, pg. 18-22)

Papa Oshoffa's Journey home

The death of Oshoffa shook Nigeria and the world. His death was reported on the BBC and Voice of America. Many were in a state of shock at the departure of such a disciplined evangelist, a loving man and a revered worshipper. Papa Oshoffa was known by so many and respected by so many. This showed in his various send-offs, service of songs, funerals etc.

On September 1st, 1985 he was on his way to Ibadan CCC Mokola parish harvest after leaving CCC Ikorodu 1 Parish. As Papa was about to enter the car on the left behind the driver (where he usually sat), he closed the door and went to sit on the other side.

His car, driven by Espedit, an experienced driver, was only about seventeen kilometers from Ibadan. It was speeding along when suddenly one of the tires exploded. The car skidded and somersaulted about four times before landing in the bush. Thomas and Mac who accompanied him were found dead immediately. However, Papa was found and helped by a woman; Alhaja Hadijat Olufunke Olawoye. He was later met by Baba Ajanlekoko. Papa was subsequently driven back to Lagos for quick treatment at Labi's Hospital, Ilupeju. After, Papa was taken home upon request due to the emerging crowd to find out about his health status.

On 2nd of September, despite no severe harm being done to him, Papa was convinced to return to hospital for an x-ray and further examination. The next day at hospital (3rd September) he spent the day peacefully. On the 4th of September Papa got out of his bed unaided, walked to the adjoining bathroom and was back, (Enigmatic spiritual leader: 2014, pg. 153).

On the 7th of September Papa called for some elders to meet him at the hospital for a thanksgiving the next day.

On 8th of September 1985, an altar was laid and chairs were arranged at the

penthouse of first Shadrach hospital, Ilupeju. The following members attended:

- Supreme Evang. A A Bada;
- Sup. Evang. S O Ajanlekoko;
- Sup. Evang. P H Ajose;
- Snr. Evang. Ebenezer Oshoffa;
- Snr. Evang. Olude;
- Hon. Evang. J K Owodunni;
- Hon. Evang. A O Adefeso;
- Hon. Evang. C E Adenegan;
- Hon. Evang. S O Banjo;
- Hon. Evang. George Amu;
- Sup. Snr. Prophetess Adenegan;
- Sup. Snr. Prophetess Olude;
- Snr. Eld. Sis. Otenigbagbe, who represented her husband Hon. Evang. Otenigbagbe.

On the 9th of September Papa gave all his keys to his daughter Lace Sup. Snr. Eld. Sis Edith Oshoffa and briefed her on his family and welfare.

On the 10th of September 1985 Papa Oshoffa "gave up the ghost, smiling, with one eye opened." (Enigmatic Leader pg. 161). Elders were called to the hospital to find out that he had given up the ghost. God's gift to the world had passed on.

The remains of the Pastor-Founder, Pa S. B. J. Oshoffa were finally laid to rest on Saturday, October 10th 1985, in his mother's hometown, Imeko, the Celestial City, amidst mourning, miracles and thanksgiving.

Oshoffa, Samuel Bilewu
1909 to 1985
Celestial Church of Christ
Nigeria

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