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Babalola, Joseph
Ayodele

1904-1959

Born 25 April 1904 at Odo Owa, Oke Ero, in the present day Oshun State of Nigeria, he claimed to have been anointed by God before birth. Tradition has it that on the day of his birth a great and mysterious object blew up and shook the skies. His father was Baba Ijo (Church Patron) of the CMS Church, Ilofa, 90km from Ilorin. According to Elijah Olu Akinwumi, Babalola's unprecedented Oke Oye Revival gave birth to what is now known as the Christ Apostolic church. The story went that while driving a steam roller along Ilesalgbara Ok¹e Road the voice called him thrice that if he refused to heed the voice of the Lord to go out and preach, he would die. He resigned his job; fasted for seven days and saw a figure presumed to be Jesus. He was given a bell to drive away evil spirits and a bottle of water for therapeutic healing.

He was then told to go and preach in Odo Owa on a market day in October 1928, dressed in palm fronds and painting his face in charcoal. But he was mistaken for a mad man, seized, and taken to Ilorin charged for disturbing public peace. But then the prophecies which he gave were coming to pass and miracles continued to happen. He was released.

He went to Lagos where he met Pastor D O Odubanjo and Senior Pastor Esinsinade of Faith Tabernacle. He was baptised into that Church before returning to Odo Owa. Pastor Odubanjo said of him that within three weeks he had cured about three hundred lepers, sixty blind people and fifty lame. Patients at Wesley Hospital, Ilesha, were reported to have left the hospital to receive spiritual healing. The dumb spoke; lunatics were cured; witches confessed. Later he was committed to prison for identifying people as witches and wizards. Also, and unfortunately, a few people died after they were given water from 'igi obo' or sass wood. A break soon occurred between those who would use medication to treat ailments and those who would not but trust only in prayers. The faction that would use medication chose Oke Oye as headquarters and became known as

The Apostolic Church. The larger faction led by Babalola became the Christ Apostolic Church.

The Church soon opened schools, a Teachers' Training College, a maternity home, a Seminary and a Training school for prophets. A private university has been found and named after him – Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji, Arakeji in Osun State of Nigeria. He was personally dissatisfied with materialism, and sinful life brought about western civilization.

The church was registered May 1943 under the Nigerian Company Law of 1924 number 147. At Ede on Sunday 26 July 1959, he called on S O Akande to take over.

Celestial Church of Christ at 70

September 1947-September 2017

Sup. Evang. Banji Oyelakin