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Christianah

Abiodun Emmanuel

1907 – 1997

In her biography by Ebeye Boniface, Christianah Abiodun Emmanuel's father hailed from Abeokuta and her mother from Porto Novo. Father Olu Abiola wrote that she was the daughter of Rev Akinsowon who was a clergy at Porto Novo and her mother was the daughter of the Alaketu of Ketu in present-day Ogun State of Nigeria. She took on the name and title of 'Her Eminence Captain Dr Christianah Abiodun Emmanuel', the word captain being a symbol of spiritual leadership. Let us call her Mama Emmanuel for short.

Her spiritual journey began when she fell into a trance at the Corpus Christi celebration on June 18, 1925. She remained in trance for 21 days; trained and tutored by Archangel Michael. Pa Moses Orimolade Tunolashe was already evangelising and was sent for. Pa Orimolade came in pouring rain and wasn't drenched. It was Emmanuel who asked that Baba Orimolade be called and who assured him that he and his followers would not be touched by the pouring rain. This happened as she predicted.

Both agreed to work together, Emmanuel as visionary; Pa Orimolade as leader. Both worked in areas of healing and prayer ministration. At first Emmanuel called on the Seraphims in her prayers; but while saying the grace on September 9, 1925, a member dreamt that they should also call on the Cherubims given that Seraphims and Cherubims are twins in heaven. Hence they became known as Cherubim and Seraphim society. However, a split came in 1929 leading to a court case which gave the name Cherubim and Seraphim to Emmanuel faction. Pa Orimolade faction took the name Ita Balogun Praying Band of Cherubim and Seraphim. It is claimed that the Holy Ark of Covenant was released to her in a vision sometime in 1929. According to Father Abiola, a spiritual message given in 1970 that she should be regarded as the head of the Cherubim and Seraphim, was actuated much later in 1980. The debate concerning

the two titans would however be said to roll on; leading to divergent versions of the early history and growth of the church.

Emmanuel led a group to Abeokuta in 1927. From Abeokuta, the group proceeded to Ibadan. There was quite a spectacle as the new sect paraded the streets with their white uniforms and melodious songs, condemning witches and wizards all the way. In 1928, they went to Ilesha where the king offered them a house. This was after a prayer was said and much needed rain fell. In Ondo town after an open-air service it was claimed that 1600 new converts registered.

A split came between Baba Orimolade and Emmanuel. Father Abiola gave two possible causes of this; one, pressure arising from established churches which increasingly became hostile, the other, internal struggle for leadership. At a time, the Alake of Egbaland tried to intervene but this was in vain. The Administrator of the Colony, Mr G H Findlay, advised them in March 1929 to go to their separate ways. Baba Orimolade's faction took the name Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim. This was registered 14 February 1930. Emmanuel's faction took the name Cherubim and Seraphim Society.

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Sup. Evang. Banji Oyelakin

About the Author

John Adeyeye Olabanji Oyelakin originally trained and qualified as a Chartered Town Planner. He was once the National Secretary of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners; one time the Executive Secretary of that body and the first Registrar, Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria. He held management positions in both Nigeria and the United Kingdom before retiring to take up full time work in the vineyard.

He presently holds the rank of Superior Evangelist and he is the Shepherd in charge, Celestial Church of Christ, Greater London Parish based in Southall, near Heathrow airport, West London. He is happily married children and grandchildren.