

# **The Unification of Celestial Church of Christ Is A Task That Must Be Done**

## **- Evangelist (Prophet) OLU OSHODI**

**ADDRESSING A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE EPHPHATHA HALL,  
CELESTIAL CHURCH OF CHRIST, AYILARA PARISH, SURULERE**

I salute esteemed Shepherds and Elders of our dear Celestial Church of Christ; Executives of the Parish Management Committee and Members of Ayilara Parish. I salute also, gentlemen of the press.

This is a critical period in the history of the Celestial Church of Christ and everyone who wants to be on the right side of history must join us in the Unification of our great church. We all need to make personal and collective sacrifice to achieve Unification.

To this end I, SAMUEL OLUMUYIWA OSHODI hereby renounce my titles of Reverend and Deputy Pastor of the Celestial Church of Christ.

Henceforth, I revert to the 1985 title of Full Evangelist that the late Pastor/Founder, Reverend (Prophet) SBJ Oshoffa anointed me with. I will now be known and addressed as Evangelist (Prophet) Samuel Olumuyiwa Oshodi.

Today, I solemnly declare my 100 percent support for the Unification of the Celestial Church of Christ. There is a history behind this decision. Let me tell you some of it briefly...

After the demise of the Pastor/ Founder, Rev (Prophet) S.B.J Oshoffa of blessed memory, shepherds, trustees, and some high ranking honorary evangelists allowed the devil to set in through one Segun Amun who used diabolical items (cowries, half burnt candle and a small wooden cross) to proclaim Supreme Evangelist A.A Bada as Pastor.

But the constitution of the church clearly mentioned that the Holy Spirit will take charge of appointment of the Pastor. Without any delay the investiture programme came up in 1986 and thereafter a trustee of CCC, Evang. J.K.

Owodunni sued Supreme Evang. Bada to court and eventually the Supreme Court of Justice in Abuja pronounced that Bada should not parade himself as the Pastor of Celestial Church of Christ again. That was in year 2000.

Pastors were appointed illegally after the demise of Pastor Bada which is against the instruction and pronouncement of Pastor/ Founder S.B.J Oshoffa through Ojo Adele in Ogun State.

All Celestians should now understand that we have no pastor and that all those who either appointed themselves or were appointed by their cronies are only regents whose time is transient, thereby making all anointments that we must have received null and void.

The Holy Spirit reminded me that I started the latest most global movement for the Unification of the Celestial when I was led to appoint women of substance and men of understanding to go and appeal to all the self-appointed pastoral divisions to allow unification. And these people did very well when they maintained status quo

To keep Celestial Church of Christ one is a task that must be done. We must allow the Holy Spirit to appoint the genuine Pastor for us according to the proclamation of our Pastor/Founder, Rev Prophet S.B.J Oshoffa of blessed memory.

Majority of us know how some high ranking elders manipulated the appointment of Supreme A.A Bada to the post of a Pastor through one Mr Segun Amun in 1986. We all witnessed what happened at the Supreme Court in year 2000 when the justice pronounced that he should not parade himself as the Pastor because it was unconstitutional and it was proved null and void.

This is the time for us all to humble ourselves as our Lord Jesus Christ and make a little sacrifice by going back to our original anointment and ranks in 1985. Life is a mission and not wealth, rank or position; not power but the ability to surrender ourselves in totality into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The so called Pastors have tormented this great church personally and they have made it a family affair. The Celestial Church of Christ is greater than any individual. If there are any differences between Pa Owodunni and Pa



Banjo – both of whom are the last two original trustees of the church appointed by Papa Oshoffa - they should please settle for God's sake.

This the Bible clearly states in Hebrew 12:14 – “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord”:

Since 1985, 24 years after the demise of Papa Oshoffa, we have never gotten any major development as a church, no primary or secondary school, hospital, seminary, or university. All projects in the Celestial City, Imeko or along the Lagos/Ibadan Expressway have become major embarrassment to right thinking Celestians – just because we lack Godly leadership.

These are some of the steps I believe must be taken by the 'Regents in Office' and their supporters in order to hasten the Unification process.

**Step One:** They should hasten to renounce their titles as 'pastors' and go back to their 1985 ranks because I am sure we have records at the International Headquarters, Ketu with 'Baba Yemisi'.

**Step Two:** They must take to prayer and fasting because they have tormented this great church and did not wait for the Lord to choose for us.

**Step Three:** Let them willingly join the GLOBAL UNIFICATION MOVEMENT immediately and wait for further instructions from God.

We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God and Celestial Church of Christ – **Romans 3:23**. The bible states clearly that those who cover their sins shall not prosper but those who confess, repent and forsake their sins will surely receive the mercy of God – **Proverbs 28:13**.

All of us should take a drastic u-turn and go back to our Lord Jesus Christ who descended this church with his precious blood to cleanse the world.

I am not here to discredit or disorganize any regent or faction of the church. Rather, I am calling on everyone to join us in returning our church to the supreme authority of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

This is the Divine Order of the Holy Spirit; it is not by my might or power, but His grace. I know the truth and the truth has set me free. Let us all embrace the truth and be free. Set yourself free by seeking the Unification of the

church this year 2009. Don't exalt yourself. Let Jehovah God exalt you. We should all wait upon the Lord to choose His own pastor for us.

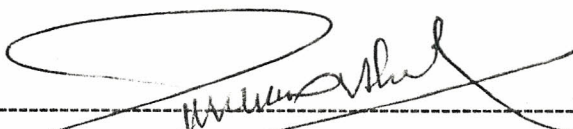
This year Ephphatha Crusade Worldwide, the miraculous and Spirit-filled international crusade, which the Lord gave me the injunction to host every year for His glorification starting in year 2000 is 10 years old this year. Halleluyah!

By God's grace this year, we will be hosting Ephphatha Crusade in the United Kingdom, in the United States, in the Republic of Benin where our church was founded by Papa Oshoffa of blessed memory; and we will host it on Friday, July 31, 2009 here in Lagos, Nigeria where it all started.

Ephphatha stands for the Unification of our church. It stands for healing, victory, deliverance, prosperity and supernatural blessings of all Celestians worldwide. We are not for any faction. Ephphatha is God's gift to Celestial Church of Christ Worldwide.

Long live Celestial Church of Christ Worldwide and long live God's obedient servants worldwide in Jesus name. Amen. Halleluyah! Halleluyah!! Halleluyah!!!

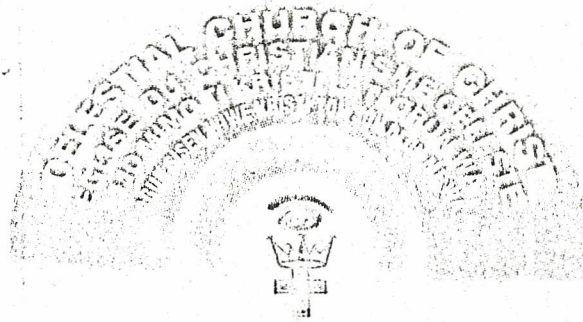
**Signed and Dated on January 27, 2009**



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**Evangelist (Prophet) Samuel Olumuyiwa Oshodi**  
Senior Shepherd, CCC Ayilara Parish  
Visionary and President, Ephphatha Crusade Worldwide





INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
31, MOSHOOD STREET, KETU LAGOS  
P.O. BOX 1237 IKEJA, LAGOS  
NIGERIA.

WORLD HEADQUARTERS  
CELESTIAL CITY,  
IMEKO, OGUN STATE.  
NIGERIA .

30th September, 2005

Superior Evang. Oshodi  
Celestial Church of Christ  
Ayilara Parish,  
Lagos State.

Dear Superior Evangelist Oshodi,

LETTER OF INVITATION

Calvary greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, may his peace abide with you. Amen!

Your attention is hereby required by the Pastor to discuss issues affecting our church and how to move forward.

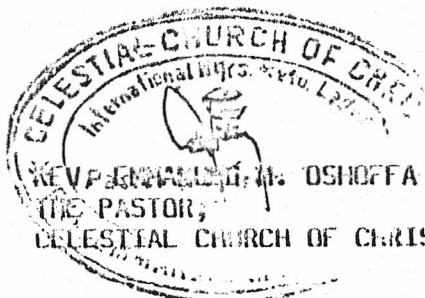
Place: C.C.C. Int. Hdqtrs.  
Pastor's Vicarage, Ketu

Date : Monday 17th October, 2005.

Time : 11a.m.

Please be punctual.

Yours in Christ,



Lagos State Secretariat

15<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

Rev. Pastor E.M. Oshoffa  
31-Moshood Street Ketu – Lagos.

Dear Sir,

Calvary greeting in the precious name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.  
I appreciate the letter of invitation that I received today 14<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2005  
for a meeting with your Eminence at Ketu for a way forward in CCC  
W/W.

We all understand that there is a unification meeting going on at  
Makoko to finally eradicate division in CCC W/W.

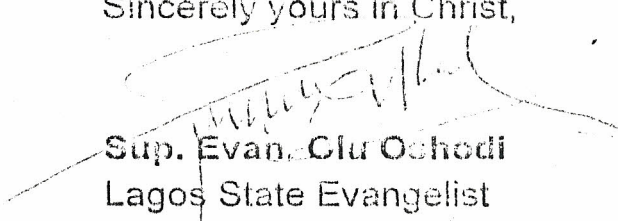
In my opinion, we should allow the moderators and members of both  
parties divinely appointed by us, now working in progress for  
unification to finish the work without interruption.

We must all understand that we are children of one Daddy and of one  
God (Malachi 2 vs. 10) therefore we must not spoil the covenant of  
our father (Saint S.B.J OSCHOFFA) of blessed memory.  
We have all sinned and short of the Glory of God.

This is the time for all of us to repent of all our sins and take a drastic  
"U" turn to our LORD JESUS.

MAY GOD HELP US all in JESUS Mighty name (Amen)

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Sup. Evan Clu Ochodi  
Lagos State Evangelist

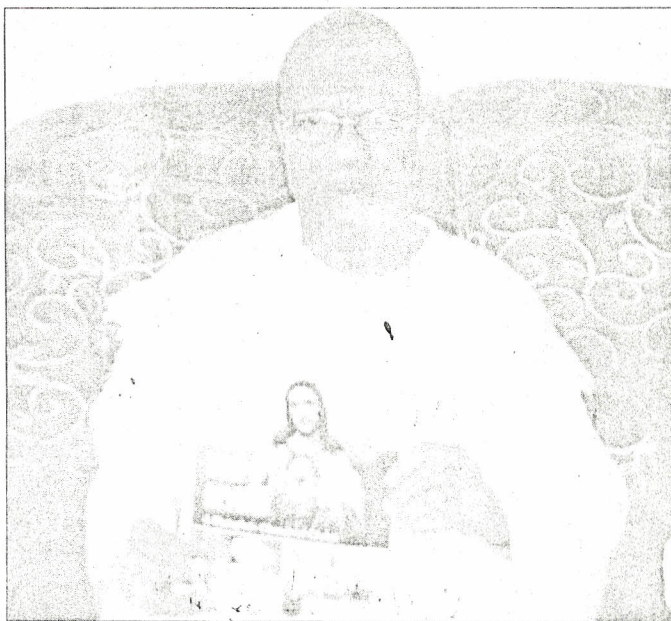


# There Is No Love, Peace And Unity In CCC — Oshodi

Recently, Deputy Pastor of the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), Reverend Olumuyiwa Oshodi, relinquished his office and stripped himself of his rank and title.

Until his declaration, Oshodi was deputy to Pastor Paul Suru Maforikan, who heads the second biggest division of the church.

The 66-year-old reverend gentleman shocked members of the public when he alleged that all those parading themselves, as pastors of the 61-year-old church are self-serving impostors. In this Interview with GRACE OMOSHABA; Oshodi who 10 years ago began the largest open revival of the church named 'Ephphatha Crusade,' said he is determined to aggressively support the unification process.



• Oshodi

## church?

Anybody who is a pastor now or deputy pastor is not conforming to the constitution of the church as pronounced by our late SBJ Oshoffa.

## Your decision to renounce your title would have made your relationship with Paul Maforikan sour?

When we are declaring unification you should not belong to A or B, (if not) there will be division in the church. If I want to renounce it I should come out. We have diocese and the trustees. For unification sake, I should come out so that they will not see me as being part of any segment. If you want to unify the church you must be neutral.

Just like this one, several controversies have rocked the CCC in times past. Isn't it possible you are responsible for elongating especially among the people you left behind?

I want to take them along because everybody must be a part of the unification. If you are not part of

the unification, it means you are against the pronouncement of the pastor founder; you are against the constitution too.

## You have a constitution in the CCC, should someone just wake up one morning and anoint pastor?

They know the truth but they don't want to go by it. That's the problem we are having. They must come to unify the church in love, peace and unity.

## How do you think you can correct these lapses?

We are telling them to renounce their rank, go back to the time of the pastor founder, then we can move forward. They have abandoned all the projects we have here and there because there is no unity, no peace, and no love. The only way we can solve our problems is to come together and unify the church. Forget about your rank. A life is a mission, not wealth, not power, position but ability to surrender totally into the hands of Jesus Christ. That is what many people have failed to do now.

We want to correct that in one love and unity. The CCC root is still there. We only need to correct ourselves.

We'll go out and start propagating. We are going to say that they should stop anointing. People are not happy. They are disheartening. They don't love these things that are happening. God is not in disunity. He is not an author of disunity. He is a God of peace.

## Now and beyond what is your vision for CCC?

We are propagating unification. We want to unify the church. There shouldn't be any division. We don't want conflicts, we want Christ to work in us as ever before. We want the solver of problems to solve our problems. We have abandoned projects that have not been completed. We cannot do it in isolation, if we come together we can.

## The church is 61 years and you don't have a missionary building?

We will have that when we unify the church. We have abandoned projects here and there. One at

Imeko, Abeokuta / Ibadan Expressway can be revisited if we can have one voice. That is what I'm propagating for now, we come together for one purpose, one voice then we can move ahead, together in one voice, one love. We don't have to quarrel with one another. The Bible says in Mal. 2:10, "Are we not children of one father?" So, why are we now quarrelling? Unless we see ourselves as one, and recognise that, will we move ahead.

## How soon will these changes take place?

As soon as we finish here today; I have a lot of people that we want to do this together.

They are also tired of the conflicts, division here and there. If you go to a parish, they'll ask you, 'are we not for Christ?' If they discover you are from Paul, they'll say: 'No, you can't fellowship with us, That is ungodly, and that is what we want to remove now and we have to move forward, to propagate, talk to people. We are going to enlighten them.

## What is your last word for all CCC members?

To keep CCC one is a task that must be done all over the world. Jesus is in control already. It is not by my might or power, it is by God's grace: He is using me for this. I don't think I can do it by myself.

Just two weeks ago, I got two sets of my garments; I can't use it any longer. Now I want to put it aside and start wearing the ones I used a long time ago in 1985, I want to go back to it. It is a sacrifice, you humble yourself, go back to Jesus and pray fervently so that He will answer. Jesus is the owner of the CCC, whether we like it or not, He hears our prayer and that is what He told me to tell people.

## Why did you change your title of Deputy Pastor to Evangelist?

I decided to do that by the spirit of God, which overtook me and arrested me. The anointing we had from Pastor A.A. Bada till date are null and void. Since the pronouncement from the Supreme Court on Pastor Bada that he should not parade himself as Pastor of this church. Constitutionally he is not a pastor.

The late Pastor/ Founder, Reverend (Prophet) SBJ Oshoffa anointed me and conferred on me the titles I now bear. I do this as a personal sacrifice in order to declare my 100 per cent support for the unification of the church because he who comes to equity must do so with clean hands.

That means this pastorship thing is not part of the Celestial Church.

Yes. The Holy Spirit of God must appoint the pastors that should be in place, it should not be by manipulation. We have only one pastor and it was the founder Oshoffa. Any other is not a pastor because they are not appointed spiritually.

## You got the position you relinquished long ago. Why didn't you reject it then?

It was in 1985, before our pastor and founder died, he gave me the title Evangelist. I got the Deputy Pastor from Paul Maforikan.

## But you should have rejected it then.

I didn't reject it because the Holy Spirit did not directing me. When the Holy Spirit took over me, arrested me, He said I should renounce it.

Does that mean that anybody in the CCC that is a pastor is not conforming to the constitution of the



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PASTOR POLITICS ENTERTAINMENT SOCIETY LIFESTYLE



# Olu Oshodi surprises 'Cele'

**U**ntil mid-January this year, most members of the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) knew Prophet Olumuyiwa Samuel Oshodi, 66, as Reverend and Deputy Pastor. He was said to be a major supporter of Pastor Paul Suru Maforikan who heads the second biggest division of the 61-year-old white garment church.

But on Tuesday, January 27, 2009 Oshodi addressed a huge crowd of followers and a cross-section of the news media at a press conference. He declared his total support for the unification of all factions of the church and his personal sacrifice of stripping himself of his acquired titles of Reverend and Deputy Pastor and the paraphernalia of pastoral responsibilities and appurtenances attached to those titles.

Oshodi who has now returned to his 1985 title of Evangelist/Prophet – incidentally that was the rank given to him and seven others by the late founder of the church, Reverend Samuel Bilehou Joseph Oshoffa – also announced his disengagement from every perceived division or power bloc within the church in order to reinforce his declaration for unification.

Exclusive information reaching me confirms that since the demise of Oshoffa 24 years ago, the church has been engulfed by spiritual rascality, financial impropriety and the usurpation of the office of pastor by different people parading themselves as heads of the church.

Said Dr. Michael Adedoyin, a prophet and secretary-general of Ephphatha, the largest crusade of the CCC which has Oshodi as its founder and president: "Papa Oshodi is the first Celestian in any high ranking pastoral office who would disrobe himself, renounce his acquired titles and revert to a 24-year-old rank in order to be taken seriously as a sincere and genuine icon of unification."

"His declaration on Tuesday also confirmed to the Celestial world in particular that the Ephphatha Crusade, which incidentally marks its 10th anniversary this year, is and has always been a neutral and non-partisan evangelism springboard for all of CCC regardless of which pastor or division you belong to."

"One can only hope that others would borrow a leaf from Papa Oshodi because he who comes to equity must come with clean hands. You cannot pretend to be a pastor or claim you want unity for the church and not make the sacrifice of disrobing yourself. You cannot continue to benefit from an illegitimate arrangement and claim you want to change it."

HAMILTONSTYLE spoke to Evangelist/Prophet Oshodi and he explained that he had already declared his

decision to Pastor Paul Suru Maforikan who he last served as deputy.

He said, "After the demise of Pastor/Founder SBJ Oshoffa of blessed memory, some elders manipulated things through one Segun Amun who used diabolical items (cowries, half burnt candle and a small wooden cross) to proclaim the late Supreme Evangelist Alexander Abiodun Bada as Pastor, CCC Worldwide. Majority of us knew that it was all manipulated. But some of us were too far from the centre to change the course of things being fostered on the church."

However, the constitution of the church clearly states that it is the Holy Spirit that will appoint the next pastor. Rev. Bada's investiture was held in Imeko in 1986 and thereafter a trustee of CCC, Evangelist Josiah Kayode Owodunni sued Bada to court and eventually, the Supreme Court of Justice in Abuja disrobed Bada and ordered him not to parade himself as the Pastor of CCC again. That was in year 2000.

"Unfortunately, more pastors have been illegally appointed over the church since

the demise of Bada. Celestians must now understand that we have no pastor and that all those who either appointed themselves or were appointed by their cronies are only regents whose time is transient, thereby making all anointments, positions and ranks that we have all received null and void."

"It is the Holy Spirit that instructed me to disrobe and renounce my acquired office and declare totally for the unification of CCC. To keep the Celestial Church of Christ one is a task that must be done. We must all allow the Holy Spirit to appoint for us a genuine pastor according to the proclamation of our Pastor/Founder, Rev Prophet S.B.J Oshoffa of blessed memory."

"Today's so called pastors have tormented our great church and have made it a family affair. They should all disrobe and join the CCC Unification Worldwide. The Celestial Church of Christ is greater than any individual in it. If there are any differences between Pa Owodunni and Pa Banjo – both of whom are the last two original trustees of the church that were appointed

by Papa Oshoffa – they should please settle for God's sake and restore peace and legitimacy over the church before they also pass on."

"Since 1985 that Papa Oshoffa died, our church has not recorded any major development; no primary or secondary school, hospital, seminary, or university. All projects in the Celestial City, Imeko or along the Lagos/Ibadan Expressway have become major embarrassment to right thinking Celestians – just because we lack godly leadership."

Oshodi is determined to aggressively use the platform of the Ephphatha Crusade which his parish, CCC Ayilara, started 10 years ago to push the unification and 'fresh fire evangelism' agenda around the four corners of the church."

"This year, we are hosting Ephphatha in the United Kingdom, United States, Benin Republic (where CCC was founded by Oshoffa) and here in Lagos, Nigeria. So, help us God," he said. Amen.

## Obembe and the Benny Hinn imbroglio

**I** got feedback from two people over HAMILTONSTYLE tribute to the memory of my friend and client, Abisola Kasali two weeks ago. One was a phone text from an unnamed reader and the other, a phone chat with Lanre Obembe, the presiding Bishop of El Shaddai Bible Church, Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi – Lagos. But that was after I'd received close to 100 texts and 68 emails from diverse readers, some of who knew the late Abisola and thanked me for the tribute.

First, the phone text from 08025746817: "I just read your tribute to Ms Kasali and I feel the mention of Bishop Obembe's financial imbroglio was totally irrelevant to the article (I'm not a member of his church)."

Second was my telephone chat with the bishop. I phoned him because a mutual friend had called me on his behalf and had encouraged me to speak with him.

"Good afternoon bishop, my name is Kunle Hamilton. I wrote the tribute to Abisola Kasali in today's Saturday Sun on page 36, HAMILTONSTYLE. I was told you are upset and you think I mentioned your name maliciously... Sir, I bear you no grudges and I have no reason to be malicious to you," I said to him.

"Oh no, you are wrong. If it isn't malice how come you are calling me a controversial figure in your article and accusing me of swindling Benny Hinn of millions of dollars, something that happened four or five years ago? Well, you must redress this matter. In fact, you will hear from my lawyers!"

I was a bit surprised and just managed to say, rather sarcastically: "Wow bishop, I just love your style."



•Lanre Obembe (right)

I made a technical slip by not adding the word 'purportedly' in last week's story. That was a technical error for which I apologize. But without any prejudice to Obembe, I ought to point out that I am not the one that has labeled him 'controversial.'

I respect Obembe. Indeed, he preached at one of my church crusades many years ago. I have not and will not call him a thief because even in the matter of the purported Benny Hinn swindle he was neither convicted nor publicly declared guilty.

Harsh as my words may have sounded to Obembe and other more sensitive readers, let me remind us all that people must hold himself accountable for whatever happens under their watch.

I think Obembe is a man of integrity, I think his church is salvation-based and I think his congregants love and cherish him as a worthy leader.

**Re: Bishop Lanre Obembe**

On this page last week, Bishop Obembe, a prominent Christian leader, was accused of swindling Benny Hinn of millions of dollars. I was surprised and just managed to say, rather sarcastically: "Wow bishop, I just love your style."





E2

## Man-U-Script

By KUNLE HAMILTON · 080 800 00007 · hamiltonstyle@yahoo.com



# Pastor Shocks Church, Renounces Titles, Rank.

It was on Facebook, the interactive website that is fast becoming Nigeria's second tier Federal Capital Territory (FCT), that I first caught wind of the rumour that a high ranking pastor of the famous Celestial Church of Christ has stepped down from office and was renouncing his titles at a press conference in Lagos.

At first, I said it must be a hoax. But even then, I couldn't shrug it off because for so many years, I have been poking my nose into other people's businesses since that is the business of journalism. I particularly poked my nose into the affairs of churches and the men and women of God that decorate our landscape.

A friend of mine who noticed my interest as I posted my thoughts about the 'Cele Pastor' on Facebook said to me: "Kunle, why bother with Cele story; who cares?"

I laughed at the naivety of my Facebook friend and replied him: "I care about 'Cele Pastor' the same way I care about Pastor Enoch Adeboye and the RCCG, Dr. Daniel Oluokoya (ex-Christ Apostolic Church or C & S, I think) and his MFM, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome (ex-Assemblies of God, I think) and his Christ Embassy, Pastor Chris Okotie and his Household of God; even Pastor Temitope Joshua (ex-Celestial Church) and his Synagogue – all of whom I have written about in MANUSCRIPT.

"I need to dig into this 'Cele' thing some more because much as other Christians try so hard to deride and carpet these Africanised white garment churches, it is 'Cele' and the Cherubim and Seraphim products that abound among today's Pentecostal pastors and choristers."

I mentioned over 20 names of such pastors and choristers and my friend quickly agreed with me that 'Cele' was worth digging into if indeed its ex-members now hold key posts in other churches. He even followed me to the press conference held a few days ago and I quickly told him: "Most ex-members of white garment churches left in search of greener pastures and not necessarily because they care more about taking anybody to heaven..."

So let's get back to my 'nose-poking' into 'Cele' again. The press conference was addressed by one Evangelist (Prophet) Olumuyiwa Oshodi. If I wasn't there myself, I wouldn't believe it – that a white garment minister would relinquish his rank and title, the very tools of 'chop and clean mouth' in the many Africanised churches that dot our landscape? But it was true. First, the news story that came out of that conference entitled "Pastor Shocks Celestial Church, Steps Down," Read this...

Deputy Pastor of the Celestial Church of Christ, Reverend Olumuyiwa Oshodi, has relinquished his office and stripped himself of his rank and title. The 66-year-old reverend gentleman shocked members of the public when he alleged that all those parading themselves as pastors of the 61-year-old church are self-

serving impostors.

Oshodi made this disclosure at a press conference tagged 'Declaration for the Unification of CCC' held at the Celestial Church of Christ, Ayilara Parish in Surulere, Lagos, Tuesday, January 27, 2009.

He said, "I, Samuel Olumuyiwa Oshodi, hereby renounce my titles of Reverend and Deputy Pastor of the Celestial Church of Christ and now revert to my 1985 title of Full Evangelist (Prophet).

"The late Pastor/Founder, Reverend (Prophet) SBJ Oshoffa anointed me and conferred on me the titles I now bear. I do this as a personal sacrifice in order to declare my 100 per cent support for the unification of the church because he who comes to equity must do so with clean hands."

Until his declaration, Oshodi was deputy to Pastor Paul Suru Maforikan who heads the second biggest division of the white garment church.

Since the demise of Oshoffa 24 years ago, the church has been engulfed by reports of spiritual rascality, financial impropriety and the usurpation of the office of pastor by different people and for which reason many cases have been taken to the police and some to the courts.

On the issue of pastors and trustees of the church, Oshodi said: "Today's so called pastors have tormented our great church and have made it a family affair. They should all disrobe and join the CCC Unification Worldwide. We all must wait upon the Lord to choose the right pastor."

"If there are any differences between Pa Owodunni and Pa Banjo – both of whom are the last two surviving trustees of the church that were appointed by Papa Oshoffa – they should please settle for God's sake and restore peace and legitimacy over the church before they die."

Oshodi, who 10 years ago began the largest open revival of the church named 'Ephphatha Crusade', said he was determined to aggressively use the crusade which his parish, CCC Ayilara, hosts annually to support the unification process.

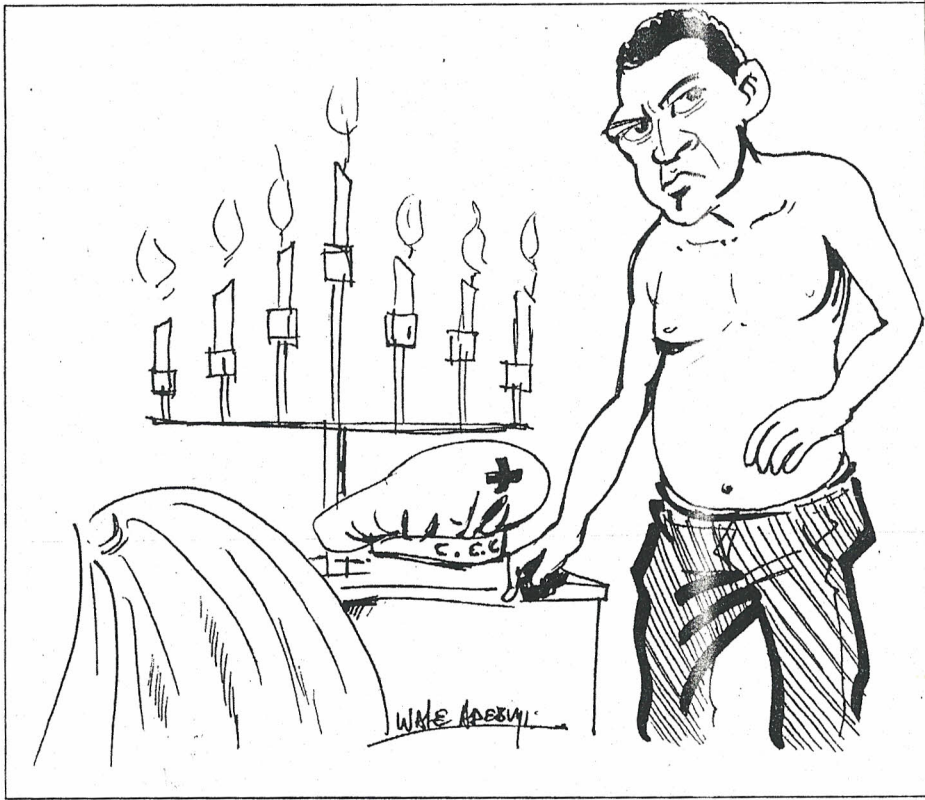
"This year, as we mark our 10th anniversary, we will be hosting Ephphatha Crusade in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Benin Republic where the church was founded by Papa Oshoffa and here in Lagos, Nigeria."

Unconfirmed reports say that in the heat of Oshodi's renunciation, a bewildered Pastor Paul Maforikan flew out to London only to phone in to confide in some people that he was also ready to renounce his pastoral title for peace to reign in the church. However, this remains to be proven.

Press men attended the conference from all major news media including the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). It was apparent that quite a few of them knew a bit of the history of the church. One asked Oshodi if he wasn't setting the stage for his own ascent to the seat of pastor of another faction of the embattled church.

I was moved by Oshodi's response.

"I say it publicly here, even if



these shepherds and high ranking elders of the church who surround me today (and there were over 500 of them in the hall) hail me and say they want me as pastor, I will decline.

"I am not doing this for any personal gains. Indeed, I am not doing this for any man. I am being propelled by the Spirit of God in me. About a month ago, God told me clearly that I had abandoned the mission of unification of the Celestial Church of Christ in preference for rank and title, which He didn't approve for me."

"I woke up a renewed person. Left to me, I probably would have continued to wear the robes of Deputy Pastor, but if God has instructed me to take those robes off, then I can't join the fray and declare myself pastor or allow some people push me into it. No, I won't take such a thing. I just want to see our great church united again," he said.

Well, it all sounds good, but just as I warned Pastor Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God – to ensure he handpicks his successor in his lifetime otherwise RCCG will experience worse breakup than the C & S and Celestial Church – I also must sensitise the emerging unification movement in the CCC.

The two surviving original trustees of the church, octogenarian Pa Josiah Kayode Owodunni and septuagenarian Samson Olatunde Banjo, must move fast to bury their egos and reunite the church while they are still alive, so they can forestall further disintegration of the church. For decades, both of them, like the four other original trustees (all dead), have

apparently paid only self-serving lip service to the idea of unification since the demise of Oshoffa. They can right their wrongs now!

Disrobing and renouncing titles is a huge and praise-worthy sacrifice from one man, but no single tree can make a forest. To bring together all the mushrooming pockets of unification efforts in the church is good, but it must be done in ways that encourage other powerbrokers of the church to embrace unification as their own, not as Oshodi's or indeed some other icon's.

But beyond disrobing and renouncing titles, what the Celestial Church needs is a comprehensive constitutional review and rebranding (or image re-engineering). The numerous media reports about prophets and prophetesses of the church calling some people witches and burning their hands or shepherds confiscating other people's wives, etc are rife and these paint a church black in the sight of right thinking persons.

Again, when the Supreme Church disrobed one of the church's erstwhile pastors, Rev. Abiodun Bada, in 2000 and told him not to parade himself as pastor any longer, it also told the church to review its constitution and make it a proper document on certain fundamental issues like succession.

In addition to that, the church needs to review a constitutional provision called 'Pastor's Share' which converts almost all the wealth of the church into the personal possession of whoever is its pastor.

Anyone will kill and lie in God's name for such unfettered

riches and as long as that subsists, drama of the absurd will continue to play out on the Celestial stage as men damn all consequences to declare themselves pastor to also get their grubby fingers into the church till. Even an angel from heaven stands to be corrupted of 'killed' (ha, ha) if sent to rule such a church with poor accountability.

Enough for now, I wish Evangelist Oshodi and the Celestial Church well even as I join other right-thinking persons in looking forward to a conscientious rebranding of the church beyond lip service unification that was being practised before Oshodi happened on the scene with his laudable renunciation.

## New Pastor

A new pastor moved into town and went out one Saturday to visit his community. All went well until he came to one house. It was obvious that someone was home, but no one came to the door even after he knocked several times.

Finally, he took out his card, wrote on the back "Revelation 3:20" and stuck it in the door. The next day, as he was counting the offering, he found his card in the collection plate. Below his message was a notation "Genesis 3:10." Upon opening his Bible to the passage he let out a roar of laughter.

Revelation 3:20 (Pastors note) reads: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come into him, and will dine with him, and he with me."

Genesis 3:10 reads: "And he

said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked."

## Where Is God?

A couple had two little boys: aged eight and 10, who were excessively mischievous. They were always getting into trouble and their parents knew that any mischief occurred in their town, their sons were probably involved.

They boys' mother heard the a derygman in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The cleric agreed, but asked to see them individually. So the mother sent her eight-year-old first, in the morning, with the older boy to see the reverend gentleman in the afternoon.

The cleric, a huge man with a booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly: "Where is God?"

They boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response sitting there with his mouth hanging open, wide-eyed. So the reverend repeated the question in an even sterner tone: "Where is God?" Again the boy made no attempt to answer. So the derygman raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed: "Where is God?"

The boy screamed and bolted from the room, ran directly home and dove into his closet, slamming the door behind him. When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked: "What happened?"

The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied: "We are in big trouble this time, dude. God is missing – and they think we did it!"