

**APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH
WECA HQTRS, ANTHONY
MISSION DEPT.**

BENIN REPUBLIC 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Introduction

A delegation of five Brethren was sent to represent the WECA Headquarters at the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Gospel in the Republic of Benin. Brother Kayode Ajiboye led the team. Others are his wife, Sister Kikelomo Ajiboye, Sister Esther Ibikunle, Sister Adrienne Bolougbe, and the Driver, Brother David Eluwa.

According to the programme of events, the major activities were fixed for the week-end of 14th and 15th October, 2023. The days preceding, 9th to 13th October, were scheduled for special prayers for the Anniversary and the development of the gospel in Benin.

Background

The Apostolic Faith Church started in Benin Republic in 1948, brought there by late Brother Ben Abbey, an indigene of Togo. Around the time the Gospel started in Lagos, Nigeria, Brother Abbey was living in Lagos. It was there he came in contact with the Founders of the Church in Lagos. After praying through to his 3 Christian experiences, he decided to go back to his country. He tried to introduce the Gospel in Togo but his people refused to accept it. He then decided to relocate to Cotonou in Benin Republic, more so that his wife was a Beninoise.

The Gospel found ready hearts in Benin and has since grown by leaps and bounds. We now have 66 Branch Churches, with headquarters in Jericho, Cotonou.

The following Missionaries from Nigeria were sent to oversee the work in the Republic of Benin after the demise of Bro. Ben Abbey in 1967: Brothers Lucas Obakoya, Oluwatade Sokeye, Augustus Omole, Hector Elebute and Amos Adeoye. In 1997, Brother Marcelin Hounmenou, an indigene of Benin, was made the Country Overseer. After his demise in 2021 the present Country Overseer, Brother Marcelin Kploca took over.

Week-end Activities:

The delegation from WECA Headquarters arrived on Saturday, 14th October 2023. The major activities for that day were Evangelistic Outreach in the afternoon and in the evening, projection of a Documentary on the History of Apostolic Faith in Benin Republic. This took place in the Hqrts. Church at Jericho area. The delegation was able to attend the Film Projection. The Sunday activities took place on the Church Campgrounds at P.K.14, Djeffa, Porto Novo Road, Cotonou. Members from Cotonou and other Branch Churches in the Republic of Benin started arriving at the Campgrounds on Saturday evening, and by Sunday morning the whole place was full.

On Sunday, 15th October, 2023 by 7.30 am, Workers were already assembling in the Prayer Room. In the prayer room the Country Overseer introduced the team from WECA to the Workers. In response the team Leader delivered the message of the DS – Brother Isaac Adigun and made the Workers to know that even though the DS was physically absent he was with us in spirit and his goodwill message was adequately expressed. The same goodwill message was also delivered to the Congregation during the Devotional Service. The congratulatory message from Sister Rachel Fakorede was also read to the people and they were inspired.

The Sunday School session opened at 9.00 am with Congregational singing and distribution into classes. The review period opened with the Choir singing: “I will sing with a joyful heart”. After the Review, The Elementary Sunday School Children came to present their Anniversary Programme. They took the Congregation down memory lane on how the Gospel was founded in Benin, including the persecution of the founding members, who were arrested and taken to prison.

The Devotional service started with an instrumentation by the Orchestra, followed by “O Clap Your Hands All Ye People” by the Choir and “If God be For Us” rendered by selected voices. The Congregation sang joyfully a few verses each of four hymns chosen from “The Collected Gospel Songs (CGS)” The Bible Reading, chosen from Joel 2:21-27 was preceded by an Anthem from the Choir: “Rejoice in The Lord”. The Special Song by the Choir/Quartet was “Unto The Lord Be The Glory”.

The Sermon for this special occasion was delivered by Bro. Kayode Ajiboye who led the delegation from WECA Headquarters. The topic of the powerful sermon was: “The Faith of Our Fathers” introduced with Psalm 16: 6 & 7. An Heritage is not a visible thing. It is different from an inheritance. The Faith of our Fathers is

our Heritage, not the Church buildings, or other visible things. It includes the Sound Doctrines – Salvation, sanctification, Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and other Bible Doctrines.

The devotional and evangelistic presentation of the sermon drew many seekers to the altars of prayer and people prayed fervently. No doubt many souls were blessed. About 21 blessings were recorded.

There was a great number of people just like that of Camp Meeting time, and they all participated joyfully. The attendance for the Devotional Service was 5,409. There was really joy in the Camp. The Media was also in attendance and a News Bulletin on the Day's events was composed by them in the French Language.

Launching of The New Tabernacle Building Project

After the Devotional Service, there was a Lunch Break. Everyone who came was fed freely and people ate to their satisfaction. The Service for the Launching of The New Tabernacle Building Project was scheduled for 3.00pm. This was preceded by a 30 minutes Prayer Room session. After the prelude by the Choir, there was one Congregational song "Christ is Made The Sure Foundation" followed by the Congregational Prayer.

The Announcement brought in the Presentation of the Building Project which was projected on the screen. It is a beautiful Church edifice which raised prayers in the hearts of everyone for the quick realization of the Project.

The Bible Reading was from Haggai 2:7-9. The Special Song was followed by the special sermon titled: "God is Greater Than Man" taken from Job 33:12. The encouraging Bible verses used include 1 Chronicles 29: 7-13 and Numbers 11: 21, 27, 31. "Is the Lord's Hand waxed short?". This brought forth the Powerful Declaration of Blessings on God's people that, despite the Global Economic Recession, "From this day will I bless you" (Haggai 2:19). Then came the Closing Benediction given by Sister Esther Ibikunle before going to the site.

The filing out of the "Old Tabernacle" to the Foundation Corners site was done decently and in order. The Congregational song that led people out was "Stand Up, Stand Up to Build" adapted to the tune of Hymn 495 (CGS). The Congregation filed out joyously to the site and with determination to build.

In the opening remarks at the site the leading Minister, Bro. Ajiboye made people to understand that this was just a Ceremonial Foundation Laying to mark

the occasion as the Foundation proper is not yet dug. He poured cement in the First Corner, followed by the Country Overseer, Brother Marcelin Kploca, the Representative of the Francophone Regional Services in WECA, Sis Esther Ibikunle and an Elder and former member of the Board of Trustees, Brother Hounkpevi Raphael.

The Day's events were concluded on the site with a Closing Prayer at about 5.00 pm. Thereafter, people started going back home. The WECA delegation left for Lagos on Monday, 16th October, 2023 with a warm farewell from the Country Overseer and some members of the Welfare Committee. The delegation arrived safely in Lagos on Monday afternoon.

It was really a memorable occasion for all who participated and the prayer in the heart of everyone is for the quick realization of the Tabernacle Project.

Photos of launching of the New Tabernacle Building Project,
Campgrounds, P.K. 14 Djaffa, Cotonou, Republic of Benin.

