

**AN ADDRESS OF FELICITATION PRESENTED BY THE NATIONAL  
PRESIDENT OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH, NIGERIA, PASTOR  
S.E.IGWE, AT THE CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF THE APOSTOLIC  
CHURCH, NIGERIA, HELD ACROSS TERRITORIES IN NIGERIA  
FROM MONDAY 9<sup>th</sup> TO SUNDAY, 15<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2018.**

The National Vice President, TACN,  
All Territorial Chairmen, TACN,  
Members of the National Executive Council,  
Members of the National Council,  
All saints of The Apostolic Church, Nigeria.

**THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH NIGERIA AT HUNDRED: A REFLECTIVE  
MEMOIR FOR AGENDA SETTING.**

Our own Glorious Vision is one hundred years in Nigeria this year. It is dated from 1918-2018. We can only sing *'to God be the glory, great things He has done'*. On behalf of the National Executive Council, I congratulate all ministers, officers and members of The Apostolic Church Nigeria for witnessing this epoch making event. This address is to serve the triple purpose of felicitating with our church members, reflecting on our journey so far and as well setting agenda for the years ahead.

**Where we came from:** The Apostolic Church was founded by the Holy Spirit through the Acts of the Apostles. Historically, the church as a denominational name emerged as one of the earliest Classical Pentecostal denominations in Europe at Penygroes, South Wales, United Kingdom in 1916; as an aftermath of the 1904-1905 Welch Revival by Evans Roberts, with the Welch Pastor Daniel Powell Williams who is popularly acclaimed as the human founder of the church.

In 1918, the Holy Spirit began an indigenous Pentecostal Revival in South-Western Nigeria, among Africans and by Spirit-inspired African leaders without the physical presence of any European or American leader. This indigenous Pentecostal Revival ignited a nation-wide explosion in 1930, which spread like wild fire across Nigeria, with outpouring of the Holy Spirit, reminiscent of the Apostolic experience as recorded in Acts of the Apostles. As a result of persecution which ensued, characteristic of the early church, the leadership of the indigenous Pentecostal Group in Nigeria, previously called '*Precious Stone*' or '*Diamond Society*' but now affiliated with '*Faith Tabernacle Congregation*', sent a 'Macedonian Pentecostal call' to the authorities of The Apostolic Church in Great Britain through correspondence.

The response to that call by the authorities of The Apostolic Church in Great Britain led to the coming down of European missionaries to give helping hands to the African indigenous Pentecostal Body, which upon mutual agreement decided to adopt the name of the Classical Pentecostal denomination from Europe. According to Barret (1982), The Apostolic Church Nigeria, emerged as the first Classical Pentecostal denomination in Nigeria. This year the church is one hundred years old in Nigeria and it calls for a big celebration. Brethren, let us roll-out the drums, give praise from a grateful heart for the Lord has done great things to His church. He has kept His Word that He will build His church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail. These hundred years have been impactful though not without attendant challenges. Since these were the founding years of the church, there were issues of break-away that nearly threatened the corporate existence of the church but in all of these and other spiritual challenges the Lord stood by His church. The Apostolic Church is known for the Word, Prayers, Prophecy, Miracles, Healings,

Evangelism, Sound Doctrine and in-depth Teaching on Heaven consciousness dangers of hell.

**Where we are today:** The Apostolic Church Nigeria has made significant progress over these years. The church is standing tall as one of the leading Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria. Her strong doctrinal stance on practical Christian living of holiness, righteousness, salvation, and love has cut out an edge for the church in the midst of compromising Christian communities. The church's belief in the totality of the Scriptures without additions or subtraction has made her members enviable in the society. The Apostolic Church Nigeria is administered through six (6) Territories, Namely; LAGOS AND WESTERN/NORTHERN AREAS (LAWNA), CROSS RIVERS, IGBOLAND, MARITIME, AKWA IBOM and ANDONI. Each of the Territories is headed by a Territorial Chairman who governs the territory by the territorial Executive Council. Each territorial Chairman in council in turn reports to the National Executive Council headed by the National President.

The church has made significant progress on foreign missions. The church's missionary activities has led to the establishment of branches in Ghana, Benin Republic, Republic of Togo, Sierra-Leone, Cote D'Ivoire, South Africa, Uganda, Cameroun, Gabon, Canada, The United Kingdom, Tel-Aviv-Israel, and North America. Many of these missionary fields have long been given autonomy while a few others are still been managed by the various territories that established them. The growth level of The Apostolic Church in Nigeria is exponential (very fast). For example, between the year 2013 and 2017 the number of Areas in The Apostolic Church Nigeria jumped from 260 to 339 across the nation. The church is marching on. Praise the Lord!!!

**Where we hope to be soon:** In Philippians 3: 13-14 the Apostle Paul said, *‘Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ’*. Nearly all of us who are alive today will not be alive to celebrate the second one hundred years of this church, if Christ tarries. The question bothering my mind is what shall become of The Apostolic Church Nigeria when we are all gone to be with the Lord? The steps we take today alongside this celebration will determine the answers to that question. Therefore, I challenge every minister, officer and member of the Church to reflect on the following issues for the future of the church:

**Youth Emancipation:** We have repeatedly observed that a society without an active youth (church inclusive) is doomed for extinction. As we step into another century, I appeal to our church leaders to give the youths a chance. Do not see them as threats but as assets. Kindly embrace and encourage them. I have since directed that Apostolic Youth Movement be established in those territories were they are not, in line with the Church Constitution and in the spirit of continuity in the Vision.

**Aggressive Evangelism:** The Great Commission remains the mandate of this church. The years ahead of us should be years of aggressive evangelism and soul winning. In line with this objective we shall be at Uyo, Akwa Ibom State from 10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 for a City-Wide Crusade. Plans are in top gear to make that outdoor crusade a huge success. We covet your daily prayers and support in any way possible. Furthermore, all Territories, Fields and Areas are hereby directed to aggressively pursue evangelization of their communities for the Lord. Let us take up the banner of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the world and preach Christ

to the unsaved, wherever they are. This is the heartbeat of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Church Planting/Growth:** As we evangelize the world, we should plant churches. I have directed that every Area across the nation should plant at least an Assembly (church) in a year. When this is done in five years, you can imagine how far we would have covered in growing the church and evangelizing our nation.

**Information Management:** Information management is key to the growth of an organization. In the years ahead, we desire an Apostolic Church that speaks; a church that is media friendly. The media is a strong tool for evangelism so we encourage our church leaders to involve the media despite the cost. Again, I implore our leaders to reduce the growing communication gap in the church. We should also avoid hasty approach to programmes. Events should be well thought-out through planning before execution. Finally, it is important to inform you that the church is already working on hosting an active Website, where information will be accessed by everyone at the click of a button, in addition to official circulars. Let us all grow proportionately to the trend of the time.

**Unification of the Church:** In His priestly intercessory prayers Jesus Christ prayed for the oneness of the church. The unity and unification of the church is not negotiable, therefore, no church leader should behave in a manner that would inhibit the peace and unity been enjoyed in The Apostolic Church Nigeria. This goal of achieving unity in the church must be pursued vigorously in the years ahead. Therefore, in the spirit of this celebration, I hereby extend a hand of fellowship to all splinter groups of the church, to come back and we will happily receive them back home. In that same vein, all aggressive sects within the church should go back to their territories and make peace.

**Caring Christian Fellowship:** One major reason why the church has lost membership over the years is lack of care for members. The Apostolic Church should be seen as a home for all without any feeling of tribal superiority over others by any group. I hereby call on the leaders of our church to look after the spiritual, physical, material, and emotional welfare of members. That is what we are called to do. Let brotherly love continue.

**Avoidance of Dogmatism:** Finally, I appeal that in the unfolding years, dogmatism should not replace our sound doctrine. Rather all church leaders should deeply meditate on Paul's charge to Timothy in 2Timothy 2:15, *'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth'*. Knowledge of the Word of God will certainly free us from dogmatic tendencies. Once more, I congratulate all saints of The Apostolic Church, Nigeria. I pray that this Vision will continue to flourish and our children will celebrate another hundred years of it in Jesus Name. Long live the Glorious Vision of The Apostolic Church, happy centenary celebration.