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# THE CELESTIAL CHURCH OF CHRIST TENETS

Lecture Delivered by Rev. A. A. Bada, Supreme Head, Celestial Church of Christ Worldwide at Celestial Church of Christ National Headquarters, Makoko, Lagos Under the Auspices of the Bible Class on 4th April, 1987.

It gives me a great pleasure to be here today to share with you what I know and I find necessary for you to know to enable you to share it with fellow Celestians so that a good knowledge of what we have and hold tenaciously to the tenets of Celestial Church of Christ may make us stand firm in the face of wrong perverted teachings which abound around us. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make thee free".

## **PREAMBLES:**

Celestial Church of Christ tenets may mean many things to many People. To me, the tenets are divine in origin and grounded in the scriptures. Tenets: it should be noted are not peculiar to Celestial Church of Christ but when one practices what is not Pedestals, one is open to suspicion and even, attack from other groups. It may be necessary at this juncture to find a simpler meaning of expression of tenets. Tenets, according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English means: Principle; belief; doctrine. And if we break one of the above definitions, doctrine, into smaller words, we have the following also in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary Of Current English: Body of teaching; belief and teachings of a church, political party, school of scientists. I say therefore, that what I do know about the beliefs and teachings of Celestial Church of Christ and want to share with you is that not only did the Celestial Church of Christ tenets come through divine revelations to our beloved Saint S.B.J. Oshoffa, the Prophet, Pastor, and founder of the Church, but also have their basis in the Bible. In short, the Celestial Church of Christ tenets are mostly part of God's statutes given to our forebears with

the definitive term that they should be kept from generation to generation.

It is lack of understanding of the scriptures that make many people think that Celestial Church of Christ tenets are either peculiar or the thoughts of a clever mind, or even the rationalization of a philosopher-religionist. Our beloved Pastor, Founder, my father in Christ, saint S.B.J. Oshoffa was but a carpenter whom it pleased God Almighty to elect for the establishment of Celestial Church of Christ with tenets divinely dictated, So far for the preamble.

## **TENETS:**

My term of reference - Celestial Church of Christ tenets - has a very wide scope which I am afraid cannot be adequately covered within the period of a lecture of this nature. I shall endeavor in this lecture to highlight only the salient ones that are easily misconstrued.

### **1. ADMISSION into membership of Celestial Church of Christ:**

There are no preconditions for admitting any willing person into the membership of Celestial Church of Christ. However some steps need be taken to ensure a clean break between the old and the new system of life. Our Lord said to Nicodemus in John 3:3-5, "No one can

enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit". There are three vital step: Sanctification, baptism, anointment.

**(a) i. Sanctification:**

Sanctification is the first rite a prospective member of the Church should undergo. Sanctification in Celestial Church of Christ falls into three categories. The first one is for new members to remove their filth and stain of darkness in consonance, with the words of God in Ezekiel 36:25-30, 11:17-20; Exod. 19:10-22; Lev. 10:3. As Adam was driven out of Eden, because of sin, there was also the restoration of the second Adam through Sanctification into new Jerusalem in Christ Jesus. Hence the hymn given to Celestial Church of Christ, a hymn of invitation to a rebirth: 'Jesu lo npe o tantan, ma bo, else wa' etc.

After sanctification the new member is numbered among the children of promise in the new faith in Christ Jesus. Materials used for sanctification are spirit-in-word, water, and fire.

In this first case, the following are needed: water, sponge, soap and a stick of candle which when lit is symbolic of the spirit of God like tongue of fire which descended on the first apostles to sanctify them on the day of Pentecost - Act. 2:1-4. Following immediately the sanctification of a member is the sanctification of the person's place of abode. A clean man remains clean if he resides in a clean

environment; a clean man in a filthy environment is unclean since man is a product of his environment. Acts 19:18-19 supports the essence of ridding a house of all acts that are not related to the spirit of God whenever one starts a new life in Christ Jesus.

## **ii. Purification:**

The second category of sanctification practiced in Celestial Church of Christ is the purification exercise that a woman undergoes after her monthly period, and after giving birth to a child. This is very important and God does not take it lightly. Lev. 12, Lev. 15:16-18; 15:19-24; 29-30. Many people discountenance it but Christ established it beyond reasonable doubt: Mark 5:25-34. The weight of the impurity was so much felt by Jesus Christ that he could not resist asking who touched him. The Apostles-also warned the Antioch converts to steer clear of 'blood' Acts 15:29.

## **iii. Consecration:**

The third category of sanctification is consecration into priesthood as it is explained in Exod. 40:12-15. It should be noted that in Celestial

Church of Christ, candle is used to replace lamb, goat, sheep prescribed in the scriptures Prov. 20:27.

### **b. Baptism**

A prospective member may be presented for the rite of baptism only after he has participated in the worship and adhered to the rules of the church for 12 months Acts 11:26. That length of time is for the person to examine the doctrine and the mode of worship thoroughly before taking the plunge. Baptism therefore is the first rite performed to admit formally a worshiper into full membership of the church after which such a member becomes spiritually equipped and elevated to partake of holy communion and join other members of the church in spiritual works according to the prompting of the holy spirit. Baptism in Celestial Church of Christ follows the immersion pattern, the type which Christ our Lord underwent in Jordan through the hand of John the Baptist - Matt. 3:13-17.

### **c. Anointment:**

A member is not considered ripe for the rite of anointment in Celestial Church of Christ until such a person has steadily worshipped in the Church for three years, two years after baptism. Exod. 30:30-33. By the time a member is being presented for anointment, there should be adequate evidence that such a person is a committed

Christian worshipping in Celestial Church of Christ. Saul otherwise known as the Apostle Paul was for several years referred to as "Brother" until he and Barnabas were formally commissioned to proceed on a missionary journey - Acts 9:17; 13:15.



## 2. FESTIVALS:

In consonance with one of the statutes of God to mankind Exod. 23:14, Celestial Church of Christ tenet gives prominence to three festivals: Christmas, (the birth of Christ at the end of the year); Easter (Palm Sunday, passion week featuring washing of feet, holy communion: and Christ's resurrection); and Harvest.

### i. Christmas:

God in his infinite mercy is ever looking for ways of reconciling man to himself. It was on this mission of reconciliation that Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God volunteered to go. Christ took it upon himself, put his glory in heaven aside and came, into the world to save mankind. And when He came, He became the chief priest and king. No wonder the rite of anointment coincides with Christmas festivities and more precisely falls on December 25th every year, the day which is throughout Christendom universally accepted as the day on which Christ was born. For by anointment, in Jesus Christ, a member of Celestial Church of Christ is made a priest unto the Lord and a king to reign over the earth. Rev. 5:9-10.

The world Congregation of Celestial Church of Christ assembles annually on 24 December at an appointed place as directed by the Lord Himself through our Pastor and founder, Saint S.B.J. Oshoffa to

celebrate. It is an event in Celestial Church of Christ which every committed member looks forward to with fervor.

## ii. Easter:

To Celestians, this is celebrated in remembrance of the Exodus, the time of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage as it is also the time the deliverance of God comes through our Lord Jesus Christ to humanity. Exodus 13:1-4; 34:18. The significance is that the Passion Week marks the time when the only begotten son of God surrendered his life atonement for the sins of the world. (Jesus Christ is often referred to as the firstborn of the father) Heb. 1:6. The Passion Week (Palm Sunday night to Holy Saturday) is an eventful week for all Celestians, the only week when it is statutory for Celestians to fast. On Palm Sunday, Christendom proclaims the kingship of Jesus Christ. This is otherwise known as the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem Zech. 9:9-10; Lk. 19:32-38; Matt. 21:5-9; Mk. 11:1-10; John 12:12-15. One of the events - washing of feet takes place on Holy Thursday.

The rite of washing of feet in Celestial Church of Christ has a great significance. By the rite, it is believed that the eternal curse Gen. 3:15 on the descendants of Adam is removed, John 13:8. All the signs

of the curse should be washed off before one can enter the Kingdom of God.

Here is the story of one Senior Elder Olowoloba a member of Celestial Church of Christ at Arepo Village in the sixties. For about three years consecutively, he and the entire parish missed the service of washing of feet. He became seriously ill to the point of death. In a state of comma he saw a very long white ship into which Celestians were filing. He hurriedly put on his sutana and ran to the ship only to discover that there was a roll call. At the end of the roll call, he did not hear his name. He moved near and protested since he too was a Celestian. He was asked to show a sign that he was truly a Celestian. They looked thoroughly at his feet and saw no mark; he was then asked to run back to Makoko, get his feet washed before he could qualify to enter the ship. When he came round, he gathered himself up and with all his family and the church members came to Makoko where the service of washing of feet was coincidentally in progress. He narrated his experience, washed his feet, and all the members of his family and members washed their feet too. Eventually he got well soon after; but he died the same year.

A full service and administration of Holy Communion follow washing of feet on Holy Thursday evening. Mark 14:22-26; Lk. 22:14-20; 1 Corin. 11:23-32. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "Blessed are ye if know

these things and do them" John 13:17. Again he said, "This do in remembrance of me "Lk. 22:19. It has become statutory in Celestial Church of Christ worldwide to administer Holy Communion on quarterly basis - three monthly exercises.

### **HARVEST:**

God ordained the feast of harvest. In obeying this statute of God and to enhance the fulfillment of God's design for his children, all Celestians - children and adults - observe the festival of harvest as it is recorded in Exod. 23:16. There are, year in year out, evidences, and testimonies abound that the observance of this festival brings in its trail the blessing enumerated in Exod. 23:25-30.

### **3. WORSHIP:**

Worship is given a prime of place in the doctrine of Celestial Church of Christ. "Then the Lord said Unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh and tell him, Thus said the Lord God of the Hebrews, let my people go, that they may serve/worship me" Exod. 9:1. It is important to note that what God primarily demands from his people and from generation to generation is "serve/worship the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might." "And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread etc". Exod. 23:25. The service or worship of God is a strong deciding factor to show who belongs to

him and who do not. Malachi 3:14:18. The prime of place given worship in Celestial Church of Christ is reflected both in its frequency, mode, and intensity. It is right to say that we observe three-hourly time of prayer 6 a.m., 9am., 12 noon, 3 p.m., 6 p.m., 9 p.m., 12 midnight (psalm 119:164).

Daily - 5.30 am. Morning devotion; 9 p.m. Evening devotion.

Wednesday - 9 am. - Special service for barren women and those who seek job. 6 pm. - Worship

Friday - 12 noon 3 pm. special service for prophets, dreamers et 3 pm. special service for pregnant women 6 p.m. worship.

Sunday 10 am. - Worship; 6 pm. - Worship.

First Thursday of the month - 12 midnight - New Noon Service Ezekiel 46:1-6.

The new moon service is as important as the Sunday worship. It is a service that is loaded with meaningful action of reverence and adoration. The shepherd and the whole congregation in unison lift up their hand (acknowledging the sovereignty of God), then bow down, and finally kneel down with face to the ground, the forehead touching the ground. Nehemiah 8:6. The worship is conducted in

absolute lowliness before God. There is no sitting on chairs or benches. There is intense use of incense and perfume.

And, at other services, our act of worship is in kneeling with face to the ground touching the ground with our forehead when the bell tolls three times and we chorus in unison, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts" Isaiah 6:3; Rev. 4:8.

NOTE:

For Wednesday 9 am. Special service for barren women, participants would have one candle, one bottle of water, three different types of fruits like pawpaw, orange, mango, banana, coconut etc. After a short service they are placed before the Lord with fruits, bottle of water and the lit candle placed a little distance from the head and covered with alter cloth and sanctified water is sprinkled on them. When each of them wakes up, she takes and eats one type of fruit and the bottle of water.

For Friday 12 noon - 3 p.m. special service for prophets, dreamers and those seeking the power of the holy spirit, participants would have one candle and a bottle of water. After the service, they are placed before the Lord and covered with alter cloth. They take their water when they wake up.

For Friday 3 p.m. Spiritual prenatal clinic for pregnant women, participants would have one candle and a bottle of water. After service and prayer for safe delivery, they are placed before the Lord and covered with altar cloth. They take their water when they wake up.

It will be reasonable and useful to direct our attention to the following aspects relating to our worship:

- i. Falling on our faces, worshipping God - Rev. 14:6; II Chron. 20:18; Exod. 34:6-8; Matt. 26:39; Rev. 7:11; Rev. 11:16; 4:10.
- ii. Gates of our church open continually - Isaiah 60:11-12; Rev. 7:15.
- iii. Altar lamp burns continually - Lev. 24:1-2; Exod. 27:20
- iv. Candlestick (seven pronged) - Exod.25:31-37; Heb.9:2 Rev. 1:12; 4:5
- v. Table of the Altar - Exod. 25:23; Heb.9:1-3
- vi. Communion box - Heb. 9:4
- vii. Burning of incense Rev. 8:1-4; Mark 16:1 Lk. 1:9-10; Lk.23: 55-56; Matt 2:11; Exod. 30:34-38.
- ii. Use of sanctified oil - James 5:14-15; Mark 6:13
- ix. Walking barefoot and not wearing cap in the Church - Exod. 3:4-6; Rev. 1:14; 1:15
- x. Loins (Girdle) - Acts 12:8; John 13:4-5; Jer. 1:17

xi. White Garment - Matt. 28:2-3; Rev. 6:9-11

xii. Garment for worshippers and priests - Exod. 39:22-29.

From the above, it can be concluded that most of our practices which relate to our worship in Celestial Church of Christ are dictated from the Lord as directly in the Bible. And John in Rev. 1:1-3 did not mince words that he was given the revelation in order to show God's chosen people what must happen very soon. Christ made these things known to John by sending his angel to him and he had told all that he had seen. "Happy are those who obey what is written in this Book": i.e. the book of Revelation. It is evident that Celestial Church of Christ is the fulfillment of the vision of John in the scene described in Rev. 7:9-17.

#### **4. RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS:**

Our religious obligations in our church are many and varied. The principal ones which God does not play with are thanks offering, and tithes.

Thanks offering and tithes take a prominent place in our worship in Celestial Church of Christ. The significance of these in our life is well explained in Malachi 3:6-12. Doing it is blessings and not doing it is curse. Psalm 100:1-5 relates the message loud and clear. It is the bounding duty of those who are saved to "serve the Lord in gladness"



and "come to his presence with singing". It is appropriate to enter His gates with thanksgiving to acknowledge "that the Lord, He is God; it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves".

Of equal importance are alms and freewill offering which is popularly known as collections 1 Corin. 16:1-3. These are sacrifices that are lifted up for blessings. It is from part of those four types of offerings: thanks offering, tithes, alms, and freewill offering called collections that the workers receive their stipend.

## **5. ORDINANCES:**

In Celestial Church of Christ, all the laws given to Moses and the prophets are strictly adhered to. Malachi 4:4; Exod. 20:1-20 Matt. 5:17-20. Since repetition is a fixing device, the mosaic laws and Celestial Church of Christ ordinances are brought into announcements every worship day. Our ordinances are categorized for ease of reference viz Food, Drink, Morality, Discipline, and Ritual Cleanliness.

## Food:

It is forbidden in Celestial Church of Christ to eat Pork; Crawling animals like snake, snail, and species of fish that have no scale. Eating blood is also forbidden Lev. 3:17; Gen.9:4-5; Deut. 12:15-16; 23-25.

## Drinks:

It is forbidden in Celestial Church of Christ to take alcohol or wine Lk. 1:15; Number 6:1-4. It is also forbidden to smoke cigarette or snuff tobacco.

## Morality

Adultery or fornication in any form is totally forbidden. It is forbidden for a man to hug a woman or stay too close chest to chest to a woman 1 Corin. 7:1-2; Rev. 21:8.

## Discipline:

It is forbidden in Celestial Church of Christ

1. For women to leave their head uncovered I Corin. 11:5-6; 10
2. For men and women to wear transparent dress or use transparent material to sew their sutana;

3. For women to mount the pulpit to deliver sermon or lead congregational worships 1 Tim. 2:11-12;
4. For women to adorn their lips or nails (foot or finger) 1 Peter 3; 1 Tim. 2;
5. For men to allow their hair to be too long 1 Corin. 11:14; for male and female members to sit side by side in the temple of God;
6. For members to merry-go-round at night.

### RITUAL CLEANLINESS:

It is forbidden in Celestial Church of Christ

1. To carry a corpse into the temple of God;
2. To bury the dead close to the temple;
3. For women in their monthly period for the first seven days to move near the temple or touch any holy thing
4. For women after giving birth to children to enter the temple until the time of her purification 40 days after child birth;
5. To eat anything offered to idols.

There are a few general ones. Members of Celestial Church of Christ are forbidden to wear anything red or black either as underwear or as dresses.

## 6. SOCIALS:

There are a few vital things that can pass for tenets in our marriage and child-christening ceremonies.

### Marriage:

The aspect I want to highlight in our marriage ceremony is that which shows the union not only of the bride and bridegroom but also of the two families - the families of the bride and that of the bridegroom - consummated under the spirit of God. The parents of the bride will hold the hand of their daughter and place it in the hands of the parents of the bridegroom giving their daughter not directly to the bridegroom but to the parents of the bridegroom to be adopted as their own daughter. The parents of the bridegroom will then take the hands of both the bride (their daughter-in-law) and the bridegroom (their son) together and give to the elders of the church who then deliver the hands to the officiating minister for solemnization of matrimony. Held within three pillars - the families of the bride, the families of the bridegroom, and the church elders - the wedlock stands a great chance of lasting.

## Child Christening:

On the eighth day, every child born into a Celestian home is christened. For this ceremony the following are needed: seven types of fruits, candles (2 packets), incense, honey, salt, sugar, and water. Seven of the candles, lit, will be in a bowl of water, which will be placed in front of the prophet who carries the child. At the entrance of the temple, the child will be sanctified by the shepherd and the prophet carrying the child with six other members of the congregation will usher the child into the temple dancing. One of the sidemen will carry the bowl in which seven candles are stuck out of which three are lit while another sideman will be burning incense to lead the child into the temple. In the process of the service, the spirit of God will descend on the prophet carrying the child to give the child a name. The name given to our Lord came from an angel before he was conceived Luke 2:21.

After sermon and collection, seven elders of the church, four men and three women, will stand round the child who is carried by the prophet. The name given through the holy spirit will be read out after which water, salt, and honey shall be put into the child's mouth with words of blessing from the Leader. This is followed by the reading of Deut. 28:1-14 and prayer from the seven elders. When the service is ended after thanksgiving, the congregation will dance

round the child, giving him gifts and taking part of the honey, salt, sugar, and fruits.

At the end of the ceremony in the temple, the child is led into the waiting arm of his mother outside the church just as he was led into the temple.

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