

## AFRICA IN AMERICA



### Migrant on Temporary Visa Starts Church in the Americas

A lot has been said about the Reverend Dr Abraham Oyedeji. He was a successful Nigerian professional who was also a successful American, and who turned no-one away.

Pictures of Dr Oyedeji and his friends and flock were taken by *MJoTA* Publisher in Christ Apostolic Church functions in Brooklyn, Philadelphia and Queens, during the Manhattan parade celebrating Nigerian's 50 years of independence in October 2010, and during the days of funerary rites for Dr Oyedeji in May 2011. Left, *MJoTA* publisher at CAC Philadelphia in 2007; below, *MJoTA* Publisher and CAC Philadelphia ladies on Mother's Day, 2011, a week after all traveled to New York for the funeral of Dr Oyedeji, who was superintendent of CAC Philadelphia.



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The first essay was written by a woman Muslim leader (pictured on the next page) who became very close to Dr Oyedeji in the years before his death. She delivered these remarks in a eulogy on the 2nd of the 3 days of funerary rites.

The second essay was written by *MJoTA* Publisher (pictured at the First in the Americas Christ Apostolic Church 2010 summer picnic) who took photographs on 2 of the 3 days of funerary rites in Brooklyn after Dr Oyedeji's death in March 2011.

*MJoTA* publisher was not permitted to photograph inside the church during the services in the AME Cathedral in Queens on Day 3.

### EULOGY BY A MUSLIM WOMAN



*(Comments delivered on Day 2 of funerary rites in Queens, New York City on Wednesday May 4, 2011)*

The Rev Dr Abraham Abegoke Iyanda Oyedeji pulled me into his spiritual family on a winter night in early 2007 when as a classmate of Rev Dr Gbenga, 2-Judge Diaz and I made a site visit to Christ Apostolic Church, First in the Americas on Cortelyou Avenue, off Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, New York City.

I run the Muslim Womens Institute for Research and Development. From that meeting I as well as my organization have been in the full embrace of Daddy and of you, his congregation.

Daddy and Dr Gbenga came to visit me at my other place, at The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture where I serve as an Archival Librarian. There we discussed the possibility of him donating his papers to the Schomburg Center as well as the records of the congregation and the denomination.

One quick story: From our first meeting Daddy

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always placed me in his family (as did Dr Gbenga my classmate in the pilot of the New York Theological and Auburn Seminary – Muti-faith Doctor of Ministry Program) in the lineage of his brother who served as Chief Justice in Nigeria and senior Imam at times leading pilgrims to hajj from Nigeria so in honor of the relationship and as member of this family

I say As Salaam Alaikum to you Daddy. May you be granted ease from the challenges of the grave. There is significance for me to be addressing the community on this the 40th day since your passing.

I pray that your grave and tomb be transformed into a rose garden and you be granted entry into the gardens of paradise.

*By Chaplain Nurah-Rosalie Amat'ullah, D.Min*

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**Below and next page, scenes from the 2010 Nigerian Independence Day Parade in Manhattan, New York City. Previous page, scenes from 2010 summer picnic of Christ Apostolic Church 1st in the Americas. Front page, top, scenes from Ambassadors for Christ Thanksgiving in May 2010. Below second from left, Ambassador from Nigeria to UN, third from left, former mayor of New York. Below right, Muslim family.**



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### WONDERFUL SEND OFF TO A GREAT MAN: PASTOR DR ABRAHAM OYEDEJI

My brothers and sisters,

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the huge numbers of people that Pastor Oyedeji touched had the opportunity to say goodbye to his physical body, and on Thursday [May 5, 2011], we came together to rejoice his life at the Allen AME Cathedral in Queens.

I first walked into a CAC church with my eldest son in Philadelphia in 2006, and was immediately welcomed by Pastor Festus, the elders and the women's group. I was a member of that congregation for the next 18 months, and during that time I met our Superintendent, Pastor Oyedeji. The first time I saw Daddy he was dancing down the aisle, I had heard he was an old man, but concluded when I saw him dancing that he was not old, he just had white hair.

I knew when I first met Daddy that I was in the presence of a great man, a good man, a kind man, a pastor who took seriously his mission of ministering to the body and soul.

Today, I was so excited to hear Pastor Agbeja speak, he is Secretary of CAC North America, and pastor of the Hyattsville Church of Praise, in Maryland. Pastor Agbeja and Pastor Yomi Ademawagun laid their hands on me and prayed for the success of Medical Journal of Therapeutics Africa the first time I went to CAC Church of Praise in Maryland. Pastor Agbeja and Pastor Ademawagun were cut from the same cloth as Pastor Oyedeji. Daddy is dead, but he left worthy successors.

During the Cathedral service today, pictures were projected showing Daddy at different times, in different places. Twice Daddy was beaming next to his good friend and protegee, Princess Tosin Mustapha. So lovely to see his blessing on her.

Praise the Lord for such a good man who lived an exemplary life. May Daddy rest in perfect peace, and personally, I would like to thank him for the good works he did that paved the way for the work I do.

Note added in press: as I was preparing this article, I discovered I had photographed Pastor Oyedeji several times, and that in each photograph, he gave me his undivided attention and a beautiful smile. He truly understood inclusion. He was aware that not all of his flock were well behaved, but he turned away no-one. He understood to his DNA that communication was the key to human relationships.

*by Susanna J Dodgson BSc(Hons), PhD*

*Publisher of MJoTA*

