

# *Hunger And Thirst After Righteousness*

•

*“Thy Word  
&  
Truth”*

•

## **The Apostolic Faith**

*N. W. Sixth & Burnside  
Portland, Oregon 97209  
U.S.A.*

## **HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS**

I praise God in the name of Jesus Christ. I am glad that I am privileged to testify about how the Lord brought me into this glorious Gospel where I had the salvation of my soul.

Before I came to this church, I had gone very deep in sin. The more I struggled to do good the more I was a victim to sin. In my former church I made much effort to behave like a Christian ought to but it was just not possible.

According to the tradition in my place my parents usually made sacrifices on my behalf because I was their only child. When I became a little bit enlightened through the Word of God I resisted these incessant offerings and sacrifices because I had got enough faith to believe that God could heal and protect me. I remember when I was

young, one Sunday school teacher told us in class that the sacrifices which our parents made on our behalf was the source of the trouble we usually had and that if a stop was not put to it our life span might be shortened. When I told my parents, they were terrified. My father told my mother, "If you do not want us to lose the only child, it was high time we stopped these repeated sacrifices. "Sometime when I had a slight headache, my mother would come to ask me quietly if I would allow her to offer something as sacrifice on my behalf. My answer used to be, "If you try it, I shall die, and you will regret it." Since that time my mother did not make any sacrificial offering on my behalf again. My sickness at short intervals stopped. I gained strength and my health improved. It was not long when my parents started to attend my church.

One day a relation of mine came back home from Ikot Ekpene market with two Apostolic Faith tracts entitled “How to become a follower of Jesus Christ.” I asked her to give me one of the tracts and she did. I did not read the tract then but kept it for the next two years.

In 1937 I began to read the small tract and the more I read it the more I enjoyed it. The day I got that tract I did not imagine that it would bring as much blessing to my life as I do enjoy today. I was reading that tract time and again, on some occasions with tears. I was thirsty for the grace of salvation I read about in the paper. I wanted to be free from sin and the devil but I did not know how. I began to hate the vices and other malpractices that were rampant in my former church. I knew that most of our activities were opposed to the Bible principles. As I tried to point out some of these things the church members and the leaders

frowned at me. I was no more of the same mind with them. After some time I informed the elders that I wanted to organize cottage meetings which would be open to as many as were interested in the light of God's Word on salvation from sin. Three people joined me immediately. What I was teaching was that people should repent of their sins so Jesus might save them. Shortly I was alleged of introducing heresy into the church with a view to causing a division and that I would soon be arrested unless I was careful. One day policemen and some civil servants came to the town with a written warning that any one who preached the doctrines of another denomination in the area would be made to pay a fine of five pounds. I was not moved by the threat at all. We continued to hold our meetings regularly. In 1940, we put up a small building which we used as prayer house.

An elderly gentleman from one of the churches in my place came to ask me one day what name I would call our church when the building was completed. I told him that the church would be called "Apostolic Faith" because I love the doctrines of the organization. That man tried to convince me to change my decision. He gave me some reasons why he felt it was not expedient to affiliate with that Mission. He told me to consider the following points: the first was that I had few followers. The second was that adhering strictly to God's Word like the Apostolic Faith was noted for would hinder many prospective members from joining us. The third was that the headquarters of the church in Portland Oregon in America was not used to sending out their missionaries to evangelize foreign countries. That being so, according to him, we would not be able to succeed single-handedly. In conclusion he said, "I want you

to realize that there are popular churches in this town and you will derive many benefits if you join any one of them.” I told the gentleman that I understood all the points he had made, but that I had resolved to go the Apostolic Faith way and nothing could change that resolution. Having said that much, the man left to continue with his own church. It was not quite long after that he came back to worship with us.

I wrote the first, second and the third letter to the headquarters of the Apostolic Faith in Portland. I got a reply to my third letter with a parcel of Gospel tracts. It was at that time we wrote the name of the Apostolic Faith in front of our small building for identification. But that time the elderly man who came to join us was made the leader. Later we wrote to our headquarters asking for someone who could perform the ordinances of Water Baptism and the Lord’s Supper for us. We

got instructions to invite one Mr. Honsu Stephen, who came to teach us some of the doctrines of the Apostolic Faith. He advised us also to stop the practice of clapping and dancing during the service. He said he wanted to appoint a leader in the group. We consented and presented our leader to him. He rejected the gentleman on the grounds that he was living in adultery. We presented yet another member who was also rejected. Later he informed us that he had found somebody and he mentioned my name. It was a surprise to me and I disagreed with the suggestion. My reasons were that I was a young man who lacked the necessary experience for leadership, and I was a semi-illiterate but all the members supported his choice and I had to accept the leadership with tears running down my cheeks. It was not long before the overseer who appointed me to lead the church left us.

At a stage we received information from the mother church in Portland Oregon that Reverend Timothy Oshokoya was coming to us on a visit. Soon after that information he arrived and gave us words of exhortation. Any time I remembered how low our standard with respect to sound doctrine was at the time Brother Oshokoya paid that visit to us I felt ashamed. I observed that the contents of Brother Oshokoya's letter to me before his visit were not different from the teachings in the tracts which I received from America. I became absolutely convinced that the real Biblical Truth had been presented to us unlike what obtained in my former church. There we were taught to shake the body while we prayed and believe that we were under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It was when I got saved that I fully realized that I had been lost in false teachings.

When Brother Oshokoya returned from America in 1951, he invited me to the annual campmeeting convention in Lagos. I was very happy when I stepped into the church for the first time ever. After the sermon I went to the altar of prayer where I nearly quarreled with a worker who was helping me in prayer. I thought he just meant to confuse me. I reported the man to Brother Oshokoya, the Africa Overseer who patiently advised me to continue to pray fervently and not to bother myself about the altar worker. That brother was sincere and daily he wanted to assist me to pray through to victory. I told him it was a pity he could not know who I was. I declared that I had been saved, that I was a minister of a whole church and I was administering the Lord's Supper to people. One day I pretended to be absorbed in a long session of prayer. I was the last man on the altar of prayer. When I rose my helper asked how it

was with me. I wondered whether he did not observe that I was the last person on the altar bench and maintained that that was enough evidence to all that I had been saved. I thank God that the brother did not leave me alone. The next day I prayed earnestly and God forgave my sins. In a couple of days I was sanctified and later baptized with the power of the Holy Ghost.

At the Campmeeting convention in 1951 I decided that getting back home I would teach my congregation all the doctrines which the Apostolic Faith held, and in case they did not accept these Bible truths I would quit. I began to emphasize in my teaching that everybody must be saved from sin. I sent down from the platform all the choir members, workers and the elders. I made it clear that any one who would be a worker for God must first be saved from sin. At the beginning of that exercise there was great opposition but soon

people began to pray their way through to the grace of salvation and the other Christian experiences. From the rank and file of this new set of God's children I selected new choristers and Gospel workers. Some of those who had been members before but who could not yet pray and have salvation came to say that they too should be reinstated but I told them that the requisite qualifications for a Gospel worker included having Christian experiences, and that any one who lacked those Christian experiences could not be appointed to any office in this church organisation. I thank God He had the victory.

By 1966 and 1967 with the Nigerian civil war, the congregation in Ikot Enwang was scattered to the countryside. My joy is that as bad as the situation was the grace of salvation was sustained in the hearts of my people in all their wanderings. In my movement from one place to another, I got

to Ndon Ebom. My people heard the news and came to me, and I made arrangement for their lodging in some branch churches. The civil war made many people conscious to their need of God. All the children of God were happy when they received money, food items and clothing materials that were sent from the Africa headquarters in Lagos. I thank God that He has brought me to the true old time faith.

*(Rev. Philip Inyang, Pioneer Leader of the Apostolic Faith churches in former Eastern Nigeria.*