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Ashimolowo Gives Succour To Widows In Ode Omu

From Tunji Omofoye, Osogbo

ODE-OMU, an ancient community in Osun State and hometown of Pastor Mathew Ashimolowo of Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC), Maryland, Lagos, stood still recently, in honour of the cleric, who buried his uncle and used the occasion to assist about 2,000 widows.

Dignitaries who attended the event held at the proposed site of the KICC University on Ode-Omu, Osogbo Road, showered encomiums on Ashimolowo for practicing Biblical injunctions by remembering the poor and needy in the society.

The roll call of eminent Nigerians who witnessed the funeral and poverty alleviation programme for the less privileged included, Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola of Osun State; the Minister for Youths and Development, Senator Olasunkanmi Akinlabi; former National Vice Chairman (Southwest) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Senator Yinka Omilani; the Secretary to Osun State Government (SSG), Alhaji Fatai Akinbade; General Evangelist of Christ Apostolic Church (Worldwide), Prophet Kayode Abiara; Pastor Femi Emmanuel; the Ogunsua of Modakeke, Oba Francis Adedoyin and several other ministers of God.

The widows comprising the aged, middle aged and the young were drawn from various compounds in Ode-Omu. They arrived the venue ahead the commencement of the programme scheduled to begin at 10a.m.

On arrival, at about 11.15a.m, Pastor Ashimolowo and wife, Pastor Yemisi Ashimolowo led Governor Oyinlola to inspect facilities constructed in readiness for the university project.

The governor, who was ostensibly impressed, urged indigenes of the state to emulate the enterprising spirit of the Ashimolowos. He said the state government needed the contributions of all stakeholders in order to move Osun State to the next level.

The spirits of the recipients brightened when it was announced that Governor Oyinlola would address them and also formally flag off the distribution of the materials and money. They rose in unison, danced and sang the praises of the governor.

Expectedly, the governor did not disappoint the widows. He acknowledged their gesture by dancing with them. Turned pastor, Oyinlola, in a short admonition, urged the widows to have faith in God whom he said was more able to assist them to face their challenges.

Congratulating the widows and thanking God for making it possible for them to witness the year 2010, he said he was happy to be associated with Pastor Ashimolowo and his projects. He said the proposed university was a remarkable and worthwhile venture that should be supported by all.

He urged the people of Ode-Omu to rally round the Ashimolowos in order to

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make the project a reality in no distant future.

Oyinlola, who reiterated the determination of his administration to lay a solid foundation for the development of the state, called on Osun indigenes home and abroad to come home and be involved in the task of state development.

Prophet Abiara, in a short message, recalled the close relationship Jesus Christ had with widows and the poor and urged the beneficiaries to look unto God for succour everyday.

He noted that Ashimolowo had followed the steps of Jesus Christ by taking care of the widows.

According to him, the widows should not lose hope as a result of their condition because God, the author and finisher of their faith, knew the next level he was taking them to.

"God has not forgotten you. As your creator, I believe, He is aware of your situation and will continue to provide for your needs according to His riches in glory," he said.

Senator Omilani noted that Ashimolowo had shown the virtues of a good Christian by sowing seeds in the lives of the widows. He said the gesture would go a long way in assisting the widows and creating a sense of belonging in them. He added that Nigerians should invest in ventures capable of bridging the gap between the poor and the rich.

Senator Akinlabi, who noted that development of the society and welfare of citizens should not be left to government alone, lauded the Ashimolowos for the project. He said there was joy in giving to the needy and less privileged.

"Pastor Ashimolowo by his gesture has demonstrated the spirit of good neighbourliness. This programme should provoke others to do something in lifting people in whatever way they can," he said.

Some of the widows who spoke were full of prayers for their benefactor, asking God to bless him to enable him sustain the project.

One of them, Mrs. Christiana Olufunmi Amos, 32, a mother of two, who lost her husband in 2009, was overwhelmed by emotion. She fought back tears while narrating her experience to The Guardian.

A septuagenarian, Mrs. Rebecca Isawumi, who lost her husband about 30 years ago, urged other Nigerians to emulate Pastor Ashimolowo. Although she said she had accepted her fate and was coping with the challenges of widowhood, she called on the wealthy to come to the aid of the vulnerable.

Another beneficiary, Elizabeth Isaac, 38, a fashion designer, resident in Lagos, was philosophical, saying God was her strength. The mother of four advised her colleagues to be up and doing and to have faith in God.

Pastor Ashimolowo told journalists that poverty, inaccessibility to good healthcare system and a cultural practice, which supports polygamy was responsible for the high rate of widowhood in the society.

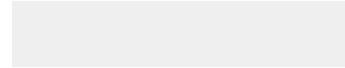
He said about 60 per cent of the beneficiaries were Muslims. They were fed with the word of God to strengthen them to face the challenges associated with widowhood.

On the proposed university project, the cleric noted that when it became operational, the institution would help to reduce the problem of admission to tertiary institutions.

The funeral service of Pastor Ashimolowo's uncle, Pa Joseph Oluwatowaju Ashimolowo, who died last year at the age of 95, was held at St. David Church, Ode-Omu. Popular gospel singer, Yinka Ayefele, entertained guests at the colourful funeral reception.

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