

"MY ENTIRE LIFE IS GOD"

- EBENEZER OBEY - FABIYI

Special interview

with **Professor Evangelist Ebenezer
Obey Fabiyi**

The life of evangelist Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi epitomizes the vision that speaks and paints a picture of him as a product of divine guidance. The secrets of men are in their stories. The famous juju singer turned evangelist had humble beginnings which contradict the height he has attained today.

The story of his birth and the circumstances surrounding it shares some similarities with that of the birth of our lord Jesus Christ as we know from the scriptures. Mary the mother of Jesus was a virgin who by the reasoning of the kind of pregnancy she had was exposed to ridicule and shame. The same was the case of the mother of the Evangelist Ebenezer Obey, Abigail, who after 20 years of marriage was barren and resulted into a divorce that led to her seeking a hide-out in Idogo, Yewa, a village in Ogun State. Eventually, by divine connection, fell in love with a carpenter and farmer like the Biblical Joseph and the rest is the unprecedented



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greatness that came into the world in Evangelist Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi. It is not surprising therefore that Ebenezer Obey, understanding the circumstances surrounding his birth, did not mince words when he declares that his entire life is God. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctify thee and ordain thee a prophet unto the nations" – Jeremiah 1:5.

The journey of life is such that does not have a definite destination to arrive at and for that reason, the need for the discovery of identity is imperative. Until the question of identity is correctly answered, the tendency to go astray is high, according to Psalm 119:67. God does not bless who we pretend to be; He only blesses who we truly are.

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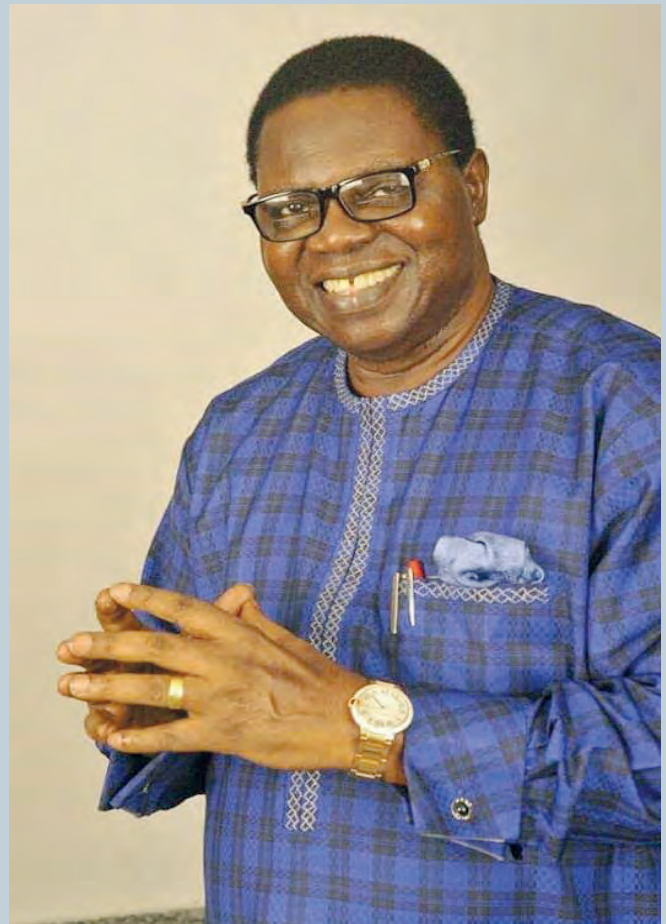
Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi from his youth had the requisite insight that defined his placement in destiny, though getting into it came with oppositions especially from his mother who did not believe that he had the potential of going through the terrain that he chose. Aside her doubt of him not having the potential, she was averse to his desired profession for not agreeing with the known associated lifestyle of those who had trodden that path before him, such as smoking, drinking, womanizing, and so on. She did not see the profession as ordained for the morally and spiritually upright. Coming in contact with this great musician who had impacted his generation irrecoverably and listening to his submission in relation to what makes a man great in life, one will be convinced that only the grace of God makes great.

Evangelist Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi does not look like the hero he is known to be by reasons of humility and serenity that encompass his personality. It was almost difficult to match his countenance with his exploits in the area of music. The important lessons that we learn from this great secular musician turned evangelist include: understanding one-self, believing in oneself, having confidence in God, tolerance and faith in the Almighty God. It is also understandable from the encounter with evangelist Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi that one's place of birth in life does not determine the ultimate placement in life which in other words mean that being born slave is not a determiner of where one ends up in life, for God is the lifter who brings one down and lifts another up.

Limitations do not limit us, unless we allow them. Another important aspect of evangelist Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi's life that is worthy of emulation is his endurance; we are called to endure life to enjoy it. "For many are the afflictions of the righteous but God has delivered him from them all" – Psalm 34:19.

The life of Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi is a pointer to the need to be a covenant practitioner for that inform his decision to abandon his circular musical career for the work of God and a full time for good 18 years. His passion for the kingdom of God and its expansion provides the answer to his unprec-

edented lifting, which only the hand of God can engineer. Evangelist Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi's message to the undying world is that we should have respect to the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitation of cruelty. – Psalm 74:20.



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In conclusion, the life of this great man of God, full of wisdom and Holy Ghost, is a revelation that God does not delight in the legs of man or the strength of a horse, but only in them who trust in Him. When God is taken out from a man's aspiration for greatness, the end of the journey inevitably is the valley, because only the hand of God can take a man to heights that are unimaginable in life. If God is the secret behind your lifting as it is with Evangelist Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi, you will need God also to remain on top.

Interview excerpts:

LHM: What is your understanding of the difference between riches and the blessings of God upon the life of a man and how does this apply to your own life?

EBENEZER OBEY: Well, one can be rich and not be blessed, but once one is blessed, the blessings of God make rich and add no sorrows to it. So, when you are blessed because we are talking about the blessings of God, they are quite a number of blessings. To those who rob, that is a kind of blessing to them, but when you talk about the real blessings, those are the ones that come from God and with no sorrows added to them.

LHM: You had the privilege of traveling far and wide as a musician. What lessons have you learnt from your exposure in terms of the differences in the pace of development between one nation and the other, as well as between one continent and the other?

EBENEZER OBEY: To start with, most of the countries I traveled to have been practicing democracy before us and they have passed through most of the problems we are passing through now and had overcome them. There are certain things you don't need to preach to them whether in America or in Britain or other parts of the world. Talking about corruption, there are certain things that they would not just do because they know better. The same is not the case here in Nigeria because of poverty and the fact that everybody is corrupt. Even the babies in the womb can be said to be corrupt because that is the food they eat. We have all taken laws into our hands and we commit crimes with impunity because our leaders and the law enforcement agents too are corrupt. The only way out for us in this country and which also will lead us in the part of progress is to have the right kind of leaders who are God-fearing. We the followers also must be law abiding and God-fearing to move our country forward.

LHM: What in your opinion are the reasons why in spite of the mega churches of world repute and the large congregation of worshippers that we have in Nigeria, prayers seem to be answered

quicker in America where such church buildings and large congregation as ours are not present?

EBENEZER OBEY: God answers prayers. The truth is that we need to pray and determine to know Him more just like what Apostle Paul said "That I may know Him more". That should be the consideration of the followers of Jesus Christ. The more of God you know, the quicker you will receive answers to your prayers. Not all those who go to church are in touch with Christ and not all those who call themselves ministers of God are worshipping God in truth and in Spirit. God knows His own and those who are His own know him too.

LHM: The Nigeria of yesterday and the one we have today, what changes have taken place and what lessons should have been learnt for progress and stability?

EBENEZER OBEY: Nigeria of yesterday was much better than the Nigeria of today. In those days family looked after each other and by so doing we were able to build sound moral characters in our children. There was cooperation and love among the people from one neighborhood to another. The foreign lifestyle that we have adopted has affected us badly to the extent that we are no longer our brother's keepers but everyone is on his own. Those days we had good leaders like late Chief Obafemi Awolowo whose love for the people and development led to the provision of free education and health services. In my opinion, if people who are Nigerians can emulate the Nigerians of yesterday by caring and loving one another, the country will be great.

LHM: You once declared in one of your songs that the words of elders are words of wisdom and what the old man or woman can see sitting down, the young cannot see standing up.

You indicated that your late mother Abigail once discouraged you from going into music for her fears regarding the kind of lifestyles that those who have trodden that terrain before you lived such as smoking, drinking and womanizing.

Your accomplishment in life today seemed to have

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proved her wrong; does it mean that all the fears she expressed did not find any practical expression in your life at all?

EBENEZER OBEY: The fear of my mother was not about the lifestyles of some musicians who had trodden the path that I wanted to follow per say in relation to smoking, drinking and womanizing, rather it was more about the prospects that the music profession hold in comparison with other professionals such as medical doctors, lawyers, engineers and so on. As a matter of fact, she was averse to having a son who will be an indian hemp smoker and who will indulge in other social vices such as drinking and womanizing. She made herself clear enough by asking if I wouldn't like to travel to London, riding in good cars and living a good life. She persuaded me to focus more on my studies, for she believed that was the only way by which I could become great in life, for it was her wish to be called the mother of a doctor, a lawyer or an engineer. However, her admonitions did help me a lot and made me to be extra careful in my choice of the kind of lifestyle that I lived. Thank God I was able to meet all her expectations concerning her dream child and even beyond her wildest imagination. I was a very careful person who always put God first and God did not in any way fail or disappoint me. I give Him all the glory.

LHM: How do you respond to your adversaries who went about circulating rumors about your death when in actual sense you were alive and in good health?

EBENEZER OBEY: I responded to them with one of my songs that talks about a bird known in Africa by name "elulu". It is believed that whenever this bird makes sound what it does is drawing rain. Whereas since the bird does not have a place to hide itself. The rain will end up beating it.

In other words, those who declare "themselves" dead and not me were just inviting evil on themselves just the same way as the rain maker birds cannot escape being beaten by rain. It was not too surprising that they did that to me because that wasn't the first time, but what made my reaction

vehement at that time was because they rumored it five times in one month and that was too wicked to say the least. I know death will come when it will for we all have to pay the dues. I am not afraid of dying but I strongly believe that no man or any agents of the devil can cut my life short when God has not commanded it. As long as I live I will continue to thank and praise God. I hope also to impact lives positively through my music, for God has blessed me to be a blessing to my generation. To those who are into evil doings, I can only pray for them to repent for whatever a man sows that also shall he reap. I thank God for sparing my life and I will continue to do so as long as live and worthy to be counted among the living, praise God.

GOODWILL FROM MESSAGE FROM EBENEZER OBEY

I wish to express my gratitude to God almighty for keeping me alive to witness my 79th birthday. I also express my appreciation to my fans all over the world for being there for all the time. I know God still has more things for me to do and as long as I live I will continue to work hard and impact lives through music.

*Interview by: Samuel 'Tunji Adeyanju
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