

# **The Celestial Church of Christ; The History of an Independent African Church.**

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## **Abstract:**

The Independent Indigenous churches in Africa, of which the Celestial Church of Christ is one, are a twentieth century phenomenon. These indigenous churches have contrasting characteristics in the different African States where they operate. While some of these indigenous churches have come into existence for racial reasons and others as protest groups, the Celestial Church of Christ claims to be the "last ship of Salvation" - kind of "Noah's Ark". It claims divine origin and everything about the church is traced to Divine Revelation.

Incidentally, the C.C.C. is the most misunderstood of all the Christian churches in Nigeria. Some see it as a cult while others describe it as a refined Yoruba traditional religion. I have under-taken to investigate the Celestial Church in order to bring out the truth about the faith and practices of that church especially now that the Dramatis Personae connected with the birth and development of that church are still on the stage. The intention is to lay bare the facts and allow individuals to give their own conclusions.

In this research therefore, I have attempted to survey the social, political, economic and religious conditions of Porto Novo (Ajase Ipo) in order to show the background on which the Celestial Church of Christ was founded, as well as examine the origins, growth and expansion of the C.C.C. and then to investigate the theology, liturgical practices, organization, administration and constitution of the church. My conclusion is mainly an evaluation of the church as a Christian church vis a vis its contributions to religious change in Nigeria. My approach is mainly historical and theological.

**Keywords:** Indigenous church/ religion/ Christianity/ Celestial Church of Christ/ theology/ liturgy

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