Elizabeth Afu and the Mother Ministry in Bukaolum Boki - Cross River State: a Discourse on the Paranormal

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Introduction

This paper is an attempt to demonstrate how religious experience of an individual can be a veritable catalyst to change in the lives of people and in societies. Such was the case at St. John's Catholic Parish Wula in which Mrs. Elizabeth Afu was a member in good standing, participating in the sacraments as well as in the parish Choir in her own out station Bukaolum, a village very close to Wula, the Parish centre in Boki L.G.A. of Cross River State.

Elizabeth, a maiden from Olum in Boki L.G.A., with little primary school education is married to Afu from Bukaolum. They wedded at St. John's Church Wula.

Elizabeth's religious experience in the course of a Parish Choir competition at the Parish centre in 1991 transformed her there and then into an ecstatic mood that made her to prophesy and speak in tongues at the utter surprise of her local group and the other members in the competition. Initially the Parish Priest then, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Odey welcomed her new state but when, with time, she started uttering prophecies and statements that ran contrary to Catholic doctrines and traditions, the romance between her and the Parish Priest began to crack, a situation which climaxed in court litigations and final breakaway of Elizabeth from the Catholic Church to form her own Church, called the "Mother Church", attracting to the new church, some members of the parent Catholic Parish. She later built a small worshipping house near her family compound in Bokaolum. One interesting thing about the new Church was the fact that the church had in its membership some banana merchants, some medical doctors, lawyers, teachers and ordinary folks in the community and its environs. One wonders why Elizabeth, a local house wife with little education, could command the loyalties of these men and women of worth in her membership.

This paper among other things attempted to proffer answers to this question. Specifically tried to (1) Describe Elizabeth's Religious Experience at Wula. (2) Unravel the basis of the emergence of the "Mother Ministry" in Boki L.G.A. (3) Describe the mode of operation of this movement. (4) Examine the implications of the ministry to in culturation process