

NIGERIAN WOMAN RULES THREE TRIBES

She was christened by her father, an Anglican bishop, "Gift of God" and "Joy."

To thousands of Africans throughout Nigeria she is known simply as "Auntie Ayo."

But the joy which is tribal chief Mrs. Theodora Ayo Manuwa's second name is very obviously missing as she offers her strife-torn people.

Mrs. Manuwa, who is sword-bearer to the King of Abeokuta for services to her community, and is also an OBE, was probably the most imposing and colorful figure at the 11th World Congress of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women in London.

Placing her palms together in the lap of her voluminous, richly-embroidered, almond-green robes she told me:

"Prayer is the only answer to the bloodshed, the killings and the starvation that are ravaging my people. I sincerely believe this."

"My parents used to say

that life is not who is right, but what is right I ask myself this day after day."

The plump and jolly chief-tainess, who rules three communities of 10,000 people in the Abeokuta district of Federal Nigeria, added:

"As founder and principal of three schools in Lagos I teach that without God we can do nothing. Religion is the basis of all our lives."

Mrs. Manuwa, who admits to being 61 "and a half", educated at Hoylake, Cheshire, and St. Mary's Hall, Brighton, and holder of diplomas in cookery and midwifery, shook her head sadly and said:

"Nigeria would not be in the fearful straits it is today if the Ibos had not assassinated that Godly man, our late Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Balewa. He was a man of integrity, honesty, and he feared his God. If he had been alive he would have poured oil on those troubled waters."

Mrs. Manuwa, a firm believer in the power of woman, and herself a member of 16 organizations in Nigeria, has a peace plan to try to settle the war. She has a delegation of six prominent Nigerian women willing to fly to Biafra—"perhaps our mother instinct could win where the men have failed."

All she needs is her Government's permission and a plane to fly them into the trouble spots.

When she is not trying to settle wars this daughter of the late assistant Bishop of Lagos is busy settling the future of her pupils. Or trying to.

"I told the king of Abeokuta, who is a very enlightened king, that I would like to start vocational schools for girls who are not very academic. To teach them to use their hands, rather than dabble in biology and chemistry."

"Instead of sending out 14 year old girls to get pregnant I see that they are occupied. I ensure that they keep up

Electronically illuminated dresses, coats, and slacks which glow in the dark and flash on and off at variable speeds are being marketed in New York. The lights are powered by tiny rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries carried in a belt.

with their arithmetic, for a housewife must keep her fingers on the budget and not be a spendthrift."

"They must keep up their English so their husbands are not ashamed of them."

She has introduced this vocational training, including laundry, needlework, cookery, dressmaking, fabric printing, nursery nursing and mothercraft into the curriculum at one of the schools.

"The third school," explained Mrs. Manuwa, her fan-shaped gold earrings clinking, "is what I call my snob school. It is for boys and girls of good quality, the children of politicians, lawyers, and doctors. We teach only in English."

"I refuse to have government grants for my schools because it would be a case of 'thou shalt and thou shalt not.' One of their shalts is that you must have 40 pupils to a class. Far too many. I refuse to have more than 20 pupils, as they must get individual teaching."

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