



# MOYA CHRONICLES

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## MOYA – SPEAKING TRUTH TO AFRICAN CHRISTIANS

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In the process of a research project, I was invited to watch a Shepherd of an African Independent Church help a woman who had come to him with a problem. She was, of course, severely distressed, she needed a spiritual solution to her problems as she understood them to be spiritual. After she narrated her story, the Shepherd called an anointed *elemi* (a seer) who was not in the vicinity of the church building to attend to the woman. In a trance, the *elemi* recited the entire narrative of the woman and went on to prescribe the solutions she needed. I had seen the Spirit at work many times. However, this event blew me away and has stayed with me for a long time. Of course, this is what the Spirit can do, and it is common in Africa.

Generally speaking, Africans are a very spirit-conscious people. Indeed, for most Africans, life—in its entirety—is a spiritual endeavour. Spirits form the ‘vital force’ that enables the world to function. The influence and impact of the spirit-world on human life in African cannot be overemphasised. For Christians, the *Moya* is the most powerful being there can ever be, the *Moya* of God—the Third Person of the Godhead. The miracle of the *elemi* mentioned above plus many others such as healing, deliverance, spiritual power

over evil forces, speaking in tongues, prophecy, visions, are but examples of how Africans appropriate the Holy Spirit. However, an often-neglected work of the *Moya* is that of the Spirit of Truth. An important epithet of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is the Spirit of Truth. Jesus in his farewell discourse with the disciples, in John 14, 15, and 16, repeatedly described the Spirit as Spirit of Truth.

*“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever. THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).*

*“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me” (John 15:26).*

*“But when he, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come” (John 16:13).*



The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth is rarely spoken of, yet, understanding the Holy Spirit as a purveyor and an agency of truth has rich and powerful implications for our Christianity in Africa and in the African diaspora. Indeed, African Christians can appropriate the function of the Spirit of Truth in various ways.

First, the Holy Spirit functioning as the Spirit of truth **reveals to us the truth in God's word**. The Spirit shows us the truth of scriptures. The word of God is referred to as the truth: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John: 17:17; cf. 2 Samuel 7:28; Psalm 119:160). When we embrace the *Moya* as the spirit of truth, the Spirit brings light to our reading, studying, and meditation of God's word, especially in relation to the contexts in which we are located. The Spirit unveils to us the mystery, the hidden truths, and the gems of God's word, and we have a clear conception of the mind of God as revealed in the Bible.

Second, we are **endowed with discernment** when we understand the *Moya* as an agent of truth. The Spirit of Truth in us shines light on situations that look like riddles and mysteries, exposing the hidden works of darkness. We have a good example of how this worked out among the early Christian community in the Book of Acts. Apostle Peter, full of the *Moya*, discerned the lies of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-10 and that of Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8:9-24. In the same manner, the *Moya* remains the agency for exposing the sorcerers and false prophets exploiting throngs of needy African people seeking solutions to their existential problems, for he will guide us into all the truth (cf. John 16:13).

Third, the Spirit of Truth **sets us free**. Jesus assured us that we will know the truth, and the truth will set us free (John 8:32). The truth is very liberating. It sets free. The Spirit of Truth residing in us gives us freedom. The Spirit frees us from all bondages and shackles of the enemy,

from fears, anxieties, and worries of life. The Spirit frees us from all encumbrances of the devil, from the guilt of past sins and ancestral curses and gives us liberty to approach our heavenly Father directly and not through any mediator because we have been given unlimited access through the blood of Jesus by the spirit (cf. Eph. 2:18). What a joy to have the spirit of truth living inside of us!

Lastly, the Holy Spirit functioning in us as the Spirit of truth **inspires us to always speak the truth**. Scriptures enjoin us to speak the truth to one another: "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbour, for we are members of one another" (Eph. 4:25). In a world where the truth has become a scarcity, speaking the truth validates the presence of the *Moya* in our lives. It is a contradiction for us African Christians to lay claim to being possessed by the *Moya*, whereas lies and falsehood continue to thrive in our communities. Indeed, the *Moya* for us in Africa should transcend ecstatic spirit manifestations, protection from demonic forces and meeting our existential needs. We must live and practice our faith in the consciousness that the *Moya* is an agency of the truth. It is this Spirit of Truth that can help to shed light to other functions of the *Moya*, and it will help to validate whatever claims we make about the workings of the Spirit in our individual lives and congregations.



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