**MEMORIAL SPEECH**

**FOR**

**PAUL IJIEWERE**

Hello everyone. Life is filled with so many reasons to be happy and sad…. hopeful and frustrated… cautious and trusting…. But it is rare when a large, diverse group of people, like we are today, can come together in unison to really demonstrate love, respect, and devotion to a woman who was, for us in so many different ways, our light, our guide, and our spiritual conscience here on earth. Today we have the joy and privilege to really celebrate the life of a beautiful woman… someone who was our friend, our sister, our matriarch, and our conscience, Elder Sister Dora Idahosa Azenabor, and while technically she is no longer on this physical plane with us, she has touched each one of us so deeply that she really does live on within all of us. Each time we think of her, share her wisdom, tell a story that demonstrates her strength, her courage, her determination to go beyond the confines of her circumstances, she lives on. Our stories and memories shape the image of the person we have all known and loved. The celebrations we will share of our beloved mother for the next several days will act to inspire us to continue to carry her message of love and faith even further than her own personal journey has taken her…. And we all know that she traveled far! (**If you think it's okay to make a little joke, say that with a gesture and wait for the laugh).**

Eighty seven years! That alone is a remarkable accomplishment…but if we think of where she began her life and how many souls were touched along her fascinating journey, we begin to form a picture of what made our spiritual mother so extraordinary. She was born in a time and place that didn't prepare anyone for world travel or global spiritual outreach on a massive scale. I don't think I have to give details to any of you, but to say that her early years were challenging doesn't begin to describe the struggles she had growing up in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but the one thing she discovered was the miracle of faith, and that is something that has the power to move mountains…. and all of **us**. We have seen miracles come out of our belief in God, and Sister Elder Dora lived her life open to, and accepting of every single revelation… no matter how small…. No matter how impossible it might have been to see…. We know, as true believers, that it is the unseen that brings us life and hope and salvation. It is also the unseen…. Like Elder Dora is now…. That will watch over us and guide us to new heights of salvation.

In Proverbs 31:25-30 we learn, “Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her, ‘Many women have done excellently, but **you surpass them all..**’”

Elder Dora Azenabor was was from the same village as my family, and that was the town of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She was close to my mother and to think of her brings back memories of home. She was always supportive of others. She was greatly respected in our community and would do just about anything to help a neighbor. She was known for making sure the community was able to find their way to church and I have a clear vision of her picking people up and taking them to services, all for the joy of reaching out and helping someone. Sister Elder Dora married her husband Mr. Iboi Azenabor at Ujielu, Ewossa in Igueben Local Government area Igueben, Edo State, Nigeria.  No matter where life took her, she was a dedicated woman of God, an evangelist and community leader. Prior to her relocation from Ewossa to Benin city in Edo State – Nigeria, She was a faithful member of Eternal Hope Ministrie at Ewossa. Her evangelical ability influenced most Christians in that community and it was through her spiritual guidance that so many people gained their salvation. Sister Elder Dora, the affectionate woman as she was famously referred by most indigenes of that community, was lovely and respectful.

If I had to choose a creation from nature that might symbolize Sister Elder Dora so that others might understand her strength and grace, I see her as a beautiful, strong, established \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tree (**If there is a kind of tree native to your home, use that**). She was a force of nature who bore fruit, spread her branches, and provided spiritual nourishment, shelter and comfort for all of those that new her and loved her. Those branches can also be seen as representing her family…. She is survived by generations of faithful believers…. all people who find strength in God and willingly share their love and salvation with their friends and community. Elder Sister Dora had some extraordinary brothers and sisters. Of course we must take a moment to honor the memory of the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa. In their family, they had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ brothers and sisters. Elder Sister Dora went on to have (**name the number of children**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ children, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ grandchildren, and each one is a branch growing and spreading the love and light of faith. I'd like to mention some of the surviving family members now:

Bishop David Azenabor……………………………………………Son

Min. Mrs. Omono   Azenabor Omoruyi                    Daugther Inlaw

Rev. Mrs. Rose Azenabor……………………………………..Daughter Iniaw

Mr. Henry  Omoruyi  …………………………………………….Son Inlaw

Pastor Ishosa Azenabor ………………………………………… Grand Daugther

Ms Osahumhen Azenabor

Ms Pamela Azenabor ……………………………………………   Grand Daughter

Master Osahumen  Azenabor ..

BROTHERS:

All of the members of this wonderful family share the heritage and belief that has brought so much peace and understanding to so many people around the world..

In the end of our lives, I think as we look back, we know the true blessings are the lives we touched and the love we inspired. A famous poet once said, “I am part of all that I have met.” We are all a part of Sister Elder Dora and thank God, she is a permanent part of all of us. The poet Walt Whitman simply said, “We were together. I forgot the rest.” Isn't that all that really counts? We are all here, together, in love, mutual respect, and faith, to honor this wonderful, giving caring woman. May she Rest In Peace and continue to inspire all of us. Thank you.