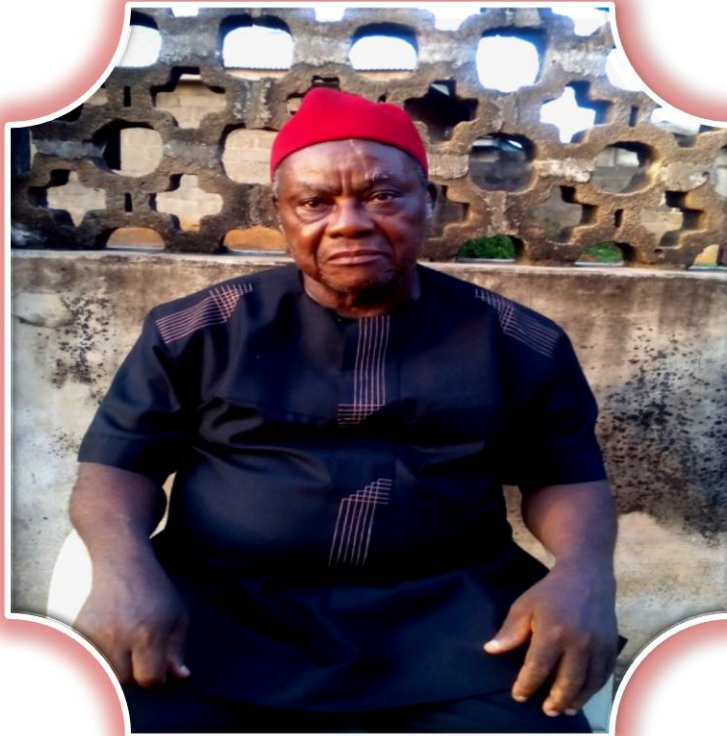


WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION
ELLEN G. WHITE-SDA RESEARCH CENTRE
Babcock University
PIONEER OF THE MONTH

*AS ONE OF OUR PUBLICATIONS, PIONEER OF THE MONTH BRINGS
TO YOU FROM TIME TO TIME*

*BRIEF ACCOUNTS OF SOME OF OUR PIONEERS WHO HAD
LABOURED IN GOD'S VINEYARD.*

THIS MONTH OF AUGUST, WE PRESENT A SERVANT OF GOD,



Elder Philp Uwazughoke Odoemela
(July 24, 1937)

HIS EARLY LIFE: Philip Uwaezuoke Odomene was the first son of late Mr. Enoch and Mrs. Violet Odomene. He has five siblings, His mother was a Christian, but not a member of SDA church, while the father was never a Christian for all his life time on earth. He hails from Umunwatanwoke Umudu in Umuaka Mbutu Isiala Autonomous Community of Aboh Mbaise Local Government Area in Imo State, Nigeria.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: The young Philip Odoemene attended St. Peter's Anglican Primary School, Mbutu from 1945 to 1954, from 1972 to 1975, he had his Pre-Seminary training for Ministerial Certificate at Adventist Collage of West Africa (ASWA). His love for things of God, quest for quality education and good life, made Philip to further his education and finally bagged his B.A degree in Religion at ASWA 1979.

FAMILY LIFE: In 1969, Elder Philip got married to Miss Beatrice Ejiogu from Umuhu in Aboh Mbaise Local government area of Imo State. Their marriage was blessed with five children; two males and three females namely: Mr. Chinemerem Odomene, Tochukwu Odoemene, Mrs. Amarachi Smith-Okpara, Mrs. Ozichi Eluwa and Miss Chinyeaka Odomene. Elder odoemene, by the grace of God, saw four out of his five children through the university education while the remaining one is a sucessful fashion designer at Abuja in Nigeria. Four out of his five children, at the time of this interview, are happily married with children.

MINISTERIAL HISTORY: The very first time Philip Odoemene had the advent message was in 1947 in his village that was when Pa Isaiah Uwalaka of Umuajala Umuchokoneze of Ezinihite Mbaise and his evangelistic team brought the good news to Philip's village and he pored sands and threw stones at them. Instantly, the youth gathered to beat him up but Pa I. Uwalaka, made a pronouncement that, the act is an open oat made by Philip to carry the gospel to even an unknown areas that they will not be



able to reach.

In 1953, Philip Odoemene's fellow school boy at the then Salvation Army School, invited him for a thirteen Sabbath programme. He honoured that invitation and participated fully at the programme. The response to that invitation changed his life for God. He studied and read the bible texts for that day by himself with deep understanding of them. His life was touched and he was convinced of the bible truth there. That was his first time in seventh-day Adventist Church and marked the beginning of his spiritual journey in the church. According to Elder Odoemene, his encounter with the church has remained God's blessings to him till today. He added that, receiving the truth and walking in its path exposed him to education which his children benefited and thereby making Philip's retirement an enjoyable one, he is continuously reaping the fruit of his service to God and he believes that this will serve as testimony to someone someday.



With the new light, love and care rendered by members of the church to the first time worshiper, Philip changed his plans as a student. He decided to make his weekly visit to his home town every Wednesday instead of Friday to enable him collect items for his up keep from home, just to ensure that he did not miss weekly Sabbath worship. This continued till he finished his primary education. On his return to his home town in 1957, he discovered a five weeks old branch Sabbath school in his village and there he receive spiritual nurture.

P. U. Odomene became the first missionary volunteer (MV) leader and choir master of the church. In 1972, he moved to the West where he had his tertiary education, Philip joined the church and participated fully as he was a student in Adventist Seminary School, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State. His quest for service to God Almighty made him and few of his colleagues identify the need for church expansion by opening branch(s) Sabbath school in Ilishan town to reach the members who were not elites with the word of God and to evangelize the community for God as found in the book of life. (*Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All*

power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.)

By their knowledge of this commission, they forwarded formal application to ASWA in August 1988, their request was granted by the ASWA Management Team and six weeks after that, they kicked off with a branch Sabbath School in Ilishan town which today has given birth to two more districts. P. U. Odomene was appointed one of the Elders of the church as the four members who spare headed the movement of Ilishan No. 2 church were; Elder Egerugwu, Elder P. U. Odoemene, Elder Amanze, and Elder Ihemadu. In 1989, the church was organized and P. U. Odoemene became the very first elder of the church. The church operated under his leadership until pastor S. Idowu was brought as the first church pastor of No. 2. SDA, Ilishan-Remo. After him, pastor Olarenwaju came and gradually they developed an area dedicated to Ilishan oro as a shrine into a sacred place of worship of the Most High God. *“What a fulfilled of prophecy”*

WORKING EXPERIENCE: After Elder Odoemene’s graduation from ASWA, he secured job employment with the Ogun State Government as Bible Knowledge (BK) Teacher. He worked with the government until his retirement in the year 2007. However, Elder P. U. Odoemene kept ministering for God in the classrooms where he met and taught students the truth about the word of God. He served in several committees including Board of Trustee for Babcock High School (BUHS). He contributed immensely to the growth of BUHS by making sure that positive policies were voted in favour of work of God at the school. He directed many souls to God while the Holy Spirit did the conversion.

RETIREMENT: While still on retirement, Elder P. U Odoemne expressed his happiness over



his comfort, enjoyable good health, and fulfilling days of old age. As found in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 *To every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to*

plant, and a time to pluck up [that which is] planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Elder Odoemene made it clear here that if you work with God during your active years, that He will guide you to plan well and your pension days will serve as years of harvest as long as you are found in our Lord's service(s). He added that the best thing for a Christian to do is to serve God with all your means and as well invest in your children, by training them in the way they should grow and develop the academically.

Source:

Live interview with Elder P. U Odoemene by Akintunde Oyewale and Chinanu-Akpuh Chinwe Comfort; Edited by (Chinanu-Akpuh, Chinwe Comfort, Research Assistant, Ellen G. White-SDA Research Centre, Babcock University), (July 2015)

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