

**The Man behind the Mask:
An Overview of Professor Ogbu Uke Kalu's Professional Career**

by

Professor E. M. Uka

Preamble

The Deputy Vice Chancellor, and Chairman of the occasion,
All other protocols observed.

I feel humbled, and at the same time honoured to be invited to participate in this sudden memorial seminar on behalf of Prof. Ogbu Kalu my boyhood friend at Hope Waddell in the mid fifties. We belonged to the same church- the Presbyterian church of Nigeria. Ogbu kept in touch with me when he was about to return to Nigeria in 1974. By then I was the Chaplain of the Christ Church Chapel here in UNN. Ogbu encouraged me to apply to Princeton Theological Seminary while he was there. He also disclosed to me his intention to apply to the University of Nigeria Nsukka (U.N.N.) for the post of a lecturer in the Department of History. I took his letter to Prof. Eme Awa of blessed memory for advice. He suggested that Ogbu should apply to the Department of Religion where his progress would be rapid, for at that time, there were heavy weights in History with people like Prof. Ifemesia, Prof. Afigbo and the rest. He asked me to inform Ogbu to send his application through him. This was how Ogbu got appointment in the Department of Religion here in U.N.N.

Ogbu made me feel proud by his progress in our Department. In fact he was a champion not only in subjects related to religion and culture, but also in history and in most of the social science subjects. Ogbu also made me feel welcome in his home. On one occasion while I was teaching at the Trinity College in Umuahia, he visited me with a request to baptize one of his daughters in his village church in Isiugwu-Ohafia. I gladly obliged. He also invited me to dedicate the house they built for their mother in the village. I gladly did that, and have performed many other pastoral tasks in that family. This introductory remark is to establish the fact that there was a cordial relationship between Ogbu and me. So the news of his sudden death and departure gave me a devastating shock, but I am trying to

recover in view of the fact that he lived a committed Christian life: I know where is – in his Father’s house where there are many mansions!

His Birth And Early School Years

Ogbu was born in Ohafia on June 2, 1942 to Elder Kalu Uke Onwuchekwa and Mrs. Margaret Uzumma Uchendu Kalu, both of blessed memory. He had his primary education at Ohafia Central School, Elu Ohafia where he was nicked named “solo” meaning *little Solomon*. Ogbu was given this nickname because though he was young and small in size, he reasoned like an old man and had a good memory. His secondary school career was in Hope Waddell where we met and mingled as friends and guys from Ohafia and from where he emerged with grade one in the school certificate examination. He did extra two years for his HSC and cleared all his papers in one sitting with high grades. He recorded these accomplishments between 1955 and 1961.

Thereafter, there was news that the Presbyterian Church in Canada had offered scholarships to train ministers for the Presbyterian Church in Nigeria (PCN). The condition was that those willing to apply for the scholarship should write the entrance examination for admission into Trinity College. Ogbu did, but I did not, for I knew what my father had suffered as a Catechist in the Anglican Church, partly because he got into the ministry with First School Leaving Certificate. So I promised myself that I would go to Trinity College for training as a graduate, which I eventually did.

Ogbu performed exceptionally well in the Trinity College entrance examination. Canada heard about his result and awarded him the scholarship, not for training in Trinity College, but for training in Canada. This was how Ogbu went to Canada for further studies at the University of Toronto in 1963.

According to the Rev. Fee, the General Secretary of **Life and Mission Agency** of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, “Ogbu Kalu was chosen as the third student to be given higher education in Canada, under the Board of World Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada for training Church leaders in partner Churches. The very Reverend Nwachukwu Eme was the first, and the Reverend Dr. Inya Agha Ude as second.”

Ogbu In Canada

While in Canada, Ogbu enrolled to read B.A in Church History in the University of Toronto, Canada. He proceeded to the University of McMaster in Hamilton Ontario for his Masters Degree in History, and emerged with a “Summa cum laude” result. He then went back to University of Toronto for his PhD degree in Church History. After that, He proceeded to do a post doctoral research program at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, in the UK.

Thereafter, he was asked by the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) to go to Princeton Theological Seminary in USA for the M.Div. Program, which was the original intention of the Presbyterian Church in Nigeria, recommending him to Canada for ministerial Training. Ogbu obeyed and went to Princeton for his M.Div degree.

Academic Qualification

- 1967 B.A. Hons, History, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- 1968 M.A. Summa cum laude, History, McMaster University, Ontario, Canada
- 1972 Ph.D., History, University of Toronto
- 1974 M.Div., Princeton Theological Seminary
- 1997 D.D., Presbyterian College, Montreal, Que. Canada

Ogbu’s University Career At UNN 1974-2001

Prof. Ogbu Kalu began his teaching career here in UNN in 1974. He was engaged as a Lecturer 1, to teach in the Department of Religion. Given his spectacular ability in research and writing, he hit the professorial rank within a space of five years 1974-1978

According to his curriculum vitae, his teaching career here in UNN is as follows:

- 1974 --- Lecturer Grade 1
- 1976 --- Senior Lecturer
- 1978 --- Professor

Since then Ogbu, like an eagle soared higher and higher as a scholar whose impact has been global.

Offices Held In University Of Nigeria, Nsukka 1974 - 2001

- (i) 1976-2001 **Member, University Senate**

- 1968/69-1969/70 Province of Ontario Graduate Award
- 1970-1972 Canada Council for the Arts Fellowship: University of London, UK
- 1972-1974 Princeton Theological Seminary Fellowship
- 1973 Ecumenical Commission Research Grant
- 1974 Grier-Davies Award, Princeton
- 1986 Vice-Chancellor's Research Leadership Prize, University of Nigeria

- 1995 UNIFEM/UNDP Grant on "Silent Victims: Violence Against Women in Nigerian Universities." Social Science Council of Nigeria Research Grant
- 1999 Pew Trust Research Enablement Grant
- 2000 Ford International Scholar Award

Teaching Career

- 1974-1976 Lecturer Grade 1
- 1976-1978 Senior Lecturer
- 1978-2001 Professor of Church History, University of Nigeria, Nsukka
- 1987 Visiting Lilly Professor, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA,

- 1988 Visiting Professor for World Missions, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Seoul South Korea.

- 1992/93 Senior Research Fellow, Center of the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, and Visiting Professor, New College, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh

- 1995 Visiting Professor, University of Pretoria, South Africa

- 1996 Charles Johnson Scholar, and Visiting Professor Knox College, University of Toronto and Presbyterian College, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

- 1998 Visiting Professor, Emmanuel College, University of Toronto
- 1999 Visiting Professor, Harvard Divinity School and Senior Research Fellow, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University
- 2001 Visiting Professor, Ls Religionwissenschaft, University of Bayreuth, Germany
- 2001-2009 Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity and Mission,

Prestigious Academic Awards, Honours And Distinctions

Fellow of the Historical Society of Nigeria (FHSN)

- (i) Men of Achievement (Cambridge) Vol. VII
- (ii) Who's Who in America: Contemporary Authors, Vol. 93-96
- (iii) The International Author's and Writer's Who's Who, Vol. IX
- (iv) A *Festschrift* in my honor: ***Religion, History and Politics in Nigerian Essays in Honor of Ogbu U. Kalu***, Chima J.Korieh and G. Ugo Nwokeji (Lanham: University Press of America Inc., 2005)

Distinguished Lectureships

- Paul B Henry Lecture, Calvin College, 2003.
- Burgess Lecture, 2003, Luther Seminary, 2003.
- Towards Edinburgh 2010 Lectures, New College, University of Edinburgh and Glasgow, 2004
- African Studies Lectures, Harvard University, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007
- African History Lectures, Trinity International University, 2004
- World Christianity Lectures, Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA, 2005
- Convocation Lecture, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, 2006
- Regent Divinity Lecture, 2007 (5 June, 2007), Regent University of Science and Technology, Accra, Ghana

- ERANOS TAGUNG and Lecture, Ascona, Switzerland, August 10th,2007

ERANOS TAGUNG and Lecture, Ascona, Switzerland, June 10th,2008

Membership Of Boards Of Academic Journals

(i) Member, Editorial Board of:

- (i) *African Theological Journal (Tanzania)*
- (ii) *Journal of Religion in Africa (Leeds)*
- (iii) *Bulletin de Theologie Africaine (Zaire)*
- (iv) *Kabiara (University of Port-Harcourt)*
- (v) *Ikenga (University of Nigeria)*
- (vi) *Journal of Religion and Theology (Anglican Communion, Nigeria)*
- (vii) *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae (Church History Society of Southern Africa)*
- (viii) *Bulletin for Contextual Theology (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa)*
- (ix) *Kosimme: Journal of Arts and Religion, Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria*
- (x) *Journal of World Christianity (Harvard)*

Editor:

- (a) 1975-1987 *West African Religion*
- (b) 1977-1980 *Religions*
- (c) 1979-1982 *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*

Offices Held In Ecumenical Organisations

- (i) 1970-1981 Secretary General, West African Association of Theological Institutions
- (ii) 1977-1988 Board of Management, Institute of Church and Society, Ibadan
- (iii) 1980-1984 Chairman, Conference of African Theological Institutions, (Nairobi, Kenya)
- (iv) 1980-1996 Coordinator, Church History Projects for WAATI and CATI
- (v) 1986-2009 Coordinator, History of the Church in Africa, a multi-volume series sponsored by the Ecumenical

Association of Third World Theologians and Roman Catholic Mission

- (vi) 1986-1996 Secretary and Coordinator, Association of African Church Historians
- (vii) 1989-2009 One of three Executive Directors, Working Commission on the History of the Church in the Third World, London
- (viii) 1996-2001 Member Governing Council, Spiritan School of Theology, Enugu (Holy Ghost Fathers, Roman Catholic Church)
- □□□□□□ (ix) 1997-2009 Co-Director, International Project on Evangelicalism and Globalism.
- (x) 1998-2001 Member, Executive Board, Currents in World Christianity, University of Cambridge;
- (xi) Chair, Executive Board, Section of Central Working Committee (CWC) on Evangelicalism and Globalism.
- (xii) 1998-2009 Member: History of World Christian Movement Project (Pittsburgh Theological Seminary) Funded by Luce Foundation.
- (xiii) Associate Director, Chicago Center for Global Ministries, 2002-05
- (xiv) Associate Director, CCGM, 2002-2005
- (xv) Vice President, Midwest Association of Professors of Mission, 2002-2003
 - President, Midwest Association of Professors of Mission, 2003-2004

Publications

An outstanding scholar, Prof. Ogbu Kalu has published in several national and international journals as a giant in the fields of African Traditional Religion, English Church History, African Church History, Historiography, Theology, Dictionaries, and Encyclopedias. His publication covered a wide range of subjects in humanities and social sciences. He published more than 19 books and over 150 articles in journals and edited volumes. His books include *African Pentecostalism*:

An Introduction (2008), *Clio in a sacred Gard: Christain Presence and African Responses, 1900-2000* (2008), *African Christianity: An African Story* (2005), *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities* (2008, with Elaine Low), *African Christianity* (2007), *power, poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in Afican Christianity, 1960-1996*(2000), *shaping Beloved Community: Multicultural Theological Education* (2006, with David V. Esterline), *The Embattled Gods: Christianization of Igboland, 1841-1991* (1996), *History of Christianity in West Africa* (1981), *The History of Christianity in West African: The Nigerian Story* (1980), *African Church Historiography: An Ecumenical Perspective* (1988), *Divided People of God: Church Union Movement in Nigeria 1875-1966* (1978), and *Readings in African Humanities: African Cultural Development*. Some of Kalu's publications have been republished widely. He was a contributor to

- *Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity ed M Patte*: Charismatic Movements(2000words);History of Christianity in Africa (2400words);Protestantism in Western Africa (300 words)
- *Dictionary of Mission Theology ed John Corrie* (Nottingham, UK: InterVarsity Press,2006): New Religious Movements (2700words), pp42-46; Charismatic Movements (1200 words),pp29-31.
- *Encyclopedia of Western Colonialism since 1450 ed Thomas Benjamin* 3vols (Detroit: McMillan Reference USA,2006): Christian Missionaries in Africa (3000 words); Indigenous Religion and Western Presence in Africa (1000);Sierra Leone (1000 words); Islam, Colonial rule in Subshara Africa (2000 words)
- *International Encyclopedia of Religious Biography ed J.Gordon Melton*. Consultant
- *Lion History of World Christianity ed: J.S.Mbiti* (1000 words)

“African Christianity” In John Bowden ed *Christianity: The Complete Guide* (London: Continuum,2005):2-12

Religion and Conflict Transformation: Discourses on Muslim-Christian Conflicts in Nigeria.” *Violence and Islam*, University of Bayreuth, Germany, June,2006

- *Encyclopedia of Missions and Missionaries ed Jonathan Bonk* (New York: Berkshire Publishing/Routledge,2007): “Political Economy”1250 words (pp345-347) *Global Dictionary of Theology* eds William A Dryness and Matti-Velli Karkkainen (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2008): “African Theology”2500words

- *The Atlas of Global Christianity* ed Kenneth Ross and Todd Johnson Edinburgh University Press,2007: “Modern West African Christianity(3600 words)
- “Christianity in West Africa” *Introducing World Christianity* ed Charles Fardian. Blackwell Press,2007 (7,000 words)
- “Christianity in Sub Saharan Africa from 1800 to the Present” In Lamin Sanneh ed. *Blackwell Companion to World Christianity* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 2009) 5500 words

- Globalization and Mission in the 21st Century in Kalu, ed. **After the Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission** (Louisville,KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009)

- Discursive Interpretations of African Pentecostalism *Fides et Historia*, 2009

Book Reviews: Prof. Ogbu Kalu has reviewed over twenty books which include:

i. Paul Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising Economy*. In *Pneuma*,27,1 Spring 2005:189-191

ii. M.A Oduyoye, *Beads and Strands*; Ka Mana, *Christian Churches of Africa*, Kwame Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa* In *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*,29,1 Jan 2005:48-49.

iii. Frieder Ludwig Afe Adogame, eds. *European Traditions In The Study of Religion in Africa* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag,2004) *Journal of African History*,46,3(November,2005): 511-513

iv. Richard Hall, *On Africa’s Shore: A History of Maryland in Liberia,1834-1857*(Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society,2003, 644pp) *IBMR*,31,3,2007:158-159

v. Luke Ndubuisi, *Paul’s Concept of Charisma in ICorinthians 12*(Frankfurt: Peter Lang,2003) *Pneuma*,28,2,2006:358-361

vi. David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement*(Oxford:James Currey,2006) *H-NET University of Michigan*,2007(5,800 words)

vii. Matthew Ojo, *The End Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria*(Trenton,NJ:Africa World Press, 2006) *Africa Studies Review*,2007

viii. Tabona Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religions in Zimbabwe: Health and Well-being*.(Aldershot,UK: Ashgate,2007) *Pneuma: Jnl of Society for Pentecostal Studies*.2007

- ix. Keith Augustus Burton, *The Bible and African Christianity: The Blessing of Africa* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2007). *Religious Studies Review* (A Publication of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion) 2007
- x. Barbara M Cooper, *Evangelicals in the Sahel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006) *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 47,2 (2009)
- xi. Robert Mbe Akoko, *Ask and You Shall be Given: Pentecostalism and the Economic Crisis in Cameroon* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, University of Leiden, 2006) *Pneuma*
- . "The Changing Faces of Evangelicalism in Africa: A Response to George M. Marsden." Consultation on *The Changing Face of American Evangelicalism* Institute for the Study of American Evangelicalism, Wheaton College, October 13th, 2005 In press, edited by Edith L. Blumhofer.
 - . "Modeling the Genealogy and Character of Global Pentecostalism: An African Perspective." Society for Pentecostal Studies, Pasadena, March, 2006. Published: *Nerd Geref Teol Tydskrif*, 47, 3(2006):506-533.
 - . Encyclopedia, 2006-2009

The Man Ogbu Kalu as a Career Academic

The preceding overview of Prof. Ogbu Kalu's career as a "Professional Academic" portrays much about who the man was:

- A royal Professor of over thirty years standing in the Humanities and Social Sciences.
- A man of extraordinary ability in reading, writing and research A convinced and committed Christian, respected across the board by Roman Catholics Pentecostals and Mainline churches.
- A noble and knowledgeable Elder of the PCN.
- A man of humble and caring disposition who served his generation with candour, courage and commitment
- A great man who never lost the common touch
- An engaging and inspiring lecturer who satisfied the intellectual quest of his students and fellow scholars, both nationally and internationally.

- An intellectually robust, dynamic and devoted Christian church leader of global Acclaim.

Prof. Ogbu you were indeed

A thorough-bred academic of global impact - admirable, accomplished, altruistic, amiable, benevolent, boisterous, caring, capable, courageous, candid, compassionate, competent, daring, devoted, determined, dependable, dutiful ebullient, efficient energetic, erudite, exemplary, famous, fantastic, firm, friendly, forgiving, gallant, generous, godly, great, homely, humane, honest imaginative, indefatigable, influential, incorruptible, just, kind, knowledgeable, liberal, mentor, noble, objective, patriot, pleasant, a philanthropist, publisher, pioneer, quintessential, reputable, responsible, sage, sincere, sociable, thinker, understanding, unequivocal, vibrant, versatile, vigorous, wise, witty, youthful and zealous...

O Ogbu, you were really a phenomenon; no wonder you inspired so many with your example of true greatness, selflessness and hard work. You were a role model of professional excellence; you uplifted countless souls with your warmth and compassion. Indeed, your professional career was marked by faith, integrity, scholarship, competence, joy and compassion.

Ogbu, Kalu: A Hyphen of Great Tension

Ogbu, it must be said, was a hyphen of great tension between “Town and Gown”, between the privileged and the underprivileged; between the teacher and the taught; between the educated and the uneducated; between the young and the old; between Nigeria PCN and Canada PCC; and also between black Africa on the one hand and Asia/Europe on the other hand. It was by these means that he found outlets for his inventive genius and creative abilities which in turn gave expression to his potential for moral goodness, academic excellence and poetic flair.

O God... why!

But, one could ask: O God! Who is Ogbu Kalu that You are so mindful of him or the son of Kalu that your so richly endowed him?

O Ogbu! (if I may borrow and adapt the words of William Wordsworth)

Your soul was like a star and dwelt apart;

Thou had a heart whose breadth was as wide as the sea;
A heart in which there was no guile – pure as the naked heavens, majestic
and free;
So didst thou travel on life's rough way-
In cheerful godliness, ready always
The lowest/loveliest duties to perform'
The loveless to love
The helpless to help
The down-trodden to uplift

O! Ogbu, why was your beauty slain in the midst of your years?
How are the mighty gone forth!
But – now why this your tale?
Your tale is heard and yet it is not fully told;
Your fruit is fallen and yet your leaves are green;
Your youth is spent and yet you are not old;
You conquered the world, yet you did not live out your years;
Your thread is out, yet it is not fully spurn;
Now you live yet, your life is done (Tishbone)

In sum, it could be said from the fore going, that Prof. Ogbu Kalu, a Professor par excellence, was a good man and a good teacher who was committed to training, educating, equipping, pruning, inspiring, shaping up, brushing up, mobilizing, facilitating, improving, and guiding his students turning them from being crude to being polished, and from being intellectually lazy to being intellectually alert, hardworking and productive.

Prof. Ogbu lifted his students up

- From being academically sloppy to being academically accomplished
- From being uncivilized to being civilized
- From being primitive to being modern
- From being selfish to being selfless
- From being weak characters to being strong characters
- From being corrupt in office to being incorrupt and incorruptible in office
- From being ungodly to being godly
- From being poor in ideas to creative in ideas

- From being proud to being humble
- From being discriminatory to being accommodating

God Give us more men like Ogbu Kalu

God give us more men like Ogbu Kalu,
 Men a time like this demands;
 Strong minds, great heart, ready hands!
 Men whom the lust of office cannot kill;
 Men who possess opinions and a will;
 Men who will not lie;
 Men who can stand before demagogues
 and damn their treacherous flatteries without winking...
 Men who live above the fog in public duty and in private thinking.
 O God! Give us more men like Ogbu Kalu in Jesus name Amen (Josaih
 Gilbert Holland)

In view of the above I am persuaded to say that History rarely throws up such men, as Prof. Ogbu Kalu, who through sheer force of character, churchillian indomitability, public spiritedness, prodigious intellect, generosity of mind, crystal clear foresightedness, incredible appetite for industry, have transformed their world leaving it a better place, a much more better place than they found it.

Yes, Prof. Ogba Kalu has made the world a better place than he found it. He has in fact cheated mortality by his publications through which he still speaks, teaches and preaches.

This idea of the immortality of the dead is brilliantly captured in a poem by Edgar Guest which says inter-alia:

*If something of you isn't living long
 After your spirit is fled;
 If your hand ceases toiling and giving,
 The minute your body is dead,
 Then you have quit this world a debtor,
 And failed in the infinite plan;
 If you have not left a roadway better,
 You have rendered no service to man.*

From what has been said thus far, it could justifiably be said that Prof. Ogbu Kalu was a great man by all standards

- Great in his birth and parentage
- Great in his education
- Great in his academic credentials
- Great in his professional career
- Great in his publications
- Great in his propensity for humanitarian services
- Great in his service to the Academy, Church and Society
- Great in his intellect and integrity
- Great in the number of meritorious recognition and Awards
- Great in his travels and triumphs
- Great in his popularity and prosperity
- Great in his family life as a faithful and loving husband, father and grandfather.
- Great in his Christian life and living
- Great in Isiugwu Ohafia, Ohafia, Nsukka, Canada, Chicago, London, Ghana etc.
- Great in death, not death by a debilitating disease or sickness but great in that he is being buried by his loved ones, friends, relations, colleagues, from all over the world.

Yes, as this great man now takes his exist- how do we conclude our tribute to him? Truly it could be said of him in the words of Mark Anthony in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar that his life was gentle and the element so mixed up in him that nature - indeed, his students, colleagues, countrymen, friends and townsmen- could stand up and say to all the world, this was the man, a great man indeed. Yes, this our great man has now run his raced⁷, fought a good fight, finished his course and kept the faith. Therefore there is laid up for him, a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge shall give him... (2 Tim.4: 7-8)

Adieu, Ogbu till we meet again. May your noble Soul rest in Peace through the Prince of Peace even Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.