

A TRIBUTE TO OGBU U. KALU (1942–2009)

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I am sure that we were all shocked and saddened to hear the news of the sudden death of Dr Ogbu Kalu on 7 January 2009 after a brief illness. Dr Kalu, who spent most of his life and academic career in Nigeria, was most recently the Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago.

We first met in 1999 when I was just beginning my doctoral studies on African Pentecostalism at the University of Birmingham. It was his invitation to participate in a conference in Nigeria which helped to kick-start my field research and introduce me to some of the pioneers of the Nigerian Pentecostal movement. I remember the group discussions we had with some of these pastors, and the respect with which they held him. Subsequently, I benefited from Dr Kalu's comments on my own work and from interacting with his numerous publications.

Dr Kalu has been described as a “towering figure in the fields of Global Mission, African Christianity and Global Pentecostalism.” He studied History at the Universities of Toronto, Canada, and London, United Kingdom, obtaining BA (Hons), MA, PhD (University of Toronto). He also obtained a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, and a Doctor of Divinity in 1997 from the Presbyterian College, Montreal, Canada.

Dr Kalu began a distinguished teaching career at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1974, leading to a number of lecturing engagements at among others Harvard University, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary, South Korea, the University of Edinburgh, and the University of Toronto. He also served as a visiting professor at New College (University of Edinburgh), McGill University, University of Toronto, Harvard Divinity School and the University of Bayreuth.

He was a prolific writer on a wide range of subjects, publishing over 180 articles and authoring or editing 18 books, including *The History of Christianity in West Africa* (ed. London and New York: Longman, 1980); *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in African Christianity, 1960-1996* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000); and *African Christianity: An African Story* (ed. Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria, 2005). His latest book, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) is already regarded as a seminal work of its kind.

Dr Kalu was not only a world-class scholar but also a man of deep Christian faith and conviction. For many years he served as an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church in Nigeria and held various national leadership positions in the denomination. As a resident of Chicago, he was a member of Progressive Community Center – The People’s Church.

Dr Kalu is survived by his wife, Wilhelmina, and four children, Edward, Stella, Jayne and Patience.