

Agboola, David Toyebi (1914–2015)

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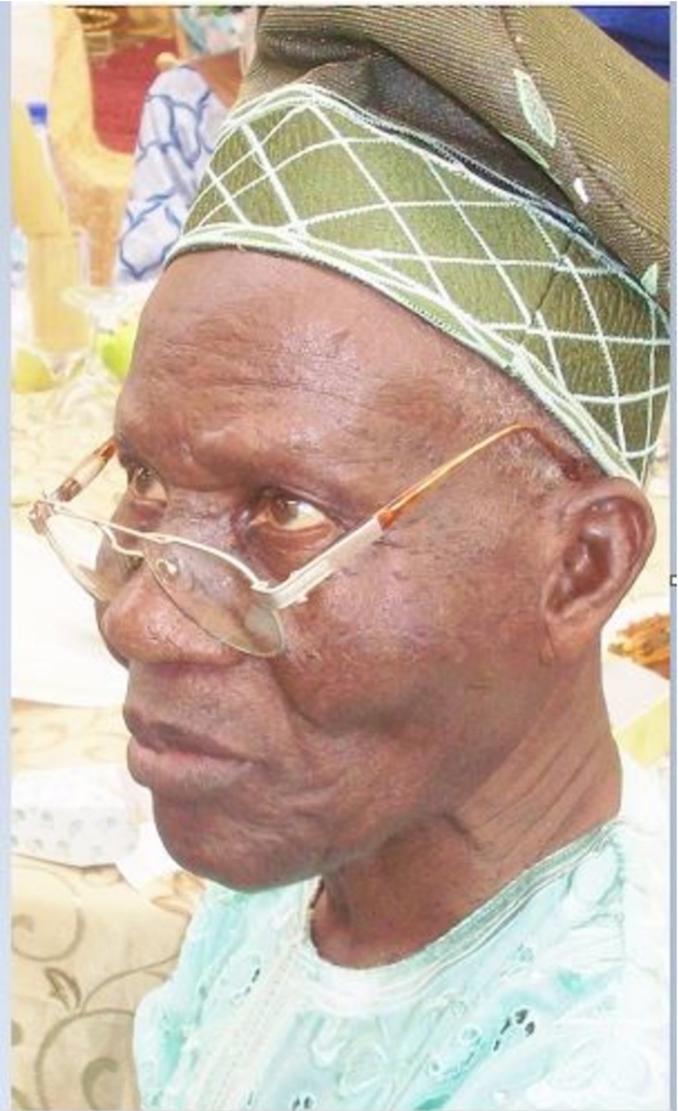
David Toyebi Agboola was a pastor, administrator, and published author from Nigeria.

Early Life, Education, and Marriage

David Toyebi Agboola was born into the royal house of Iletun in Otun, Ekiti state in about the year 1914.¹ Due to poor recordkeeping habits of the time, the exact date is not known. In 1935 he was among the children sponsored by the king of Otun Ekiti, his hometown, to attend the Makarata Primary School in Omu Aran, in the current Kwara state. The school was for boys only and was headed by a Caucasian man known as J. D. Clark. David, an industrious young man, had already learned the family trade of basket weaving using palm fronds. This he taught his fellow students.²

In 1937, due to his admiration of Adventist teachers and their respectful and loving relationships with their students, he transferred to the SDA Elementary School in Otun. By 1940, he completed and passed the Standard 4 examination at Otun and moved on to Central SDA School at Ibadan.

At this higher level, David had difficulty paying his school fees. However, God had a plan as the Honorable Atolagbe, his mentor from Otun, introduced him to Pastor McClement, the leader of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Nigeria. David was admitted under a work-study arrangement, working as a mail boy which helped



David T. Agboola

Photo courtesy of Victoria A. Egwakhe.

cover approximately half of his tuition. The remainder was covered by an elderly missionary lady for whom he worked chopping firewood on a weekly basis.

By 1941, Agboola had successfully completed Standard 6 and in the subsequent years was able to attend the Seventh-day Adventist Teachers' Training College at Otun Ekiti. There he successfully passed the national teacher certification examination; he was one of 11 candidates from his school to successfully do so out of 55 nationwide candidates. He also received some training in agriculture at Moore Plantation, an agricultural research establishment.

The above only marks the beginning of David Agboola's educational journey which included obtaining a B.Sc. in geography and political science from Leeds University, an MA in religion from Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, and culminating in an honorary doctorate in human capacity development from Babcock University, Nigeria.

David married Margaret Meyolanu in 1951. They had five children who have now gone on to have their own families.

Ministry

David Agboola started his church work as a student teacher in the SDA school at Ipoti, Ekiti. He also worked as a teacher at the Seventh-day Adventist Teachers Training College in Ihie, Abia state, and later at the Erunmu Central SDA School. Subsequently, he was called to the West Nigeria Mission headquarters in Ibadan where he was appointed as a traveling teacher for the mission. Towards the end of 1963, David and his family were moved to the Adventist Grammar School (AGS) at Ede where he served as the lead geography teacher for many years. David Agboola was one of those who remained on the church's salary scale when AGS was taken over by the government. Teachers had the option of choosing to be on the government salary scale (after the government took over church-owned schools) which was higher than the church salary scale. Those who chose to be on the government scale effectively chose to work for the government and not the church. They were not under the church pension system.

In 1973 David Agboola was called to the Nigeria Union Mission office in Lagos as director of the education and youth departments. In 1974 he hosted the first-ever Seventh-day Adventist nationwide youth congress at the University of Ibadan. It was a huge success. From the union, he went on to serve as a lecturer at the Adventist Seminary of West Africa (now Babcock University). There he served in various capacities including being the dean of men. In 1977, David was ordained into the gospel ministry. He was one of the pioneer church educators to whom Babcock University gave an honorary doctorate degree.

Later Life and Publications

David T. Agboola retired from formal service in 1991 and continued to make himself available to his local church and community. He died on August 26, 2015.

Pastor Agboola authored numerous articles and several books, including *The Seventh-day Adventists in Yoruba Land: 1914-1964* (published 1987) and *Seventh-day Adventist History in West Africa (1888-1988): A Mustard Seed* (published 2001).

NOTES

1. Biography of David T. Agboola as written in his funeral program, kept in the author's personal collection.
2. Unless otherwise noted, the information in this article is based on the author's personal knowledge as Pastor Agboola's daughter.

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