Kakwi, Filibus Mayan (1904–1995)

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Filibus Mayan Kakwi, one of the first converts to Seventh-day Adventism in northern Nigeria, served the church as an evangelist, pastor, and, in the 1960s, in the administration of the North Nigerian Mission.
Early Life and Conversion

Filibus Mayan Kakwi, also known as Kazanzauna, was born in 1904, the second son in the family of Kakwi Akwoi. He had five brothers: Lamba, Mallum, Yinwa, and Tamba.

Mayan was a prominent leading member of the kudodo traditional religion in the Amo community of Jengre before becoming one of the first fruits of J. J. Hyde’s first baptism in 1936.

To demonstrate his true conversion and acceptance of the Adventist faith, Filibus divorced four of his five wives but retained Maryamu as his one wife. Ten children were born to the family of Filibus: Benjamin Gindau, Shawuya, Hanatu, Wafillu Annah, Maryamu, Zilla, Tanko Yohanna, Methuselah, Lilian, Asiya, and Esther Taye.

Mayan’s only education was two years of an adult literacy-cum-baptismal class in the Bible school taught by Pastor Hyde.

Ministry

While in the baptism class, Mayan began to witness his faith to friends in the neighborhoods. This continued till 1940, when he and his schoolmates were sent out officially as non-salaried pioneer gospel workers. His first deployment was to Babban Padama. Filibus remained in this location for six years, building a large church with more than 68 baptized members. He was ordained with his elder brother, Simon Lamba, in 1957.

The new churches Filibus pioneered include Bakin Kogi, Figizini, Padaman Shanu, Kayarda, and Doka. He received his first salary when he was at Bakin Kogi. Skilled in masonry work, he built the church buildings in all the new stations where the president deployed him.

Filibus was also a talented linguist. He fluently spoke Amo, Hausa, Jere, Lemoro, Kurama, and Gurei. Wherever he was posted, he easily mastered the mother tongue of the locality and communicated fluently with the people.

In 1960 he was elected as the Home Missionary secretary during the biennial constituency meeting of the North Nigerian Mission. He later served as secretary of the Islamic department. Though he retired in 1974, he was active as the church pastor of Matsira until his death in 1995.

Legacy

Pastor Filibus is fondly remembered as a pastor with a strong passion for songs. He composed several choruses in Hausa, which were always sung before his sermon. Some of his choruses:

Magane mai rai, Yesu wanke ni da ita; Words of life, Jesus wash me with them;

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Zan zauna a kafar Yesu, Zan zauna akafa; I, zan zauna akazar Yesus har abada! I’ll sit at Jesus’ feet; yes, I’ll sit at Jesus’ feet forever!

This song earned him his nickname Pastor Kazanzauna.

Za mu je sama; zamu je sama! Randa Yesu zaya za. We shall go to heaven, we shall go to heaven, on the day Jesus comes.

Some of his Hausa choruses have been incorporated in the Hausa Advent hymnal, Wakokin Yabo, such as numbers 184, 195, 313, and 340. His grave and that of his wife are at the same cemetery with his brother Bulus, behind the Jengre Seventh-day Adventist Hospital.

Sources


Notes

1. Most information in this article relies on oral tradition that has been preserved among the Seventh-day Adventists in Northern Nigeria or is from


