Jacob A. Achinefu

A Lifetime of Faithful Service in Nigeria

Jacob A. Achinefu has devoted more than six decades of his life to preaching the gospel, training preachers, strengthening congregations, and serving the church in Nigeria. His life reflects a deep commitment to the work of Christ and to the spiritual growth of the church across his homeland.

Jacob was born on May 10, 1942, in Isiahiafor Amavor in the Osisioma Ngwa area of what is now Abia State, Nigeria. His journey in the faith began early. In 1958 he was converted to Christ during a public religious debate between Seventh-day Adventists and members of the Church of Christ. That moment set the direction of his entire life.

The following year he enrolled in a Bible training school [Nigerian Christian Bible College (NCBC), supported by African Christian Schools Foundation (ACSF) from Nashville TN] where he studied under missionaries who had come to Nigeria to help establish and strengthen the church. These teachers not only instructed students in Scripture but also modeled Christian character and dedication to the work of the gospel. Their influence left a lasting impression on Jacob and helped shape his lifelong commitment to ministry.

After completing his early training, Jacob began working with a small village congregation. Even in these early years his work involved both preaching and helping build stability in local churches. During the difficult years surrounding the Nigerian civil war in the late 1960s, many missionaries were forced to leave the country. Yet the work of the church continued through local leaders like Jacob who carried forward the teaching and ministry that had been established.

In 1973 Jacob traveled to the United States to continue his education. With assistance from brethren who supported his training, he studied at Lubbock Christian College and later at Abilene Christian University. His wife, Justina, joined him in the United States in 1974. After completing his studies, Jacob returned to Nigeria in 1978, committed to using his training in service to the church.

Leadership in Christian Education and Medical Missions

Upon returning to Nigeria, Jacob resumed teaching at the Bible training school where he had once been a student. His work helped prepare new generations of preachers and church leaders.

During this period he also became closely connected with the Nigerian Christian Hospital (NCH) in Nlagu, a medical mission that has served communities across southeastern Nigeria for many years. In 1981 Jacob served as Business Manager of the

hospital while his wife Justina worked as the Matron. Together they helped oversee operations that combined medical care with Christian service.

While working at the hospital, Jacob also preached regularly at the nearby village congregation. In time, his preaching took him to other congregations throughout the region, including churches in Aba and Lagos. His work has always combined local congregational service with broader efforts to strengthen the church throughout Nigeria.

Jacob later served as Director of the Nigerian Christian Hospital and also as Director of the Nigerian Institute of Arts and Theological Studies, continuing his long involvement in Christian education and leadership training.

A Ministry of Strengthening the Church

Over time, Jacob's role in the church expanded beyond serving a single congregation. Many churches began turning to him when they faced internal difficulties or doctrinal concerns. As a result, he increasingly became known as someone who could help congregations resolve problems, restore unity, and strengthen their commitment to the teachings of Scripture.

Rather than remaining permanently with one congregation, he began traveling widely across Nigeria, assisting churches through preaching engagements, lectureships, leadership councils, and training events for preachers. His ministry has included house-to-house evangelism, open-air preaching, weddings, funerals, and gatherings designed to encourage cooperation among congregations.

He has also helped coordinate support for Nigerian preachers in various regions, distributing funds that assist men working in areas where churches are small and resources are limited.

In addition, Jacob has written and taught extensively to help Christians better understand the teachings of Scripture and defend the truth of the gospel.

Rebuilding After Violence

Nigeria has faced periods of significant instability, and Jacob's ministry has not been untouched by these dangers.

At one point a preacher training school near the Nigerian Christian Hospital was attacked by armed members of a hostile group. The building was shot up and the violence claimed the lives of a teacher and two students. The tragedy forced the school to close temporarily. Jacob played an important role in helping revive the work and restore training opportunities for young preachers who would serve congregations throughout the region.

In another incident, Jacob himself was kidnapped and held for about a week without food or water. The ordeal caused severe dehydration and led to kidney failure. By God's mercy he recovered, but the experience illustrated the dangers that ministers and Christian workers sometimes face in parts of Nigeria.

Following the kidnapping, Jacob and his family relocated for a time to Lagos in order to avoid further threats. Even during that difficult period, he continued preaching and serving the church.

Continuing the Work in Later Years

Today Jacob continues his ministry from Abia State, though he has adjusted his work to reflect his age and health. In recent years he considered the possibility of retiring from extensive travel, but the ongoing needs of the church led him to reconsider.

In a recent letter he wrote that invitations to preach and concerns about doctrinal confusion among some younger preachers have convinced him that he must continue working "as the Lord gives me strength."

One of his present priorities is encouraging and stabilizing young preachers. He has expressed concern about teachings that depart from Scripture and has made it his goal to help guide younger ministers toward faithful teaching and sound doctrine.

Another focus of his work is the establishment and strengthening of congregations in areas where Christians must travel long distances to worship. One such effort involves a small congregation near the Nigerian Christian Hospital where some believers walk miles to attend services. Jacob has helped support a preacher working with this group and is seeking ways to secure land where a church building and preacher's residence could be constructed.

Even at this stage of life, Jacob continues traveling, preaching, counseling churches, and writing to encourage the faith of Christians.

The Challenges of Ministry in Nigeria

Like many Christian workers in Nigeria, Jacob carries out his ministry in a setting marked by economic hardship and social instability.

Unemployment and poverty remain widespread. Many people struggle to provide for their families, and churches often have limited resources to support local ministry. Inflation and rising property costs create additional challenges when congregations attempt to secure meeting places or build facilities.

Security concerns also remain a reality in some areas. Kidnapping and crime have become serious problems in parts of the country, creating dangers for travelers and ministers who move frequently between communities.

Despite these conditions, the church continues to grow in many places. Faithful preachers and teachers work tirelessly to strengthen congregations and to share the gospel with those who have not yet heard it.

Partnership with the Northwest Church of Christ

For many years the Northwest Church of Christ has maintained a close partnership with Jacob and his ministry. Through prayer, encouragement, and financial assistance, the congregation has helped support his preaching, travel, and teaching efforts across Nigeria.

This partnership reflects the New Testament pattern of cooperation between congregations and gospel workers in different regions. By supporting faithful ministers like Jacob, the church participates in the spread of the gospel far beyond its local community.

Jacob regularly expresses deep gratitude for this partnership and remembers the congregation in his prayers.

A Life Devoted to the Gospel

From his conversion in 1958 to his ongoing ministry today, Jacob Achinefu's life has been devoted to the service of Christ and His church. He has preached in villages and cities, taught students preparing for ministry, guided congregations through difficult times, and helped train the next generation of preachers.

Even after decades of service, his commitment remains strong. Rather than stepping away from the work, he continues to labor as long as strength allows, seeking to preserve sound teaching, strengthen the church, and bring others to Christ.

His work stands as a reminder that faithful ministry is not measured only in years of service, but in a lifetime of dedication to the gospel.