

THE OGUNYEMIS



**A
Walk
with
God**

*Life & Time of
Apostle Cornelius
Ogunyemi*

This book is dedicated to
Apostle Cornelius Ajayi Ogunyemi
who to the glory of God was

A Yielded Vessel

A Prophetic Icon

A Hero of Faith

A Soldier of Christ

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NOT FOR SALE

A Covenant Child

Birth and Childhood

Cornelius Ajayi Ogunyemi was born into the family of Pa Samuel and Ma Dorcas Ogunyemi at Ilesha on the 16th of August 1933. He was the second of three children. Before he was conceived, his parents had lost a number of their children shortly after birth, and so they made a vow to God that if their subsequent child was a male and survived, they would dedicate him to God's service for the rest of his life. Their prayer was soon answered with the birth of a baby boy they named Cornelius (in reference to Acts 10:31: "and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard . . .'").

Cornelius lost his dad when he was still young, so he had to grow up fast and take on the responsibility of fending for himself, his mum, and his sisters. He would frequently work on the farm and hunt for

game to earn money to pay his school fees. He had a great love for education, and it was his ambition right from when he was young to become a professor; he was determined to achieve this despite the many obstacles he encountered.

No More Struggle

The Call to Ministry

After completing standard six, his parents told him that he was a child of promise and that he had been dedicated to God's service before he was born. This came as a shock, and he immediately rebelled against the idea of becoming a full-time minister of the gospel because it was not in line with his ambition of becoming a professor. Also, it was not a lucrative career, and preachers were then generally held in low regard in the society.

In his mid-teens, he was handed over to Pastor Banji, a minister in The Apostolic Church in Ilesha—like Samuel was handed over to Eli in the temple—to start the work of the ministry. As he told the story in later years, he tried escaping from the mission several times without success, including acting in ways that could get him expelled, which did not work either.

Then one fateful day, he came to the realization that he was stuck with the calling, and he yielded his life to God. He then made a covenant to serve Him for the rest of his life, with the condition that God would in turn bless him with all the good things of life.

After this, he had a powerful spiritual encounter in his room during a time of prayer and fasting; the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily and he began praying in tongues and prophesying. The experience lasted for days, and those living in the mission house were scared because he had locked himself up in a room. On the seventh day, he came out of the room through a window, went to the church to take the bell, and began ringing it throughout the community, proclaiming God's kingdom.

This marked the beginning of the ministry and mission of Pastor Cornelius Ajayi Ogunyemi, which would eventually touch the lives of thousands of people around the world, particularly in Nigeria and the United Kingdom.





On Your Marks!...

Education

He started his primary education in 1939 at The Apostolic Church Demonstration School, Oke Oye, Ilesha, and had completed Standard Six by 1947.

He was so full of wits to the extent that when a girl in his year was rude to him, and he said to himself that he would deal with her. As the janitor of the school, he is responsible for getting to school early to open the doors. So he went to school earlier than before on this particular day. He went to the class of the rude girl in question and brought out essential items from the girl's class, scattering the items on the field. He knew the girl was the class representative in her class, and she was responsible for keeping the things intact.

When school resumed at 8 am, the class teacher was unhappy with the state of the items, so the girl was seriously disciplined.

After his Standard Six and his spiritual encounter, all his educational pursuits would be along the lines of theological training.

In the early 1950s, he enrolled as part of the second set of The Apostolic Church Bible College in Ilesa under the leadership of Pastor Sydney Elton, a missionary from the United Kingdom, and graduated after two years. Later, in 1969, he went to Wales to study theology at The Apostolic Church Bible College, Penygroes, and graduated with a Diploma in Theology. His prophetic and evangelistic gifts were very remarkable, and he was constantly receiving invitations to preach in churches across South Wales during his duration of study there.

Love without Borders

Marriage

The Lord provided a help meet for him in the person of late Deaconess Juliana Olufunmilayo Fapohunda. A courageous, educationist, God-fearing, kingdom seeking-woman.

Cornelius and Juliana met when they were teenagers at Oke Oye Ilesha; their parents were engaged in farming and lived within the same community. So they will wake up early, around 4 am, to go to the farm, come back to sell, do house chores and prepare for school. They also attend the same local church - The Apostolic Church Oke Oye Ilesha. That was where their love and affection began but of course, in those days, before you decide on an important issue like marriage, you have to seek God's guidance.

They prayed, sought divine counsel and got married on the 3rd of January 1961. As

couples, they went through several challenges of life together and prevailed. Juliana could not conceive for about a year when they married, and they overcame.

Another landmark story of their marriage was how Cornelius stood by Juliana to further her educational ambition. The general rule in The Apostolic Church then in the '50s and '60s was that if you are married to a Pastor, you cannot have a meaningful education or career. You are to sit at home and take care of the children and your husband. This couple broke that protocol. Cornelius stood before his leaders to defend his wife's educational ambition, and she was allowed to further her education to teacher training level and eventually university level in the early '80s.

These two stood by each other through the thin and thick, during adversities and trials of life that they faced, they had each other's back. When Cornelius was out of work for 3 years (even though he went back to farming), Juliana worked as a senior teacher earning a salary and doing some trading by the side to support the family. Juliana was a pillar behind Cornelius Ajayi Ogunyemi throughout her life on earth. She went with him to all the mission fields he was

transferred to, helping to build and raise women of prayer and purpose. She taught them how to be homemakers, educated, and support their husbands and children.

God blessed them with seven godly children who are pillars in God's kingdom across the nations. They are both excellent and loving parents to all their children, constantly seeking their complete well-being spiritually, emotionally, mentally, health wise, and above all, educationally. They laboured day and night to give their children the best they could in every aspect of life.





Poured Out...

Ministry and Missions

Cornelius Ogunyemi's active ministry spanned over 60 years. He began his ministerial work in a little community on the outskirts of Ilesha, and afterwards worked in the old Bendel State, preaching and establishing churches in Benin, Warri, Igara, Opila, Agenebode, and several other towns and villages.

In the mid-70s, he was transferred to Ilara Mokin, and later to Akure, first as the district pastor and in 1980 he was appointed the first Ondo Area Superintendent. He was later transferred to Lagos, serving in Bariga, Shomolu, and then Amukoko as the first Apapa Area Superintendent. From Apapa he was transferred to Makurdi, then to Kaduna, where he retired due to ill health. Overall, he served in over 20 stations across the country, in the North, Middle Belt, and Western regions.

Throughout his career, his primary ministry thrust was building God's people up spiritually. Also, he was always looking out for the welfare of God's people spiritually, physically, and financially. He always made sure he put up a house of worship in any station where he met none or where it was uncompleted.

He was a workaholic and was always about His Master's business. The fruits of his labour – spiritual and physical – are doing exploits all over the world today.

His Prophetic Ministry

His prophetic ministry was outstanding, and it singled him out among his contemporaries. In the 1970s, he was one of the three LAWNA council prophets alongside late Pastor Osinowo and Pastor Adebayo (both of blessed memory).

There are so many examples of his remarkable accuracy in the prophetic ministry. For instance, before the pronouncement of the benediction during one LAWNA annual convention in the late 1970s, the Spirit of the Lord came upon

him, and he told the leaders on the altar to greet themselves farewell because not all of them would be alive for the next convention. That evening, one of the main leaders went back to his station, slept, and was translated to glory before morning.

At another LAWNA annual convention during the late 1970s, he prophesied that the newly appointed LAWNA Chairman, Pastor I. G. Sakpo, and the executive council members should gather round the altar in the presence of the congregation and bury the seed of division and segregation within LAWNA territory. To the glory of God, LAWNA is still standing today.

Sometime in the 1980s, thieves stole the tyres of his car in the middle of the night. That night, he declared that just like his vehicle had been grounded, within seven days the thieves would also be grounded. True to the prophetic pronouncement, the police arrested them three days later at a house on the street the crime was committed.

The stories of his prophetic exploits are too numerous to be told here. There were many days when people would start arriving at his residence from as early as six in the

morning, seeking divine guidance and counselling. He was so selfless that he would sometimes continue attending to them till evening without having any meal.

He also regularly organized meetings to train other people to be able to better maximize the use of their prophetic gifts in all the stations he was posted to.

On a particular day, he told one of his sons not to travel to Ibadan. His son left the house as if he was going back to campus but headed straight to the bus garage to board a bus to Ibadan. Later that day when Baba went out, His nephew was with him, Baba asked him, where is your brother, he trying to cover up, answered that his brother has gone back to campus. Baba gave him a knock on his head telling him is this not your brother that I'm watching now boarding a bus to Ibadan and Baba described the shirt and the trousers with the specific colour his son was wearing on his way to Ibadan. His nephew said he was dumbfounded, thinking to himself and wondering how Baba knew.

Even though so many people were touched by his prophetic gift, including many who were wealthy and highly placed

in society, he never took advantage of God's people or make merchandise of the prophetic grace. He would often tell those who wanted to bless him with gifts and money to give it to support God's work, particularly church projects.

His Evangelistic Ministry

Cornelius Ajayi Ogunyemi was a unique gift to the body of Christ. He was always organising revival meetings wherever he was posted to. In 1973, he ministered alongside the late Pastor E. Ogundeke, who was then the LAWNA evangelist at Olorunda Ketu. The Lord confirmed their ministries with signs and wonders, and scores of people experienced deliverance from the power of darkness.

During one revival meeting in Kaduna, people that came with magical tokens ended up dropping them at the altar and surrendering to the power of God.

One of the high points of his evangelistic career was a confrontation with idol worshippers in a town called Ilara Mokin in

Ondo State. During a preaching campaign in that town, he and some zealous young men who were part of the church's prayer team, felt inspired to sing a Yoruba song which can be translated, "Idols are not real; idols cannot save anyone; only Jesus can save."

Afterwards, they entered the town's main shrine dedicated to a deity called "Ajalemogun", took out the drums there, and started drumming and singing. A crowd soon gathered around them, and the shrine's custodians, feeling humiliated, attacked them with charms. They also made a pronouncement that Pastor Cornelius and his team would be dead within seven days.

But the team began to pray in tongues while there and then went back to the church where they continued praying and fasting. It is on record that within 5 days, about three of the shrine's custodians died. In panic, the king invited Pastor Cornelius and begged him to leave the town for fear of more of their people dying. Eventually, the king became a member of The Apostolic Church and attended Sunday services regularly.

This mighty evangelistic grace was constantly manifested in every village, town, and city where he served. He was still active in evangelism in his mid-70s: crossing rivers by canoe to preach the good news to villagers in Makurdi and calling on the government to provide education in villages without schools. At this age, he was still sleeping in huts in villages and eating with the locals in his quest to proclaim the gospel of Christ

His Pastoral Ministry

He was a pastor par excellence. He spent considerable time visiting and counselling members, and he also invested a lot of time and resources into developing young people. He is passionate about progress in every member of his congregation; if you are jobless, he wants you employed; if you don't have education, Pastor C. A will encourage you to go to school; if you are barren, he wants you to have your children; if you are poor financially, he wants you to become rich. If you are rich, he wants you to have more to support your family, the work of

God and those in need. If you face spiritual challenges, he is ready to pray and fast with you until you are victorious. If you are an eligible bachelor or a spinster, he wants you married immediately. He will employ all the ministry gifts at his disposal to move God's people forward. Whenever any member is going through any challenge, they can knock on his door any hour of the day, whether during the day, midnight, night or early morning. He will get up and follow them to go and resolve the problem. He is easily accessible to all his members regardless of age and status. He has a large, loving and forgiven heart like His Master Christ – the good shepherd, to accommodate everyone around him, both young and old. He quietly supports widows, orphans, single parents with his funds. Sponsoring the education of some members, he is a giver, so liberal towards God's work and His people. On several occasions, when people give him an envelope full of money, he won't count it no matter how bulky; he will drop it into the offering basket during the offering. He was a skilful teacher of God's word; he was always studying, first to feed his inner man, and then his congregation.





Overflowing Grace

Testimonies of lives touched

A man who is a brother to Desconess J. O Ogunyemi's former colleague at TAC primary school in Ilara, Ondo state ran mad. Ps C. A asked that they bring him from Ilara to the mission house at Akure. Organised prayer sessions for him with the ministers under him. He was completely delivered



A young lady was brought by her Dad to the mission house at Amukoko in Apapa Area. She also had mental problems, prayers were organised by Pastor C.A with the ministers, she was completely healed, got married and joined her husband overseas.



A lady testified of how she was completely healed of stroke through the healing ministry of Ps C.A. According to her she, she was prayed for over the phone and was instructed to get olive oil which was prayed on. She was applying the oil on her body and she was completely made whole.



A lady that had fibroid for many years delivered the fibroid like a baby in one of the revival meetings held in the early 80's at The Apostolic Church head quarters Isinkan, Akure Ondo area



His Apostolic grace lifted many hopeless, visionless people that are in doldrums to a high level and positions in life



An incident happened with one his older daughters who just got a job in the late 80's. One morning Ps C.A told her not to go to the office, she sneaked out to go because she just couldn't understand why she should not

go. On her way, the lorry bus 'Molue' veered off the road on the 3rd mainland bridge and almost entered into the river. When she came back, she had to repent and thank God for saving her life.



A similar incident happened to one of his younger daughters. She said she was about to go to school to get her result. She said Baba C.A just came out of his room and told him not to go school. She also sneaked out and went to school. While was on her way a lorry came and lifted her and she found herself on the other side of the road. She couldn't tell anyone when she got home. It was some of the members that witnessed the incident that came to inform Baba what happened.



A lady at Markudi narrated how she became committed again as a believer. She was told by her husband that the new Area Superintendent transferred to Markurdi was a man full of the Spirit of God. At this point in her life she has lost faith in God, stopped

going to church because she was facing a serious challenge. According to her she decided to go to mission house. She met Mama (late Deaconess J. O Ogunyemi and they were chatting. She said Baba was reading news papers and he just started narrating how she has been looking for a child sent to her from her home town that has been lost for months and he (Baba) began to give instructions by the spirit about what to do. She said she was rooted on the spot, speechless and said to herself that so God still uses men like this in the Apostolic Church. That was the beginning of her journey of faith afresh in God.



...Spread Over **His Apostolic Grace**

He was a very charismatic leader, and he had a remarkable administrative gift. These, coupled with a strong work ethic, made him stand out as a giant in his generation. There was always an aura of authority around him.

Pastors and leaders who were posted to work under him usually resumed at their duty post with some trepidation because of his reputation for being a hard worker and a tough leader. Working with him often required long hours and was often spiritually, mentally, and physically demanding. Slothful subordinates never had it easy with him. However, those who were ready to learn and grow usually found it to be one of the best experiences of their lives because of the opportunities he provided for their gifts and talents to flourish. This way, he was able to raise many future leaders, many of whom

went on to become superintendents, apostles, and prophets within the Apostolic Church and beyond.

He was a leader with vision and foresight. His superiors were always confident about his ability to get the job done wherever he was sent to. As such he was often given some of the most difficult assignments; and he always delivered.

He never wavered in the face of opposition. Once he was certain that his goals were aligned with God's will, he would march on, irrespective of whether he had the support of the minority or the majority of the people. This mindset made him succeed where others failed.

He was also a very straightforward person, never shying away from giving his honest assessment of a situation or directly confronting people about issues. He always avoided getting involved in church politics and was famously known by the epithet, "Ireje le fogbe" (referring to his sense of equity and fairness) by his colleagues in the Christian Association of Nigeria (Lagos State Chapter).

He was passionate about unity in the body of Christ. He detested tribalism and frequently preached against it; his slogan was, “No nepotism, no tribalism; we are one in Christ.” He always ensured everyone was given an equal opportunity to serve regardless of their tribe.

The marks of his apostleship were not only evident when things were rosy, but also in difficult circumstances. When he had a fall out with his leaders in 1980, shortly after becoming the Old Ondo Area Superintendent, he humbled himself by accepting their decision to suspend him from leadership for a period. During this time, several churches invited him to join their leadership team, but he chose to embrace the discipline as part of his lot in life. He took to farming to take care of his family during the three-year period it lasted.

When he resumed his work with the church, it was as an assembly pastor (a position he last occupied about 20 years before then) and gradually rose through the ranks all over again until he was ordained as an apostle in 1988 by the late Pastor I. G. Sakpo. In 1995, he became the

first Apapa Area Superintendent of the church and later a member of both the LAWNA Executive Council and the National Council.

During his career, he held the following leadership positions in the Apostolic Church

- He was a member of the LAWNA Executive Council in the mid-seventies.
- In 1979, he was appointed the first Ondo Area Superintendent (as an ordained prophet, not as an apostle)
- He was ordained as an apostle in 1988.
- In 1995, he was appointed the first Apapa Area Superintendent.
- In 2002, he was appointed the Makurdi Area Superintendent.
- In 2008, he was made the Kaduna Area Superintendent.
- In 2009, he served as the interim administrator of the Abuja Area while he was the Kaduna Area Superintendent.

In addition to his responsibilities in the Apostolic Church, he twice served as Vice Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (Lagos State Chapter) – 1993 and 1995. Also, on two occasions (1994 and 2000), he was part of the Lagos State official delegation to Jerusalem.





The Secret Place

Personal Life

His Prayer Life

A major key to his unusual courage, outstanding results, and spiritual breakthroughs was his prayer life. He would usually wake up early in the day to seek God with the whole of his heart. He mastered the art of prayer and fasting and was a firm believer in the power of God. This gave him a lot of confidence in dealing with challenges in life and confronting the powers of darkness wherever he was sent to.

He frequently went on personal retreats that lasted for days – separating himself to be alone with God, praying day and night. It was usually obvious whenever he returned that he had had an encounter with God. The anointing on him would be so intense, leading to many people experiencing signs

and wonders, breakthroughs, and deliverance from demonic oppression.

It was his practice to raise an army of young, dynamic prayer warriors around him wherever he worked.

He was a deep worshipper and would sometimes lie flat on his face to honour God during worship. He was also once a choirmaster and regularly worked with the choir to create an atmosphere of intense worship in every service.

He was always in tune with the Holy Spirit and several spiritual gifts – including the word of wisdom, interpretation of tongues, healing, faith, and working of miracles – were demonstrated regularly in his ministry. He was particularly remarkable in his spiritual discernment. The gift of the Word of Knowledge was in operation in his life on a consistent basis. He often knew what was in people's hearts before they mentioned it, and once likened the experience to watching a video clip.

He was once accused of dabbling in witchcraft because of how precise he was about situations he had no prior knowledge

of. On a particular occasion, he had to give his keys to church elders so they could search his room for any object that could confirm that he was involved in magic. At another time he was invited to the elders' room where he was stripped to his underwear to check if he had incisions of a magical nature, but nothing of such was found.

There are scores of testimonies about the effectiveness of his prayers. When one of his daughters lost consciousness in the middle of the night, he dressed up and went out to a place to pray. While there praying fervently, armed bandits saw him and remarked in jest that he was drunk. She had regained consciousness by the time he got back.

When one of his sons had a similar experience in the early 1980s, he sent two pastors to go and pray for him because he was then presiding over a conference. After a couple of hours without any change in the situation, he went there himself, prayed and the boy was restored to life.

During one revival meeting he conducted in a church in Lagos, a fire broke out at a nearby bakery. He immediately instructed the congregation to face the direction of the

bakery and command the fire to go off. Miraculously, the fire was quenched after only a short period.

In a similar way, in the early 80s, one of his sons came back from school and passed out. He was presiding over an area ministers conference. When he was told. He sent two of his ministers to go and pray for him, while he continued his meeting. After hours and no response, he went there himself, prayed and his boy was brought back to life

His Spiritual Fortitude

Ella Wilcox said: “Everyone can smile when everything goes on like a song, but a man worth while is the one who can smile when everything goes dead wrong.” Cornelius Ogunyemi encountered countless trials, troubles, and persecution in his personal life and in the work of the ministry, but he remained undaunted through it all.

He once told the story of how he was slapped by an older colleague in the elders' room after prophesying. His offence was

that he was bold enough to say what he considered to be God's mind. But this did not stop him from prophesying at the next meeting.

On another occasion, when his false teeth fell out while prophesying at a large gathering, he picked it up, cleaned it and put it back in his mouth. As a result, some people who were ignorant about false teeth and could only attribute the incident to magic, began to gossip that he was using magical powers to prophesy. They were unaware that he lost the teeth in a serious accident many years before then and was given dentures.

He never lost his joy and confidence in God despite the many trials and tribulations he encountered. Some of his favourite songs included:

“There is victory within my soul”
(Redemption Hymnal Appendix 68)

“Walking in the King's highway”
(Redemption Hymnal 407) and

“Conquerors and overcomers now are we” (Redemption Hymnal Appendix 68).

He frequently quoted the following Bible verses:

“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Romans 8:35).

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10).

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14).







Home Affairs

His Family life

He was a family-oriented man to the core: always loving, caring, and working tirelessly to provide for his household. He always quoted the scripture that said whoever does not provide for his household is worse than an infidel.

He engaged in farming with his family during the three years he was away from ministry work in the early 1980s – they grew yams, corn, tomatoes, and other crops. The family lacked nothing. He loved and cared very much for his wife and children.

If any of the children got sick, he would keep watch round the clock, checking on them constantly throughout the night to monitor their temperature and pray. He would also take them to the hospital if that was necessary.

This kindness was extended to his sisters and their children. He was always looking out for their welfare and supporting them as much as he could. He cared for his nieces and nephews as though they were his children, also his in-laws and cousins. He was a man with a large heart and was lovingly called “Baba” by the extended family. He was the one who led many of the family members to make a commitment to Jesus Christ

Even though he had a tender heart, he could also be strict, and very much frowned at improper behaviour. He was widely regarded as a no-nonsense person.



Sunset in November

His last days

Like the rest of humanity, Cornelius Ajayi Ogunyemi experienced seasons of great battle with the enemy of our souls – the devil and the flesh – but he was always quick to run to the Father's presence for grace and the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. He was quick to repent before God and always humble enough to apologise to man (whether young or old).

In his early seventies, he was transferred to the northern part of Nigeria – a task which could be considered very demanding for his age – but the missionary in him gladly accepted the challenge. As usual, he never complained to his leaders about where he was posted; his motto was “missionary everywhere and anywhere”.

However, the years of travelling the length and breadth of the country preaching and planting churches in villages, towns, and

cities had taken its toll and he could not carry on for much longer. He became very ill when he was seventy-six and never recovered until his passing on 28 October 2021. His most frequently uttered word during this long illness was, "Amen".

If he had one major weakness, it was that he did not take enough time to rest. He was always on the move in the quest to get the job done, not caring about the effect on his health. His children can't recall him ever going on leave or taking a vacation.

Till the very end, Pastor C. A., as he was fondly called, was a lover of God and a completely yielded vessel. He served God and his generation with the whole of his heart, soul and might. He will be fondly remembered by everyone who knew him.

He is survived by all his children and grandchildren.

Parting Shots

Scriptures

*And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. **Revelation 14:13***

*By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it, he being dead yet speaks. **Hebrew 11:4***

*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. **John 11:25***

You will live on in our hearts, Cornelius Ajayi Ogunyemi.



