

Obituary

**PAUL TEBEFIA ODEGHE, MFR, DSC (Ilorin),
FWCP, FMCPH, LRCP, LRCS (Dublin–Ireland)
DTPH (London) 1926–1995**

Dr P. T. Odeghe, retired Chief Consultant Leprologist passed away in the early hours of Friday 21 April 1995 at the age of 69 years.

Pa Odeghe was born at Uvwiamuge in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria on 30 March 1926.

After his primary and post-primary education, he trained as an engineer and served with the Federal Department of Works. However, his interest lay in medicine and so he went to the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, Ireland from 1953 to 1959. He returned to Nigeria in 1960 and worked as a medical officer for the then Western and Midwestern Regional Governments from 1960 to 1965. In 1965 he returned to the United Kingdom and studied at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine returning to Nigeria in 1966 to take charge of the leprosy control programme at the Specialist Hospital, Ossiomo, then the former Bendel State.

He worked in Ossiomo for 19 years rising to the status of Chief Consultant and Medical Director of the former Bendel State Leprosy Control Service until retirement in June 1985. Thereafter, he went into private practice establishing the Odeghe Clinic in Sapele where he was the Medical Director until his sad demise.

With the death of Pa Odeghe, Nigeria has lost a leading leprologist, humane physician, able administrator, teacher, compassionate father and loving husband.

His extensive activities (too numerous to mention) in conjunction with the surgical and medical treatment of leprosy patients, as well as the control of the disease in and outside the country resulted in his engagement in numerous related organizations. As a result, he was a recipient of many national and international awards which include the National Award of Member of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (MFR) in 1978 and in 1982, the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) by the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. He served as a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Panel of Leprosy and was also the Medical Adviser on Leprosy to the Federal Ministry of Health.

He was an author and presented many scientific papers at various National and International Conferences.

He was the foundation on which the present leprosy control in Nigeria was built on and his activities were all encompassing. There was no area in the life of the average leprosy patient that his humane touch did not influence, whether it was medical, surgical, social, spiritual or rehabilitation.

To him, leprosy control was not a matter of life or death, it was much more than that. He was a great disciplinarian and his devotion to duty could not but rub off on his subordinates, whom he regarded as colleagues and friends.

For those of us who had the rare opportunity of working closely with him: we have lost a

mentor, a father figure, adviser and teacher. We take consolation that the current crop of leprologists in Nigeria have carried on his work.

We pray for his wife, Helen, and their seven children, knowing full well that 'Papa' is resting peacefully in the Lord's bosom watching over us all.

M. C. NDUKWU & T. O. MAJOROH