

A Short Biography of Professor Jacob Mundi Baba, B. A (Hons), Ph.D.

By

Prof. Jerry A. Gana

Preparation for Life

Professor Jacob Mundi Baba, was born on Wednesday 2nd December, 1942 to the family of the late Baba Paul Gana (famously known as Bababidinga) and Mama Elizabeth Gana, in Gusadi, Gbako Local Government Area of Niger State.

He commenced his primary education at the famous St. John's School, Bida from 1951 to 1959. It was indeed during the registration process to be a student that Jacob gave his father's name as BABA, instead of Paul Gana, the actual name. From then on he became known as Jacob Mudi Baba, instead of Gana. After a brilliant performance at the Entrance Examination, Jacob Baba proceeded to the prestigious St. Paul's College, Wusasa-Zaria, from 1960 to 1966. On completion of his secondary at St. Paul's Collage, he obtained Division One at the West African School Certificate Examination, and later passed the Higher School Certificate, (H.S.C) in the same collage.

In 1967, Professor Baba gained admission into Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and graduated in 1970 with B.A (Hons) Degree in Geography, Second Class Honors (Upper Division). With his outstanding performance, he immediately registered for a Master's Degree in the same year, and by reason of a profoundly excellent progress, he was promoted to directly proceed into the Ph. D programme. He worked hard to produce a well-research thesis and therefore obtained his Ph.D. in 1975.

In the service of his country

During the next decade, Professor Baba moved from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer 2, then Lecture 1, Senior Lecture, Reader and Professor in 1985. As a Lecturer he taught with great passion, clarity of expression, and an inspiring note of excellence. His students loved his Courses and respected his very high integrity. Professor Baba was not merely a lecturer but a reliable role model in character, teaching skills, research methodology and life-style. During his years at ABU, Zaria, he produced many outstanding graduates and post-graduate students, some of who later became State Commissioners; Federal Ministers and indeed State Governors. What a rich harvest of highly trained manpower for his beloved country.

In 1988, Professor J.M Baba transferred his services from Ahmadu Bello University to the Federal University of Technology, Minna as Professor of Geography. During his period at Federal University of Technology Minna, he served as DEAN of the School

of Science and Science Education, and later as Deputy Vice Chancellor for two terms. As Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Baba excelled as a stabilizing force to the University Administration of the then Vice Chancellor, Professor J. O. Ndagi. His amiable nature, listening attributes and quiet mien endeared him to the entire staff.

Professor Baba was a very loyal, dependable and hardworking Deputy. His eloquence and gift of oratory made him an obvious choice as University Orator for many years. FUT Minna is celebrated as a quality place today because of the pioneering efforts of people like Professor Baba.

Professor J.M. Baba has to his credit more than 80 scholarly works published in reputable journals, books of readings, commissioned technical reports, and refereed conference proceedings, with subject matters focused on agricultural transformation, rural development, environmental management, and population studies. He holds the highly cherished membership for many national and international professional bodies. He attended and participated in several academic and professional conferences and workshops, and served in various government parastatals and agencies engaged in various community services. Professor Baba retired from the public service in June, 2007 but continued to offer services on contract with the Federal University of Technology, until his death on Wednesday 9th August 2017.

Christian Service

In the area of Christian service, we are delighted to confirm that Professor Jacob Baba received the Lord Jesus as personal Saviour and Lord during his student days. He was never ashamed of the Gospel, because he knew the Gospel to be “the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes”. (Romans 1:16). During his student days he served meritoriously as Secretary of the Fellowship of Christian Students at ABU, Zaria. While on the teaching staff of ABU, he also served as Secretary of the University Chapel Committee for many years. Beyond the University, Professor Baba served on several Christian Committees and also as Guest Speaker at Churches, Conferences and Seminars.

Prof. Baba had the great privilege of leading and working together with his colleagues Prof. Jerry Gana and Mrs. Mary Tebu as well as undergraduate students at Ahmadu Bello University in establishing the Nupe Christian Fellowship International to drive the process of evangelism and support to the Churches in Nupe land. Indeed, he served as the foundation President and subsequently the Pioneer chairman of its Board of Trustees until his death.

Professor Baba loved singing greatly and was a celebrated member of the Gospel Singers and the University Chapel Choir. Now he has joined the magnificent Choir of

Heaven to forever sing the praises of Him who is the “King of Kings and Lord of lords”. “Hallelujah; for the LORD GOD Omnipotent reigneth” (Revelation 19:6).

In tune with his gracious humility and dedication to the service of humanity, Professor Baba also served meritoriously on the pioneer Board of Trustees of Leprosy Mission International for two terms of eight years. He later served as the Chairman of the Board for two years to complete the tenure of the late Professor Ishaya Audu, the historic Vice Chancellor of ABU, Zaria. During the life of that Board, the new Alheri Leprosy Village, Yangoji, FCT, Abuja, was established, very well designed and built. The new village has some 270 two-bedroom houses, a school, one hospital, a market and several farms for its residents. As of today it is the only re-settlement village of its kind in West Africa. Professor Baba was clearly one of the unsung HEROES of our generation.

Like St. Paul, Professor Baba has “fought a good fight, he has finished the race, he has kept the faith”. “Henceforth there is laid up for (him) a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give (him) on that day; and not for (him) only, but to all those who also love His appearing (2Timoyhy 4:6-8).

Conclusion

With gratitude to God for a life well lived, we salute a very sound Professor who had great learning to profess; a lecturer with capacity; a researcher with a profound vision; a public servant with a robust integrity; an anointed preacher with eloquence; a devoted husband and loving father; a Christian leader filled with the Holy Spirit.