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SPECIAL RELEASE

3 JULY, 2017

OBITUARY

PROFESSOR JOHN OSEMEIKHIAN AKAO
(1947 – 2017)

Professor A. I. Olayinka, FAS, announces with deep regret, the transition of The Rt. Rev. Professor John Osemeikhian Akao, a retired staff of the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts. The sad event occurred on Tuesday, 20th May, 2017. He was aged 70 years.

Professor Akao was an erudite Hebrew scholar who contributed immensely to Biblical scholarship in the Department of Religious Studies. He obtained a B.A. degree in Religious Studies in 1977 from the University of Ibadan. At the end of his first academic session in 1974/75, he won the University scholarship and became a University Scholar for the rest of his stay in the University for the First Degree. He enrolled for the Masters Degree in Biblical Studies at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in 1980/81. He was offered admission to do his Ph.D at the University of Scotland, Glasgow in 1984. It was extraordinary that Akao was able to complete his Ph.D degree in Old Testament and Literature within the minimum period of three years. He taught briefly at the University of Ife before joining the service of this University as a Lecturer II. He subsequently rose through the ranks to become a Professor with specialisation in Old Testament and Literature in 2000.

The distinguished Hebrew scholar, Akao's academic programmes, sabbatical and conferences took him to both national and foreign Universities like Stellenbosch University, South Africa, Hebrew University, Tel-Aviv, Delta State University, Abraka and many others. Professor Akao was the Editor of African Journal of Biblical Studies (AJBS) from 1999 to 2003. From 2003 – 2007 he was Vice-President, Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies and later, President of the Association (2008 to 2010).

Late Professor Akao served the University and the community in various capacities. While in the University, he used the opportunity to assist, on request, to teach Old Testament Language and Literature in some institutions and theological colleges affiliated to the University of Ibadan who lacked the personnel to handle the Biblical languages. Among the Institutions assisted were: The SS Peter and Paul Catholic Church Major Seminary, Ibadan 1987 – 90 and 19997- 2000; The Dominican Institute, Ibadan – 1995 – 2004; The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, 1988 to 1990; The West Africa Theological Seminary (formerly Wesley International Theological Seminary, Owerri) as an Adjunct Lecturer in Advanced Biblical Theology for the Postgraduate Students.

After retiring from the University in 2005 when he was elected Anglican Bishop of Sabongidda-Ora Diocese, he was privileged to be one of the few retired Professors of the University of Ibadan recalled to continue to assist with the supervision of Doctorate Degree programmes.

May his gentle soul rest in peace. Amen.

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