

# Kogi Region

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Kogi Region is an administrative unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria. It was organized in 2013 and covers Kogi State in Nigeria. Kogi State is part of Western Nigeria Union Conference in the West-Central Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventists. Its headquarters is in Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria.

Statistics (June 30, 2019): Churches, 7; membership, 675; population, 4,788,040.<sup>1</sup>

## Historical Background

The first Seventh-day Adventist church in Kogi State began at Isanlu in 1933, and it was started by Elisha Omole, a native lay Adventist worker, along with some members from Ilesha living in the community.<sup>2</sup> The church was later visited by a medical team from Ife hospital, which further enhanced the work in the community. In 2003 Pastor Joseph Adebomi was the pastor of the church. The growth rate of the church in Isanlu has been very small.<sup>3</sup>

### Establishment of Adventist Churches Between 1975-1990

The church began in Mopa in 1977, the hometown of David Abejide Babaagba after his return from the SDA hospital, Ile Ife, after 20 years of service there. He engaged in house to house ministration without any converts for a long time except his children. In 1982 another branch was opened in Ajaokuta in the residence of Elder J. C. Nwankwo (popularly known as prison evangelist) along with Duro Afolabi and late Chidi Joseph. The Ajaokuta church was organized on December 1, 1985, by Pastor D. O. Babalola (the then president of West Nigeria Mission). The first district pastor was Pastor C. A. Ojulari. The Okene church was the first church to be organized in Kogi Region, and it was organized on September 30, 2006, by Pastor Onaolapo Ajibade (the then president of the West Nigeria Conference). The church had begun in 1989 with Elder Nwadike Raymond as an Adventist and a businessman who had settled there.<sup>4</sup>

### Establishment of Churches Between 1991-2011

The evangelistic outreach at Idah that took place from April 28-June 1, 1991, brought the message to Igala land. Pastor James Aromeh was the anchor man while Pastor Henry Anukam was the speaker. It was sponsored by

Elder Solomon A. Nwaejike, who also sponsored the first evangelistic outreach in Ibaji land, which was held at Nwajala December 24, 1991-January 6, 1992. Pastor Dele Adelakin led out. In a ceremony held at Idah on May 23, 1992, the entire Igala land was handed over by the East Nigeria Conference president, Pastor J. O. Achilihu to Pastor J. A. Ola, president, West Nigeria Conference. Lokoja church started in January, 1995, with the late Ezekiel Agbara as the leader. Its church building was completed in June 1999. Between 1992 and 1999, more than fifteen other branches were opened in Ibaji land (Lowland) with the Global Mission and efforts of some individuals.<sup>5</sup> In a Global Mission project, the West Nigeria Conference deployed about fifty trained pioneers to Ibaji land for a groundbreaking program in October 2001. This was followed with reaping efforts in 42 centers in January/February 2002. Forty-two companies were thus established at the end of the reaping campaigns. Eventually a total of twenty-three lamb shelters were erected for twenty-three of these companies. The financial assistance that made this gigantic Global Mission effort possible came through the Three Angels Broadcasting Network—specifically through its director for Africa, Elder Own Troy.

Churches in Upland Ibaji include Felele Company, started in 2003, Kabba Company, also started in 2003, Obangede Company, started in 2004, and Anyigba Company, started in 2007/2008.<sup>6</sup> All these led to further increases in membership.

#### Developments Between 2012-2019

In the Kogi Region was the North Western Nigeria Conference; the Kogi Region was an attached field to the union. On January 28, 2012, at Odogwu, Ibaji, Kogi Region was inaugurated by Pastor Oyeleke Owolabi (the union president), with the executive committee of the West Nigeria Conference in attendance. Pastor Kehinde Alao was dedicated as the administrator and Pastor Nurudeen Agbabiaka as the secretary-treasurer.<sup>7</sup> Pastor Agbabiaka was later replaced by Mr. Samson Babatunde Okunlola.

By the grace of God as the gospel spread further, other worship centers were established. These included Ogaminana in April 2012 with Elder Harisson Offosu as leader, Obajana in August 2012 with Daniel Koko as global mission pioneer in charge, Revini on May 27, 2012, with John Onubi as the global mission pioneer in charge. Kabba Junction (Zariagi) church started in October 2013 with the relocation of the family of Mr. Remah Emmanuel (after a long time as a member at Lokoja during which time he built Lokoja church as a bricklayer). By April 2014, Pastor John Onubi was deployed to Sheria for groundbreaking exercises. This was followed by three weeks of an evangelistic program in the community sponsored and conducted by the Alive Nigeria team.<sup>8</sup>

*District Inauguration:* Okene district was created out of Ajaokuta district in January 2013 and was officially inaugurated on April 20, 2013, by Pastor Kehinde Alao (Kogi Mission administrator). Pastor Augustine Ojomah was the first district pastor.<sup>9</sup>

*Centenary Celebration:* Kogi Region joined other fields in the union to celebrate the centenary anniversary of the church in the union on March 29, 2014. Pastor Oyeleke Owolabi led out in the program. All the union officers were in attendance, along with the ministerial secretary.<sup>10</sup>

*Ordination of Ministers:* Two of our outstanding ministers (Pastors Kolawole Adebayo and Micheal Ajide) were ordained into full ministry on May 30, 2015, at Lokoja. The union president and the union ministerial secretary were present.<sup>11</sup>

*Church Organization and Dedication:* With the completion of the Idah Church, the church was organized and dedicated on July 18, 2015. The region's administrator (Pastor Kehinde Alao) led out in the service!<sup>12</sup>

*First constituency:* The first ever constituency meeting was held at Lokoja March 22-24, 2019. Pastor Augustine Confidence Ojomah served as the new administrator. Departmental directors appointed includes: Pastor Caleb Alu (evangelism, Global Mission and Sabbath School), Pastor Kola Adebayo (youth), Elder Daniel Egwu (legal adviser, AMO), Mrs. Rita Agene (AWM), Elder Bestman Philip (stewardship).<sup>13</sup>

## Leaders

President: John Kehinde K. Alao (2013-Present)<sup>14</sup>

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### SOURCES

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*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* Various years. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

Western Nigeria Union Conference Minutes, May 30, 2015, Western Nigeria Union Conference archives, Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria.

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### NOTES

1. "Kogi Region," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2020), accessed September 22, 2020, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=52363>.
2. Interview with Mr. Amos Omole son of late Pa. Elisha Omole by Pastor Kola Adebayo January 20, 2014 at Isanlu
3. An interview with the Adana of Isanlu Land, Oba Ikubolaje, the Onisanlu of Isanlu by Pastor Kehinde Alao September 23, 2014.
4. Program of the organization of Okene Church, in the authors' private collection.
5. An Interview with Pastor James Aromeh by Pastor Kehinde Alao March 2012 at Idah.
6. An Interview with Mr. Davidi Gebi by Pastor Kehinde Alao on January 27, 2012 at Idah.

7. Program of inauguration of Kogi Region, in the authors' private collection.
8. Personal knowledge of Pastor Kehinde Alao as the Director of the Region.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Western Nigeria Union Conference Minutes, May 30, 2015, Western Nigeria Union Conference archives.
12. Personal Knowledge of Kehinde Alao.
13. Ibid.
14. "Kogi Region," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2014-2020), accessed September 22, 2020, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/old-yearbooks>.

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