

Debra, Bennard Christopher Bamfo

(1914–1996)

CHRIS ANNAN-NUNOO

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Bennard Christopher Bamfo Debra was a pastor, evangelist, and church administrator in Ghana.

Early Life

Bennard Christopher Bamfo Debra was born in 1914 to Opanyin Kwadwo Debra and Hannah Somuah Dompseh, both of Obomeng–Kwahu. Debra was known by family members as “Kwahu Bamfo.” His colleague ministers called him “B.C.B.” while church members knew him as “Amanforehwemo.” He started his primary education at Ho Presby Primary in 1923 and continued his studies at the Amedzofe Presby Senior school where he obtained his middle school learning certificate in 1933.

After completing his schooling, he was employed at Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana, as an assistant storekeeper with U.T.C. His work at Sekondi was so successful that he was promoted to the grade of storekeeper and was transferred to Dunkwa where he became the choirmaster/organist for the local Presbyterian Church.

Pastor Debra married Matilda Kyekye Kwafo on June 6, 1946. They had seven children. In 1950, he resigned as a storekeeper and went to Sankore in the then-Brong Ahafo region to do farming. It was there that he was introduced to the Adventist faith by the late Opanyin John Manu, who was famously known as “Papa John,” in 1952. In 1956, he formed the Singing Band in Nkwwatia Kwuhu and Ntoaso campmeeting¹

Ministry

Pastor Debra began his ministerial work as an evangelist at Techiman and later in Wenchi. He then became a district leader for a number of districts, including Atibie, Sunyani, and Bibiani. He later became the district pastor for the following districts of churches: Accra, Ashanti Bekwai, and Koforidua. He lost his wife Matilda and later married Hannah, a teacher.

He was ordained as a minister on March 13, 1965, by Pastor S. Appiah Dankwa. He was also the Lay Activities/Temperance/Stewardship director for the Ghana Mission from 1973 to 1975. He was the chairman for the Twi-Advent Hymn Book review committee in August 1975.

As Accra District pastor, he organized and hosted the first National Campmeeting at the Accra sports stadium in 1965.²

He was instrumental in the building of the Labone Adventist Church in Accra and, upon its completion, he led the church's first service on January 6, 1968, before proceeding to transfer on January 7, 1968, to Koforidua.

Pastor Debra served as the first national chairman of the Ghana Adventist Choir Union (GACU) and promoted the Ghana Adventist Singing Band Union (GASBU). He retired from active service in 1986. He died at the age of 86 on September 3, 1996, and was buried on September 29, 1996.³ He was survived by 11 children and his wife, Hannah.

SOURCES

Funeral Booklet, September 1996.

Brocke, Eunice Miranda. *Adventism in Accra* (Advent Press, 2011).

Kinsley, Eyiah Joe, editor. *The Southern Trumpet* (Advent Press, 1994).

NOTES

1. Extracted from the Funeral Booklet, September 1996, at Obomeng Kwahu.
2. Eunice Miranda Brocke, *Adventism in Accra* (Advent Press, 2011), 41-43.
3. Eyiah Joe Kinsley, editor, *The Southern Trumpet* (Advent Press, 1994).

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