



South West Ghana Conference.

Photo courtesy of Isaac Ofori Attah.

South West Ghana Conference

ISAAC ADJEI-EPHRAIM

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The South West Ghana Conference is a church administrative unit of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana. The conference operates under Southern Ghana Union Conference of the West-Central Africa Division. South West Ghana Conference was established in 1995, organized in 1998, and reorganized and territory divided in 2017. It consists of the following territories: southwestern Ghana which includes the land mass

encompassing the major portion of the Western region of Ghana, bounded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, on the west by the borders of Cote d'Ivoire, on the east by the Central region of Ghana, and on the north by Nsuaem in the Takwa-Nsuaem municipality. The conference headquarters is in Sekondi, Ghana.¹

As of June 30, 2018, South West Ghana Conference had 138 churches, membership of 19,634, and total population of 1,139,705.²

Events Leading to Establishment of the Conference

Around the year 1989, Elder John Alfred Asiem conceived the idea for the Western region to have its own conference. That same year, Pastor Ted Wilson, who was then the executive secretary of the Africa Indian-Ocean Division, visited the Western region.³

Elder John Alfred Asiem together with some church leaders in the early 1990s, during the time of Pastor J. K. Arthur, the district pastor of the Takoradi district, decided to petition the South Ghana Conference (now Accra City Conference) about the desire for a conference for the Western region to ensure effective administration considering the fact that the Western region was a vast territory.⁴

At the South Ghana Conference session held at Asorkore-Koforidua during the tenure of Pastor Ebo Bonnie, the petition was presented. It was at this session that Pastor P. O. Mensah became the president of the South Ghana Conference. In response to this petition, he sent Pastor S. C. Kumah to help with the process. When he arrived, he mobilized some elders of the Takoradi and Sekondi districts to promote the idea of the Western region having its own conference. This led to setting up an interim committee made up of: Elder John Alfred Asiem, Elder S. K. Appoh, Elder Peter K. N. Appoh, Elder Agyei-Baako, Elder Alexander K. Dougan, Elder Kwame Kyei Amoako, Elder Anilow Johnson, Elder Enoch Cudjoe, Elder J. A. Yankey, Madam Adwoba Ariza Erzuah, and Pastor Samuel Charles Kumah, who were tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that the dream came to pass. Other elders, Elder John Kwabia, Elder Daniel Adjei-Mensah, and Elder Emmanuel Ofori-Attah, supported the committee members in various ways. The mobilization went as far as Samreboi.⁵

It became necessary for the new field to have a headquarters office. Coincidentally, the Sekondi Church was facing eviction from its worship place which was opposite the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) office, so the church was looking for a new place of worship. A member of Sekondi Church saw in the newspaper that the current conference building, which belonged to Uniliver Ghana Limited, was being sold so the church inquired about it but, unfortunately, the church couldn't afford the cost of the building, which was going for 50 million Cedis, now 5,000 Ghana Cedis (5,000). The owner was asking for 75 percent of the amount as a down payment, and the rest to be paid by a specified date. Members of Sekondi Church were asked to contribute funds in support of the purchase of the building. A team, made up of Elder Sampson Owusu, Elder Godfred G. Anai, Elder Samuel K. Gordon, and Pastor Thomas Techie Ocran, organized the fundraising and also went to the South Ghana Conference to solicit their support. This news reached the interim committee, who

also mobilized funds in support of the purchase of the building. An amount of 14 million Cedis was raised by the Sekondi Church, two million Cedis by the interim committee, and 21 million Cedis was raised from churches in the South Ghana Conference to make a total of 37 million Cedis which was used to secure the building. The balance was paid by the Sekondi Church at a later date. Part of the building was used for worship by the Sekondi Church and part was used for the field offices.⁶

The committee then began its operation in the newly purchased building. In 1995 the field officially became an administrative unit with Pastor Samuel Adama Larmie becoming the first director. His days as director were short-lived because he was called back to South Ghana Conference after a few months.⁷ Pastor Ansah-Adu was then brought from Kumasi to be the director,⁸ but after a while he was called to be the general manager of Advent Press.⁹ South Ghana Conference then sent Pastor Kwabena Twum to replace him. Pastor Thomas Techie Ocran and Elder Samuel Mensah Ansah remained the secretary and treasurer for all of the above-mentioned directors. It was this team, headed by Pastor Kwabena Twum, that finalized the work to reach conference status. On July 24-25, 1998, the first session of the field was organized at the Ghana Railway Training School, Sekondi, to elect its leaders. Pastor Andrews Lawrence Ewoo became the president; Pastor Thomas Techie Ocran, the executive secretary; and Elder Samuel Mensah Ansah, the treasurer.¹⁰ Before the session, Pastor P. O. Mensah had begun the regionalization of conferences which was finalized by Pastor Samuel Adama Larmie. This led to the South-West Ghana Conference gaining the Enchi, Asankragua, and Wassa Akropong districts from the Ashanti region and losing the Komeda, Kissie, and Abransah districts to Mid-South in the Central region. Atobiase district was also added to the South-West Ghana Conference from the Central region.¹¹

Inauguration of the Conference and Leadership

The inauguration of the South-West Ghana Conference was held at the Ghana Secondary Technical School (GSTS) from December 17 to 20, 1998¹² and was graced by the former first lady, Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings as the guest of honor. Sadly, some members of Enchi district who attended the inauguration, were involved in an accident on their way home, with some losing their lives and others sustaining injuries.¹³

Around the year 2000, Pastor Andrews Lawrence Ewoo was called to the West-Central Africa Division, so there was a need to elect a new president. Pastor Ansah-Adu was elected to be the president.

After his first term as president, Pastor Ansah-Adu announced in his session report that he was leaving to attend school. At that session, Pastor Thomas Techie Ocran was elected as president while Pastor Emmanuel B. Mbrah and Elder Stephen Nana-Bentum were elected as executive secretary and treasurer. During their second term in office, Pastor Jonah Kwarteng Antwi replaced Elder Stephen Nana-Bentum. Pastor Emmanuel B. Mbrah also left and Pastor Richmond Afonaa-Mensah replaced him.¹⁴

At the 5th Triennial Session of the conference held April 20-25, 2010, Pastor Michael Assilidjoe became the conference president, while Pastor Thomas Techie Ocran chose to be a district pastor.¹⁵ Pastor Richmond Afonaa-Mensah and Elder Bright Osei Yeboah became the executive secretary and treasurer.

Pastor Thomas Techie Ocran was called to the Ghana Union Conference (now Southern Ghana Union Conference). During the first quarter of 2015, Western North Ghana Administrative Unit was created and headquartered in Sefwi-Wiawso. This reduced the number of districts of the South-West Ghana Conference from 35 to 25.¹⁶

Pastor Bright Osei Yeboah after some time was called to be a lecturer at Valley View University-Techiman Campus and Pastor Jonah Kwarteng Antwi replaced him.

At the 2016 session of the Southern Ghana Union Conference, Pastor Michael Assilidjoe was called to become the Sabbath School and Global Mission director and this led to Pastor Richmond Afonaa-Mensah becoming president while Pastor Adeefe Kwakye replaced him as the executive secretary.

For effective administration, the West-Central Ghana Administrative Unit was created with its headquarters in Tarkwa. This reduced the number of districts of the South-West Ghana Conference from 25 to 16.¹⁷

At the 2nd quadrennial session of the conference, held April 17-22, 2018, Pastor Adeefe Kwakye was elected as president, and Pastor Nana Kofi Nimako and Pastor Jonah Kwarteng Antwi as executive secretary and treasurer.

SOURCES

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Executive Committee Minutes, "South West Station of SGC of SDAs," Action Number: 115-98, South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.

Executive Committee Minutes, "South West Station of SGC of SDAs," Action Number: 082-5-96, South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.

Executive Committee Minutes, "South West Station of SGC of SDAs," Action Number: 066-4-96 (i), South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.

Executive Committee Minutes, "South West Station of SGC of SDAs," Action Number: 028-97, South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.

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NOTES

1. "South West Ghana Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2019), 406.
2. Ibid.
3. Interview with Sarah Nancy Appoh by Isaac Adjei-Ephraim on October 24, 2018, at Takoradi in the Western region.
4. Interview with Pastor Daniel Armstrong Kumah by Isaac Adjei-Ephraim on October 10, 2018, at the South-West Ghana Conference headquarters office, Sekondi, in the Western region of Ghana.
5. Interview with Elder Peter K. N. Appoh by Isaac Adjei-Ephraim on October 24, 2018, at Takoradi in the Western region of Ghana and corroborated by Elder Alexander K. Dougan in an interview with him on June 25, 2019, at Sekondi in the Western region of Ghana.
6. Interview with Elder Samuel K. Gordon by Isaac Adjei-Ephraim on June 25, 2019, at Kojokrom in the Western region of Ghana.
7. Executive Committee Minutes, "South West Station of SGC of SDAs," Action Number: 082-5-96, South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.
8. Executive Committee Minutes, "South West Station of SGC of SDAs," Action Number: 066-4-96 (i), South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.
9. Executive Committee Minutes, "South West Station of SGC of SDAs," Action Number: 028-97, South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.
10. Executive Committee Minutes, "South West Station of SGC of SDAs," 1st Triennial Session (July 24-25, 1998), South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.
11. Interview with Pastor Daniel Armstrong Kumah by Isaac Adjei-Ephraim on October 10, 2018, at the South-West Ghana Conference headquarters office, Sekondi, in the Western region of Ghana.
12. Executive Committee Minutes, "South West Station of SGC of SDAs," Action Number: 115-98, South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.
13. Interview with Pastor Daniel Armstrong Kumah by Isaac Adjei-Ephraim on October 10, 2018, at the South-West Ghana Conference headquarters office, Sekondi, in the Western region of Ghana.
14. Interview with Pastor Daniel Armstrong Kumah by Isaac Adjei-Ephraim on October 10, 2018, at the South-West Ghana Conference headquarters office, Sekondi, in the Western region of Ghana.

15. Executive Committee Minutes, "South-West Ghana Conference," Action Number: 19-10.
 16. Budget Session/Executive Committee Minutes, "South-West Ghana Conference," Action Number: 005-15, South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.
 17. Emergency Executive Committee Minutes, "South-West Ghana Conference," Action Number: 033-16, South West Ghana Conference archives, Sekondi, Ghana.
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