



Valley View University main entrance

Photo courtesy of Valley View University.

Valley View University

BELLE DOLLAR-BILL

Belle Dollar-Bill

Valley View University is owned and operated by the West-Central Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists. The institution operates on several campuses and centers within Ghana. It takes the pride of being the first private university accredited and chartered in the country.

Introduction

Oral history has it that in 1888, a ship on missions anchored at Apam, a town in the Central Region of Ghana, and the seamen threw to the shores Bible tracts by the International Tract Society of Seventh-day Adventists and set back to sail. Later in the same year, Francis I. U. Dolphijn, a catechist in the Methodist Church, went for a stroll at the beach of Apam and stumbled upon a folded paper. Out of curiosity, Francis took the paper from the beach. To his surprise, it contained a lot of wonderful messages about the Sabbath commandment. He took the literature home and began studying it with his wife and children. As time passed, he and his entire family accepted the Sabbath truth and began worshiping God on the Sabbath. With time Francis wrote a letter to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Battle Creek, Michigan, asking for missionaries to come and establish the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana. On February 22, 1894, the first group of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries touched down at the shores of Apam where Francis, with his small band of Adventist believers, welcomed them and there the first Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana was established.¹

Through the efforts of missionaries and indigenes, the church established schools from the elementary to the secondary level. These institutions soon proved to be indispensable mission tools for the propagation of the Three Angels' Messages. Indeed, the church became strong in Ghana because of its educational institutions. Currently, the church in Ghana operates 863 educational institutions. Out of this total, 782 are basic schools, 74 are secondary schools, six are training colleges, and one is a university.² In the country Adventist education has been known to be holistic and value-based. It is a journey to excellence, a journey to eternity, and its centers are safe places to grow.

Extending the Mission: Adventist Ministerial Education

With the popular conviction that education lies at the foundation of all accomplishments, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana established a complex of schools. As the church and its educational institutions grew, there arose the need to train church workers. From 1959 the Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA), Nigeria, provided an opportunity to train church workers. However, the late seventies and early eighties were generally bad years for Ghana, both politically and economically. Coup makers were part of the problem. They brought about a bad image for the country from potential foreign investors. The Ghanaian currency itself, the cedi, fell badly vis-à-vis other world currencies. These turbulent developments made it harder for prospective Ghanaian students to find their way to Nigeria for college education.³ In June 1977 the leaders of the Central Ghana Conference headquartered at Kwadaso, Kumasi, Asante—especially Matthew A. Bediako (president) and S. K. Agyemang (executive secretary)—took the initiative to propose the establishment of a “Ministerial Certificate Course at Bekwai” Secondary School.⁴ The proposal was voted and recommended by the West Africa Union in September 1977 to the Northern Europe-West Africa Division.⁵ After it had scrutinized the proposal,⁶ the Division Ministerial Commission took the decision to start the program in September 1979.⁷ The “Bekwai Seminary,” as it was popularly known, thus commenced.

But the 1977 vision was to resurrect a latent dream whose history goes back to the 1930s when the idea of a college for training missionaries in Ghana was first hatched. In 1932 the British missionary Jesse Clifford moved the headquarters of church administration in Ghana from Agona to Bekwai. From 1953 the newly established Bekwai SDA Secondary School was to become a major center for Adventist education, playing host to the SDA Training College. The church started a pre-seminary institution in 1954 that awarded a two-year ministerial diploma under the administration of the European African Union. Pastors S. A. Amfo, K. O. Ameyaw, D. K. Asare (prefect), E. K. Akwaboah, S. K. Amoateng, and S. K. Yeboah were some of the students who were admitted in 1958. This pre-seminary school was headed by E. L. Nelson.

Due to some challenges, pre-seminary education ceased after a few years. History has it that the establishment of ACWA was initially the thought, hopes, and plans for starting a seminary in Ghana back in the 1930s--1950s. Such thoughts later materialized in Nigeria in 1959.⁸ Despite all challenges, the church in Ghana did not give up hopes of establishing a seminary. In the 1970s most of the clergy were middle school graduates. The leaders, therefore, sought to improve the education of the pastors to facilitate their entry into the seminary. With theological training being of paramount importance to the gospel ministry, the pioneers established the Adventist Ministerial College at the premises of the Bekwai Secondary School in 1979 to provide pre-seminary education.⁹ It was an experiment for venturing into higher education as an additional tool for more effective soul-winning drives.

Isaac Kwame Boateng, headmaster of the Bekwai Secondary School, hosted the new institution. In January 1980 the Central Ghana Conference passed a call through the union to the division for a "Missionary to be Director of the Ministerial Certificate Program, Head of the Bible Department in the SDA Secondary School, Bekwai, and Institutional Pastor."¹⁰ While waiting for the arrival of Walton S. Whaley, the answer to the call, Emmanuel Osei was appointed "temporarily as Acting Director of the Bekwai Seminary."¹¹ Anthony Yeboah Amoako, Solomon Enoch Opam, and Tabi Agyei were among teachers at the Secondary School recruited to help teach the seminarians.

Nikki Aulikki, a young lady from Finland, and Jon Jonsson, a pastor from Iceland, were also European teachers of the seminarians. Walton Sanford Whaley, together with his wife Leola, became the Americans helping to globalize the nature of the evolving saga at Bekwai. Pioneer students at the "Bekwai Seminary" were also an international community, comprising Ghanaians like John Donkor, Daniel Mari, Eric Osei Yeboah, Charles Kwaning, William Cobbinah, Philemon Aboungo, Ezekiel Okofo Boansi, and Agyeman Pambour; and Sierra Leoneans like Samuel Sankoh and Samuel Yokie.⁷ Other later students who got to Bekwai for the training there included Stephen Addo Kwakye, John Nyamekye, Sampson Adjare, Thomas Bobie Danso, Paul Appiah Mensah, and Sampson Twumasi.¹²

The "Bekwai Seminary" started with a total of twelve students, all male and working as pastors. They had two tutors in the persons of Yeboah Amoako (Bible tutor) and S. E. Opam (Adventist Church Doctrines tutor). Midway

through their program, however, the “Bekwai Seminary” students were given a shock of their lives. Their division headquarters administration in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, under President Robert Kloosterhuis, handed out a new policy to the effect that, henceforth, the minimum qualification for entry into the ministerial work was the bachelor’s degree.¹³

The students were devastated by this Abidjan handout, which also essentially killed the “Bekwai Seminary” in 1983/1984 because the school was then programmed to produce only ministers and other workers whose formal educational level was just like that of 12 graders in the American educational system. But, providentially, the death and burial of the Bekwai Adventist Ministerial College became the life and development of the Adentan Adventist Missionary College in the Accra metropolis.

The leadership of the church sought to prepare the seminarians to acquire the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level (GCE O’Level) to enable them to meet the requirement for entry into a ministerial college. At this stage, realizing that the two courses were not enough to prepare them adequately to obtain the GCE O’Level certificate, the students were made to join the final year general art class of the Bekwai Secondary School. On that fateful morning of their first day as Bekwai Secondary “senior” students, all 12 pastors, smartly dressed in white shirts and socks, black shoes, trousers, and ties, entered the Form 5 classroom. The sight of 12 men in such an unusual outfit sent the helpless Form 5 students fleeing from the classroom. It took the headmaster over 30 minutes to convince them that these were pastors and not policemen and that they were joining them to prepare for the O’Level examinations. Still, these youngsters insisted that they would not sit in the same class with the pastors. Finally, when the students agreed to go back to the class with the pastors, they insisted that the pastors be seated in two rows with an appreciable distance between them and the next row of actual final year students. After they got used to them, they nicknamed the ministers “The Crows” because of their black and white attire. One of the pastors, Eric Osei Yeboah, was affectionately and hilariously nicknamed “Spiritual Sintim,” and they created a caricature of him with an extra-large nose on their classroom wall.¹⁴ In spite of the embarrassment and humiliation from the young students, each of the 12 pastors passed the O’Level exams with flying colors; three of them passed with distinction (Eric Osei Yeboah, Gyasi Asimpi, and E. O. Boansi).

The Establishment of a College

The new vision for a local ministerial training school, together with its future broader dimensions of a junior college and eventually a university, which was cast in the late seventies, eventually saw the light of day. Soon after the start of the Ministerial Certificate Course at Bekwai, the Central Ghana Conference mooted the idea to upgrade it into a college. This was initiated by Brempong Owusu-Antwi, who presented the proposal as part of his report to the 11th Session of the West Africa Union Mission as acting president of the Central Ghana Conference in 1980.¹⁵ Coincidentally, in the same year, the new division, Africa-

Indian Ocean Division, voted that henceforth entry into the pastoral ministry was a bachelor's degree. Walton S. Whaley also indicated that he wrote a feasibility paper in 1981 at the instance of Matthew A. Bediako for the establishment of the junior college. Upon the acceptance of the idea by the union and the division, the South Ghana Mission officers met with the West Africa Union Mission officers, proposing the establishment of the junior college within the territory of the South Ghana Mission.

Siting the College

The establishment of such an institution had to be in line with the General Conference Education Policy. To this end A. C. Segovia, then associate education director of the General Conference, was invited to come and assess the feasibility studies for the establishment of the college. The meeting with A. C. Segovia was attended by representatives from the Africa-Indian Ocean Division (Joseph Nkou, education director, and J. J. Nortey, treasurer). Also present were WAUM Executive Committee members, the president of Central Ghana Conference (H. V. A. Kumah), and all executive committee members of South Ghana Mission. The team was supposed to embark upon a field inspection of the proposed sites in the two territories.

In May 1982 the Central Ghana Conference had voted "To propose to WAUM the present site of the Agona S. D. A. Secondary School for the proposed Junior College."¹⁶ The survey team did not visit Agona, and the conference accordingly expressed its displeasure and disappointment at its subsequent executive committee meeting.¹⁷ The sites proposed by the South Ghana Conference were visited; namely, Aplaku, Awutu Breku, Agona Kwanyako, Ntoaso-Nsawam, Abiriw, and Oyibi. At the end of the visit to the site, the team selected the Oyibi site. Proximity of the site to existing tertiary institutions (i.e., University of Ghana and GIMPA), to a major road, to the national airport, and to the national capital, all worked in favor of Oyibi. As Kofi Owusu-Mensa has noted,

The Accra Metropolis became the final home of the evolving Adventist tertiary institution after some real 'brotherly fight' between the Central Ghana Conference headquartered in Kumase and the South Ghana Mission headquartered in Accra over 'the glory of hosting.' The struggle for this 'glory' nearly tore the church in Ghana apart, leaving behind some hard feelings that dogged the progress of the school for some time. The brethren, however, finally allowed the Holy Spirit to take full control of the situation for Christian togetherness and unity to prevail for a forward march, arm in arms, for Christ and His mission for mankind in these closing scenes of world history.¹⁸

The Oyibi site itself was suggested by one Victoria Torto at Oyarifa, near Accra, to see the chiefs of Oyibi for land for the proposed university. Following her advice, Ebenezer O. Sackey, the then president of South Ghana Mission, met with chief Nii Okanshan II, who recommended a meeting between the four families who own the stretch of land he envisaged would be needed for the project. At the first meeting between the families (i.e., Djane We, Nii Moi We, Odatei Tse We, and K. G. Mensah family) and South Ghana Mission, the families agreed to release their lands for this educational development. The families, acknowledging the prospects of such a

project in raising the profile of their village (Oyibi), were interested in releasing their lands for the project but indicated they would lease the property instead of an outright sale.

One of the key players at the birthing of the institution was Joseph A. Bulley, an Accra man of solid Adventist credentials, a 1959 Earl E. Cleveland convert. A humble, self-made man of moderate resources, he put his life and property on the line for God and Adventism to help lay down solid foundations for the growth and development of the university. His property at Adentan, Accra, became the main temporary campus of the institution in the Accra metropolis, which was christened "Adventist Missionary College" in 1983. As a building contractor, the South Ghana Mission further engaged the services of Joseph A. Bulley to not only use his private premises at Adentan to start the Adventist Missionary College but also put up temporal structures at Oyibi.

The Early Days of the College

Officially opened on October 31, 1983, the Adventist Missionary College started at Adentan in the Greater Accra Region with 16 students, with Walton S. Whaley as the president. With Walton S. Whaley as head, the school started operating with some of the GCE O'Level graduate ministers from Bekwai, as well as other applicants who came directly for admission at Adentan. The offer of Joseph A. Bulley to use his property was indeed a blessing as the location was excellent and attracted students from the national capital and beyond.

Most of the students who enrolled at Adventist Missionary College came for theological studies and were prepared for pastoral ministry. However, the college also offered some business courses to prepare accountants for the church and its institutions. The philosophy of education was the preparation of each student for service, and this was done within the parameters of Adventist Christianity. Since its inception the institution has been known for its Christian values and ethical stance on education and life in general.

Despite the economic and political difficulties in the 1980s, the college remained focused on its mission. During the Adentan days, there was the Whaley team that pioneered the work of the college. The students included Ghanaians, Sierra Leoneans, Liberians, Togolese, and even a Congolese. Pioneer students at Adentan in 1983, twenty of them, included Stephen Addo Kwakye, Amos Oppong Afriyie, Lydia Maku Ago (the only female), E. Akuoko Konadu, Atta Kwabena Assenso, Atta Kwarteng Assenso, Joshua Attoh, E. Okofo Boansi, Kofi Deku, Michael Owusu, Benjamin Oyortey, Joe Almeida, Paul Koroma, and Samuel Sankoh.¹⁹ These business and theology students, programmed for two-year junior college work, also had international teachers as their mentors. Ghanaians were naturally in the majority, but other nationalities also featured well. Ghanaian teachers included names like Japheth Agboka, George Stephen Aidoo, Andrews Ewoo, Daniel Sackey, John Attakora Mensah, Victoria Aryee, K. D. Ameley, Robert Akuamoah Boateng, Kofi Ohene Konadu, Safo Mensah Ntim, Bernard Gomasi, and Kofi Owusu-Mensa.²⁰ Their American colleagues were Walton Whaley, his wife Leola, and Judith Sundsted. L. G. Antonio was of British citizenship while Pascal Latour and his wife Juliet were truly both Indian and French.

During the Adentan days, several batches of students came after the pioneers. Later students from 1984 to the end of 1988 included people like Jemima Aryee, Esther Cooper, Theresa Dweh, James Denis, Joe Fayie, John Flomo, Samuel Yokie, Kwao Tetteh Abbeyquaye, William Ackah, Jr., Enoch Affum, David Ameyaw, Amofa Anane Asamoah, Joseph Asare, James Badu, Charles Bediako, Emmanuel Boateng, Andrews Fosu, George Kumi, Sampson Twumasi, Samuel Attah Oduroh, Abigail Assenso, Thomas Ocran, Emmanuel Takyi, Emmanuel Koroma, Joseph Wright, John Andor, Segla Kossivi, S. Gameti, Yaw Ofori Amanfo, Ayodele Adekale, Felix Yaw Adu-Gyamfi, Isaac Kwabena Donkor, Elijah Nyamaah, George Opey, Gabriel Yaw Ahimah, Emmanuel Imbrah, Kwame Kyei Gyamfi, Linda Agboka, Kwadwo Kwarteng Ampofo, and Francis Tenortey. That was a small “Organization of African Unity” for Christ and His cause on earth. Adding that to the body of international faculty on campus, the Adventist Missionary College was a veritable little “United Nations” of Adventists. And indeed, the international character of the institution has only expanded over the years.

The Relocation to Oyibi and Change of Name

Moving from Adentan to Oyibi was also a struggle. Some of the students, many of the city boys and girls, picketed and protested against the move, unwilling to go to “the bush,” but had to be moved there reluctantly by the college administration headed by Christus Andoh Mensah as the acting president.²¹ The official move from Adentan to Oyibi took place in January 1989.²² The Adventist Missionary College at Adentan now became Valley View College at Oyibi.²³ Some of the students that began a new life at Oyibi from Adentan were Felix Yaw Adu Gyamfi, George Opey, Gabriel Ahimah, Daniel Oduro Sarpong, Micheal Achianor, David Kyei Agyapong, Elijah Nyamaah, Alfred Acquaye, William Boadi Beckson, Obed Mfum Mensah, Joseph Kwaku Amankwah, Seth Asare Tawiah, Philip Quarshie, Klihpord Oduro Darkwa, Zubairu Bundu, Damson Anim Oppong, Emmanuel Imbrah, Kwadwo Kwarteng Ampofo, Kwame Kyei Gyamfi, Linda Agboka, Francis Ternortey, and Rose Newman.

Pioneering at Oyibi brought in not just international students but also an international faculty and staff—Ghanaians like Christus A. Mensah, S. M. Ansah, S.Y. Mawutor, S. Kusi Appiah, Daniel Oduro Mensah, Nabi Donkor, and Samuel Larmie; Indians like Pascal Latour and his wife Juliet; and Filipinos like Eliezer Lingayon and his wife Ellen.

The Oyibi virgin bush was indeed frightening in 1989 and 1990. It was virtually empty, except for its snakes, scorpions, anthills, antelopes, grasscutters, crickets, termites, cockroaches, and other pests. The infrastructure and buildings for the college were nothing to write home about. A wooden building for a men’s dormitory, a duplex for ladies’ dormitory and deans’ house, an all purpose administrative-library-classroom block, and a cafeteria-chapel classroom complex were all the institution could boast of as its real assets on the ground. The ubiquitous good old Joseph A. Bulley, together with his “boys,” was a real helper who continued his good deeds and services for the struggling college. All these early structures on campus were Bulley Projects. One of the city girls who touched down at Oyibi in the early nineties for university education cursed her mother many times

with sleepless night tears for her bad decision to dump her at Valley View College, a school comprising only a few girls and mainly old men studying theology, her “fathers.” Water, accommodation for students, faculty and staff, and transportation were all pioneering challenges and problems on campus in the early nineties, but these could not stop Adventists in Ghana and their brothers and sisters around the globe from moving forward for Christ and His rescue mission for humankind. The strength for this determination was derived, as usual, from the global togetherness spirit driving the evolution process.

The Lord has blessed the determination of the church and the leaders of the institution over the years. A concatenation of acting and substantive presidents has so far steered the affairs of the institution: Walton S. Whaley (president, 1980/1983-1987),²⁴ Arlyn C. Sundsted (Ag. President, 1987-1988), Christus A. Mensah (Ag. President, 1988--1989), Israel T. Agboka (ag. president, 1989--1990), Donald O. Eichner (president, 1990--1991), Francis N. Chase (ag. president, 1991--1992), Roland L. Joachim (president, 1992--1994), Seth A. Laryea (president/vice-chancellor, 1995--2010), Daniel Buor (vice-chancellor, 2010--2015), Daniel K. Bediako (vice-chancellor, 2015 to date). Five of the presidents/vice-chancellors are Ghanaians while the remaining five Americans, all working consecutively for the progress of God’s mission.

These presidents also worked with both national and international faculty, staff, and students to build up the institution through the years. International faculty members, in addition to those already mentioned above, who have helped the institution through her struggles, challenges, and humble achievements, include the Indian, Kenneth Swansi and wife; the Nigerian, Oluseyi Oduyoye; the Rwandese, Juvenal Balisasa, Pierre Nzokiswanimana, and Samuel Kanyandekwe; the German Ursula Gorch Akafu; the Togolese, Jean Elorm Doufodji; the Kenyan Philip Maiyo and wife Grace; and the Americans Christopher Carey, Lydia Andrews, and Johnson Afriyie.

Ghanaian faculty and staff completing the globalization efforts and strides of the institution over the years are many and cannot all be named here. In addition to the few mentioned above, a few more include Alfred Adonu, Dzedzorm R. Asafo, Alex Briandt-Coker, Ama Foriwaa Karikari, Daniel Opoku-Boateng, Eden Adeku, Emmanuel Takyi, Brempong Owusu Antwi, Samuel Kwasi AttahOduroh, Francis Tenortey, Vida Mensah, Charles Amoah, Francis Mensah, Amos Oppong Afriye, Matthew Annoh Appiah, Esther Bofo, John Pepra Mensah, Isaac Dowuona, Kwasi Okyere Darko, Josephine Ganu, Daniel Ganu, Irene Apea, Isaac Owusu Dankwa, Abraham Amponsah, Peter Boateng, Emmanuel Boateng, Gifty Gyamera, Abraham Okrah, Christiana Pokuaa, Francis Opoku, Kofi Boateng Agyenim, Mabel Owusu Antwi, Elizabeth Abenaa Obiri Antwi, Geoffrey Nimoh, Bernard Bempong, John Appiah, Joseph Aaron Hagan, and Henry Quarshie. These and many others have worked tirelessly for the progress of the university.

The growth of Valley View University is reflected not only in its name, having changed from “Bekwai Seminary” through “Adventist Ministerial College” and “Adventist Missionary College” to “Valley View College” and now Valley View University. Growth has come in various other ways, including expansion in terms of campuses,

accreditation and charter, programs and enrollment, infrastructural development, and industries.

Campuses and Learning Centers

That the Lord has showered blessings upon the university over the years is evident by the fact that the Oyibi has grown birthed satellite campuses and learning centers across Ghana. The main campus at Oyibi is situated on 251 acres of land, about half of which has been developed. Recognizing the fact that education is a mission, the administration ventured to expand the institution and its influence at strategic locations in the country. Satellite campuses include Techiman Campus and Kumasi Campus, while learning centers include Takoradi and Tamale.

In 2009 Valley View University took over the Adventist Secondary Technical School (formerly Adventist Vocational Institute) in Techiman in the middle part of the country, taught out the students, and converted the 256 acre property into a university campus. The Valley View University, Techiman Campus, officially opened for business on September 1, 2009, with 109 students and Joseph K. Osei as rector of the campus.²⁵ This both stopped the church from ceding the secondary school and its property to the government, a step already taken by the Mid-West Ghana Conference in 2007.²⁶

The first staff of the Techiman Campus comprised those recycled into the system from the defunct secondary school and some new staff. Felix Tottoh Aplogan, E. O. G. Nsowaah, Emmanuel Nuertey, and Florence Obeng Aboagye were drawn from the defunct secondary school. New members included Asare-Bediako Ankrah, Yaw Osei-Boadu, Albert Amo-Asimeng, Osei-Bonsu Agyemang, Owusu Agyekum, Robert Aidoo, Lydia Adomako, and Annor Boahen.²⁷ The campus has since developed rapidly, and the student population in 2019 was 3,500. Three rectors have so far headed the administration of the campus under the supervision of the Oyibi campus: Joseph K. Osei (2007–2013), Robert Osei-Bonsu (2014–2015), and Peter Agyekum Boateng (2016–date).

Since its establishment, the campus has played a key role in the development of the Techiman municipality. Apart from making university education accessible to the community, the university-owned hospital and basic school complex have been of great service to the people. The hospital effectively promotes a healthy lifestyle within communities. And the basic school complex had a population of 971 pupils in 2019.

The Kumasi campus started as a Distance Learning Center in 2004, at the M. A. Bediako Adventist Preparatory School, Amakom, Kumasi. In 2012 the center moved into a rented facility at Kwadaso, Kumasi. It assumed a campus status in 2013. From August 2015, the campus also had to perch with an Adventist secondary school in Kenyase, Kumasi, to run its sandwich sessions (a special program for students who were elementary school teachers), while running the distance programs at the Kwadaso facility. Finally, in April 2019, the campus moved into its own 6.5-acre land property graciously leased by George Kwabena Koduah family at Oduom/Anwomaso in Kumasi. Currently, the staff and student population is about 1,200.

From 2004 the Kumasi center was run from Oyibi, with a part-time caretaker in Kumasi. In 2013 David Kwasi Asare was appointed coordinator of the center, and from October 2015 to January 2016, Peter Agyekum Boateng was appointed rector and was succeeded in February 2016 by Emmanuel B. Amponsah as rector. Although granted the status of campus in 2013, the Kumasi campus officially started operations as a campus in July 2017. The campus has the potential for growth and will continue to support the mission of the church in the region. There is a plan to build a full campus on a 79.5-acre plot at Feyiase, near Bekwai, where the seed of an Adventist university in Ghana was nursed.

In 2014, following an invitation of Michael Asilidjoe (president of the South-West Ghana Conference) in 2013, the university started a Distance Learning Center in Takoradi in the south-western part of the country. It started with 15 students. The center started in the basement of the Central Church, Takoradi. Just as the Seth A. Laryea administration took over the Adventist Secondary School at Techiman in 2009, so the Daniel K. Bediako administration stopped the church from ceding the Adventist High School in Takoradi to the government and converting same to a university learning center in 2016. In April 2016 the center was moved from the basement of the church premise to the Adventist High School, whose students were taught out and the structures renovated. From 2014 the center was run from Oyibi with the help of a part-time caretaker, Daniel Armstrong Kumah. In July 2017 Ebenezer Quaye was appointed coordinator and was succeeded by David Asare in October 2019. In 2019 the student population at the center stood at 269.

The Tamale Learning Center is located in the northern part of Ghana. It started in 2012 as a Distance Learning Center. It was run from Oyibi with the help of a part-time caretaker until July 2016 when the vice-chancellor, Daniel Bediako, ceded it to the Techiman Campus. In 2017 Ellen Osei was appointed assistant registrar to take care of the center and in 2018, Asare-Bediako Ankrah was appointed coordinator of the center. The center still operates in rented facilities. The student population in 2019 was 453, the majority of them being sandwich students.

Accreditation and Charter

The Adventist Accrediting Association accredited the institution in 1983. In 1995 the college was affiliated to the Griggs University to run degree programs in theology, religion, and business. The name "Valley View" itself was adopted in 1989, not just to reflect the beautiful valley as one looks down from the nearby towering Akuapem Hills but also to receive some dollars from the donors who fancied the name.²⁸ In 199c the college was incorporated into the college/university system of Seventh-day Adventists and moved from being a union institution to a division institution. Accordingly, the West-Africa Union Mission offloaded the financial burdens of the college on the shoulders of the division, its parent institution headquartered in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

The college was recognized by the government of Ghana in 1997, when the newly formed National Accreditation Board visited and accredited the institution. Thus, the college became the first private tertiary university to be

granted accreditation in the country.²⁹ In the same year the “college” in the name of the institution was replaced by “university.”

Beyond program and institutional accreditations is the Presidential Charter that allows an institution to award its own degrees. A charter is normally granted to an institution that successfully executes its mandate over a period of 10 years following its accreditation. Visiting the institution in his official capacity as the first sitting Ghanaian president to do so, John Agyekum Kuffour addressed the audience at the 12th Commencement Ceremony on Sunday, May 28, 2006, handed the charter bearing his signature, and topped it all up with the government’s gracious donation of the money in cedi equivalent to US\$100,000.00 for the growth and development of the university.³⁰ The government also donated a bus to the institution. While the institution carried the name “university” beginning 1997, it officially became a “university” in 2006 with the granting of the charter.

Schools, Programs, and Enrollment

From one small theology department in the 1980s, Valley View University runs 43 academic programs from diploma (associate degree) to doctoral (Ph.D.) level. These programs have been organized into seven schools/faculties: (1) Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, (2) School of Business, (3) Faculty of Science, (4) School of Education, (5) School of Nursing and Midwifery, (6) School of Adult and Distance Education, and (7) School of Graduate Studies. Students have the option to enroll in one of several delivery modes, including Regular, Distance, Evening, Weekend/Sunday, Sandwich, and Summer modes.

According to the Admissions and Records Office of the university, student enrollment figures have increased steadily over the years. The records indicate that in the 1st semester 1996/97, 2nd semester 1996/97, and 1st semester 1997/98 there were 83, 95, and 89 students respectively. For the first five semesters of the 21st century, enrollment was 565, 671, 845, 895, 925 in that order. The enrollment figures continued their upward trend. For the 1st and 2nd semesters of 2005/06, they were 1,092 and 1,240; for 2006/07 they were 1,559 and 1,934; for 2007/08 they were 2,408 and 2,581; and for the 1st semester of 2008/09, it was 3,071.

The figure for the 1st semester of 2009/10 was 3,279. From the 2012/13 academic year, enrollment increased exponentially. The figure for that year was 6,630. The table below presents the enrolment figures from 2013/14 to 2018/19 academic years.

School	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Arts & Social Sciences	422	423	392	377	386	397
Science	537	554	559	524	501	393
Business	1378	1180	1042	901	634	492
Education	4439	5718	5745	5801	5373	5221

Nursing & Midwifery	567	704	803	928	971	1105
Adult & Distance	1044	1027	1152	994	1026	1081
Graduate Studies	127	271	371	551	780	745
Total	8514	9877	10064	10076	9671	9434

In 2019, students enrolled in the University represented twenty-five countries of Africa. Adventist students currently constituted about 40%. As has been the case since 2014, students in the Sandwich constitute about 50 percent of total enrollment.

Graduating students have also steadily increased in numbers as new programs were introduced. For example, graduands were 9 in 1995, 20 in 2000, 133 in 2003, and 207 in 2005. These numbers tripled after 2010. For example, in 2010 the number was 627, in 2011 it was 604, and in 2012 it was 679. The table below presents the matriculation and graduation figures from 2013/14 to 2018/19 academic years.

Year	Matriculants	Graduands
2013/2014	3360	1071
2014/2015	2757	2700
2015/2016	2860	2635
2016/2017	2956	2922
2017/2018	2876	2747
2018/2019	2897	2775

According to the records, the university, between 2002 and 2015, sponsored a total of 23 faculty members to pursue Ph.D. degrees. Since 2016, 71 faculty and staff enrolled in various Ph.D. programs, 63 of them being fully sponsored by the university. In 2016 it became a policy of the university that only Ph.D. (or equivalent degree) holders are eligible for full-time engagement as faculty members. The policy also required that each faculty member is expected to publish at least one peer-reviewed journal article per year.

Infrastructural Development

The growth of the university into campuses and learning centers also meant expansion in infrastructure. When the college moved to the Oyibi site, there was only one lecture block with a seating capacity of less than 200. In 2019 the institution can boast of ten lecture blocks with seating capacities totaling 5,620. Again, with an initial wooden structure male hostel infested with snakes and scorpions and a small hostel for females, the university currently has six main gigantic hostels that can accommodate 3,000 students. Some of the student hostels have been named after both individuals (e.g., Ellen White, J. J. Nortey, M. A. Bediako) and groups (NAGSDA, i.e., North

America Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventists). So have lecture blocks been named (e.g., J. A. Bulley, Bobab Centre, Andrew Clark, and Columbia Union). We have also moved from one staff residential apartment to faculty/staff blocks accommodating 60 families.

To a large extent, the institution owes its growth in infrastructure to Adventists in North America, Europe, and Ghana. Buildings such as the NAGSDA Hall, Andrew Clark Hall, Columbia Hall, the Guest House, Fresno House, the Bakery, Seth A. Laryea Multipurpose Centre, and the Euro Houses were large donations.

Apart from Adventists, some governmental organizations have supported the growth of the university. For example, the German government, through the Ecological Society, partnered with the university in the early 2000s to build an ecological concept for the institution. The 251-acre Oyibi land is being developed through the ecological masterplan designed by the German partners. With this program, the institution became the first university in Ghana to initiate an ecological concept (eco-Master Plan, biogas, waste water treatment, water harvesting, nutrient application, etc.).

Currently a number of infrastructure projects are ongoing. These include a new administration block, a lecture block, new student hostels, faculty flats, and a gigantic church building that can accommodate 4000 worshippers.

Industries

Besides the academic work, the university has engaged in several industries or ventures that are intended to both instill the value of physical work in students (i.e., avenues for Work-Study program) and to generate income for the institution.

While some of the ventures have been in operation since the early 2000s, the Ventures Directorate was established in 2016. With this, the University Ventures became a semi-autonomous unit with its own board of directors. The ventures include the following:

1. Bakery, which supplies the healthiest bread to the surrounding communities in Accra, Kumasi, and Techiman. Many people would agree that Valley View Bread is the best bread in Ghana.
2. Mineral water project, which supplies sachet mineral water with very good pH levels in Oyibi.
3. Block factory, which produces all the blocks used to build in the university at Oyibi and Techiman.
4. Hospital, which serves surrounding communities at Oyibi and in Techiman. More than 97 percent of the patients come from these communities.
5. Restaurant, which is attached to the cafeteria and supplies vegetarian meals.
6. Farms (including mangoes, oranges, vegetables, poultry, etc.) at Oyibi and Techiman that supply some fruits, vegetables, soy milk, and eggs to the cafeteria and sell to the community.

7. Basic schools at Oyibi and Techiman that serve surrounding communities. The enrollment in 2019 was 1,700. The university was assisted by Maranatha International to put up the classrooms for both the Oyibi and Techiman basic schools.

8. Auto mechanic shop, which repairs both university and individual vehicles at Oyibi.

Valley View Radio Station started with an Adventist World Radio studio in the year 2005. Studio productions started in the year 2006 for AWR broadcasts. With the help of AWR, the FM studio was set up in the year 2007. Then in 2011 the National Communications Authority of Ghana granted the FM license with the frequency number 97.7 MHz. Here again, Valley View University became the first private university in Ghana to have a campus radio. All this came about at the initiative and hard work of the manager of AWR-Ghana, Belle Dollar-Bill.

Student Life on Campus

As her mission, Valley View University emphasizes academic, spiritual, vocational, and technological excellence for service to God and humanity. To support this transformation agenda, the university has promoted holistic learning experience on its campuses with Bible lecture series, interdisciplinary forums, spiritually uplifting programs, sporting activities, and fun activities for students.

Students enroll at the University from different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. In 2019 the student population represented 25 African countries. Adventist students receive a 10 percent waiver on fees throughout their study. Those in the theology program receive 25 percent. The Work-Study program is available to students. Through this program, students work to pay part of their fees. There are two categories of the Work-Study program. In the first category, students work for a certain number of hours each week and get paid. Those who are not registered within a particular semester are also given the opportunity to work extra hours for extra income. The second is Work for Skill & School Programme. This not only affords students to raise funds for their education but also focuses on the acquisition of some entrepreneurial skills in the various ventures of the campus. This program comes with a sponsorship package that takes care of a greater portion of the student's tuition, feeding, and accommodation.

Student Life and Services department plays a key role in the nonacademic life of students. The primary function of this department is to nurture the student outside of the classroom by providing an environment and physical structures that will enable the student to excel in academic, spiritual, social, and career aspects of his/her life. The food services, sports, counseling, and social activities are part of the essential mission of Student Life and Services in ensuring that students achieve academic excellence and whole-person development.

The department works closely with the chaplaincy team for the spiritual health of the students. Services are aligned with the mission and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The several worship centers on campus are meant to involve as many students as possible in church activities. The administration, in

consultation with chaplain and dean of Student Life and Services, determines which spiritual activities are required of all students. Currently, apart from the daily morning devotions in their rooms, students are required to attend Sabbath worship services and the Wednesday afternoon chapel service. There are also semesterly Week of Spiritual Emphasis programs that students are required to attend. These always lead to baptisms. There are many singing groups on campus. Some of these groups have become international groups, such as The Symphonies. These groups add color to worship services. Students also have interest in mission. There are four students' evangelistic groups that engage in evangelism during holidays. The university regularly spends a portion of its evangelistic budgets for these efforts. Through the efforts of students and staff, the university has opened about twenty churches. The hostels provide healthy outlets for socialization and recreation to give students a balanced life. Games are organized by the sports director on a regular basis. There are annual hall weeks that each hall/hostel celebrates. During these celebrations, students do not only engage in fun and recreation, but they also learn about basic housekeeping, Christian grooming, sex education, and family life in general. The ladies also enjoy lessons on basic cooking and baking, as well as homemaking. Hall life itself is a whole school for practical, healthy, organized living. Students consciously or unconsciously learn how to live peaceably with others. These include how to share spaces and utilities with others and how to avoid being a nuisance to one's neighbor or friend.

Apart from the hostel activities, students are also given the opportunity to learn the art of governance through associations and clubs that they are allowed to form for such activities. At the moment there are seven main associations besides the Student Representative Council. These associations, with their varied subassociations, range from academic ones that reflect programs or disciplines offered by the university to social groupings. Literature Club, International Students Association, Students Youth Travel Organization, Computer Science Students Association, Business Administration Students Association, National Civic Education Movement, The Green Earth Club, Ministry Oriented Students Club, Theology/Religion Student Association, etc. have been organized to provide for students' interest in these areas. Some of these associations organize trips to areas or institutions to acquaint themselves with facts that enhance the courses of their pursuit. Some of these student groups have helped enhance the image of the university internationally. For example, a student group distinguished itself in Ghana and Kenya in the Zain African Challenge Competition in 2009, collecting \$10,000.00 in teaching aids for the school and getting some additional cash donations for themselves. This team topped all the rival universities in Ghana in this competition.³¹ Again, a student team took first place in Global Management Competition Ghana (2013) and placed 6th globally (2014).

But more to these exciting events is the leadership experience they gain from the exposure. The Student Representation Council provides opportunities for student leadership. Elected officers, including faculty sponsor(s), regularly direct the affairs of the council and conduct the general assembly and senate meetings in accordance with the approved constitution.³² Special leadership seminars are organized before the beginning of

every academic year for all leaders of the associations to prepare them for their various leadership roles and functions in tandem with the Adventist philosophy of education.

Alumni

The university has so far graduated over 17,000 students. More than 50 percent of the workers in the institution are alumni who are dedicated to serving God and humanity even with meager remuneration. The office of Alumni Relations has continuously worked with the alumni. In recent years, however, the alumni in the diaspora have shown keen interest in the development of the institution. A scholarship fund has been established by the alumni to support needy students.

Governance, Mission, Vision, and Challenges

This section deals with issues relating to governance in the context of both church and state requirements. It also touches on the strategic direction of the institution with regard to the Adventist mission and identifies challenges.

The university exhibits a well-developed system of governance with a clear organization. The university is run by Management/Administration, headed by the vice-chancellor, under the supervision of the Governing Council chaired by one of the local union presidents. The council has six subcommittees that advise council in the execution of its functions. The council, in turn, reports to the Board of Education/Executive Committee of the West-Central Africa Division, chaired by the chancellor, being the president of the division. Governing documents include the division policy, the constitution, strategic plan, and employee handbook. There are also external bodies, the National Accreditation Board (Ghana) and the Adventist Accrediting Association, whose requirements must be met to remain in business.

Under the Seth A. Laryea Administration, the idea of a new constitution which was an amalgamation of the American and British systems was hatched. A constitution review committee was subsequently set by the Board of Trustees. The proposed constitution was approved and used from 2010 to 2015.³³ At the end of the quinquennium, the constitution was revised, and the revised one is currently in use. Both the 2010 and 2015 constitutions lean toward the British system rather than the American. The change from the purely American system to the British system brought about some internal discomfort, as faculty ranking was now based more on publications. It must be noted prior to 2010, research publications were not required of faculty members. In fact, faculty promotion was almost nonexistent. Beginning in 2010, salary notches were tied to ranking, which was in turn tied to teaching, service, and especially research and publication.

The Adventist Accrediting Association, during their visit in 2017, recommended further revision of the constitution. Among the concerns raised was that the current constitution lacks alignment with the West-Central

Africa Division Working Policy. For example, there is the need to differentiate between the University Council (at the division level) and the Local Board of Directors (which is currently called Council). Again, the membership of the existing council needed to be reduced, with institutional representations limited to the vice-chancellor and one other employee, while at the same ensuring more qualified lay representation. The constitution is being revised for the 2020--2025 quinquennium.

The University's statements of mission, vision, and core values were restated in 2007 and have remained unchanged:

1. Statement of Mission: Valley View University, a Seventh-day Adventist institution, emphasizes academic, spiritual, vocational, and technological excellence for service to God and humanity.
2. Statement of Vision: To be a center of excellence for Christian education.
3. Core Values: Passing on the passion for excellence, integrity, and service. Excellence is the commitment to attain higher standards and expectations; Integrity encompasses honesty, authenticity, and trustworthiness; and Service, the willingness to serve God and humanity in a selfless manner.

In recent times, the government of Ghana has initiated some policies on tertiary education. These policies include an increase in the number of public universities, upgrade of diploma (i.e., associate degree) awarding colleges of education into degree-awarding institutions, and a quota system for new entrants in some programs (e.g., nursing). In addition, private universities have increased by 50 percent over the past seven years (there are 81 private universities in Ghana now). These government policies and the increase in the multiplicity of tertiary universities in Ghana have made enrollment extremely competitive. Generally, in Ghana, prospective students prefer public universities to private universities. The administration of Valley View University has noticed that graduate or postgraduate education promises a good avenue to increase enrollment. This is the key reason for sponsoring many faculty members to pursue Ph.D. degrees to qualify them to teach graduate courses.

The requirements and recommendations of the National Accreditation Board and the Adventist Accrediting Association sometimes conflict with each other. This is because the former follows the British system while the latter follows the American system with an Adventist Christian flavor. Where there are conflicts, the university does its best to satisfy both bodies, though this is often difficult.

It must be admitted that some administrative actions in the past took the university off the global map of Adventist education. During those periods, most of the professional standards required by the Adventist Accrediting Association were invariably ignored. This resulted in the university being placed on probation by the Adventist Accrediting Association from 2013 to 2017. There was a lack of a vibrant missional vision that has led to a detrimental situation in which employees consider working for the university as a mere career instead of ministry. Some interviewees wished that the administration would turn around the ethos of the university to become mission-focused once again. Thankfully, the current administration has employed functional measures

to restore the institution onto the educational context required of all Adventist institutions. These measures promise to help focus on the Adventist mission and maintain the university's relationship with other stakeholders so as to maintain its credibility and vibrancy in the changing landscape of education in Ghana.

The current Strategic Plan expires in 2020. According to the administration, a new strategic direction has been proposed to the Governing Council by the vice-chancellor. The proposal is that the university creates a niche in health and technology in Ghana. It is believed that, though there are challenges, the initiatives being taken may culminate in a vigorous pursuit of the university's mission and vision.

Legacies of Some of the University Administrations

Between 1979 and 1994, three substantive presidents and four acting presidents served the institution now known as Valley View University. These seven leaders contributed in various ways to nurse the institution, carrying it on their laps from Bekwai (1979) through Adentan (1981) to Oyibi (1989). In Ghana, the title vice-chancellor is reserved for the head of a chartered tertiary institution. Technically, therefore, since its charter in 2006, there have been three vice-chancellors: Seth A. Laryea, Daniel Buor, and Daniel K. Bediako.

1. Legacy of Seth A. Laryea administration:³⁴

- Securing the first national accreditation of a private tertiary institution in Ghana
- Securing the first presidential charter of a private tertiary institution in Ghana
- Establishment of a satellite campus (Techiman) and a study center (Kumasi)
- Establishment of the Distance Learning Center
- Expansion in physical infrastructure through fundraising—three hostels, one lecture block, Baobab, officers/faculty homes
- Development of an ecological concept through a German collaboration
- Building relationships, team spirit, and selfless service

2. Legacy of Daniel Buor administration:³⁵

- Expansion in enrollment (from 3,877 to 9,899) and academic programs (from 14 to 25) within the five-year term
- Emphasis on research and faculty rankings
- Reorganization of departments into schools/faculties—School of Theology and Missions, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Business, Faculty of Science
- Establishment of graduate school

- Establishment of a study center (Takoradi)
- Massive expansion in physical infrastructure through loan facility—three hostels, three faculty/staff flats, and one lecture block
- Establishment of basic schools—Oyibi and Techiman

3. Legacy of Daniel K. Bediako administration:³⁶

- Emphasis on academic qualifications—engagement of only Ph.D. degree holders on full-time teaching and massive support for faculty through scholarships (from 11 Ph.D.s in training [Dec 2015] to 71 Ph.D.s in training [Sept 2019])
- Stability in enrollment figures despite stiffer competition during the period (from 9,899 [Dec 2015] to 10,076 [Dec 2017] then to 9,485 [Sept 2019]) and increase in academic programs (from 25 [Dec 2015] to 43 [Sept 2019]), including Ph.D. programs
- Massive infrastructure consolidation and facelift through internally generated funds while servicing the loan secured by the Daniel Buor administration (e.g., redesign and pavement of Entrance/Main Carriageway and the School of Graduate Studies, and continuation of the church building, School of Business block, the Boluwatife block, Perimeter Fencing/Wall, Techiman campus hospital, and Techiman men's hostel)
- Securing permanent sites and renovation of acquired properties for Kumasi campus and Takoradi Center, and granting Kumasi campus semiautonomy
- Establishment of evening (esp. nursing and midwifery) and weekend study modes (esp. Graduate School and nursing programs) and online teaching and learning at the School of Adult and Distance Education
- Establishment of a new salary scheme outside of the church system
- Creation of new schools (i.e., School of Education, School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Adult and Distance Education) and establishment of school/faculty registry system
- Establishment of Marketing Office adventures directorate, and granting the Ventures semiautonomy
- Development and implementation of policies, academic and administrative, to ensure discipline and to improve efficiency (e.g., review of entry requirements, code of conduct, control manual, performance evaluation instruments)
- Securing of an institutional reaccreditation (which had expired in 2013) from the Adventist Accrediting Association for the period April 2018 to December 2021

40th Anniversary Celebration

Valley View University celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2019. The anniversary was launched on November 15, 2018, by Leslie Pollard, president of Oakwood University. In the course of 2019, a number of programs were undertaken. The climax of the celebrations occurred during the weekend of the 25th graduation ceremony, July 4--7, 2019. Walton S. Whaley, the first president of the institution, delivered the sermon of the baccalaureate service. His Excellency, the vice president of the Republic of Ghana was the guest of honor for the graduation. A total of 2,775 students graduated in 2019. Here is an excerpt of the speech of the vice-chancellor, Daniel K. Bediako:

Life, they say, begins at 40. From a very humble beginning (1979) the institution now known as Valley View University has turned 40, a milestone that deserves our celebration. From one borrowed classroom/administration block we have grown into three campuses and several learning centers. We started with less than 20 students. Now, we can count more than 9,000 students. We are still the largest and most multicultural/international private university in Ghana. Along her 40-year journey, this institution has enjoyed several firsts in the country, including first private tertiary institution to be accredited (1997), the first to be granted presidential charter (2006), and the first, probably in Africa, to develop an ecological concept (eco-Master Plan, biogas, wastewater treatment, water harvesting, nutrient application, etc.).

And more could be said about academic excellence. We are the leader in value-based, Christian education in Ghana. Our Computer Science & Information Technology graduates are among the best software developers in Ghana. Our Nursing graduates do not only pass the licensing examinations with high scores, but they are also among the best nurses. Business graduates are key industry leaders. Our BEd Secondary Education Sandwich program is a leader in the country. And we are ranked among the best eight out of more than 100 public and private universities in Ghana.

We have come this far by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we have trekked the 40-year journey under the leadership of ten presidents and vice-chancellors: Walton S. Whaley (1980/83-1987), Arlyn C. Sundsted (Ag. 1987-1988), Christus A. Mensah (Ag. 1988-1989), Israel T. Agboka (Ag. 1989-1990), Donald O. Eichner (1989/1990-1991), Francis N. Chase (Ag. 1991-1992), Roland L. Joachim (1992-1994), Seth A. Laryea (1995-2010), Daniel Buor (2010-2015), and Daniel K. Bediako (2015-to date). Some of these carried the institution on their lap from Bekwai (near Kumasi) to Adentan (near Accra); there are those who walked her down to Oyibi; some solicited funds, from church to church, to fend for her; some carved a name for her; and some engraved that name further, building and reshaping.

We salute our past leaders and workers, who rendered selfless services to see the institution grow. . . . We salute our faculty and staff for their dedication. . . . We celebrate our 17,000 alumni who are making giant strides across the globe..... We celebrate the Seventh-day Adventist Church for establishing and supporting this University. And, above all, we celebrate our God for His grace and mercy that have brought us thus far.

We mark our 40th anniversary with the establishment of endowment funds. A Ghanaian Adventist group in the USA launched the Valley View University Foundation whose aim is to endow professorships and support the education of quality students. The target is to raise \$5,000,000 in ten years. Another endowment fund is being established locally to support work-study scholarships and to fund capital projects. I appeal to all Seventh-day Adventists in Ghana to contribute generously to fund value-based Christian education in service to God and humanity.

There are challenges, internal and external, but we know that the Lord is greater than all our challenges. And so we have every reason to sing with the psalmist—“Give thanks to the Lord, for His mercies endure forever!”⁸⁷

Conclusion

As an Adventist institution, Valley View University lives to fulfill its mission within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist mission. We preach, teach, heal, and disciple through education. Young men and women get to experience Christ. And we praise the Lord for the opportunity given us to serve Him here by leading young minds to fear God.

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