

Benin Mission

MATTHIEU KOULEETE

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The Benin Mission, encompassing the country of Benin, was established in 1964 and reorganized in 1987. Its headquarters are located at C/1109 "D," Wologuede, Cotonou.¹ As of the end of 2019, the membership was 5,859 with twenty-eight organized churches and sixty-one companies.²

History

The first missionary to Benin was a literature evangelist by the name of George Vaysse, a European, who came to the country in 1957. After two years of selling books, he made two converts.³ The true establishment of the Adventist Church in Benin dates from the arrival of Friday W. Nwala Amechi in 1963, and his brother, David Nwachuku in 1970. The brothers were Nigerian Seventh-day Adventists and traders who shared their faith with their customers. One of the first two people they converted was John Irobi, who was baptized in 1970 by Pastor Beech.⁴ Many more converts joined the group and the Aidjedo church in Cotonou was organized in 1983. Friday Nwalla, and John Irobi were elected the first elders. Pastor De-Paula led out in the ordination service.⁵

The Aidjedo church had great difficulty in finding a permanent place of worship until 1987 when a plot of land was purchased at Aidjedo. The Aidjedo church is known as the "mother" of all churches in Benin.⁶

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Benin was registered with the government in 1971. The registration with the government meant recognition by the government.⁷ The church in Benin was part of Togo-Benin Mission until 1987 when Benin became a mission station⁸ and later a mission in 1990.⁹

Expansion of Work

In 1991, Walton Walley, an American missionary, conducted a large open-air campaign at Wologuede and some converts were won. Between 1991 and 1998, church companies were established in Red Star (now the Agontikon church), Akpakpa, Kotoclomey, Lobo-zoukpa, Allada, and Kandeve (now the Tokpota church organized in 1997). The Akpakpa company met for worship in the house of David Danton. The church in Agonve, established by Victor Ragoobar, was organized on December 20, 1997.¹⁰

The Adventist message was first preached in Parakou, in northeast Benin, by Leopold Agbossassa who was then a literature evangelist. He arrived in 1983 and by the following year he had five converts.¹¹ Another literature

evangelist, Samuel Kpera, took the Adventist message to Maregourou in 1993, Natitingou in 1998, N'Dali in 2001, and Nikki in 2004.¹² The church gained high visibility in the northern region while Sowoanou Matthie Koulete was the pastor of the Donga district churches from 2003 to 2007.

Natitingou in the Atacora region in northwest Benin was first entered in 1998 when Samuel Kpera arrived to preach the Adventist message to the region. The church he established was organized in June 2006. Miche Bade, a missionary from Adventist Frontier Mission (AFM) began work in Kandi in 2006. In 2011, Samuel Kpera began work in Djougou.

Between 1986 and 1999 the Adventist message spread to other towns like Ouesse-Dokoundoho, Tosso, Savalou, Glazoue, Bohicon, and Cove.¹³

Current Administrators¹⁴

President: Geoffrey Comlan Dotou

Executive Secretary: Matthieu Sowoanou Koulete

Treasurer: Basile D. Djossou

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook, "Benin," accessed June 9, 2020, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=13547&highlight=Benin|mission>.
2. *4th Quarter Statistical Report for 2019, West-Central Africa Division, 2019.*?
3. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Benin."
4. John Irobi, interview by author, Cotonou, Benin, September 7, 2020.
5. Ibid.
6. Leopold Agbossassa, "Strategies to Restore Mission Mindset in Benin Mission: Case Study of Adjedo Church, Cotonou" (MA thesis, Adventist University of Africa, 2009).
7. *Official Journal of the Republic of Dahomey*, Legal Deposit No. 835, July 1, 1971.
8. "Benin Mission Station," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988), 50.
9. "Benin Mission Station," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1990), 47.
10. Benin Mission Records.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. "Benin Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2019).

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