

Sumani, Simon

Zuguduba

(1945–2007)

KOSSI-EKAO AMOUZOU

Kossi-Ekao Amouzou is a Seventh-day Adventist minister. He is the immediate past director of the Seventh-day Adventist Hospital in Tamale, Ghana. Currently, he is the Ministerial secretary and Family Ministries director for the North Ghana Mission. Pastor Amouzou is married to Delali Tendar. They have three children.

Simon Zuguduba Sumani was the first Mamprusi Seventh-day Adventist pastor in Ghana. He became an Adventist through Pastor Johannes Onjukka, the first president of the North Ghana Mission, with whom he preached the Advent message among the Mamprusis as well as other tribes in northern Ghana. He worked as an evangelist from 1968 to 1977 and as a minister from 1979 to 2003.



Simon Z. Sumani

Photo courtesy of Kossi-Ekao Amouzou.

Early Life, Education, and Marriage

Simon Zuguduba Sumani was born at Wulugu, a town 14 kilometers north of Walewale in the West Mamprusi District of the Northern Region (now North East Region) of Ghana on June 15, 1945.¹ His father, Sumani Dawuni, was a Muslim, and his mother, Pianwone Sumani, a Roman Catholic. Simon Zuguduba had four siblings, of which he was the second oldest.²

In 1952 Simon began his primary school education at Nalerigu and later went to Walewale where he successfully completed his middle school education in 1963. That same year he got employment as a pupil teacher at Guabuliga. Later he was transferred to Kukua, a town six kilometers south of Walewale.³

Sumani married Susana Sanatu Ninyari Kolugu on September 27, 1965, at Wulugu, where they both hailed from. They had eleven children, of which two died in their infancy and two others in adulthood.⁴ The couple

committedly served the church in North Ghana Mission until their retirement in 2003.⁵

Conversion and Ministerial Work

Sumani became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1968 at Guabuliga during a six-week evangelistic crusade by Pastor Johannes Onjukka, a Finnish missionary. At that time Pastor Kofi Antobam was in charge of the Walewale area. Encouraged by the missionary, Simon then decided to become a pastor. He therefore applied and gained admission into the then Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA), now Babcock University in Nigeria for the four-year Ministerial Certificate program.⁶ After the first two years of training, he returned to Ghana in June 1970 and was sent to work among his people in the Mamprusi land. He later proceeded to Bawku to assist Pastor W. B. Ackah in an evangelistic campaign. He stayed at Bawku for seven months to nurture the new converts since Pastor Ackah was a guest speaker. From there he came to Bolgatanga for a three-month internship under Pastor K. O. Amoyaw.⁷

In 1972 the mission sent Sumani back to Guabuliga. There he conducted extensive Bible studies so much that in the first three months of his stay at Guabuliga twelve people, including his wife, were baptized by Pastor Onjukka.⁸ That year church membership at Guabuliga increased to 42. On Sabbath days, visitors outnumbered the church members. By the end of 1971, the mission, in the quest for more results, moved Sumani from Guabuliga to Walewale, the district capital, which is also a more central point to the surrounding communities. With the help of Mr. Benjamin Sarpong, Sumani planted the church at Diani, Wungu, and Zangum, all in the Mamprusi land.⁹

On January 31, 1974, Pastor Sumani was transferred to Kumdi to work among the Nchumuru and the Konkomba people. At Kumdi he taught religious education in the primary and middle schools and successfully organized in these two schools the Seventh-day Adventist Young People's Society of Missionary Volunteers. He conducted in the month of June a two-week evangelism program at Kojobone and organized there a Sabbath School branch.¹⁰ In October 1974 the North Ghana Mission moved Pastor Sumani to Kpandai to serve as the area leader for Kumdi, Kpandai, and Boafri.¹¹ Twelve people got baptized during his first revival at Bladjai in early 1975.¹²

In 1977 Sumani went back to ASWA, Nigeria, to complete his four-year ministerial training, which he successfully completed in April 1979.¹³ He was to serve in Wa (Upper West) upon his return to Ghana,¹⁴ but due to the lack of accommodation at that time in Wa, he could not go there again. He was asked to go to Zangum to work once again among his fellow Mamprusis. During his stay at Zangum, Sumani mobilized the members to build a new place of worship because the first building had collapsed. In the 1980s, because of the work of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), many people at Zangum developed interest in the Adventist Church, and so Pastor L.G.A. Antonio, the mission president, also paid frequent visits to the church there.¹⁵

In April 1981 Sumani was transferred to Kpandai. Through his work many among the Nawuri, Nchumburu, and Konkomba people got baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in places like Kitare, Kumdi, Bladjai, and

Kpandai. He led the Bladjai church to put up a new church building as the first one had collapsed, and he led the Kpandai Church to start molding blocks for a church building.¹⁶

Sumani was ordained into the gospel ministry on January 24, 1987, at Tamale together with Kofi Antobam and A. K. Boateng. After his ordination the mission once again transferred him to Walewale to continue the work among his tribe in the Mamprusi land in northern Ghana.¹⁷

Later Life

In early 1991 the health condition of Pastor Sumani started failing. This led to his early retirement in 2003. Unfortunately, his condition kept deteriorating. On January 24, 2007, Pastor Simon Zuguduba Sumani passed on at the Walewale District Hospital.¹⁸ His burial took place on March 22, 2007, at Wulugu, his hometown, in the West Mamprusi District. Pastor Sumani is remembered for his great passion for sharing the Adventist message in Ghana and for his commitment to seeing his family involved in church activities.

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NOTES

1. Simon Z. Sumani Service Record (Tamale, Ghana: North Ghana Mission, n.d.),1.
2. Christiana Sumani Kpaga (Pastor Simon Z. Sumani's sister), interview by author, Walewale, Ghana, April 22, 2023.
3. Ibid.
4. Their surviving children include Esther Sumani, an accountant at the Ghana Revenue Authority; Priscilla Sumani, a midwife with the Ghana Health Service; Naomi Sumani, a relationship manager at the Bank of Africa Ghana; Andrews, a business person; Samuel, an officer with the National Sports Authority; Abigail, a worker with Ghana Enterprise Agency; and Miriam, a nurse with the Ghana Health Service.
5. Susana Sanatu Sumani (Pastor Simon Z. Sumani's widow), interview by author, Walewale, Ghana, April 22, 2023.
6. Kofi Antobam, interview by author, Kumasi, May 3, 2023.
7. Simon Z. Sumani Service Record (Tamale, Ghana: North Ghana Mission, n.d.),1.
8. Ibid., 1.
9. Ibid., 2.
10. Sumani, "Evangelistic Efforts at Kojo-Boni Akumdipe," *West African Advent Messenger*, February 1, 1975, 15.
11. J. M. Hammond (mission president) to S. Z. Sumani, October 1, 1974. North Ghana Mission, Tamale, Ghana.
12. Sumani, "Simon Z. Sumani Service Record" (Tamale, Ghana: North Ghana Mission, n.d.), 2.
13. "ASWA Graduates 1979 (From West African Union)," *West African Advent Messenger*, April 1, 1979, 4.
14. George E. Bryson (mission president) to S. Z. Sumani, January 31, 1979. North Ghana Mission, Tamale, Ghana.
15. Ailen Andres Sox, "ADRA Project Gives People Golden Spoon," *ARH*, September 12, 1985, 23. See also "The Missions," *West African Advent Messenger*, February 1, 1983, 5.
16. Simon Z. Sumani Service Record (Tamale, Ghana: North Ghana Mission, n.d.), 2.
17. Adams A. Nwumele (former mission president), interview by author, Tamale, Ghana, September 25, 2022.

18. Pierre Musabyimana, letter to all pastors, elders, churches, and institutions in North Ghana Mission, February 12, 2007. North Ghana Mission, Tamale, Ghana.

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