

Agbedigue, Kodjo Raphael (1942–2012)

ENYONAM KOKOUTSÈ AGBEDIGUE

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Agbedigue Kodjo Raphael, the first Togolese pioneer and Adventist evangelist, was born in 1942 in the village of Kolo-Mésiwoobe (south of Togo).¹ His father was Agbedigue, chief of the village, and his mother was Alougba, grower and seller of crops. He was the firstborn of four children (three boys and one girl).²

Education and Marriage

He carried out his primary school studies at the Catholic Mission of Kati village and Kpalimé and on June 19, 1960, obtained his primary certificate. Then he entered the Catholic Teachers' Training Center in Kpalimé, where he graduated with his Certificate of Professional Aptitude for Primary Education in 1963.³ He was assigned as a teacher and catechist at Votromé where he remained for two years. He married Lady Tomevenya in 1958 and they had six children.⁴ The children's names are: Michel (firstborn), Ruth and Marthe (twins), Jeanne, Mawuyena, and Enyonam (who became an Adventist pastor and is author of this biography).

Ministry

In 1965, Agbedigue Kodjo met the first Adventist missionary, Henri Kempf, who came to evangelize Votromé.⁵ Convinced of the truth of the Adventist message, he abandoned his work and his former religion for the benefit of truth. He was baptized by Kempf on September 18, 1965. He became an employee of the Adventist Mission and was posted to Lomé where he taught at Segbe for two years. In view of his excellent work, the Adventist Mission decided to send him to the Adventist Seminary of Nanga-Eboko in Cameroon.⁶ From 1968 to 1971 he successfully completed his theological training and returned with his diploma to work as an evangelist.⁷ He took his pastoral training in Lomé in 1974 and was ordained to the pastoral ministry on April 8, 1978, in Lomé in the Central Church (now Maranatha Temple).⁸

During his ministry he held several positions within the Church, namely: pastor in Lomé (1971-1973), district pastor of Kpalime (1973-1976), district pastor of Lomé (1976-1978), district pastor of Atakpamé (1978-1985), district pastor in Notsè (1985-1989), district pastor of Kpalimé (1989-1994), district pastor of Sokode (1994-1996), and district pastor of Tsévié (1996-1997).⁹

He also served as director of the following departments: Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, Chaplaincy, Education, Family Ministries, Publications, and Spirit of Prophecy.¹⁰

During his ministry, Pastor Agbedigue baptized more than 7,500 people.¹¹ He also received the following honors: best student in his class at the seminary, best student literature evangelist, and best worker in church planting.

Later Life and Legacy

Pastor Agbedigue retired on January 1, 1997, for health reasons after 32 years of service for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹² Despite his retirement and poor health, he continued to preach and succeeded in establishing a church in the Lomé district where he built his retirement home. Pastor Agbedigue died May 12, 2012, after a long bout with kidney disease.

The ministry of Agbedigue contributed to the establishment of churches in more than 25 towns and villages in Togo, and he made the church known to the Togolese authorities as one of the first Christian denominations in Togo.¹³

SOURCES

Kodjo Agbedigue's and Felix Agbodza's testimonies. Unpublished documents, 1997. In the private collection of the Agbedigue family.

Kodjo Agbedigue's work files, Togo Conference archives, Lome, Togo.

Reports of Personal Ministries and Mission departments in Togo Mission. Togo Conference archives, Lome, Togo.

NOTES

1. Kodjo Agbedigue's birth certificate, in the private collection of the Agbedigue family.
2. Unless otherwise stated, the information about Kodjo Agbedigue's life comes from the personal knowledge of the author as Agbedigue's younger sister.
3. Kodjo Agbedigue's diploma for this degree in the private collection of the Agbedigue family.
4. Marriage Certificate in the private collection of the Agbedigue family.
5. Kodjo Agbedigue's and Felix Agbodza's testimonies (unpublished documents, 1997), in the private collection of the Agbedigue family.

6. Kodjo Agbedigue's work files, Togo Conference archives, Lome, Togo.
 7. Adventist Seminary of Nanga Eboko in Cameroon.
 8. Kodjo Agbedigue's work files.
 9. Ibid.
 10. Reports from Togo Mission department, Togo Conference archives, Lome, Togo.
 11. Ibid.
 12. Secretariat archives of Togo Mission, Togo Conference archives, Lome, Togo.
 13. Reports of Personal Ministries Department in Togo Mission, Togo Conference archives, Lome, Togo.
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