

Seventh-day Adventist College of Education, Ghana

PETER OFORI ATAKORAH

Peter Ofori Atakorah, Ph.D. (University of Central Nicaragua, Nicaragua) is the principal of Seventh-day Adventist College of Education, Agona-Ashanti. He served a district elder (Jamasi District) and a church elder (Jamasi Central SDA Church) for over ten years, and has been active in preaching and evangelism.

The Adventist Church has many development projects in the Agona community and its surrounding towns and villages in Ghana.¹ It has a senior high school, Agona S.D.A. Senior High School (AGASS), which formerly operated as a teacher training college, Agona Teachers Training College (AGATCO), in the 1960s. The church also operates the S.D.A. Hospital, Asamang. The church in Agona has a Nursing College that offers diploma courses for nurses. In addition, the church has junior high schools in almost all of the major towns and villages in the district.

Considering that the church did not have a college of education to train teachers, it became the concern of many, especially the local elders of the various churches in the district and particularly the Jamasi and Agona Central churches. In view of this, when AGASS was relocated to its current premises, the executive members of Agona Central district, headed by Pastor Sam Duku, found it expedient to consider how the old site and facilities could be put to good use. After lengthy discussions at the district executive meeting of the Agona South district, which was chaired by Pastor Solomon Osei Kwadwo, it was concluded that the facilities should be used to establish a college of education.²

Founding of the School

Leaders of the two districts in Agona sent a delegation to the headquarters of the Central Ghana Conference (CGC) to seek their support. Elder Kofi Amofa Agyemang and Elder Sam Baah Asumadu were very instrumental here. The executive members of CGC welcomed the idea and forwarded the issue to the Ghana Union (GU) for approval. The executive of GU intended to build a monumental project at Kikam in the Western region of Ghana to mark the 125th anniversary of the SDA Church in Ghana and, for that reason, they could not financially support the establishment of a new college of education at Agona. Ghana Union then encouraged CGC to go ahead and embark on the project if they could support the project financially. CGC voted at its executive meeting to establish the college as the two districts submitted, but the administration of CGC said that the conference was faced with financial challenges, so they could not provide financial support. The conference, however, encouraged members of the two districts in Agona to mobilize themselves and start the project.³

Members of the Agona Central and South districts organized a fundraising ceremony to raise funds in support of the college. At the fundraising ceremony on February 2, 2013, 17,000 Ghana cedis (GH¢ 17,000) was raised. The money was sent to CGC headquarters to be put into an account. Peter Ofori Atakorah was among the three delegates who were sent by the executive of the two Agona districts to deliver the money to CGC.

The GU appointed a committee of 21 members to arrange for the establishment of the college. The committee included members of the GU and CGC, including Elder Paul Yaw Frempah, the general manager of SDA schools. A large number of members on the committee, coupled with its inability to work in line with the urgent demands, resulted in the formation of a new committee. The members of the new committee were: Peter Ofori Atakorah, Pastor Israel Kofi Gyimah Yamoah, Dr. Isaac Addae, Pastor Albertino Asante Boateng, and Pastor Opoku Acheampong.

Central Ghana Conference then contracted a loan of GH 150,000 from the Heritage Fund for the project committee to use for the work of renovation works. Pastor Dickson Sarfo Marfo, treasurer of CGC, facilitated securing the loan. Kwaku Owusu Yeboah, regional manager of the SDA Educational Unit, Ashanti region, coordinated all the activities. By May 2013, renovation work at the college premises was completed. Elder Brenya Aniboe and Elder Amo Mensah supervised the renovation and the construction of buildings.⁴

The college was officially opened October 16, 2013, and the first assembly for students was held October 17, 2013. The first assembly was addressed by Peter Ofori Atakorah, the principal. The college is located at Agona in the Sekyere South district in the Ashanti region of Ghana. It can be found on the Agona-Mampong road opposite the Agona Police Station. The mission of the college is to provide comprehensive training for the holistic development of students who would be morally upright, competent, committed, and dedicated to professional work ethics.

The first management meeting was held October 18, 2013, and the first lectures for academic work started on October 21, 2013.

On October 28, 2013, the parliament member for Afigya Sekyere East constituency, the Hon. David Henrich Yeboah, visited the college and donated 50 bags of cement.

On November 12, 2013, delegates from the National Accreditation Board visited the college to inspect the facilities. After the inspection, the delegates expressed their satisfaction. Sale of admission forms to admit students began in June 2013. The admission forms were sold for 100 Ghana Cedis (GH 100.00). Two hundred and eighty-nine applicants qualified and were given admission. They included 168 men and 121 women. The new students were added to the new students of the SDA College of Education, Asokore - Koforidua in the Eastern region because the college had not yet secured accreditation and affiliation.⁵

On December 10, 2013, an authorization certificate to run a college of education was issued to management by the National Accreditation Board (NAB). Peter Ofori Atakorah, the first principal of the college, was instrumental

in securing the documents, accreditation, and affiliation for the college. The college secured accreditation to run a general program on September 1, 2014, and it was affiliated with the University of Cape Coast (UCC) on October 1, 2014.

By then a new union, the Northern Ghana Union Mission (NGUM), had been created and it assumed the oversight responsibility for the college in collaboration with CGC. The Agona South and Central districts had hired two security personnel, James Kwadwo Nyarko and Nicholas Kwame Avoka, to watch over the premises. Members of the two districts organized communal labor to clear weeds and clean the rooms to keep the campus tidy.

History of the School

In June 2014, the college advertised for the sale of application forms to admit new students for the 2014/2015 academic year. It was the first advertisement of application forms since officially securing accreditation. The admission forms were again sold for 100 Ghana cedis (GH 100). Sixty-four applicants qualified and were given admission, including 40 men and 24 women. The first semester of the college for the pioneer students started in October 2014. The first matriculation ceremony was held on June 6, 2015.⁶

Northern Ghana Union Mission (NGUM) appointed the following non-teaching staff members to manage the administration of the college: Peter Ofori Atakorah, principal; Pastor Kofi GyimahYamoah, vice principal; Pastor Albetino Asante Boateng, college secretary; Pastor Joseph Acheampong, financial secretary. NGUM employed part-time and permanent teaching staff to teach in the college.⁷

College Council

After the official opening of the college, the first College Council was appointed. The membership included: Dr. Kwame Kwanin Boakye - chair; Peter Ofori Atakorah - principal; Pastor K. Annor-Boahen - secretary, NGUM; Pastor Dickson Sarfo Marfo - treasurer, NGUM; Pastor A. Kwame Adjei - vice-principal of the college; Patrick Atta-Poku Jr. - college secretary; Pastor Yaw Asamoah Kwarteng - president, CGC; Pastor Abankwa Amoakohene - president, MVGC; Joycelyn Asante Boateng - GES representative; Kwaku Owusu Yeboah - regional manager, S.D.A. Educational Unit; Kwabena Koforbour Agyemang - representative, UCC; Marian Asantewaah Nkansah - representative, NCTE; Andrews Okumah Nawil - representative, Sekyere South District Assembly; Nana Oheneba Kwasi Sarpong - representative, Traditional Council; Asamoah Kwabena - representative, SRC. In attendance: Emmanuel Kofi Mintah - finance officer; Emmanuel Owusu Afriyie; Pastor C. K. R. Gyamfi - Chaplain.

Names of Halls

The College Council named the halls after the following eminent personalities of the SDA church: Dr. Kwame Kwanin Boakye, president of Northern Ghana Union Mission (NGUM); Pastor Anthony Kwame Yeboah-Amoako, former president of Central Ghana Conference (CGC); Peter Ofori Atakorah, principal of the college; Moses Kwaku Addai, former headmaster of Agona S.D.A. Senior High School (AGASS).

Reassignment

Pastor Albertino Asante Boateng, college secretary, was called to the Central Ghana Conference and Patrick Atta Poku Jr. was appointed to take his place on October 27, 2014. Pastor Kofi Gyimah Yamoah, vice principal of the college, was also called to the Central Ghana Conference, and Pastor Abraham Kwame Adjei was appointed as the new vice principal on June 6, 2015. Elder Emmanuel Owusu Afriyie was brought in as the new finance officer to replace Pastor Joseph Acheampong who had been called to the Central Ghana Conference. On September 9, 2016, Emmanuel Kofi Mintah was appointed to replace Elder Emmanuel Owusu Afriyie who had been called to the Central Ghana Conference.

Government's Absorption of the College

On September 25, 2017, the college received an official letter that it had been absorbed into the public system. What was left to do was the financial clearance that would put staff members on the government payroll. Peter Ofori Atakorah, the principal, was instrumental in the absorption of the college.

In line with the institution's new position as a public college, Patrick Atta-Poku Jr., college secretary, was made the vice principal because Pastor Abraham Kwame Adjei was no longer employed. Emmanuel Kyei, an English language tutor, was made the college secretary.

The college runs a school system that mirrors the world's standards in terms of quality, accessibility, and equity. It generally accepts any qualified applicant, regardless of religion or denominational affiliation, race, or ethnicity. On the other hand, admitted students, whether Christians or not, must participate in required activities, especially those which are of a religious nature. This is meant to help students meet their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs and to prepare them for the coming kingdom. The college also provides a public service to the community in which it is located. Many people are delighted to use the university's the food pantry or attend seminars on health.

SOURCES

Central Ghana Conference executive committee action no. 027/12, March 13, 2012. Central Ghana Conference archives, Kumasi, Ghana.

Seventh-day Adventist College of Education, 2015 records. The college archives, Agona, Ashanti Region, Ghana.

NOTES

1. Unless stated otherwise the information in this article is the personal knowledge of the author who has been involved in the establishment of the college, and is the first and current principal of the college.
2. Owusu Yeboah, interview by author, Kumasi, Ashanti Region, March 5, 2018.
3. Central Ghana Conference executive committee action no. 027/12, March 13, 2012, Central Ghana Conference archives, Kumasi, Ghana.
4. Patrick Atta Poku, Jr., interview by author, SDA College of Education, Agona, Ashanti Region, Ghana.
5. Sam Baah Asumadu, interview by the author, Agona, Ashanti Region, Ghana, June 19, 2018.
6. Seventh-day Adventist College of Education, 2015 records, the college archives, Agona, Ashanti Region, Ghana.
7. Department of languages: Michael Asumeng Amofa (English; head of the department); Kofi Soadwa (English); Emmanuel Kyei (English); Thomas Ampomah (English); Kwabena Akosah-Brempong (Twi); Kwame Badu Baah (Twi); Frimpong Samuel (Twi). Department of Mathematics/ICT: Kuten Boateng (head of the department); Frank Nkrumah Kwarteng; John Yaw Kwarteng; Akwasi Amponsah; Serwaa Pulcheria; Joyce Asante Afful. Department of Science Nathaniel Narthey-Akrong (head of the department); Patrick Atta-Poku Jr.; Mohammed Shakibu; Wilson Nketiah Siaw; Isaac Boateng; Christiana Peprah Dabanka; Asamoah A. Wilson. Department of Education: Elizabeth Sefah Adomah (head of the department); Theophilus Andoh; Anthony Frempong; Sophia Konadu. Department of Social Sciences: Kwame Obour (head of the department); Edward Tetteh Kwabena; Nti Kokuroko; Frederick Amankwaa Opam; Eric Adjei Kofi; Oteng Sarfo Patrick; Kwaku Owusu-Agyeman; Joseph Kwadwo Kyere; Owusu Adjei Ernest; Stephen Addai Kyenyenhene; Patricia Sarpong; Akosua Baah. Department of Technical/Vocational: Eric D. Aniagyei (head of the department); Lydia Konadu; Veronica Akwaah; Emmanuel Kofi Ennin.

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