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Staff outside Advent Press building, Accra, Ghana.

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Advent Press, Ghana

KINGSLEY OSEI

Kingsley Osei serves as the general manager of Advent Press, Accra-Ghana. Osei has served the Church in this capacity for fifteen years. He served as the pastor of Alajo Church for eight years. Osei is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in commerce at the Adventist University of Philippines, Manila/Cavite.

In the early 1930s a printing press called the Nigerian Advent Press was established. W. T. B. Hyde, the principal of the Ibadan Training School in West Nigeria, purchased a small hand press and began producing vernacular tracts in Ibadan. In 1935 a cylinder press was acquired with the help of the Stanborough Press in England. The machine was first installed in a converted garage and full-time printing work was started. In 1937 the press in Nigeria was re-named Advent Press. The dropping of the name (Nigeria) reflected the vision of the pioneers that this press would have international applications. At that time production included Sabbath School lessons, tracts, training booklets, and a hymnal, all in the Yoruba language.¹

In 1948 the West African Union Mission (most of which is now Sahel Union Mission, the Nigerian Unions, and Ghana Unions) decided to relocate Advent Press to Accra, Ghana, under the leadership of Elder H. S. Pearce. The new building was officially opened on January 3, 1954, by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who later became president of the Republic of Ghana.²

The move to Accra, Ghana (Gold Coast), was not only of machinery and other equipment, but many of the Nigerian workers also relocated to Accra. Nigerians who worked in Accra include Fulayor Olu, Emmanuel Olaore, Moses Olaore, Abraham Odum, Yadeka, and others. These workers contributed to the growth of church membership in Accra. As late as 1969, some of these Nigerian brethren labored in Accra at Advent Press³

During the period 1971-1973, Advent Publishing House changed from letterpress machinery to litho (offset) machines. In 1993 the pressroom was equipped with the following machines: a two-color Heidelberg Speed master 102 - ZP, a one-color SOR, a one-color SORD, a one-color KORD 64, a two-color GTOZP, and a single-color GTO. The prepress stripping department was equipped with one Kodak camera, five printing frames, one layout table, and one plate maker. The composing room had two Intertype machines, one proof press, and desktop publishing equipment. Advent Press has the best equipped bindery in the country, with two guillotines, two folding machines, three sewing machines, two three-knife trimmers, a gathering pony, a gang-stitcher machine, a single stitcher, a pressing machine, a case-maker, a bundler, a Flow line, an end sheeting machine, a cold laminating machine, a Kolbus strawboard cutter and a Hot foil stamping machine.⁴

In order to keep up with the demand for literature evangelists in both English-speaking and French-speaking countries, Advent Publishing House has produced more than 12 subscription books over the past five years⁵

However, the story of Advent Press has not always been that rosy. The advent of computers and the proliferation of printing presses negatively affected the press. A lot of non-denominational customers started their own press, and items like calendars, letterhead, business cards, and even textbooks stopped coming to Advent Press.

The press became solely dependent on printing evangelistic materials and Sabbath School quarterlies. This situation really affected the press between 1989 and 1996. The press then decided to do away with some of the old equipment, pay off debtors, and reduce the number of employees. The Heidelberg SOR and SORD were sold together with the two-color Speed master. Later the GTO and GTOZP were also sold. It was not merely for debt repayment that this equipment was sold, but also because the cost of maintenance and spare parts was so high due to the fact that Heidelberg had stopped the production of the equipment. The parts we were getting were not original and equipment kept breaking down. Later, the intertype, Kodak horizontal camera, printing frames, case maker, Flowline, end sheeting machine, and the cold laminating machines were also disposed of⁶

The Advent Press then decided to set up a computer designing department to be abreast with modern trends at the time. In 1996 the general manager Elder G. Eqwakhe and Ishmael Fiifi Quainoo gradually set up the desktop publishing or design department where computers were used to design artwork and for typesetting. This decision saw an improvement in client services as new clients came in for their books to be typeset, laid out, and printed. The press, with the assistance of Stanborough Press, acquired an imagesetter for its own color separation, an Apple Mac G3 and later a G5. A two-color Heidelberg was also bought, together with a Kolbus Flowline.⁷

In 2006 Kingsley Osei from the South Ghana Conference was called to serve as treasurer. Actually, he was asked to close down the printing press and instead run a publishing house. On arrival, he told the Press Board—to their disbelief—that the printing press had a bright future and so he should be given the chance to revive it⁸

He then resolved to use all available resources to revive the press and make it self-sustaining. He restructured the finances and started paying off debts Advent Press owed to banks and to the division, to the amazement of the West-Central Africa Division officials.

He did not stop there. Advent Press continued to progress by refurbishing both the two-color speed master and the four-color speed master bought from Stanborough Press when they decided to close down the printing department in the UK. The press bought another Heidelberg imagesetter with a film processor. It worked for some time but then broke down. An Epson inkjet computer-to-film was purchased to replace the Heidelberg imagesetter, the old Polar 115 was sold and replaced with a SEYPA-SP PERFECTA 115 guillotine, and another Epson 9900 Computer-to-plate has been purchased to improve print quality.⁹

The old Heidelberg 10" x 15" Platen is still around but not in working condition. The old Wohlenberg 3-knife trimmer has been replaced with Perfecta SDY-1 and SDY-2. The press also has an MBO folder that can fold 30" x 40" and a smaller one for folding evangelistic material such as VOP lessons and other tracts. The current administration has resolved, since the general manager's visit to Brazil in 2017, that they will no longer purchase second hand equipment. They have kept their word by purchasing a new Champion thermal laminator, a Morgana FSN II for numbering and perforation of tithe and other receipt books, an Uchida collator, and a Champion Case maker which we purchased by swapping the old Flowline and Kolbus case maker, plus paying some money. The gang-stitcher, Muller Martini with 18 collating stations with five clamps, and two manual sewing machines are all in good shape, but there is hope of acquiring modern ones in the future. An automatic sewing machine Aster-Headop and a Kluge Hot foil stamping machine were acquired from the Review and Herald Publishing Association when they closed their printing press.¹⁰

On March 14, 2018, after the Executive Committee meeting, a new Heidelberg Stahlfolder was dedicated to the Lord, and a plaque was unveiled for a two-story, three-bedroom apartment for Advent Press officers and senior staff, and

an incinerator and a canteen for the staff. The factory floor has been tiled for easy movement of papers and completed jobs.¹¹

Currently the Advent Press is operating with 66 employees and all are national workers. It prints Sabbath School lesson quarterlies, tracts, and books in Twi, English, Ga, and Hausa, and some tracts and books in French. It is rated as one of the best in Africa when it comes to Seventh-day Adventist publishing houses.¹²

Managers (Accra)¹³

H. S. Pearce, 1948-1957; C. G. Meredith, 1957-1965; Alfred Berger, 1965-1967; Leland R. Shultz, 1968-1972; Bent Praestin, 1972-1975; Luther Talley, 1976-1982; Dieter Gramkow (Ag), 1982-1984; T. R. Rojas, 1984-1985; S. A. Armah, 1985-1988; E. C. Tetteh, 1988-1995; G. Egwakhe, 1996-1997; K. Ansah-Adu, 1997-2001; E. A. Okpoti, 2001-2006; Kingsley Osei, 2006- .

SOURCES

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Revised edition, 2 vols. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996. S.v. "Advent Press (Ghana)."

Tetteh, E. C. *History of Advent Press in Our First Million*. Accra: Advent Press, 1998.

NOTES

1. Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (1996), s.v. "Advent Press (Ghana)."?
2. E. C. Tetteh, *History of Advent Press in Our First Million* (Accra: Advent Press, 1998).?
3. Ibid.?
4. F. Quainoo, a senior worker at the press during the 1990s, interviewed by author, Accra, August 5, 2015.?
5. Author's personal knowledge as the General Manager of the Advent Press.?
6. F. Quainoo, a senior worker at the press during the 1990s, interviewed by author, Accra, August 5, 2015.?
7. Ibid.?
8. Author's personal knowledge as general manager of the Advent Press. This was when he became the treasurer for the press.?
9. Ibid.?
10. Ibid.?
11. Ibid.?
12. Ibid.?
13. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Advent Press (Ghana);" author's personal knowledge as the general manager of the Advent Press.?

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