



East Ghana Conference Headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Kwaku Okyere Baffour.

East Ghana Conference

KWAKU OKYERE BAFFOUR

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East Ghana Conference was organized in 1999 as part of the Ghana Union Conference (currently Southern Ghana Union Conference). It was reorganized and its territory divided in 2017. East Ghana Conference encompasses the whole of New Juabeng traditional area, Akosombo/Anum on the eastern borders with Volta region, and New Tafo and Begoro on the northeastern part of Atiwa and Fantekwa districts. It also shares

boundaries on the south with Nsawam and Ayikuma in the Greater Accra region, and Suhum district on the west.¹

As of June 30, 2018, East Ghana Conference had 73 churches, membership of 11,143, and population of 857,657.²

The Beginnings

Osiem, a town in the Akyem Abuakwa traditional area of Ghana, was the site for the beginning of Seventh-day Adventism in the Eastern region. The initiative came from seven members in 1931 led by Pastor Appiah Dankwa who had read *The Great Controversy* and accepted the Sabbath message.³ They were Adwoa Wana, Wofa Charles, and four others who worshipped in the house of Maame Adowaa. They were referred to as Saturday worshippers. In 1934 a delegation of the brethren at Osiem, along with Charles Boadu and Daniel Nkrumah, made a trip to see the mission president, Pastor Clifford.⁴ After this visit, Pastor Clifford appointed Pastor J. K. Garbrah to be the caretaker of the Osiem fellowship as an additional responsibility. The organized company of believers was inaugurated in 1935. It was from Osiem that the Adventist message reached Koforidua. However, one Brako [Not clear what he is trying to say.] among the Saturday worshippers led a faction to join the Savior Church popularly known as *Gyidi* or *Memenenda K?k??*.⁵

Pastor Clifford sent F. L. Stokes to Koforidua and its environs. Prior to a permanent church home in 1938 for the brethren at Asokore-Koforidua, the members worshipped at Ababio's house.⁶ Today some churches and houses in the college of education bear the name "Stokes" because of the extraordinary work he did for Adventism in the Koforidua area.

The Conference Headquarters

From a small beginning at Osiem in 1934 with a membership of seven, the church grew to attain the status of a conference in 1999. The idea of organizing a Festival of Faith in the Eastern region eventually materialized through the efforts of Pastor R. Y. P. Amponsah, Suhum district; AYA Briandt-Coker, Koforidua district; and Adu Twumasi-Ankra, Chaplain-S.D.A. Teacher Training College.⁷ The program was held at the Training College. Pastor Kwabena Twum, Stewardship director for the South Ghana Conference, and Pastor N. L. Thompson, Youth director, were invited as the guest speakers for the program.

Interestingly, the first program which started as a Festival of Faith later turned out to be an impressive prayer conference involving almost all the pastors in the Eastern region. The joy, unity, and testimonies that emanated from this prayer conference ignited the quest for greater works for the Lord in a more organized way. This eventually would give birth to a new administrative field for the Adventist Church in Ghana.

Observations from these programs won the heart of Pastor P. O. Mensah, president of the South Ghana Conference (now Accra City Conference) and he met pastors and church elders in the Eastern region with the

idea of creating the Eastern region as a field. The idea was overwhelmingly embraced by the brethren and an interim management committee was formed in 1997. Pastor S. A. Amfo Sr. was elected as the chair, Elder M. E. Duodu as vice chair, Elder Acheampong Obempong, as secretary and Elder Enoch Agyei Darko as the treasurer. Later, Pastors Adu Twumasi Ankra and R. Y. P. Amponsah were invited to join the committee.

Eventually, the Eastern region field was created in 1999 as East Ghana Administrative Unit. Pastor Kwabena Twum was chosen as the director, Pastor Adu Twumasi-Ankra as secretary and Elder J. S. Akomeah as treasurer. By the grace of God and hard work from pastors and laity, the administrative unit was able to fulfill all the policy requirements and was granted conference status within a period of six months and the name East Ghana Conference (EGC) was chosen. Names of the officers elected were: Pastor Kwabena Twum, president; Adu Twumasi Ankra, executive secretary; and Elder S. M. Ansah, treasurer. Departmental directors were: Pastor C. A. Kwaning, Publishing and Sabbath School; Pastor R. A. Ntirakwa, Personal Ministries; Pastor P. N. Duodu, Youth and Stewardship; Pastor S. A. Amfo Sr., Ministerial Association; Mrs. Felicia Pephrah Mensah, Women's Ministries; and Brother Kwaku Agyeman, Music. The first trustees of the conference were Pastor Kwabena Twum, Elder S. M. Ansah, and Pastor R. Y. P. Amponsah.

The conference inauguration was held in three different locations—Koforidua, Nkawkaw, and Akim Oda in 2001.

⁸ The conference started with 18 districts and increased to 27. Full-time pastors were 35 and lay workers were 13. The number of companies was 263, while organized churches were 153, making a total of 416 churches.⁹

Pastor Kwabena Twum's tenure as president was from 1999 to 2009. During this period, the Lord blessed the church with four different bungalows which were purchased for use as residences and administrative offices. The conference head office was the Koforidua district parsonage located at Srodae, Debrakrom. In the quest to grow the church in all spheres, a hospital idea was hatched. Soon the head office which had relocated to Nsukwao had to be used as a hospital. Another major blessing from the Lord was the construction of the Kukurantumi campsite.

In April 2009, Pastor Adu Twumasi-Ankra became the second president; Pastor S. B. Arloo, executive secretary; and S. M. Ansah, treasurer of the conference. The administration continued with the construction of the ground floor of the current headquarters site at Effiduase. Other buildings were bought to expand the hospital.

The campsite was put to use in 2010 by the Koforidua and Effiduase districts as the venue for their camp meetings. Other facelifts were provided at the campsite over the years such as electricity, water, and roofing the auditorium for use by campers.¹⁰

In April 2014, Pastor S. B. Arloo became the third president of the conference; Pastor Asare Nyarko, secretary; and S. M. Ansah, treasurer. The administration continued with the construction to the completion of the first floor.¹¹

In 2016 the administration voted to create two more fields in January 2017 hence, the conference was reorganized into three fields. We now have three conferences, namely: Eastern View Conference, Diamond Field Conference, and East Ghana Conference (EGC).¹² The reorganization of the conference brought Pastor Okyere Baffour to replace Pastor Asare Nyarko as executive secretary.

The church has acquired monumental properties worth thousands of Ghana Cedis in all three fields. Through hard work, the administration was able to purchase a GH¢ 2 billion facility to expand the SDA Hospital.

As the church in EGC grew, the need to create an English church became obvious, hence the establishment of the True Vine S.D.A Church. A section of the first floor of the headquarters is used as a place of worship. Members of this church have immensely supported completion of the first floor of the headquarters.

EGC has redefined her boundaries as a result of the reorganization into three fields. The territory of this conference is largely farmland made up of the New Juaben traditional area, Akosombo/Anum on the eastern borders with Volta region, New Tafo and Begoro in the northeast with Atiwa and Fantekwa districts of Eastern View Ghana Conference. It also shares boundaries on the south with Nsawam and Dodowa in the Greater Accra Region, and shares western borders with Suhum district, of Diamond Field Ghana Conference. Akan is the major language, but there are Ewe- and Krobo-speaking members also.

The EGC has the regional office of education near the conference headquarters. The conference has one senior high school and the premier SDA College of Education (SEDACoE) in the whole of the West-Central Africa Division (WAD). These higher educational institutions offer much support to the church in terms of soul winning and training of church employees.

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NOTES

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2. Ibid.
3. Kwadjo Baiden, interview by author, Koforidua in the Eastern region, April 20, 2019.
4. Kofi Owusu Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism: A History* (Accra: Advent Press, 2005), 13.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
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