

Oyo Conference

CORNELIUS A. AJANI

Cornelius A. Ajani

Oyo Conference, formerly West Nigeria Conference, is part of the Western Nigeria Union Conference in the West-Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventists. Oyo Conference covers the territory of Oyo State, Nigeria. It was established in 1914 and organized in 1930, reorganized in 1989 and 1998, and reorganized and renamed in 2013. Its headquarters are in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Statistics (June 30, 2019): Churches, 34; membership: 3,928; population: 8,251,206.¹

What is now known as Oyo Conference dates back to the arrival of the first Adventist missionary to Nigeria in 1914. The present-day Oyo Conference covers part of the territory where Elder D. C. Babcock began his missionary work.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church began its work in Yorubaland, Nigeria, in 1914 with the arrival of its first missionaries: Elder D. C. Babcock, his family, and two other ministers, a Ghanaian, R.P Dauphin, and a Sierra Leonean, S. Morgue. They left Freetown, Sierra Leone by boat in February 1914 and arrived in Lagos, the port of entry into Nigeria, on March 7, 1914.²

By the time Adventist missionaries arrived, Yorubaland was already a Christian mission field. Christian missionaries had already been in the country for over 50 years.³

Elder D. C. Babcock selected a mission site at Erunmu, where he was cordially welcomed by the Baale of Erunmu, Chief Oyetoro Oyelese. He was given a piece of land on which the Adventist station was first built. Elder Babcock built a house and dug a well, known today as the Babcock well.⁴

The Baale Oyelese's son began to keep the Sabbath after he was convinced of the Sabbath message.⁵ This began the work of Adventism in Nigeria, which eventually spread to surrounding villages and towns such as Owobale, Atari, Ore and Ayede.

Seventh-day Adventist mission work spread through David Caldwell Babcock to Sao, where a second station was established in 1915, and to Ipoti-Ekiti in 1917.⁶ The work was administered from Sao until 1926, while the administrative headquarters was formally moved to Ibadan in 1927.⁷ The former South-Western Nigeria Mission was inaugurated in 1930 and became the West Nigeria Mission in 1944.

Between 1975 and 1977, Mid-West Nigeria Mission was organized out of West Nigeria Mission⁸ while the former West Nigeria Mission changed status to a conference in 1989. The first set of West Nigeria Conference Officers

was David O. Babalola, President; Joseph A. Dada, Secretary; and Henry Gbade Oladini, Treasurer⁹

The rapid growth of the West Nigeria Conference resulted in a major reorganization in 1998, when it was divided into the West Nigeria Conference and the South-West Nigeria Conference.¹⁰

In 2012 the West Nigeria Conference was reorganized into five fields: Oyo, Osun, Kwara, Lagos, Atlantic conferences, and Kogi Region.¹¹ Oyo Conference at its inception had ten districts that have so far increased to thirteen: Airport-Road, Ayede, Basorun, Erunmu, Ibarapa, Ireferin, Iwo-Road, Koloko Express Road, Oke-Bola, Oke-Ogun, Ososami, Owobale, and Oyo. The pioneer officers at inception were President Ezekiel A. Oyinloye, Executive Secretary Cornelius A Ajani, and Treasurer Ayotunde A. Afolabi.¹²

The conference has three Nursery/Primary Schools: Adventist Nursery and Primary School at Oke Bola, Seventh-day Adventist Nursery and Primary School Iyana church, and Babcock Memorial Nursery and Primary School, Erunmu. A secondary school, the Adventist Heritage Academy, was established in September 2016, with the pioneer principal being Abigael F. Ogunwole.¹³

Oyo Conference is actively working in the field of evangelism. In collaboration with Adventist Men's Ministries and Adventist Women's Ministries, the conference sends out pioneer workers yearly to un-entered areas of the field. As of 2020, the conference is working on reentering Ibadan Inner City with a program tagged Ibadan Inner City Coordinate. The inner city from which Babcock was pushed to the outskirts over a hundred years ago still remains largely unentered by the Adventist church. The conference has donated a building for a Centre of Influence.¹⁴ The total membership of Oyo Conference as of December 2019 stood at 6,849, with 16 pastors and 10 pioneers.¹⁵

SOURCES

Agboola, David. *A history of Christianity in Nigeria: the Seventh-day Adventist in YorubaLand 1914-1964*. Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1987.

_____. *Seventh-day Adventist History in West Africa (1888–1988): A Mustard Seed* Ibadan: Lasob Productions, 2001.

Babalola, David, O. *On Becoming a Conference: the Story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Yorubaland*. Ibadan: OSB design Ltd, 2002.

Edo–Delta Conference, in Dayo Alao, ed., *90 Years of Adventist in Nigeria 1914 – 2004: A Compendium*. Lagos: Communication and PARL Department of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria, 2004.

“Missionary work of William McClements.” In Dayo Alao, ed., *90 Years of Adventist in Nigeria 1914 – 2004: A Compendium*. Lagos: Communication and PARL Department of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria, 2004.

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publish Association, 1966. S.v. “Nigeria.”

Oyo Conference of SDA, *Inaugural Program: Oyo Conference First Constituency Session and Inauguration* December 6-8, 2012. Oyo Conference archives, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Oyo Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Monthly Statistical Report, February 29, 2020. Oyo Conference archives, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

NOTES

1. "Oyo Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2020), <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=13504&highlight=Oyo|Conference>.
2. Oyo Conference of SDA, *Inaugural Program: Oyo Conference First Constituency Session and Inauguration*, December 6-8, 2012), 16.
3. David Agboola, *A History of Christianity in Nigeria: The Seventh-day Adventists in Yoruba Land 1914-1964* (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1987), 1.
4. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1966), s.v. "Nigeria."
5. Agboola, 2.
6. *Ibid.*, 2-3.
7. Missionary work of William McClements, in Dayo Alao, ed., *90 Years of Adventist in Nigeria 1914 – 2004: A Compendium* (Lagos: Communication and PARL Department of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria, 2004), 23.
8. Edo-Delta Conference, in Dayo Alao, ed., *90 Years of Adventist in Nigeria 1914 – 2004: A Compendium* (Lagos: Communication and PARL Department of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria, 2004), 40, 92.
9. Babalola, 200.
10. *Ibid.*, 241
11. Oyo Conference Inauguration Program, 11.
12. *Ibid.*, 6.
13. Ezekiel A. Oyinloye, President, Oyo Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Oral Interview, March 23, 2020.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Statistical Report, Oyo Conference of SDA, February, 29. 2020.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000