

# THE HISTORY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA

By

Joseph M. Y. Edusa-Eyison

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEGAL STATUS OF THE CHURCH

### **The Genesis of Wesleyan Missionary Activities in the Gold Coast, now Ghana (1835f), and the arrival and work of the Rev. Joseph Rhodes Dunwell**

The Rev. Joseph Rhodes Dunwell, the pioneer Wesleyan Methodist Missionary to work in the Gold Coast arrived in the country on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1835. Before him, a number of missionaries of other denominations – Anglican, Dutch Reformed Church, French and Portuguese Catholic priests, and Presbyterians had worked in the Gold Coast with similar intentions of propagating the Gospel resulting in the creation of pockets of Christian communities prior to 1835. The foundation laid by these, the Methodists tapped for expansion.<sup>1</sup> The above notwithstanding, missionary outreach in the Gold Coast was in many ways the success story of indigenous African zeal. Agbeti emphasised this when he wrote:

...as far as missionary enterprise in Africa was concerned, that perspective of the circumstances which led the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society to send their Missionaries there (Ghana) were a demonstration of the role which African initiative played in the establishment of Methodist work in Ghana.<sup>2</sup>

This is reminiscent of 18<sup>th</sup> century Sierra Leonean history where the African Settlers in that country who came from Britain, Canada and the Americas after the abolition of the slave trade were already Christians belonging to a variety of denominations – Baptist, Wesleyan etc. The point here is that Christianity (led by Africans from the Diaspora) had already been introduced in Sierra Leone before the Church Missionary Society (CMS) started its work in that country. Consequent to this, Andrew Walls writes confirming Agbeti that:

...modern African Christianity is not only the result of movements among Africans, but it has been principally sustained by Africans and is to a surprising extent the result of African initiatives. Even the missionary factor must be put into perspective”. So the first Church in modern Africa was not a missionary creation. It was Africans who had come to faith in a foreign land who were transported to Sierra Leone to begin a colony.... They brought their own preachers with them, and their churches had been functioning for nearly 20 years in Sierra Leone when the first missionary arrived. Subsequently Sierra Leone could supply Africa with missionaries in quantities for example in West Africa and elsewhere, in Kenya in the 1880s... the role of the mission had been to respond – sometimes, through straitened resources, belatedly and minimally – to an initiative within the community.<sup>3</sup>

Carl Christian Reindorf anticipated Walls. Reindorf had earlier pointed out that missions did not just come to found churches in Africa without an initial invitation from local populations. He argued that some indigenous West Africans, who had already embraced the faith, first extended an invitation to that missionary body.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the success of Christianity in West Africa was not dependent so much on expatriates as on local initiative. John S. Pobee rightly noted that in re-writing the history of the church in Africa, one thing that the reader cannot miss is that the hero of African church history is not the missionary but the catechist; the local modestly educated African catechist who is the unsung hero of the African church history.<sup>5</sup>

The zeal of some of these indigenous Africans had made them advocate the reading of the bible with commentaries, a suggestion which led to the split in the castle school in the Gold Coast between Mr. Joseph Smith the head teacher, and William de Graft, a student.<sup>6</sup> The group William de Graft led called the *Bible Band* or the *Meeting*, was that which later provided the bedrock for the growth of Methodism in the Gold Coast, now Ghana. Clearly, evangelism was the hallmark of the young African indigenes who had banded themselves together in fellowship. As high level spirituality was very early recognised by them as the engine of church growth, they requested bibles from Britain through Potter a captain of a ship, after an initial appeal to the Bishop of London for assistance had received no response.<sup>7</sup> Instead of bibles only, Joseph Rhodes Dunwell was sent to the Gold Coast in January 1835 as one of nine missionaries sent by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) to work in Africa and overseas.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately within six months he was dead as a result of malaria transmitted by the mosquito.<sup>8</sup>

Before his death, Dunwell had led the few educated men later to become the pillars of the church into a deeper understanding of the Christian faith.<sup>9</sup> He also reconciled the two factions of Smith and de-Graft, so that in a fewer than three months there were 50 Methodist members holding class tickets; and who had been so nurtured that the untimely death of their Reverend Minister would not permanently shake their faith. Their determination to serve the Lord in spite of the odds is encapsulated in their reply to Smith's<sup>10</sup> question to them after Dunwell's death:

I met the class on purpose to know whether they would continue in the profession they had recently entered into or desire to return to their former ways, in consequence of the death of the Missionary. They said they would remain in the profession; for though the missionary was dead, God lives.<sup>11</sup>

True to their mission policy on outreach to Africa, the WMMS replaced the Rev. Dunwell with the Rev. and Mrs. George Wrigley, to continue the work of their predecessor. Mrs. Wrigley started a girl's school (Wesley Girls' School), which later developed into the Wesley Girls' High School. The Rev. George Wrigley started building the Methodist chapel at Cape Coast, learnt the Fante dialect into which he translated the Ten Commandment, and opened stations at Elmina, Komenda, Dixcove, Anomabu, Egyaa and Abura Dunkwa, Dominase and Winneba.<sup>12</sup> As the work expanded, Rev. and Mrs. Peter Harrop were sent. Unfortunately all the missionaries died within six months upon arrival. The foundations of Gold Coast Methodism had been laid by the sweat and blood of white missionaries who sacrificed their lives for it.<sup>13</sup>

### **Thomas Birch Freeman**

A permanent solution to the high mortality rate of the missionaries was found in Thomas Birch Freeman (who had volunteered and been recruited), a mulatto of an African father and an English mother, who appreciated the challenges on the mission field.<sup>14</sup> His coming re-echoed Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton who noted that "the ills of Africa could be remedied by calling forth Africa's own resources both human and material".<sup>15</sup> The death of Mrs Freeman, a European, shortly after her arrival in the Gold Coast shook the husband, but for a time! After recovery, he continued the work begun by his predecessors by completing and dedicating the Cape Coast chapel to God on June 10<sup>th</sup> 1838. True to his evangelist zeal, he founded in the same year the churches in Accra and Abaasa.

### **Freeman's travels to Kumasi and elsewhere**

Kumasi which was then described as a 'hostile' town was one of the first kingdoms Freeman evangelised. Notorious for its threats of invasion which had made the coastal tribes fearful of her, Kumasi which was the epitome of horror and cruelty was nevertheless a successful missionary field for Freeman. He entered Kumasi on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1839, and founded a church and opened fourteen more stations.<sup>16</sup> These, he accomplished through the initiative and assistance of

devoted African helpers. James Hayford, a Fante Methodist and the British representative resident in Kumasi stood tall among the list. As Governor Maclean's representative, James Hayford had been holding services of worship for the Fante living in Kumasi and for the Ashanti who cared to attend; and through these successful devotional activities Nana Kwaku Dua I (1838-67) the King of Ashanti, extended an invitation to Freeman to open a school there<sup>17</sup>.

Other parts of the West Coast of Africa which benefited from the evangelistic zeal of Freeman were Badagry, Dahomey and Nigeria, where schools were opened to train the African Youth, in addition to improving agriculture, which Freeman deemed as a necessary index for the growth of every country. The assistance of William de Graft was responsible for the success.

The second Kumasi enterprise was beset with some challenges, as the detachment of troops Governor Hill who succeeded George Maclean in 1843 had brought with him was interpreted by the Ashantis as an attempt to avenge the death of Governor McCarthy whom they killed in a war in 1842. This misunderstanding strained relations between the British and the Ashantis. This notwithstanding, Freeman made no less an effort after returning from civil duties<sup>18</sup>, having retired (temporarily) from missionary work by the middle of the nineteenth century, to ensure that Methodism spread to the limits he envisaged. Therefore by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Methodist missionaries on the Gold Coast had opened twenty main stations from Cape Coast to Kumasi, and from Dixcove to Prampram. Increases in membership were also recorded in the yearly reports sent to the Methodist Missionary Society (MMS) London.<sup>19</sup> Thus, throughout the 1860's the work of establishing congregations progressed with greater emphasis on covering the interior more effectively.<sup>20</sup>

From the above the conclusion could be drawn that there was wisdom in the philosophy to train Africans to man African missionary enterprise at the time. It was not out of order then, that before 1840, William de Graft who was in charge of the Winneba Society was candidated to be trained as a Minister. The work that he would do would profoundly affect the future of Methodism in Ghana.

#### **Traditional Response to the Work of Mission in the Gold Coast: Nana Mensah Bonsu 1876-1885/90**

Between 1876 and 1885/90 the Ashanti kingdom, led by **Nana Mensah Bonsu** was impervious to Christian penetration. The king was not prepared to take in anything that was strongly otherworldly, something he believed Christianity was guilty of. The West African, mindful, and without an iota of doubt about his/her identity questioned the supposed superiority of Europe over her as was evident in the conversation between Nana Mensah Bonsu and the young Wesleyan Methodist missionary, Rev. Picot, who was on a visit to Kumasi in 1876 in an attempt to persuade the *Asantehene* to accept a Christian mission in his kingdom. In that statement the *Asantehene* in no equivocal terms intended to disabuse the minds of the missionaries from the misconceptions that they (the missionaries), together with the other Europeans held about Africa, and what she (Africa) was capable of doing.

Firstly, it was clear that the concept of God was not foreign to the African, for, according to the *Asantehene*, his people knew God before the advent of the missionary into their kingdom. That knowledge of God, according to Nana Mensah Bonsu, was so *clear* to them that they claimed to know His laws as well. The King's point was that the idea of God, fundamental as it was/is to all climes and peoples did not exclude the Africans. God, for the Ashanti people was therefore a present reality. He was the God of their experience. Consequently, Nana Mensah Bonsu, expressed his unwillingness to recognise the missionary effort on the grounds of what he rightly discerned as a potential clash of cultures which must take time to resolve.<sup>21</sup> The West African who seemed to have understood the missionary's preaching, which in his view had adversely affected the cohesion of the local cultures,<sup>22</sup> and the Ashanti authority in this particular case, was unwilling to allow European

penetration into their kingdom. The Ashanti preferred to have the status quo for all spheres of life undisturbed, believing that it betrayed a well thought out plan, and when left alone may naturally evolve a unique system of authority structure, to compete favourably with that from the West.<sup>23</sup> E. A. Ayandele notes that this traditional West African opposition to missionary propaganda was the greatest obstacle to missionary effort at evangelising the interior.<sup>24</sup> The African insistence that they did not need Christianity, and that they were comfortable and happy with the traditional faith is an exhibition of the lack of theological depth on the part of the missionary enterprise regarding African understanding of worldview.<sup>25</sup>

## **MISSION AND EVANGELISM**

The mission of the Methodist Church Ghana, like all Christian denominations, is one, i.e. to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land. As regards evangelism, the history of the Methodist Church Ghana the years over presents no one particular pattern in terms of outreach methods and strategies. The initial pattern, consequent to mission policy changed with time in view of the attainment of autonomous status. Aspects of that change were in line with the church's mission of seeking relevance to the exigencies of the times.

### **Introduction of Methodism in the Volta Region 1846-1922**

From the coastal areas and Ashanti as noted in the previous section, Methodism was introduced to the Volta area of the country in the eastern part of the Gold Coast before its introduction to the north. Pampram society, the first out-station to be opened by the Wesleyan mission after Accra in 1846 was started with 20 members with Rev John Plange as the first Minister. A chapel was built in 1873, and four years later (i.e. in 1877), the church at Ningo was also started. In 1885, missionary work was commenced at Dodowa.<sup>26</sup> As noted earlier in respect of the role of local initiative in to the planting of the faith, the Volta region was no exception. Its history also records the place of its indigenes in the planting of Methodism in the area. Subsequent to the visit of some indigenes of Avetile to the Missionaries at Aburi in the 1880s<sup>27</sup>, Methodism was founded in the Volta where the missionaries in the 1890s opened a church there.

In 1891 upon the directives of the then Superintendent Minister of Accra, the Rev. Hew Price, Rev. Ernest Bruce visited Kpong from Pampram and begun a church there, the same year that the church at Ada was started. This was the genesis of the creation of the Volta Mission Circuit in 1897.<sup>28</sup> The lay members from Kpong, the business men that they were, responsibly and ably propagated the faith in all the commercial centers they traded in. Churches that were founded were Peki, Ada, Anum, Anyirawase, Avenui, Abrofu, Kessiful, and Upper Krobo. The church at Ho was founded in 1921/1922, and only became a full fledged Methodist society in 1953.

### **Missionary Outreach to Northern Ghana 1911-1950s**

The northern parts of the country were the least touched in this initial missionary venture of the Methodists. From the south where the bulk of the work had been concentrated, the Methodists in 1911 made an attempt to evangelise the northern part of the country, which was not realised until after two years. The reason was that Cecil Hamilton Armitage who replaced Watherston as Chief Commissioner placed difficult restrictions on the movements of the Methodist missionaries sent to the north. Armitage is alleged to have had the impression that Protestants were difficult to control while the Catholics 'were much more amenable and law abiding'. Consequently, he determined to limit the evangelisation of the Northern Territories to the Roman Catholics. Secondly, Armitage is alleged to have argued, that since Wa was a Muslim stronghold, it would be unwise to disturb it. So the Methodists abandoned the work in the Northern Territories in 1915.<sup>29</sup> It was not until the 1950's when the Rev. Paul Adu<sup>30</sup> was posted there to open up a place

for the Methodists.<sup>31</sup> Two years later, the District Synod decided to extend its influence to the North, and Rev. Paul Adu was selected from five volunteers to begin work there as the first African missionary.<sup>32</sup>

Though Tamale was predominately a Moslem community, and as such impervious to the Christian message, Paul Adu was not deterred to begin worship services there the result of which was the establishment of the Tamale United Church with some local Akan-speaking people. He had some successes. He learnt their native languages, translated the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles Creed, and some hymns and choruses into Walla, founded schools, and addressed some of their economic needs.<sup>33</sup>

## **Northern Outreach Phase II**

As early as 1962, the church's conference, realizing the enormous nature of the work there, wisely sought a merger with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in a joint Christianization of the region. This laudable idea suffered setbacks making it impossible to achieve the desired goal. Some of the problems faced were lack of personnel, and funding. So between 1962 and 1965, positive measures were taken by the Methodist Church to provide personnel for the work in the north. In 1963 more catechists were sent to the north in addition to church volunteers who opted to serve there.<sup>34</sup> In the following year, Conference authorized the employment as catechists on trial in the north, of Northerners who have not completed their Middle School education but who have at least attended Middle School Form II and have been carefully examined by the Quarterly Staff meeting.<sup>35</sup> The result was a new breed of workers of local origin, an advantage, especially since they were assigned duties of teaching and preaching in the villages.

The problem of funding the Northern Mission was solved partially in various ways. Circuits contributed towards the upkeep of the Mission<sup>36</sup> in addition to help from church organizations such as the Connexional Women's Fellowship who donated money, sewing-machine and clothing etc. in 1962 to the northern mission.<sup>37</sup> In addition to the adoption of specific projects in the North by other circuits, foreign assistance was also sought. To further lessen the financial constraints on the north, in 1963 a number of Northern circuits i.e. Kedeleso, Kpawte and Gulumpe were transferred to Brong Ahafo.

In 1966 various programmes were held to increase the efficiency of workers in the north, with particular reference to reducing the language barrier. As part of this programme, workers to be posted to the North were taught the language to be used as the medium of communication prior to their posting.<sup>38</sup> Since Northerners were not interested in the ministerial vocation, to make southerners working in the north effective and efficient, the Methodist Church Ghana engaged the services of persons literate in the languages of the north as teachers for the southern ministers sent there in order for them to be fluent in the indigenous language of the north. On the level of winning more souls, it was hoped that the elementary and middle schools of the north would be staffed with Methodist teachers to build the children up for the church. Unfortunately, not all of these goals were achieved since prospective Methodist teachers lacked interest in teaching in schools in the North.<sup>39</sup>

In spite of this, the Methodist church was determined to make the Northern Ghana Mission work. Thus, somewhere in 1980, Conference in an attempt to evolve a more dynamic strategy for the church appointed a committee to review the church's past and current missionary strategies there. The committee tasked to draw both short and long term development programmes for the entire northern missionary endeavours was under the chairmanship of Nana J.S. Annan (a leading layman and later Vice President of Conference). The short-term programme was for the Methodist Church to provide ministers who were fluent in the northern languages. The long-term programme was to work towards a possible future autonomous status.<sup>40</sup>

During the course of time, the need struck again for the northern churches to be adopted by their southern counterparts, a point reiterated by Mr. Andrew Crakye Denteh the then Vice President of the Conference in 1981 in an address to Conference. Speaking on the topic “Church Twinning and Mission-child adoption”, he noted the important place the northern church occupied in the heart of Ghana Methodists and offered two suggestions regarding how the church in the North could be helped. The first suggestion was the adoption of Northern Churches by Southern Congregations.<sup>41</sup> The second suggestion was the adoption of boys and girls who given the necessary guidance were likely to grow into responsible positions. This laudable idea however fell through as the northern societies for adoption wanted to have all their difficulties solved for them by their counterparts in the south thus breaching the rules of the relationship. The idea was for each – the northern and southern societies in each case to understand, and appreciate the problems and difficulties of the other, and to offer the necessary help where appropriate.

After a period of twenty-one years of work in the north, Conference in 1976<sup>42</sup> noted with regret that many congregations in the north still worshipped under trees and in inadequate and unsuitable buildings. Even though these problems were identified, hardly was anything done about them until in the early 1980's when the idea of adopting the northern churches by the south was reiterated once more. Though the work was enormous in the north, the ministerial strength was inadequate. There were only seven ministers and two others serving the Ghana Armed forces and the Ghana Education service. No deaconess worked in the area. It was between 1980/81 that in addition to the aforementioned, three more catechists were stationed in the north.

The emphasis between the 1960s and 1970s was a careful study of scriptures in order to deepen one's understanding of God as well as strengthen his loyalty to Him in purity of life and love. Consequent to this, 1964 was declared a Christian Home Year to win the nation to God.<sup>43</sup> And to facilitate this, Freeman College in Kumasi was made to give special direction to the claims of evangelism throughout the Connexion. Synods charged certain people within the Districts to be responsible for evangelism. This was followed up with regular retreats and schools of Evangelism. In 1965 specific church organisations like the Christ Little Band were trained on the matter and methods of evangelism for effective and efficient evangelism. But the President of Conference regretted that church growth in quality did not commensurate with the country's population growth. This called for intensive education in the hope that the situation would improve.

During the period 1966 to 1971, the increasing number of one-Minister circuits became a great concern to the Conference. It was felt that two or more ministers in a circuit would be ideal and that one-minister circuits were to be merged, all done so that the church's outreach would be solidified. This decision was welcome since more ministers were passing out of college. In 1971 the needy members of the church were helped and the gift of healing encouraged to be exercised within the church, bearing in mind Methodist principles.

The training of voluntary lay leaders was intensified in 1972 to give effective service to members including the care of some societies. In 1973 every effort was made to prepare adherents for reception into full membership, so that the Methodist Church achieved her objective of winning many converts for Christ. The seriousness that the church attached to this ministry was evidenced in the increase in full members of the church in 1974 with an increase from 116,250 in 1973 to 122,861 in 1974. When full membership returns fell by over a thousand in 1975, Conference stepped up its programme for the preparation of adherents for full members. The result was that by 1976 full membership returns has risen to 126,436 from 121,808 in 1975 - an increase of over five thousand.

Conference in 1978 urged Methodists to take full advantage of the help offered by the Blue Cross Society<sup>44</sup> with the view to decreasing, if not totally eradicating the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Subsequently the 1980s also witnessed the introduction of guidelines of worship

throughout the Connexion for effective outreach for uniformity sake in both morning and evening worship services. Since hymns play an important role in the church's outreach, conference in 1980 accepted a recommendation from the Winneba District to use part of the week day prayer meeting for constant hymn practice for members to be conversant with the Methodist hymns.<sup>45</sup>

The year also witnessed increase in the number of societies by 37. Between 1976 and 1986, the church had increased by 1275 societies. During these years the church gained 61,582 in full membership.<sup>46</sup> Decreases recorded in certain areas were the result of double membership, transfers and other movements. Children ministry suffered a little. This could be rectified with the creation of the Christian Education Department. In all, the total Christian community showed an increase of 2947 compared to 1985's figures of 17,631, thus recording a decrease. New stations were opened in almost all the Districts during the year. Akim Oda District, carved from the Winneba District, was inaugurated as the 10<sup>th</sup> District of the Connexion on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1986.<sup>47</sup> In 1987, the Church hosted the first ever West African Regional Seminar in Evangelism under the auspices of the Institute for World Evangelism of the World Methodist Council from 29<sup>th</sup> December 1986 to 16<sup>th</sup> January 1987.<sup>48</sup>

1988 church year recorded significant improvements in the attendance at worship services in Methodist churches. If there were negative reports, it related to the villages where farming activities determined the drifts of the rural people from one area to another. Urban migration of the youth in search of jobs also contributed to their absence in church.<sup>49</sup> The problem in the urban areas had to do with the time for class meetings which was between the hours of 5.30 am and 8.00 a.m. on Sundays, thus making it impossible for some, especially the elderly to patronise church services the way they should.<sup>50</sup> As a result, the church sought to open more neighbourhood churches, and also to explore the possibility of holding class meetings on days other than Sundays. Plans were put in place to forestall the drift of the Youth to other churches. The Adabraka Circuit of the Methodist Church in 1989 instituted a Special Youth Worship with teaching Service held on Sundays from 4.30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. The practice was recommended to others.<sup>51</sup>

### **Evangelism in the North - the 1980s**

Evangelism in the 1980s focused on the spread of the Gospel in the north which recoded a growth rate of 731 indigenous members in 1987.<sup>52</sup> To help with the work there, successful deputation tours were organised by the Conference to acquaint the church in the south with the life work of ministry there. Ministers from the North visited southern churches and solicited help for work in the north.

Personnel and logistics i.e. provision of transportation for the acting chairman of the district were the initial challenges. Having approved of a development plan in 1985 by Conference, one block of 10 classrooms was completed in Tamale, and Bethel chapel redecorated. A second hand Peugeot car AK 6055 was reconditioned for the use of the Superintendent Minister of Tamale.<sup>53</sup> Work on the Yendi Manse had started. For Bolgatanga three classrooms had been completed, and Navrongo chapel was under construction. At Wa the Superintendent Minister's Manse was re-roofed. In Lawra, work on the chapel progressed steadily. The Connexion provided the North with five (5) Yamaha (100cc) Motor Cycles.<sup>54</sup> Churches in the South and individuals continued to support churches in the North financially and materially.<sup>55</sup>

In 1989 churches were planted in Yakut, Bako, Navrongo in the Bawku area. At Wa, four Moslems were converted, and two local chiefs also received the Lord during a funeral service, who extended invitation to the Methodist Church to plant churches in their villages, Gogo and Nyagli.<sup>56</sup> In Tamale, Gbalahi, a whole village, surrendered to the Gospel.<sup>57</sup> For the remarkable

growth the North had shown over the years, the Synod recommended that a Chairman be appointed by the next Synod for the Northern District.<sup>58</sup>

The 1990s was the decade for greater evangelistic growth in the church. Concerned about church growth vis-à-vis population growth, the Methodist church recommended the Methodist Outreach Relational Evangelism (MORE) programme already accepted by the church be critically reactivated to ensure the mobilization of members for evangelism.<sup>59</sup> The church in that same year decided to come out with a yearly plan for reaching the unreached. The goal in 1995 was to achieve a modest growth of at least 5%. Thus the year 1995 was declared “A Year of Evangelism”, and the programme dubbed ‘5 in 95’ launched at the 1995 Conference. Every church member was expected to pray for and witness to 5 people in that year. Each Methodist congregation was to aim at increasing its membership by at least 5% by the end of 1995. Each circuit aimed at starting at least 5 preaching posts in 1995. Finally each District aimed at starting work among five unreached people/group in 1995.<sup>60</sup> Subsequently District evangelism coordinators and lay evangelists were appointed.<sup>61</sup> It must be noted that though it was 5 in 95, it was not intended to end with that year, as it was an ongoing programme geared towards a renewal of interest in evangelism. The viability and novelty of the programme attracted a wide coverage by the Ghana Evangelism Committee, which described it as ‘a bold thrust in evangelism’, and was hailed during the Global Consultation on Evangelism (GCOWE ’95 in Seoul, Korea).<sup>62</sup> A handbook on ‘5 in 95’ was prepared and distributed in the Methodist church, and a Presidential Evangelism Award scheme established not only to encourage, but also to boast the commitment level needed.<sup>63</sup> Criteria for receiving an award were based on performance at Connexional programmes. And in 1996, Mr M. K. Baiden donated a trophy for the Grand Award.<sup>64</sup>

During this period, evangelism gathered momentum in the church. The Emmaus walk programme was introduced into Ghana through the Rev. Dr. Mathias Forson, the then Evangelism Director for the church. It was towards injecting new life to the church by revitalising and sustaining the Christians within it, as well as equipping people for leadership in the church and strengthening local congregations. The building of a retreat centre at the Abasua Mountains (then in the Kumasi District, now in the Effiduase Diocese) was initiated in 1996.<sup>65</sup>

Societies, circuits and Districts reported of growth in church membership throughout the connexion. Koforidua District for example recorded an increase of 1847 in membership.<sup>66</sup> Many Districts reached out to people of other faiths. The Moslem community in the Tarkwa District and the northern community in the Sunyani District were reached for Christ.<sup>67</sup> The first ever District Camp Meeting was held in the Winneba District on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1996 during which the President of the Conference launched the “Year of Discipleship”.<sup>68</sup> As a follow up to ‘5 in 95’, 1996 was designated “A Year of Discipleship”.<sup>69</sup>

Once again work in the north engaged the attention of the church which suggested the mobilisation of logistic support for mission in the North, as well as training indigenes from the North to evangelise the north.<sup>70</sup> As there was the need for new strategies for the northern mission, an eleven-man Northern Ghana Review Committee was put in place to review the evangelism and mission work in the north.<sup>71</sup>

In 1996 the Methodist Prayer and Renewal Programme (MPRP) was born to replace prayer fellowships, and to underscore that praying was not the preserve of a few in the church as it involved every church member. It underscored the importance of prayer for effective church work which demanded all hands on deck. Its 5 tracts were Prayer and worship, Evangelism and preaching, Teaching and discipleship, Healing and counselling, and Welfare and social Action.<sup>72</sup> Its first conference was held at the Wesley Girls’ High School, Cape Coast from 13-17 September 1996.<sup>73</sup>

With a view to recovering the church's evangelism heritage, the celebration of evangelism Sunday was shifted from July to May to coincide with the celebration of Aldersgate Week which commemorates John Wesley's spiritual experience.<sup>74</sup> Offerings taken that day were given in support of the church's evangelism efforts.

The year 1997 was dubbed EXPANSION 10% GROWTH IN '97<sup>75</sup> focusing on both quantitative and qualitative growth of the individual and church life. Conversions were reported of fetish priests in Accra<sup>76</sup> and Moslems at Amuni in the Manso Amenfi circuit, and the deliverance of a drug addict at Oppong Valley who later became the chapel keeper of that society.<sup>77</sup> Efforts were made to reach out to Kukuwo the witch village in northern Ghana.<sup>78</sup> In the same year, more people from the north were encouraged to enter the ministry, in addition to mobilising people from the north to work as local missionaries there. The need to use the mother tongue in worship service in order to attract people was emphasised. Manses in deplorable situations were to be renovated.<sup>79</sup> Methodist penetrating and impact on the North was still skin deep.

Child evangelism was emphasised so as to introduce the children to the Lord. In its bid to ensure that this succeeds, the church put forward 59 applicants who were interviewed to attend a programme in the USA dubbed *missionaries of hope* in order to help with the training of children on the African continent. Out of the number of applicants, only 3 were selected. And out of this number, only one obtained visa to the USA.<sup>80</sup> The Methodist church had a programme to reach the outcasts and marginalised of society. Specific ministries were developed to reach the fisher folk, market women, and street children. And the year 1997 saw the second Prayer and Renewal Conference held in Kumasi from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> April.<sup>81</sup>

In 1999, planting 500 churches and doubling the numerical strength of the church was initiated. Areas worked in were the Volta region. The major concerns were evangelism of the area, and the alleviation of human suffering in the various communities, to seek freedom and peace from the Trokosi<sup>82</sup> system which dehumanises women and children in the area. Success attended the efforts of the church and four churches were planted at Kpedze, Sogakope, Akatsi and Denu. Four other churches whose members had ceased to meet were restarted. These were the churches at Kpotoe<sup>83</sup>, Addidome, Agotime Beh and Avenue Camp. Other churches that were revived were Tsito, Sokode, Anyinawase, Ho and Avenue. All together, 94 souls were won for Christ. In other areas of the Volta Region, the Evangelism report states that 202 people decided for the Lord. These included the paramount chief of Akatsi and his household.<sup>84</sup> The chief of Akatsi, himself a Methodist, offered four (4) plots of land to be developed by the church. The new churches were given bibles in the mother tongue. In addition, a translated version of the Ewe order of service book as well as some selected Methodist hymns was printed for the use of the churches. They were also sent used clothing.<sup>85</sup> A follow up in the year 2000 reported that one Madam Kokmasah, a drunkard, who had server stomach pains, and was prayed for after receiving Christ, was healed, and stopped drinking. The mother of the Akatsi Chief, herself a worshipper of the thunder god, surrendered the gods to be burnt, and was baptised into the church.<sup>86</sup>

Similar increases were recorded in all the Districts. Accra planted 6 churches, Sekondi planted 2 churches, and Winneba had an increase of 3,031 in membership over the previous years' figures. Koforidua increased in membership from 23,771 to 26, 482. In Sunyani where 70 converts were won, the Kwaku Fri shrine (a traditional religious shrine for the local god) moved to the outskirts of Wenchi, its town of residence, on the pretext that its prohibitions were not being obeyed. In all, 19 churches were planted. The Tarkwa District planted nine churches. In Northern Ghana a loss was recorded as the Methodist lost certain churches (Ngrabado in the Yendi mission area, and the Bole church) to the Evangelical Presbyterian and the Roman Catholic churches because of inadequate financial support from the Methodists.<sup>87</sup> Akyem Oda planted 19 churches. Effiduase recorded an increase in numerical strength from 31,979 to 33,376. Obuasi planted 10 churches and Tema planted 4.<sup>88</sup>

The planting of churches all over the Connexion was indicative of an impressive level of growth. With the adoption of the Cecil Williamson's Evangelistic Ministry and its programmes, all church districts reported of significant growth. In Kumasi for instance a grant of 4 million cedis was also received from Cecil Williamson for a training programme in the District.<sup>89</sup> In other areas like the Sunyani District, a provision of 3 million cedis was made towards the construction of a chapel for the Nwoase society, and a further 20 million cedis for evangelism in mission areas.<sup>90</sup> The Abasua Mountains retreat centre founded in 1996 took a new look as new sheds were erected to provide shelter for visitors.<sup>91</sup> Northern Ghana District was visited in 2000. In 2001, the concentration was in the Tarkwa District, and in 2002, the Mo and Banda Mission areas in the Sunyani District. In 2003 the Koforidua Diocese was visited and work was done in the Afram Plains.<sup>92</sup>

Conference theme for the next five years from 2000 was 'Consolidation and Expansion', in order to emphasise its focus on evangelism. Teaching and retreat programmes was decentralised to equip evangelism co-ordinators to handle these in their Dioceses.<sup>93</sup> Films in the mother tongue 'Jesus speaks Dagbani' screened in Yendi in the Northern Ghana Diocese, won many to Christ. It is recorded that a total of 146 was won for the Lord.<sup>94</sup> At Mo in the then Sunyani Diocese (now in the Wenchi Diocese), some Moslems were converted.<sup>95</sup> At Bamboi and Banda the medical personnel attended to the sick numbering 568.<sup>96</sup> At Faamang in the Effiduase Diocese, the towns' folk were won for Christ after a woman who had laboured for 24 hours and could not be helped by the native midwife and a traditional priest, was helped by the Methodist medical team by referral to the Mampong hospital where she delivered safely.<sup>97</sup> This won the hearts of the people and turned them to the Lord.<sup>98</sup>

In the years 2002 and 2003, in pursuance of the church's missionary endeavour, the Methodist Church Ghana organised a successful Connexional Outreach/Crusade held at the nations' Independence Square in Accra, an activity that was later duplicated in the Dioceses and Circuits nationwide. True to her mission of spreading the gospel to all, the church, in 2003 endeavour to double her membership. When that vision fell through, beginning 2004 the church sought to double her membership within five years. Interest in rural ministry was also rekindled. During the course of 2004 the Methodist Church in Togo requested the help of Methodist Church Ghana not only to evangelise but plant churches in that country. Consequently, a fifteen member delegation led by the then Bishop of the Accra Diocese of the church, Rt. Rev. Samuel A. Hodasi left for Togo in April 2004. The success of the programme was the result in the signing of an agreement between the two churches in the training of evangelists, planting of churches, training of Children Service personnel, as well as sending missionaries to Togo.<sup>99</sup>

## **GROWTH AND CHALLENGES**

### **Mfantsipim School, Gold Coast (1876)**

Mfantsipim School, previously the Wesleyan High School, was founded in 1876<sup>100</sup> the same year that Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone attained University status. Mfantsipim School, Fourah Bay College, and the Presbyterian Training College all served as seminaries for their respective missions paving the way for self-expression, itself a good index for indigenisation of the Christian faith, and nationalism. Like Fourah Bay in Sierra Leone, Mfantsipim became the surest foundation for the training of staff for church work in the Gold Coast. Therefore like the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Sierra Leone, the Methodists in the Gold Coast were eager at training and using indigenous personnel for the propagation of the gospel. Rightly was it felt by mission that the progress of the Church in the mission field depended largely on "native workers."<sup>101</sup> The establishment of these institutions naturally offered the beneficiaries a certain level of confidence in their relations with the outside world. Later, these mission schools, along

with the non-mission, but Christian, Achimota Secondary School<sup>102</sup> in Accra, the Gold Coast, were instrumental in creating the West African elite, with positive influence all over Africa.<sup>103</sup>

The aim for Mfantsipim School was to help the African continent turn out graduates who would be able to hold their own in future. It was to ‘raise up a generation of men who would be brave enough to face the problems of their own continent, practically and unselfishly’.<sup>104</sup> Consequently, the minority missionary concern in 1892 was to *Christianise* and not *Europeanise* Africa<sup>105</sup>, to help Africa develop a Christian civilisation suited to its own climate and its own circumstances, even though this could not be accomplished without a measure of European help and ethos. But civilisation did not mean Europeanisation as evident from Lavigerie’s caution for missionaries of equatorial Africa of 1879, three years after the establishment of Mfantsipim School:

From the material aspect we must leave Africans as they are, that is to say truly Africans. We must shut our eyes and hearts to a false pity ... and resign ourselves to see the young negroes (sic) close to us maintain the customs of their land, their wattle huts instead of houses, their bare earth in place of beds, sorghum and manioc instead of bread, grass waist bands in place of shirt and trousers.<sup>106</sup>

Although this smacks of affirmative action on Europe’s part to retain the African identity, it fell short of the expected growth and development one loved to see after a synthesis had taken place following an interaction of the African and European cultures. Though Africa must be allowed to develop on lines suitable to it, there is also the strong conviction that a relatively rich culture could ensue after an amalgamation of cultures – in this case, African and European cultures. Therefore Africa, after having retained her Africanness, could also adapt the good in other cultures to enrich and fulfil her own as culture is dynamic.

From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, mission in Africa had stressed the need for an indigenous church manned by indigenous priesthood. This was to allow for a complete *rediscovery* rather than a *reinvention* of their Africanness. So important was this to the chief architects of Mfantsipim School that the school’s motto, according to John Mensah Sarbah<sup>107</sup> “is not in Latin or English, but in plain Fante”, *Dwin Hwe Kan* (Think and look ahead).<sup>108</sup> Significantly the West African forebears (in this case, in the Gold Coast) saw the advantage of first conceptualising their thoughts in *mfantsi*<sup>109</sup> – before translating or explaining in English what it meant, thus underscoring, from the beginning, the important place that mother tongue could occupy in both evangelism and the theologising process in Africa. In essence, the motto of Mfantsipim School exhorted thoughtfulness and foresight<sup>110</sup>; two qualities that would make for difference in attitude, habit and perception of the students. The School’s anthem encapsulates this thought better:

O think and look ahead dear boys  
Shout out our motto grand and free  
Assist us, Tano, with thy voice,  
Re-echo Volta of the East  
Now raise three cheers for Mfantsipim School,  
Hurray, Hurray, Hurray.<sup>111</sup>

As a way of evangelism, the anthem indicates the need for help for amplification. Thus the assistance sought from the two great rivers – Tano and Volta as they roar on their courses.<sup>112</sup> Besides Mfantsipim, there were Wesley, Freeman and Trinity Colleges, all founded by the Methodist Church Ghana. Trinity College provided a permanent answer to the quest for an established theological institution for the Church when Mfantsipim could no longer do that job effectively because of its diverse educational obligations. By its establishment in 1943<sup>113</sup> Trinity College in Kumasi relieved the Methodist Church of her reliance on expatriate missionaries, or at

least reduced it. This was to reinforce the 1913 Synod decision when the superintendency of the circuits was to be wholly placed under the charge of African ministers.

There was much growth in education as Kwadaso Vocational, a catering centre for teaching Home Science and Bible study was founded in 1948 to cater for domestic education; and offered short courses for ministers' and catechists' wives, and other churchwomen. In that same year, the Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquah was appointed the first African Chairman of the Ghana District of the British Methodist conference. This was an appointment viewed as an important landmark in the Africanisation of the leadership of the Methodist Church prior to the attainment of autonomy. The Rev. Acquah was instrumental in the translation of many of the Methodist hymns into the mother tongue. By 1949 the Church had trained forty-seven men and twenty-two women to man her affairs.

By 1960, the Methodist Church Ghana had established five training colleges to turn out teachers for Methodist schools nationwide. These colleges – Wesley, Komenda, Nkawkaw, Ofinso and Osei Tutu had a total student population of 812 out of the grand total of 4552 in the country's thirty training colleges.<sup>114</sup> Around the same time, Wesley Girls High School moved from her primary level to a secondary level to cater for the needs of the girls of the nation. Alongside this was the establishment of the Methodist Accra Girls School.

### **The immediate period prior to Autonomy (1940-1960)**

When the Rev. John Milum, the first Chairman of the Lagos District of the Methodist Church would propose autonomy for the Methodist Districts in West Africa in 1885 at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Gold Coast Methodist Church<sup>115</sup>, the Methodist Church in the Gold Coast was by no means ready and well prepared for it, as it had the necessary infrastructure in place. The human resource was not a problem as was evident in the address of the Rev. Francis Chapman Ferguson Grant, the first President of the Ghana Conference, at the opening of the 1961 Conference. Among other things he said:

Our church has always been blessed with lay men and ministers of character and ability, dedicated to our Lord Jesus Christ and loyal to His Church. As we welcome many delegates from all over Ghana who are members of this Foundation Conference, we rejoice that in our generation also the Church still has such men in its ranks.<sup>116</sup>

A few of such men may be mentioned namely, first the ministers: Revs. Joseph de Graft Johnson, Joseph Wilson, F.E. Kwesi Ekuban, C. Awotwe Pratt, Charles Yamoah, J. Bart-Addison, Paul Adu, James Emmanuel Yarquah, S.B. Essamuah, K.A. Dickson, Joseph Yedu Bannerman, and the Rev. W.C. Cudjoe who served as Conference Secretary. Some of the outstanding lay persons of the period were Paa Chinebuah, S.H. Amissah, J.S. Annan, Krakye Denteh and Dr. Alex Quaison Sackey. All these in no small way contributed to the consolidation of the Church after autonomy.

In sum, from the inception of the planting of Methodism in the Gold Coast, both the missionaries and the Ghanaian Clergy and agents worked with determination in order for the Church to take roots. This was in spite of disease and death which initially plagued the Church. From that time, the Church gradually expanded its many stations in the south. Her penetration into Ashanti and her stability in the north were important landmarks in her effort to expand the work of Methodism in Ghana. This determination with which the 'fathers' ensured that Methodism was consolidated in Ghana was continued by the generation after them which would finally usher in the autonomy.

## The Attainment of Autonomy (1961)

Once autonomy was achieved, the Church's personnel had the responsibility of planning effectively, looking ahead and building on the sweat and toil of those who established it. Realizing that posterity would not mince words in criticizing them if they failed, the leaders did their best. After the 1961 Conference, elaborate and concrete plans were put in place for the consolidation, growth and expansion of the Church. During this period the Methodist Church Ghana went through alternating states of progression and brief but disturbing periods of depression.

The Ghana Conference was divided into five Districts, namely Cape Coast, Sekondi, Kumasi, Winneba and Accra with their respective chairmen – the Revs. B. A. Markin, T. W. Koomson, J. F. Bart-Addison, Charles Awotwe Pratt, and J.T. Clegg.<sup>117</sup> Northern Ghana was then under the chairmanship of the President of the Conference. It was not until 1991 that she had her first resident Chairman, the Rev. Edison Tinsari. By 1960 the Methodist Church had expanded reaching many areas and even beyond Kumasi into Ahafo.

The church's missionary perspective was not lost on the Ghana Methodist Church with the attainment of autonomy. The words of the President of the British Methodist Church, the Rev. Dr. Maldwyn L. Edwards who inaugurated the conference encapsulates that:

I declare the Methodist Church, Ghana to be inaugurated for the purpose of witnessing to the Good News of Jesus Christ, and raising up of Scriptural Holiness throughout the land, and to the ends of the earth.<sup>118</sup>

That mission for evangelism stayed with the autonomous Methodist Church in Ghana, a feature that she sought over the years to live by. Evangelism, the major agenda of the Church was reiterated many times in the address of the Rev. Dr. Maldwyn L. Edwards. Ghana Methodism was reminded of her role as a shepherd responsible for saving lost souls, and feeding the sheep.<sup>119</sup> Referring to John Wesley who graduated from being occupied with his own conversion, to his concern for bringing others to God, The Rev. Edwards admonished the Methodist Church Ghana thus

So we as children of John Wesley, must go out to seek and to save others. I do not want a single one of you to go out of this church tonight as a spectator, but as a shepherd. As shepherds you will know and seek those around you that the great crowd of witnesses may be greater still, in these critical and urgent days.<sup>120</sup>

Earlier, in the 1960 Synod address of the Chairman of the Ghana District of the Methodist Church, the Rev. Francis Chapman Ferguson Grant, also the President-Designate had noted among other things that:

Autonomy is not an end in itself, but a means to an end that we may become a more fit instrument in the hands of God. The Church that our Lord brought into being by His death in the Cross was Gods means of turning sinners into saints and transforming a sinful world into the Kingdom of God. Our autonomy is of no account therefore, unless it produces saints and seeks to make our people a holy nation.

A church is not great because it is autonomous or wealthy or large, it is great when it produces men and women who live in the power of God by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, when it is able to turn the world the right side up...let us plan this day to be able to produce more and more holy men and holy women in the church of the Living God whose we are and whom we serve.<sup>121</sup>

In the mean time Youth Fellowships, Choirs, Singing Bands, Boys Brigade were founded as organisations through which the word would spread. From a handful of keen educated Christians

who made up the nucleus of the Methodist community in 1835 with Rev. Dunwell as Minister, that number had grown over 126 years to 170,299 total membership in 1961<sup>122</sup>, the Methodist total Christian community was to grow in leaps and bounds with the years. What this means is that out of a national population of 6,750,000 people, one Ghanaian in forty was Methodist. But this was woefully inadequate in comparison with 83 ministers; hence a ratio of one minister to two thousand members. That was a problem to be dealt with by the church.

### **Autonomy and After**

The first two decades of the church's history after autonomy fell under different administrations. The first decade was under two different but equally effective and efficient administrations. These were the administrations of the Rev. F.C.F. Grant (1961-1965) and the Rev. T. W. Koomson (1966-1972). The Rev. William C. Cudjoe served as Conference Secretary for a period of eight years, from 1961-1969. In 1969 he was succeeded by the Rev. Isaac K. Asuamah Thompson until 1974 when the Rev. J.S. Adamah Stephens took over as Conference Secretary till 1984. The other presidents of the period were the Rev. Charles K Yamoah (1973 to 1977), the Rev. Charles Awotwe Pratt (1977 to 1979) and the Rev. Samuel Benyarko Essamuah who took over from 1979 till 1984. The newly created post of the Vice President of Conference took effect from 1977. During this period (i.e. between 1961 and 1981), two Vice Presidents were elected by Conference. These were Mr. Samuel H. Amissah (1977 to 1979) and Mr. Isaac Kwadwo Agyeman (1979 to 1981). He was succeeded by Mr. Andrew Crakye Denteh (1981 to 1983), who was also succeeded by Mr. Joseph B. Oduntu (1983-1985). Each new administration sought to build upon the works and achievements of its predecessors.

The Rev. J.S. Adamah Stephens became President of Conference from 1985 to 1990; and was succeeded by the Rev. Prof. Kwesi A. Dickson from 1990 to 1997. Between 1997 and 2003, the Most Rev. Dr. Samuel Asante-Antwi was president (from 1997 to 2000), and Presiding Bishop (from 2000 to 2003). The Most Rev. Dr. Robert Kwesi Aboagye-Mensah was Presiding Bishop for six years from 2003 to 2009, and was succeeded by The Most Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Kwaku Asante.

The Vice Presidents for the period were Dr. Alex Quaison Sackey (1985-1987), Nana Dr. J. S. Annan (1987-1989), Mrs. Sophia Moore (1989-1991), Dr. A. A. Armar (1991-1993), Mr. Jacob A. Boateng (1993-1995), Mrs. Georgina Baiden (1995-1997), and Mr. Timothy Osam Duodu (1997-1999). Between 1999 and the present the Methodist Church had had Lay Presidents of Conference in place of Vice Presidents. They are Mrs. Naomi E. K. Okine (1999-2002), Mr. (now Dr.) Ato Essuman (2002-2005), Mr. James A. A. Adadoo-Brew (2005-2008), and Mrs. Araba Atta-Sam (2008-2011)

### **New structures**

During the tenure of the Most Rev. Dr. Jacob Adama Stephens the Methodist Church Ghana underwent some significant structural changes and shifted from the British way of administration to the American with the use of Boards run by General Directors and Directors. With the introduction of the Boards, the church operated five (5) Boards. These are the Boards of Ministries, Education and Youth, Administration, Finance, and Social Responsibility and Rural Development

### **Episcopal system of church administration**

In 1999, at the annual church conference in Koforidua, the Methodist Church Ghana adopted the Biblical pattern of episcopacy for its church administration. A service of Proclamation was held in the year 2000 at the Wesley Cathedral, Accra.

With the adoption of the Episcopal system of Church governance in 1999, certain significant changes were made in the church's structure. Districts are now known as Methodist Dioceses. The leading chapels of the various dioceses are known as Methodist Cathedrals. The President is now the Presiding Bishop, and takes the title, *Most Rev.* The Chairman, the Diocesan Bishop, and takes the title, *Rt. Rev.* The Superintendent Minister has not changed, but takes the title, the *Very Rev.* All other Reverend Ministers are known as *Reverend*

Regarding the use of vestments, there are some changes too: The bishops wear Mauve, purple. All Superintendents wear Green. Other ministers wear black, gray/ash, and off white. Ordained ministers are required to wear the preaching gown and bands with the appropriate stoles for preaching. The official dressing for worship service is now cassock, and not suits as it used to be.

### **The establishment of the Methodist University College of Ghana**

The Methodist Church Ghana believes that with her unique contribution in the field of education at the primary and the secondary levels, she stands in good stead to establish a university. The Rt. Rev. Samuel Asante Antwi at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in 1997, suggested the establishment of the Methodist University College Ghana (MUCG). The conference subsequently agreed. It was granted accreditation by the National Accreditation Board in August 2000, and affiliated to the University of Ghana in October 2002.<sup>123</sup> The MUCG started academic work in October 2000. The University is sited on the Wesley Grammar Secondary School campus in Dansoman, Accra, with other campuses in Tema, and Wenchi.

### **Challenges**

The 1980s was full of crises for the Methodist Church Ghana, beginning with Accra, Tarkwa, Kumasi and then Cape Coast, all involving important church leaders. These nearly brought the Church to a near split. For some, it was the result of pride, false accusations and a feeling of indispensability. Granted that these were true, it questioned the Church's true commitment to Christ.

Thanks be to God, the Church stood the test of time. She overcame these by the grace of God. No doubt the church's evangelistic drive had injected something into the people of God, something about what the church is and what is expected of them. Therefore, the turmoil and problems, rather than divide and break up the Church, got it strengthened. The church has learnt its lessons, it is hoped.

One thing that impedes church growth is the translation of the liturgy into the mother tongues of the people. Considering the fact that there are over 79 languages and dialect in the country, and the fact that officially there is only one official translation of the liturgy, the Ashanti-Twi version, this is an indication that the church needs to do more in the area of mother tongue issues than it has done.<sup>124</sup> Conference 2004 therefore suggested that the church liaises with GILLBT to help train people for this. As a result the first ever Connexional Conference on the Effect of Mother Tongue on Evangelism, Mission and Renewal was organised in 2004 in Effiduase.

### **Finances**

The source of funding for the church had been collections received during Sunday worship, donations made to her by philanthropists, especially the British Conference, the payment of church dues which was called class and ticket money (because tickets were issued on payment), the pledging system<sup>125</sup>, special monthly offerings, annual harvests, and other appeals made during worship services.

These notwithstanding, the churches expenditure had always outweighed its resources. While some Districts (now Dioceses) complained of heavy assessments, the daily church collections fell short of

expectation, maybe due to growing economic hardships. Even when the church in the 1970s reduced the assessment by 10%<sup>126</sup> in the hope that this would enable the circuits to honour their financial obligation to the church, the expectation was to the contrary. However, the results were contrary to that expected. This negatively affected the running of the headoffice which was often in financial difficulties. Over the period therefore the church had not achieved any appreciable degree of financial competence.

Other attempts made to salvage the problem were remitting to the head office 30% of harvest proceeds received each year by each church. When that failed the church introduced the Methodist Development Fund (MDF) where every member is expected to give to the church at least 20 Ghana pesewas a month for developmental projects. That also has its own challenges.

## CHURCH SERVICES, HYMNS USED AND LITURGY USED

Regular church services have been held on Sunday forenoon and evening, and Wednesday evenings. Sunday forenoon services were the official kind of worship services. In addition there were also Eucharistic services held on every first Sunday of the month. Sunday morning services may also witness either baptism, thanksgiving of a mother after safe delivery, or other form of worship service. Weddings have normally been held on Saturdays, although there have been very few cases of having such ceremonies on Wednesdays of some other day of the week according to the celebrant's choice.

Sunday evening services were very popular and well attended in up to the 1980s. These days, as a result of urbanisation and other challenges, these once very well patronised services have died out in most Methodist churches all over the country. Fridays evenings were prayer meeting times in most churches, where members met to do intensive intercessions and healing services. The current situation is the introduction of *first* and *second* worship services in most societies.<sup>127</sup> In most places, the *first* service is mostly held in English, while the *second* has the vernacular of the area as the medium of communication.

The Methodist hymn book and offices used by the British Methodist church is what is used in Ghana. The *Christian Asôr ndwom*, a selection of some Methodist hymns and some Ghanaian local choruses, is also used mainly in the *Mfantasi* areas. The *Twi* version of the Methodist hymns was published in the 1990s by the Kumasi District, and is in use by most *Twi* Methodist churches. Very soon the Ga and Ewe of Accra and the Volta respectively would have their hymns published in their mother tongues to enhance worship services in those languages.

Before the year 2000 where a new liturgy was introduced, the Methodist Church Ghana has been using the old 1936 English liturgy. However, so that the liturgy might be enriched to reflect the Ghanaian character in the worship of the Methodists, a review of the liturgy was done. The proposed alternate liturgy was to cover other activities such as dedication for choir robes and buildings, and widowhood rites, and other liturgies that the old one did not address. The intention was not only to help the Ghanaian to worship relevantly, but also to offer an alternate to the monotonous nature of the old liturgy, and to remove the boredom. Consequently, more indigenous songs and lyrics with sound theological background were to be added to the worship service to raise the spiritual levels of people during worship.<sup>128</sup>

Before this time, in 1987 the church had registered its displeasure at the excesses in worship service by way of over-dependence on clapping, uncontrolled drumming, dancing, ecstatic behaviour, speaking in tongues and the riotous nature of some prayer meetings<sup>129</sup> which called for an intensification of Methodist teaching on worship. The following year for instance Kumasi

District called for a study of the possibility of indigenising worship services by using the talking drums to summon members for worship instead of using the bell.<sup>130</sup> Further, in place of the traditional widowhood rites, the Cape Coast District instituted the 'EYIGU-SUM' held four weeks after the passing away of one's spouse.

The time was ripe for a relook at the liturgy of the church in order to worship contextually. Thus the need to review the liturgy and worship practices to reflect an indigenous church for relevant worship was discussed, and a nine member sub-committee put in place under the chairmanship of the Most Rev. Prof. Emeritus K. A. Dickson.<sup>131</sup> The committee submitted its work in draft form for two years experimentation in the year 2000. It was expected of members to remit their suggestions to the liturgy sub committee within two years for consideration and the final determination of the liturgy. Unfortunately, this has not been done, and the church is still trying the liturgy.

It must be noted that a challenge here has been the translation of the liturgy into the various language groups. Translators are not easily forthcoming. This is however not the first time the church is faced with such difficulty. The 1980s is replete with such examples. For effective worship in the second half of the 1980s, Indigenes were tasked with the translation of the church's service books and hymn books. Crakye Denteh and Paa Okyere<sup>132</sup> with S. K. Otoo of the Bureau of Languages translated the Methodist Hymn Book into the Akan language. The work was completed the following year financed by Mr. S. K. Amanful.<sup>133</sup> The Rev. Doni Kwame and Bro. V. A. Kala also translated some Methodist hymns and order of Service into the Dagari language to be edited by the Revs. Edison Tinsari, E. B. Diuri and Bro. V. A. Kala.<sup>134</sup> Two years later a copy of a collection of hymns in Dagari was received and passed on to the Sub-committee for study.<sup>135</sup>

Worship services are lively, well attended and fulfilling. They are characterised by extemporaneous prayers, introduction of *ebibindwom*, (African music), rhythmic dances, and general happiness.

## HOW DOES THE CHURCH RELATE TO THE LOCAL CULTURE

It is interesting to note that in 1982, conference had asked the Revs. K. A. Dickson, I. K. Asumah Thompson, and A. K. Quarcoo to prepare and present papers on some pertinent issues. These were – Naming Ceremony and Infant Baptism; Polygamy and Communion; Puberty Rites and confirmation Ceremony; Liturgy for Widowhood Rites; Christian Practice and engagement of a girl at marriage.<sup>136</sup>

The above is indicative of the long-sought after relevance in worship for meaningfulness for its members. This is the church committed to a proper inculturation and contextualisation of its worship life so that the Christian faith becomes alive to its members. In line with this the new liturgy has sought to contextualise some of its liturgies to the best of its ability taking into consideration the African traditional life and thought. For the purposes of this work, three or four significant areas, vis-à-vis the morning order of worship, the Eucharistic, Baptismal and funeral services will be looked at.

### Morning order of worship

It is traditional in Ghana to welcome guests before the commencement of any function, so that they are integrated into the programme and feel wanted. In the new liturgy, worshippers are welcomed very early in the worship service for the same effect as in the traditional culture.<sup>137</sup>

### **Naming of Children with Christian Baptism**

At the naming of a child which could be done in either the home of the couple or the chapel, the role of the family head is most significant. As the head of the family or his representative he gives the purpose for the gathering, and among other things says: *as our custom demands, such member should be given a name to establish his/her identity in the family. I therefore humbly wish to invite the Minister to perform the ceremony on behalf of the families.*<sup>138</sup>

The minister only names the child after the head of family has explained the reason for giving the child that particular name. Like the traditional set up, the minister calls the name of the child three times, each time dipping his/her finger into a bowl of liquid, or using a spoon to drop on the child's tongue, alternatively water and soft drink and corn wine, or water and roasted corn flour soaked in water and salt, or water and honey, as the custom of the area may dictate. The minister says the following words to accompany the dropping of water or soft drink (as the case may be) on the child's tongue.

*(Name of child), you have been brought by God into this world as a moral being with the responsibility to distinguish between truth and falsehood, right and wrong. This is water, therefore if you say water, it must be water; and this is soft drink/corn wine/honey, therefore if you say soft drink/corn wine/honey, it must be so.*<sup>139</sup>

The symbolism here is society's expectation of the child to be truthful, just as is done in traditional society. The church thus intends to inculcate into the child, certain accepted traditional and societal values and morals. The minister then exhorts the baby, the parents and the gathering. Presentations may then be made to the child, fellowship drink (where each person present sips a bit of the soft drink used in naming the child, after mentioning its name). The function is ended with prayers and the benediction.

The work was intended towards relating Christianity to the life of the ordinary person in Ghana. This is indeed a noble attempt to give the Church the character of an institution which *belongs* in the African soil, instead of it being linked in the mind of the African with a Western mode of life and thought. When done in church, the role of the traditional elder may not be taken over by the minister.

### **Solemnisation of Matrimony<sup>140</sup>**

Another scenario is the Solemnisation of Matrimony. The passion for change related to the inadequacies in the English order of service for use in an African Christian setting. For the African/Ghanaian, this liturgy is inadequate because of the undue emphasis and place given to the couple as almost the principal characters in the rite. In addition to this, the causes for which marriage was made are also limited to the bride and groom, not only for the service, but also for life. In the liturgy, the African traditional understanding of life is brought to the fore. It must be noted that 'the importance attached to the two principal actors as one is negated by the fact that in matrilineal societies in Ghana for instance, the son does not inherit'.

The conspicuously silence of the English liturgy on the role of the two families is corrected. The new order of service recognises the family's role, the couple, only serving as the link for bringing the two families together. Before a marriage is brought to the altar, the couple would have been legitimately married by traditional standards. So the two, in the eyes of the families would already be man and wife. Further in African life and thought the importance attached to the bearing of children in marriage is not compromised. While the British liturgy was silent on this, the Ghanaian one in response to tradition offers prayers for the fruit of the womb for the bride. Prayers offered to the ancestors' on behalf of the bride request them to offer the bride the fecundity of an elephant

(that is to say, to give the bride a big womb to bear children). The prayers also indicate that she brings forth twins, and that she becomes a mother of ten. Thus, whether one likes it or not, childbearing is uppermost in the minds of Africans when marriages are contracted. Thus cases relating to childlessness, which was/is viewed as disgraceful in Africa, and is a legitimate ground for divorce, were not dealt with. What is informing is that not only do non-Christian families suffer from problems relating to childlessness; Christian families also have a fair share of the pain.

The traditional question the church has not yet addressed is: *is there anyone who knows any just cause why A.B. & C.D. may not be lawfully joined together*, as this is out of place since what authenticates marriage is its being properly contracted customarily. The church should therefore give traditional marriage the seriousness it deserves. The Christian order must take into account the marriage, which the couple had already contracted.

Further, since by African/Ghanaian tradition no biological father himself gives his daughter away in marriage without reference to the extended family, the aspect of the old liturgy that makes the father respond *I do*, to the question *who gives this woman to be married to this man?*, is replaced with the words: *I do on behalf of the families*. Thus the almost unrecognised role of the family in the old order during the service for the Solemnisation of Holy Matrimony is given due recognition in the new. The opening prayers mention the family and prayers are said for them. And since the consent of the family is also required for the contraction of the marriage, members of the families of the couple are made to pledge their support for the marriage. The officiating minister would say: *the marriage of A.B and C.D unites your families and creates a new one. Do you promise to uphold them in their marriage with right counsel and godly prayers?* The families are made to answer: *We do. We wish God's blessings upon their marriage*. After this, one of the family members is asked to offer extempore prayers for the couple indicating the giving of their blessings for the success of the marriage so contracted. Prayers are said for the corporate family to stay together as a unit, underscoring the cohesive character of the African people.

The use of *Gye Nayame*<sup>141</sup> and other Ghanaian traditional symbols embossed in stoles and other liturgical vesture of the minister of religion is indicative of the church's acceptance of what it considers good in the traditional culture for Christian expression.

## **HOW DOES THE CHURCH RELATE TO THE BROADER SOCIETY - CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONS**

The attainment of autonomy was 'a momentous step in the history of Methodism in Ghana'. These were the words of President Tubman of Liberia in a congratulatory message to the church on the occasion of her autonomy.<sup>142</sup> It was momentous in the light of the responsibilities and opportunities as well as the challenges that were opened to, and would beset the church. For Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the then President of Ghana the state expected the church to partner her in the social and educational reconstruction of the country.<sup>143</sup> It was expected of the church to be a pace setter for guidance and inspiration.<sup>144</sup>

The urgency of such a co-operation with the government was further reiterated in 1963, two years after the two Presidents had written, this time, by the All Africa Conference of Churches which met in Kampala, Uganda. At that conference, all churches in Africa were encouraged to participate wholeheartedly in the building of the African nations. This was seen as an aim from which the churches should not flinch<sup>145</sup> although not an easy to accomplish.

The church had always been conscious of her responsibility and her role in shaping godly governance in the country. It had always believed she owed to its membership an explanation of her political stance on national issues and programmes, which role is enhanced when the church

engages society with her theology which seeks to relate faith to the totality of life. As the mouthpiece of the nation, the Church has not compromised her advocacy role in her attempt to bring people to their civic rights awareness, as she had endeavoured to create such public awareness to deter government from excesses.<sup>146</sup> Since the church cannot be neutral in the face of misrule which may result in untold hardships and suffering, she had participated in forums that had advocated fair play and respect for human rights upon which the principles of democracy thrives.

In the light of the above, the Methodist Church Ghana, a member of the Christian Council of Ghana, together with the Catholic Bishop's Conference vehemently canvassed in the 1990s for an end to military rule in Ghana to pave the way for multi-party system of governance in the country.<sup>147</sup> This advocacy for favourable political climate in Ghana saw the church represented by its then President of Conference, the Most Rev. Kwesi Dickson in a team of religious persons in Ghana mediating between government and opposition parties in the country for peace, when after the 1992 elections the opposition parties claimed the outcome of the elections had not been fair. The church also played a role in getting the Muslims at table with the Christians in pursuance of peace in the country. Christians in government were encouraged to bring their faith to bear on national decisions as religion and politics are inseparable.

The mediatorial role of the Churches and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission at that crucial moment in the political history of Ghana was for them not only a moral duty but also a religious one that constituted for them one theological reality that would finally alleviate the suffering of the population.<sup>148</sup> Whatever the outcome of those discussions, the Church and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission scored some successes. Politicians from different camps came to engage in dialogue expressing the collegiality expected of them. Secondly, a new religious awareness as related to faith and practice of believers (Christians and persons of other faiths) had been introduced. Churches began discussing political issues, and consequently were politically informed. They became increasingly aware of their rights and their civic responsibilities.

The Methodist Church Ghana in its annual communiqué to the Government of the country had responded to varied national issues of concern: good governance, health and sanitation, economics, and other social concerns.

## ECUMENICAL SITUATION

The Methodist Church Ghana relates well with all the other Christian bodies both home and abroad with which it is in communion. These are the Christian Council of Ghana; the Council of the Methodist Church in West Africa; All Africa Conference of Churches; the World Methodist Council and the World Council of Churches. In serving on these bodies, the Methodist Church Ghana honours her obligations dutifully.

Conference in 1962<sup>149</sup> appointed its representatives to serve on the Christian Council of Ghana at both the national and regional levels, as other appointments were also made to the subcommittees within the council. In 1963 for instance, Miss Peregrino Aryee represented the church on the Women's Committee and Mr. E.K. Ashie on the Committee on Christian Marriage and Family life.<sup>150</sup> In the same year, Conference nominated the Rev. S.B. Essamuah for the appointment as Secretary of the Council.<sup>151</sup> The President of Conference was also elected as its chairman. Ever since, Conference had participated fully in the Council's activities.

After Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone had become autonomous Conferences, it was suggested to them by the British Conference to form the Council of the Methodist Church in West Africa with the Gambia, Ivory Coast and Dahomey-Togo Districts of the British Conference. The rationale was

to help each other function properly. The Rev. T.W. Koomson of the Methodist Church, Ghana served as its secretary for five years, meeting from country to country. Although this was a laudable idea, as a result low interest and keenness on the part of some members, probably due to the pursuance of individual church/country programmes, the council collapsed after ten years of its establishment.<sup>152</sup>

In 1970<sup>153</sup> Conference expressed interest in the exchange of Ministers between and among Council state members. In 1973/74, many ministers served in other West African countries. Examples were the Revs. Charles A. Pratt as Chairman of the Gambia District; Gideon K. Agordome served in the Dahomey-Togo district of the British Conference; Samuel K. Hodasi also served in the Gambia District as circuit minister, and John K. A. Arko (now John Ampiah Addison) served the Liberia Conference of the United Methodist Church.<sup>154</sup>

Though the council collapsed during the early 1970s, Methodist Ministers from Ghana still served in the Gambia and Liberia. The Rev. Robert Kwesi Aboagye-Mensah worked in the Gambia in the 1970s; the Rev. Titus Awotwi-Pratt served in the Gambia in the 1980s and 1990s becoming its Chairman. The Ghana Methodist Conference had always received fraternal delegates from all the states mentioned above at its conferences, a gesture that had been reciprocated.

Concerning the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Methodist Conference Ghana, viewed her participation in it as urgent since in the view of Conference, Christian people all over Africa needed one another for fellowship, counsel and mutual support. All other obligations were honoured. In 1971 for instance, Conference approved the recommendation that circuits, encourage members to pay 2NP (new pesewas) towards AACC funds. Recently at its Expanded General Purposes Council (GPC) meeting in Accra, the Methodist Church Ghana accepted to remit to the AACC the one dollar (\$1) member contribution to help AACC establish a development fund.

The Methodist Church Ghana has over the years continued to have a close relationship with the Methodist Church in Britain, which has assisted it in supplying some missionary staff and giving some financial assistance.

The Ghana Methodist Church also participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> World Methodist Conference held in Oslo, Norway in August 1961. The President served on its executive council in 1963; and in 1972, the President of Conference was one of eight elected presidents of the council. Between August 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 1975, the Methodist Church Ghana hosted the Council's executive Committee meeting.

The Methodist Church Ghana has had good relations with the World Council of Churches. In 1961 for instance, the Methodist Church was represented by Mr. S.H. Amisshah at the Council's Third Assembly Meeting held in New Delhi, India.<sup>155</sup> Two years later, the President of Conference, the Rev. F.C.F. Grant represented the Christian Council of Ghana on the World Council of Churches commission on World Mission and Evangelism in Mexico.<sup>156</sup> The Methodist Church also participated in the 1969 World Council of Churches Fourth Assembly held in Upsala, Sweden as well as the Fifth Assembly held in 1975. In 1979 the Methodist Church also participated in the activities of the Council and nominated as its President, Prof. K.A. Dickson, Dr. B.W. Garbrah and Miss. Augustina Asare as its representatives to the Conference on Science, Faith and the Future, held in United States of America.<sup>157</sup>

This spirit of participation was continued in the 1980s. The effect of this cooperation on the Methodist Church Ghana was the way it began to accommodate the practice of the other churches, which was exemplified in its liturgy. Further to that, the Methodist Church also began to adapt some of the hymns of these other churches. This relationship also increased the awareness for evangelism both inside and outside of Ghana which resulted in the posting of ministers to other parts of Africa, widening the scope of ministerial training in Ghana. Her participation in these

conferences opened her up making her more committed to world issues and the kind of responses needed to resolve them.

## Conclusion

From its inception in 1835, the Methodist Church Ghana had developed from a West African District British Methodist Church to an autonomous status. It had developed from five Districts to fifteen Dioceses with numerical strength of close to one million members and nine hundred clergy. Education and social work had been her main contribution to national development. Like any institution, the Methodist Church Ghana has had its own challenges mainly in the provision of logistics and finance. These notwithstanding, the Methodist Church Ghana faithfully discharged her ecumenical obligations, and continue to conscientize her members about their civic responsibilities.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> F. L. Bartels, *The Roots of Ghana Methodism*. (Cambridge 1965), pp.1-6.

<sup>2</sup> John K. Agbeti, *West African Church History. Christian Missions and Church Foundations 1482-1919* (Leiden, E.J. Brill 1986), p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, (Orbis, 1996, pp. 86-87).

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Carl Christian Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, (Ghana Universities Press, 1966), pp. 213-241.

<sup>5</sup> John S. Pobee, 'Theological Trends in Africa Today' in Pobee, John. S., and Kudadjie, J. N., (eds.), *Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus?* Asempa Publishers, Accra. 1990, p. 59.

<sup>6</sup> Agbeti, *West African Church History*, p. 54. Joseph Smith was a Sierra Leonean. William de-Graft was from the Gold Coast

<sup>7</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Malaria had no known *scientific* cure at the time. The name 'malaria' is from *mal-area* i.e. bad area/air.

<sup>9</sup> 'The Methodist Recorder', August 17, London, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> After Dunwell had reconciled the two factions, Joseph Smith became the leader of the group.

<sup>11</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, p.10.

<sup>12</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, p.19.

<sup>13</sup> The death of the missionaries barely six months upon their arrival was a demonstration of the level of commitment to the work for which they came. It is interesting that we do not read that the Governors who lived in the castles and for that matter those who lived there with them experienced such frequent deaths as did the missionaries. The reason is not far fetched. Since the castle was airy and mosquito-free, staying there prolonged one's life. Missionaries died because they left the safety of the castles and lived amongst the indigenes of the land, in the hinterland, in the waterlogged areas, in the bushes that bred mosquitoes in order to fulfil their calling to spread the gospel to all.

Nevertheless, one may not hold this altogether against the mosquito, for, the Gold Coast had medication for malaria. Aside other herbs used in the treatment of malaria, the Gold Coast was also endowed in abundance with the nim

tree, a tree species with medicinal properties to treat malaria. Andreas Riis, the Presbyterian who worked in Akropong is on record to have been the missionary who took the local concoction against malaria and lived. The other missionaries, true to their background, saw nothing good in things African. For them things African had something about the *fetish* about it.

<sup>14</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, p. 29.

<sup>16</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>17</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> The confidence reposed in Freeman by the Home Committee was however badly shaken when the former, as a result of his ambitious development projects found it difficult to balance his accounts. In 1856, the Home Committee, the body which supervised the activities of the missionaries working for the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society abroad, relieved him of his financial responsibilities. This made him retire from active missionary work in September 1857 for twenty years. He took up a civil appointment at Christiansborg and served there till 1873 when he returned to full time missionary work.

<sup>19</sup> Kwesi A. Dickson. "The Methodist Society, A Sect" *The Ghana Bulletin of Theology* Vol. 2, (1962-1966), p. 2 quoting Rev. William West.

<sup>20</sup> Dickson. "The Methodist Society, A Sect" p.1.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph M. Y. Edusa-Eyson, *The Quest For Relevance: The History And Development Of Theological Education In West Africa In The 20<sup>th</sup> Century With Particular Reference To The Contributions Of Harry Sawyerr (Sierra Leone), Bolaji Idowu (Nigeria) And Kwesi Dickson (Ghana)*, An unpublished PhD Dissertation for Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, Akropong, Ghana, 2007, p.

<sup>22</sup> Kwesi A. Dickson, *Uncompleted Mission: Christianity and Exclusivism*, Orbis Books Maryknoll, NY10545. 1991, p. 101.

<sup>23</sup> This position represents one of two traditional attitudes towards missionary and European penetration of Africa. The first group consisted of the chiefs who were instinctively alarmed at the coming of a people who had not been invited and whose presence, it was feared, might disturb traditional political and social life. The second group consisted of those chiefs who initially hankered after missionaries obviously for political protection and economic gains. The King of Ashanti Nana Mensah Bonsu belonged to the first category.

<sup>24</sup> E.A. Ayandele, 'Traditional Rulers and Missionaries in Pre-colonial West Africa' in *Tarikh* Vol. 3 No. 1, 9 Christianity in Modern Africa, Segun Osoba, Obaro Ikime & J. B. Webster (eds), (Longmans, Green and Co Ltd and the United States by Humanities Press), 1980. p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa*, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books. 1991, p. 36.

<sup>26</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, *Souvenir Programme for the Inauguration of the Tema District*, Feb. 1998, p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, *Souvenir Programme for the Inauguration of the Tema District*, Feb. 1998, p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, *Souvenir Programme for the Inauguration of the Tema District*, Feb. 1998, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Agbeti, *West African Church History*, p. 57-59.

<sup>30</sup> The Rev. Paul Adu was one of a five-member commission appointed by the Gold Coast Synod in 1953 to study the situation in the North and the possibility for opening a mission there.

<sup>31</sup> Methodist Church, Ghana, *Foundation Conference* (1961), p.38.

<sup>32</sup> As early as 1912 some expatriates had begun work in the North but had failed to make any appreciable inroads. Part of the problem was insufficient logistical aid, and also the prevalent of the mosquito which transmitted malaria.

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<sup>33</sup> For a detailed account of the work of the Rev. Paul Adu in the Northern part of Ghana, see Joseph M. Y. Edusa-Eyson, "Native Initiative in the Planting of Christianity in Ghana – 1835-1961 – The Methodist Contribution", *Trinity journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. IX, July 1999, No. 2, pp. 40-54.

<sup>34</sup> Methodist Church, Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1963), p.70.

<sup>35</sup> Methodist Church, Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1964), p.16.

<sup>36</sup> Methodist Church, Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1962), p.9.

<sup>37</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1962), p.10.

<sup>38</sup> Methodist Church, Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1967), p.17.

<sup>39</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1967), p.20.

<sup>40</sup> With time their numbers grew at Synods. And to facilitate quick learning, ministers who hailed from the north were stationed in the south to be later posted to the north to help build up the District. There is now the northern Ghana Diocese of the Methodist Church Ghana, though not a very strong one as compared to the Dioceses in the south.

<sup>41</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Nineteenth Annual Conference, Winneba, 1980, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 22.

This adoption policy had already started. Anomabu adopted Wa; Accra adopted North Vieri; Swedru, Kpong; Akim Swedru adopted Chansa society and sent them materials for their chapel building Ashanti Mampong had adopted Borro; Ekumfi, Lawra; Winneba had adopted Morro; Sekondi, Babile; Cape Coast ,Bole; Bremen Asikuma, Swala; and Abaasa adopted Baale. Please ref. To The Methodist Church Ghana, *Nineteenth Annual Conference, Winneba, 1980, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> Methodist Church, Ghana. *Minutes of the Conference*, (1976), p.14.

<sup>43</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference* 1963, p. 60

<sup>44</sup> This was a Society offers a new life of freedom in Jesus Christ to Alcohol Addicts.

<sup>45</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Nineteenth Annual Conference, Winneba, 1980, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 114.

<sup>46</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Conference, Sekondi, 1986, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 72.

<sup>47</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference, Winneba, 1987, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 82.

<sup>48</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference, Winneba, 1987, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 83.

<sup>49</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Seventh Annual Conference, Cape Coast, 1988, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 78.

<sup>50</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Seventh Annual Conference*, p. 78.

<sup>51</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference, Sunyani, 1989, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 80.

<sup>52</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference, Winneba, 1987, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 83.

<sup>53</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Seventh Annual Conference*, p. 158.

<sup>54</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference, Sunyani, 1989, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 130.

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- <sup>55</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference*, p. 130.
- <sup>56</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference*, p. 86.
- <sup>57</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference*, p. 129.
- <sup>58</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference*, Sunyani, 1989, Representative Session Agenda, p. 86.
- <sup>59</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference, Sekondi, 1995, Representative Session Agenda*, p, BOM 128.
- <sup>60</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 133-134.
- <sup>61</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 136.
- <sup>62</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 139.
- <sup>63</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 134.
- <sup>64</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference, Winneba, 1996, Representative Session Agenda*, p, BOM 131.
- Mr. M. K. Baiden was the husband of the then Vice President of the Conference, Mrs. Georgina Baiden.
- <sup>65</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference*, Winneba, 1996, Representative Session Agenda, p, BOM 122.
- <sup>66</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference*, p, BOM 126.
- <sup>67</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference*, p, BOM 124.
- <sup>68</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference*, p, BOM 125.
- <sup>69</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 140.
- <sup>70</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference*, p, BOM 127.
- <sup>71</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference*, p, BOM 127.
- <sup>72</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 136.
- <sup>73</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference*, p, BOM 129.
- <sup>74</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference*, p, BOM 130.
- <sup>75</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Five Annual Conference*, p, BOM 136.
- <sup>76</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference, Cape Coast, 1997, Representative Session Agenda*, p, BOM 144.
- <sup>77</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 147.
- <sup>78</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 147.
- <sup>79</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 150.
- <sup>80</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Conference, Koforidua, 1999, Representative Session Agenda*, p, BOM 90.
- <sup>81</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 154.

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- <sup>82</sup> *Trokosi* is a cult system found in Ghana. Its Nigerian counterpart is *Osu*. Their operations not only dehumanises their candidates, but also take away their civil rights as persons.
- <sup>83</sup> At Kpetoe and insane man was healed, and a woman who had been bedridden for sometime was healed and walked.
- <sup>84</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, Report to the World Methodist Evangelism Meeting for West Africa, Nigeria, June 30<sup>th</sup> to July 4<sup>th</sup> 1999, p. 2.
- <sup>85</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, Report to the World Methodist Evangelism Meeting for West Africa, p. 3.
- <sup>86</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-ninth Annual/First Biennial Conference, Accra, 2000, Representative Session Agenda*, p, BOM 58.
- <sup>87</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Conference*, p. BOM 100.
- <sup>88</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, Report to the World Methodist Evangelism Meeting for West Africa, pp. 5-6.
- <sup>89</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Conference*, p. BOM 98.
- <sup>90</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Conference*, p. BOM 99.
- <sup>91</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Conference*, p. BOM 100.
- <sup>92</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, Report to the World Methodist Evangelism Meeting for West Africa, p. 2.
- <sup>93</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-ninth Annual/First Biennial Conference, Accra, 2000, Representative Session Agenda*, p. BOM 57.
- <sup>94</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-ninth Annual/First Biennial Conference*, p. BOM 61.
- <sup>95</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-ninth Annual/First Biennial Conference*, p. BOM 62.
- <sup>96</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-ninth Annual/First Biennial Conference*, p. BOM 63.
- <sup>97</sup> Upon an earlier examination the child had bridged.
- <sup>98</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-ninth Annual/First Biennial Conference*, p. BOM 65.
- <sup>99</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial/41<sup>st</sup> Conference, Sekondi, 2004, Representative Session Agenda*, pp. BOM 74-75.
- <sup>100</sup> Boahen, Adu, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, The Johns Hopkins University Press 1987, p. 16.
- <sup>101</sup> Harry Sawyerr, 'The first World Missionary Conference: Edinburgh 1910', *The International Review of Missions*, Vol. LXVII. No. 267, (July 1978.) p.265.
- <sup>102</sup> Achimota School was built by the government as an educational complex starting with nursery, and stretching into primary and secondary schools and finally to develop into a university. It was run on Christian principles by a Christian staff. The first principal was a missionary A. G. Fraser, with Aggrey as Vice-Principal. In the official photograph the Governor's hand rests on Aggrey's shoulder
- <sup>103</sup> Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, (London, Hurst & Company, 1998), p. 68.
- <sup>104</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, pp. 167, 248.
- <sup>105</sup> My emphasis.
- <sup>106</sup> Lavigerie, 'Instructions aux missionnaires', 98 cited in Hastings *The Church in Africa*, pp. 289-290.
- <sup>107</sup> Mensah Sarbah was a learned Gold Coast Lawyer, a philanthropist and author who was instrumental in the agitation for independence for the country in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>108</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, p. 166.

<sup>109</sup> Mfantasi is the mother tongue of a section of the Akans of the Gold Coast now Ghana.

<sup>110</sup> Adu Boahen, *Mfantshipim And The Making of Ghana: A Century History, 1876-1976*, (Accra, Sankofa Educational Publishers, 1996), p. 175.

<sup>111</sup> Boahen, *Mfantshipim And The Making of Ghana*, p. 175.

<sup>112</sup> It is interesting to note that the River Volta which takes its source from Burkina Faso, bordering the northern part of Ghana runs through the Eastern part of the country, while the River Tano is located in the central part of the country. I would like to think that by this was meant the whole nation being made aware of the strides of the Mfantshipim School, and hence the evangelism that it was meant to accomplish. And since this good news of the school must be shared by all, boarding facilities were reserved for boys admitted upon the recommendation of the chiefs of other traditional areas among the Fanti, a gesture later to be extended to all parts of the country. Mfantshipim<sup>112</sup> stood for the development of the African mind.

<sup>113</sup> Theological training had earlier been offered at Aburi in the eastern half of the country, about 20 kilometres from Accra.

<sup>114</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Tenth Annual Conference Handbook* (1971), p.105-106.

<sup>115</sup> Bartels, *Roots of Ghana Methodism*, p. 167.

<sup>116</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Foundation Conference*, p. 5.

<sup>117</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Foundation Conference*, p. 39.

<sup>118</sup> The Methodist Recorder, London, August 17, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>119</sup> The Methodist Recorder, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> The Methodist Recorder, p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> Methodist Church Ghana, *Foundation Conference*, p. 61.

<sup>122</sup> The Methodist Recorder, August 17, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> Methodist University College Ghana, 3<sup>rd</sup> Congregation Programme, Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006, p. 3.

<sup>124</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial/41<sup>st</sup> Conference, p. BOM, 73.

<sup>125</sup> From the comments received, it was clear that the pledging system of giving was the most suitable system for the church. The Methodist Church, Ghana, had therefore taken the line of other churches worldwide in church financing.<sup>125</sup> Under this system, each member, at the beginning of the year, preferably on the covenant Sunday (the first Sunday of the year), after due consideration of his annual income and expenditure, and the financial requirements of the church, pledged him/herself to the giving of a certain percentage of his income for the work of the church. He informs his minister of the decision, and pays either in one or more instalments without any undue hardship to himself.

<sup>126</sup> Methodist Church, Ghana. *Minutes of the Conference*, (1978), p.19.

<sup>127</sup> A society in the Methodist Church stands for a local church.

<sup>128</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Conference*, p. 72.

<sup>129</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference*, p. 79.

<sup>130</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Seventh Annual Conference*, Cape Coast, 1988, Representative Session Agenda, p. 79.

<sup>131</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference*, p, BOM 139.

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The other members were, the Revs. Justice K. Dadson, Joseph Ato Brown, Theophilus K. Anderson, Joshua N. Kudadjie, Mathias Forson, Comfort Ruth Paha (Mrs. Comfort Quartey- Papafo), Joseph M. Y. Edusa-Eyison.

<sup>132</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference*, p. 82.

<sup>133</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Seventh Annual Conference, Cape Coast, 1988, Representative Session Agenda*, p. 80

<sup>134</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference*, p. 82.

<sup>135</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference*, p. 82.

<sup>136</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference*, p. 89.

<sup>137</sup> Methodist Church Ghana Liturgy Book, Also see Joseph Edusa-Eyison, *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*... and chapter in book

<sup>138</sup> *Methodist Liturgy and Book of Worship*, Wesley House, Accra, 2000, p. 129. Also see Joseph Edusa-Eyison, "Some Aspects of Worship in the Methodist Church Ghana – Their Implications for Kwesi Dickson's Theology of Worship", *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. XV, July 2005, No. 2, p. 88.

<sup>139</sup> *Methodist Liturgy and Book of Worship*, p. 131. Also see Joseph Edusa-Eyison, "Some Aspects of Worship in the Methodist Church Ghana – Their Implications for Kwesi Dickson's Theology of Worship", 88.

<sup>140</sup> *Methodist Liturgy and Book of Worship*, pp. 116-124. Also see Joseph Edusa-Eyison, "Some Aspects of Worship in the Methodist Church Ghana – Their Implications for Kwesi Dickson's Theology of Worship", pp. 89-93.

<sup>141</sup> *Gye Nyame* which means *except God* is a Ghanaian Traditional symbol which appreciates the indispensability of God in life.

<sup>142</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Foundation Conference*. p. 46.

<sup>143</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Foundation Conference*, p. 41.

<sup>144</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Foundation Conference*, p. 41.

<sup>145</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*. (1963), p. 52.

<sup>146</sup> Kwesi A. Dickson, 'The Church and the quest for democracy in Ghana', in Paul Gifford (ed), *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*. (E. J. Brill, 1995), p. 261.

<sup>147</sup> Dickson, 'The Church and the quest for democracy in Ghana', pp. 264-265.

<sup>148</sup> Dickson, 'The Church and the quest for democracy in Ghana' p. 273.

<sup>149</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1962), p. 20.

<sup>150</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1963), p. 21.

<sup>151</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1963), p. 21.

Although the Rev. S.B. Essamuah was nominated Secretary of the Council, it was the Rev W.G.M. Brandful who initially served as the Council's Secretary from 1965-1976. Reason(s) why the Rev. Essamuah did not serve is/are not stated.

<sup>152</sup> The inaugural meeting of the council was held in Freetown in March 1961. In 1963 the meeting was held in Ghana at Cape Coast. In that year Conference accepted in principle the recommendation on Inter-Conference relations. Rev. Leslie Holmes of Ghana Methodist Church was elected as Local Preachers' Secretary for West Africa. The Rev. Grant and Mr. E.O. Lindsay also served on the executive committee of the council.

<sup>153</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1970), p. 25.

<sup>154</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1973), p. 48.

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<sup>155</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1962), p. 21.

<sup>156</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1963), p. 22.

<sup>157</sup> The Methodist Church Ghana, *Minutes of the Conference*, (1978), p. 21.