

The Akan people of Ghana treasure a great African heritage in Onyamee Kwaame, the God of Saturday. Long before the European Akwasi Bronii anchored at the shores of Ghana in 1471 A.D. and Sunday was introduced by Christianity as the day of rest, the Akan kept Saturday as their holy day which resembled very much the biblical Sabbath. Interestingly enough this indigenous religion is a home-made heritage, reaching deep into Akan antiquity. This Akan heritage is undoubtedly one key reason why the Seventh-day Adventist Church has experienced tremendous growth in Ghana since its official debut in 1888 (A.D.)

Kofi Owusu-Mensa was born in Ntonso, Asante, Ghana in 1940. He studied history at the University of Ghana (B.A. 1965), at Andrews University (M.A. 1970) and at the University of Wisconsin (Ph.D. 1974). He taught history at the Adventist Seminary of West Africa in Nigeria from 1974 to 1985 and at Valley View College in Ghana from 1985 to 1992, where he is at present professor of history. He was visiting professor at Oakwood College, Alabama, U.S.A. in 1989.

LANG Kofi Owusu-Mensa · Saturday God and Adventism in Ghana

6

ARCHIVES OF INTERNATIONAL ADVENTIST HISTORY
ARCHIV FÜR INTERNATIONALE ADVENTGESCHICHTE
ARCHIVES DE L'HISTOIRE ADVENTISTE INTERNATIONALE

6

Kofi Owusu-Mensa
**Saturday God
and Adventism
in Ghana**

PETER LANG

ARCHIVES OF INTERNATIONAL ADVENTIST HISTORY
ARCHIV FÜR INTERNATIONALE ADVENTGESCHICHTE
ARCHIVES DE L'HISTOIRE ADVENTISTE INTERNATIONALE

Edited by/herausgegeben von/édité par
Baldur Ed. Pfeiffer
Gottfried Oosterwal

Band 6



PETER LANG

Frankfurt am Main · Berlin · Bern · New York · Paris · Wien

Kofi Owusu-Mensa

Saturday God and Adventism in Ghana



PETER LANG

Frankfurt am Main · Berlin · Bern · New York · Paris · Wien

Die Deutsche Bibliothek - CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Owusu-Mensa, Kofi:

Saturday god and adventism in Ghana / Kofi Owusu-Mensa. -
Frankfurt am Main ; Berlin ; Bern ; New York ; Paris ; Wien :
Lang, 1993

(Archives of international Adventist history ; Bd. 6)
ISBN 3-631-45646-8

NE: GT

ISSN 0724-7575

ISBN 3-631-45646-8

© Verlag Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main 1993
All rights reserved.

All parts of this publication are protected by copyright. Any
utilisation outside the strict limits of the copyright law, without
the permission of the publisher, is forbidden and liable to
prosecution. This applies in particular to reproductions,
translations, microfilming, and storage and processing in
electronic retrieval systems.

Printed in Germany 1 2 4 5 6 7

FOREWORD

In 1988 the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana celebrated its centenary anniversary in that West African country. Within that century (1888 - 1988) Adventism grew from a handful of isolated folk around pioneer Francis Dolphijn at Apam to over one hundred thousand scattered all over its ten regions. The upward movement in statistics has not been interrupted, and as of now, the church in Ghana has been blessed by our God with some one hundred and forty-two thousand baptized members.

Ghana's tradition of the sacredness of Saturday, particularly among the Akan population in the country, has been one of the key factors in the success of Adventism there. The legacy of the concept of "Saturday God" in Ghana has been a gate-opener for the entrance of the Holy Spirit and the message of salvation through Jesus Christ into the hearts and lives of thousands of precious souls. For information, inspiration, and the records, it is good to put this story in writing as a part of the worldwide story of christianity, and for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana to have produced one of its own in the person of Professor Kofi Owusu-Mensa to tell this story is also significant. SATURDAY GOD AND ADVENTISM IN GHANA is a Seventh-day Adventist treasure.

Matthew Ango Bediako

General Vice President

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Contents

Foreword	i
Part I: Onyamee Kwaame: The Akan God of Saturday	1
Preface	2
The Akan Image of God	5
Akan Names, Appellations, and Attributes for God	10
The Historical God	16
Worship and Reverence	21
God and Saturday in Akanland	35
Modern Trends and God's Expectations	44
Conclusion	52
Bibliography	54
Part II: The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana, 1888-1988	55
The Origins	56
Dawson and Dolphijn, the Dual Beginners	58
The Chadwick Visit, 1892	60
The First Decade, 1894 to 1904	62
Ackah and the Kikam Age, 1903 - 1914	67
Asante, The New Base	72
The Garbrah Age	79
The Pagsing Order, 1931 - 1959	85
The New Age (Since 1959)	92
Conclusion	100
Bibliography	102
Maps	103

Part I.

Onyamee Kwaame: The Akan God of Saturday

PREFACE

In these days of a "return to culture and tradition" in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa, it is only proper for scholars and other researchers to also reconsider the question of Sunday Christianity and its worth. To do a job like this with some accuracy, we need to examine the old religious ways and practices of some African societies. The author has chosen to focus on the traditional Akan way of worshiping God, the Supreme Being.

The basic position taken in this discourse is that the dayname, KWAAME (Saturday boy), given or attached to God in Akanland is a very significant fact in the history of mankind. ONYAMEE or ONYANKOPON (God in the Akan language) evidently had a special day, namely, Saturday, in Akan antiquity. This was ages before AKWASI BRONII ("Sunday European"), with his peculiar theology and worship rituals, dropped anchor at Edina (Elmina) in 1471 A.D. The Akan God of Saturday - ONYAMEE KWAAME - was in Ghana, at least, before the birth of Prince Henry the Navigator who organized the Portuguese exploration which landed Roman Catholic priests and missionaries for the first time on the soil of Ghana in the late fifteenth century.

Thus, two worship rituals met in Ghana, and since both claimed to worship the same Supreme Being, they obviously were brought together for a purpose. Each had something positive to teach the other. The alien faith from Europe has done its job. It has enlightened the Akan man about the correct way of reaching God, whom he has known from time immemorial. God, according to Akwasi Bronii, wants His children on earth to worship Him through prayers and direct contacts, and not by way of idols and fetish shrines, although even here the teacher was not one hundred percent exemplary. The Akan man has not reciprocated this gesture of Akwasi Bronii. He has not yet educated his European counterpart that in return, God Almighty, his ONYAMEE KWAAME, desires that Africans, Europeans, and all men at large worship and pay Him homage on His special day SATURDAY. The Akan man has

not yet done his duty to God, but he can still take courage in his own adage: WO WERE FI NA WOSAN KOFA A, YENKYI (It is no taboo to return to the proper order, even though you might have forgotten or neglected it in the past.) The opportunity is still there for him to rise to the occasion.

I submit that a return to their hoary tradition of paying homage to ONYAMEE KWAAME on His day of worship, Saturday, will do the Akan a great deal of good. Ghanaians cannot dishonor God by setting aside His ordained ritual of worship and simultaneously expect Him to bless them fully as He desires. He will definitely not take to it kindly if there is a persistent and deliberate defiant or rebellious spirit working in His children against His order. Could it be that the present woes of Ghana mainly derive from an attitude of the people that offends ONYAMEE KWAAME, the Akan God of Saturday, who is believed to be the same God everywhere in the world? Do the Akan of Ghana today realize that they are the custodians of a special truth about God, a heritage that goes deep into their roots? Are they possibly repeating the tricks of Jonah, who had a message from God to deliver to Nineveh, another ancient Sodom, but tried without success to shirk his responsibility? Jonah repented, did his job, and the results were amazing. ONYAMEE KWAAME'S children can also repeat the feat of Jonah, and help effect a noble reconciliation between the Almighty and the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

This work grew out of research which originally started in Ghana in the summer of 1978 on the origins and history of Ghana Seventh-day Adventism (SDA). The purpose of this book should not be seen in terms of polemics, for the author does not have that intention. He is basically interested in unravelling the noble past for the good of mankind. He sincerely believes that man and God need a real workable reconciliation which should be the quest of any man who seriously desires the good life. If after reading this book, the reader becomes convinced that God must be respected by His children all over the world, and in God's own and the proper way, the author's wishes and dreams will have come true.

Many people have immensely contributed to the production of this work. Those who supplied the oral information which constitutes the main source of the work have been acknowledged in the footnotes that go with the chapters. The West African Union and Central Ghana Conference of SDA have been a real backbone for whatever success that has come out of this enterprise. The Adventist Seminary of West Africa in Nigeria, where I worked from 1974 to 1985, also provided some vital inputs. My wife Abenaa Hetty and our children, Akosua Afrakoma, Yaw and Kwasi Kwaadu, as well as Adwoa Nyame, the other member of my family, promoted this work with encouragement, sympathy, and understanding for which I am grateful. Dr. Kwabena Agyei (B. ADJEI-BARWUAH) and his wife Yaa Mercy, old friends, gave me all the homely care I needed in Tema, Ghana, during the times of my research and writing from 1978 to 1982. Mr. Joseph B. Kojo Kwakwa Acquah did the preliminary typing work in Accra, where he works at the West African Union Office of the SDA, and he deserves my deepest thanks. Dr. Walton S. Whaley, former president of my new field of labor, Adventist Missionary College, Accra, Ghana, brought in a great deal of encouragement and active support for the publication of this work, and I owe much to him along that line. Ms. Robin Y. Pressley of New York City was not just my great terminal secretary. Her inspiration and push toward getting this work into the wider reading world were immense, and noble. My undying gratitude goes to Robin and to her family for their support and positive contribution toward the publication of this work. Above all, the great God of the Akan, ONYAMEE TWEADUAMPON KWAAME, is the one to whom I owe everything, and the overriding aim of this work is to glorify His name and promote His cause on earth.

The Akan Image of God

To the Akan people of Ghana,¹ God is a very significant being. In their philosophy and religion He is accorded a special role, acknowledging Him to be the undisputed Master of the whole universe. This point is strongly noted by Dr. J. B. Danquah, a foremost Ghanaian scholar and nationalist leader of this century who died in Ghana in 1965:² "All men are issue of the first progenitor, the ultimate ancestor and creative Nana whose day is Saturday: Nana Nyankopon Kwaame."³

Among the Akan, God is referred to as "The Supreme Being," not out of fantasy, but with the clear belief that He created everything, including things and times as well as all beings.⁴ The creative powers of God are accepted even more widely. One can hardly run into a traditional African who holds contrary views. "West Africans", for instance, "believe that man came into existence because God created him. Man is not the result of some evolutionary process which brought him from a lower form of life

¹ The Akan constitute the largest single race or ethnic group in modern Ghana. They account for some 60 to 70 per cent of the total population of the country, occupying practically the entire southern half of Ghana, with the exception of the Ga-Adanme and Ewe speaking areas. Some of the major groups of the Akan are the Asante, Fante, Akyem, Akuapem, Kwawu, Bono, Akwamu, Assen, Dankyira, Wassa, Ahanta, Nzima, Sahwi, and Aowin.

² Dr. Danquah, who died at 70, belonged to the Akyem group of the Akan.

³ Joseph Buakye Danquah, The Akan Doctrine of God: A Fragment of Gold Coast Ethics and Religion, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. 1968), p.xxix.

⁴ Ibid., pp. viii-x, xxx, 7, 62, 65, and 152. Robert Sutherland Rattray, The Ahanti (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), pp. 140 and 141.

to a higher one."⁵

Akan religion is also basically monotheistic. Only one Supreme Deity is recognized. This all-powerful being is the same as the Jehovah of the ancient children of Israel, as well as the great Allah of Moslems.⁶ This by no means denies the fact that lesser gods exist in the image of the traditional Akan, but these sub-gods or idols - "abosom" in the Akan language - are regarded as mere intermediaries or links between the Supreme God and man. They may be described as messengers of, or at best "children" of God, having no claims to equality with Him. One elderly Asante gentleman told the author that it was sheer ignorance of the proper way of worshiping God, the Supreme Being and Creator, that led to the institution of idol worship among the Akan.⁷ Evidently, historical processes and the forces in the universe that work against the Supreme God, His ways, teaching, and purposes have succeeded, to some extent and over the ages, in corrupting the pure and original monotheistic tradition of the Akan people of Ghana.⁸

The Supreme God of the Akan is believed to live in heaven, that is, beyond the clouds we see, and this image of God makes Him "the Sky-God".⁹ The Akan will readily tell an inquirer about

⁵ Kofi Asare Opoku, West African Traditional Religion (Accra: F E P International Private Ltd., 1978), p. 92.

⁶ Rattray, op. cit., p. 141.

⁷ Interview with Nana Opoku Fofie, Breman-Kumase, Asante, June 25, 1980 (Age 75). Also interviews with the following: Madam Akosua Tweneboaa, Kumase, June 27, 1980 (Age 65); Nana Oheneba Kwabena Bekoe (Age 87) and Nana Oduro Daako (Age 69) both of Akropon-Akuapem, July 3, 1980; Nana Kwaame Kusi, Kumawu-Asante, June 29, 1980 (Age 88); Opanin Kwadwo Akyiano, Apedwa-Akyem; July 14, 1980 (Age 77).

⁸ Danquah, op. cit., p. 7.

⁹ Kofi Abrefa Busia, The Ashanti of the Gold Coast, African Worlds: Studies in the Cosmological Ideas and Social Values of African Peoples, ed. Daryll Forde (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 192.

the whereabouts of God: "Onyamee te soro" (God lives in the sky.) The history behind this conception of God among the Akan will be illustrated in chapter three. In the meantime, we only need to note that in Akan tradition, God used to live with His children right here on earth. That He now lives a long distance away from them was not His but their own doing.

Atheism is generally recognized as foreign or nonexistent in all traditional Akan societies.¹⁰ Two elderly Asante gentlemen emphasized this point to the author by quoting a well-known Asante adage, "OBI NKYERE ABOFRA NYAMEE" (God is innately known to every child born, or nobody teaches a child to recognize the existence of God, the knowledge is implanted in him at birth.)¹¹ An atheist in a traditional Akan society would be an extremely odd person. He would most likely be ostracized or written off as completely unbalanced or outright crazy. One modern writer underscores the point that a Christian who talks to an Akan about all the great attributes of God the Creator merely adds a new dimension to rather than corrects his religious conception. "The belief in a Supreme Being," he adds, "is in fact basic to the

¹⁰ Interviews with the following persons: The late Mr. A.B. Mensah (1893-1980), Kumase, July 12, 1979; Nana Nsuaman-Kwaahene of Kumase, Baafuo Odeefuo Dumfeh Gyeabuo III (Age 49), Kumase, June 4, 1980; Nana Kwaaku Poku, Kronkohene of Kumase (Age 85), Edweso-Asante, June 10, 1980; Opanin Moses Kwakye (Age 56), Kumase, June 21, 1980; Nana Opoku Fofie (Age 75), Breman-Kumase, Asante, June 25, 1980; Nana Akua Otopea (Age 94), Amanokrom-Akuapem, July 3, 1980; Nana Kofi Ansa (Age 78), Larteh (Adomfore)-Akuapem, July 3, 1980; Mr. Botchway (Age undisclosed, but an elderly man), Apam-Fante, July 9, 1980; Nana Kofi Toa (Age 56), Mankessim-Fante, July 9, 1980; Pastor W.B. Ackah (Age 56), Accra, July 13, 1980; Opanin Kwadwo Akyiano (Age 77), Apedwa-Akyem, July 14, 1980; Maame Abenaa Ampoma (Age 58), Dunkwa-Dankyira, August 6, 1980; Nana Kwabena Mensa (Age 47), Mr. Anthony Afena (Age 62), and Nana Kwadwo Taakese (Age 84), Takyiman-Bono, August 15, 1980.

¹¹ Interview with Nana Kwaaku Buo (Age 73) and Nana Kofi Safo (Age 71), Sakora-Wonoo, Asante, August 9, 1980.

Ghanaian's traditional way of life."¹²

God's immortality, immanence, omniscience, and omnipotence are recognized and accepted in traditional Akan societies as natural attributes of the master of the universe, the All-powerful Supreme Being. The Akan thought expressed by the saying "ONYAMEE NNAE" (literally, God is not asleep) sums up just about all the attributes enumerated here and more. He is seen to be always "there" planning, doing the right thing, rewarding and punishing men and women at the appropriate times. God is the king of goodness and all excellence, and He does everything in relation to men and all other beings with love, kindness, patience, mercy, justice, and righteousness. The eternal God has perfect control over His universe, although the devil and his evil forces are a nuisance.

The world of the Akan understands God in its own right. Akan wisdom and knowledge about the Supreme God pay no homage to any foreign tutelage.¹³ God manifested Himself to ancient societies around the globe, and the Akan were one of these societies privileged to have been thus blessed. The manifestation of the great God, His ways and expectations of man is a dynamic process which reaches human generations from age to age. The Akan God is neither superior nor inferior to any other ethnic God. In fact, He is believed to be the same God everywhere, although different societies may perceive Him in different ways and from different angles. This Akan originality in discovering and knowing the Supreme God of the universe for themselves was underscored by R. S. Rattray, the British anthropologist who did several studies on the Asante in the 1920s. "The conception, in the Ashanti mind, of a Supreme Being," he noted, "has nothing whatever to do with missionary influence, nor is it to be ascribed to contact with

¹² Peter Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corp., 1974), p. 65.

¹³ Danquah, op. cit., p. vii.

Christians or even, I believe, with Moslems."¹⁴ As we shall see later on in this book, an aspect of the Akan understanding of God, His holy day of Saturday, was the thing that emboldened and delighted the King of Agona in Asante, Nana Kwaame Boakye, into wholeheartedly welcoming the Seventh-day Adventist Mission to his town in 1914.¹⁵ The two beliefs seemed to resemble one another, at least in one area, and from this basis it was hoped a firmer foundation of understanding and friendship could be erected between the traditional Akan and the foreign missionary.

The Akan regard God with fear, awe, and respect. He is also sacred to them. Man's destiny is seen to rest completely in the hands of the Supreme Being. This means the traditional Akan, under normal circumstances, will always try to avoid displeasing God or His agents. Since the Akan God is the life-giver to all men, and life is all-important and precious, He is never taken lightly in any considerations of the people. The divinity of the Akan God makes Him a mystery to some extent. He cannot be fully understood in human terms, and yet He continuously reveals Himself and His ways to man. The Akan are content to live with what their God deems fit to reveal to them. They recognize their own - and for that matter all men's - limitations as creatures, and accept the omnipotence of the Creator. His wisdom is unfathomable by ordinary mortals, and this they have no difficulty living with.

With this image of the Supreme Being, the Akan people of Ghana are able to identify God with a number of names, appellations, and attributes which keep Him readily in their minds all the time. These designations will be considered in the next chapter, as we continue to explore the essentials about the Great Akan God.

¹⁴ Rattray, op. cit., p. 140.

¹⁵ Interview with the late Nana Paul Ansa (c. 1872-1980), Agona-Asante, August 11, 1978 and June 29, 1979.

Akan Names, Appellations, and Attributes for God

How many names and other designations do the Akan have for God? The answer to this question is better obtained by attempting to enumerate as many of them as one is able to, than giving a categorical response in some figure or number. An answer in figures may be misleading, since one cannot be sure whether even that is exhaustive of all Akan designations for God. Besides, the many groups of the Akan have several other appellations for God that go beyond those commonly used and known among all of them together. In this chapter, therefore, we want to bring out those names and other designations that are more commonly used.

To begin with, we can confidently say that the name ONYANKOPON or ONYAMEE and its various forms of spelling are the most common among the Akan for God, the Supreme Being. This common name for God is written and pronounced in several other forms: NYANKOPON, NYAMEE, NYAME, NYAM, ONYAME. They basically mean the same thing, namely, the Supreme Being, the Great God, the Big God of Heaven, or the Sky-God. According to two elderly Asante gentlemen, the name NYANKOPON can also mean "the one who covers all the world, everything."¹⁶ In the Nzima area of Akanland, God is commonly called NYAMLE, and in Larteh-Akuapem God or ONYAMEE simply means "you are greater than I."¹⁷

In all Akan societies, every child born to man has a dayname. The name normally goes with the day of the week on which the child was born.¹⁸ Occasionally, however, a child is given a

¹⁶ Interview with Nana Kwaaku Buu and Nana Kofi Safo, Sakora-Wonoo, Asante, August 9, 1980. NYAMEE is sometimes literally interpreted as "the one you get and become satisfied."

¹⁷ Interviews with Mr. Augustine K. Eddie of Ezilinbo in Nzimaland, Tema, August 4, 1979, Pastor W.B. Ackah of Kikam in Nzimaland, Accra, July 13, 1980, and Nana Kofi Ansa, Larteh-Akuapem, July 3, 1980 (Age 78).

¹⁸ Males and Females both have their Akan daynames thus:

dayname different from what is traditionally and legitimately his, if for example, he is named fully after an ancestor or somebody else who happened to have a different dayname.¹⁹

This dayname tradition is automatic, as the dayname is used for the child right from birth before the formal naming ceremony, and is usually the one that sticks to him subsequently throughout his life, and also after death, when reference is made to him. Whether or not the child's father - or whoever has the legitimate right to name him - is present at his birth, the baby goes by his dayname in the meantime. With this institution of daynames in Akanland, every person ever born into this world can be readily given his or her Akan dayname if he or she can remember the actual day of the week on which he or she was born.

What is interesting and relevant in connection with the above analysis of the Akan dayname tradition is that it even extends to the Supreme Being, the ONYANKOPON or ONYAMEE of the Akan. In every Akan society, God is known by the dayname of KWAAME-ONYAMEE

<u>Male Name</u>	<u>Female Name</u>	<u>Akan</u>	<u>Akan Day of the week</u> <u>English</u>
KWASI	AKOSUA	KWASIADA	Sunday
KWADWO	ADWOA	EDWOADA	Monday
KWABENA	ABENAA	EBNADA	Tuesday
KWAAKU	AKUA	WUKUADA	Wednesday
YAW	YAA	YAWOADA	Thursday
KOFI	AFUA	EFIADA	Friday
KWAAME	AMA	MEMENEDA	Saturday

¹⁹ The present author is a good example of this point. He was born on a Tuesday (June 4, 1940), but his father preferred to give him the full name of his dead father, who was called KOFI MENSA, instead of KWABENA MENSA, which would have been the proper cultural day-cum-ancestral-name. Today his first name is therefore KOFI instead of KWABENA. The OWUSU in the compound name (K. OWUSU-MENSA) is the author's father's name (fully written as KWADWO OWUSU) which he adopted and added to his given Asante name during his freshman year at the University of Ghana, Legon-Accra, Ghana, 1962/63. As a point of clarification, it must be noted here that in traditional Akan societies, a child does not necessarily adopt his father's surname. Doing that is in fact the exception rather than the rule.

KWAAME!²⁰ We shall examine this fully later on in this work to justify its title. What we need to note here, meanwhile, is that the Akan recognize the Supreme Being as a personal God in their theology, and assign Him one of the seven days of the week. This special day of God is SATURDAY, the seventh and last day of the week.²¹

Another important name given to God by the Akan is TWEADUAMPON which basically means "the dependable One," somebody upon whom you could lean without any fear of falling, the unmovable Rock of Ages.²² Very often TWEADUAMPON is combined with the other two names above to give God His full name, so to speak, in the Akan language and religion. Most of the people interviewed by the author readily gave God's full Akan traditional name as ONYANKOPON TWEADUAMPON KWAAME, the great Creator of man and of the universe. When asked to explain the historical origins of this full reference to the God of the Akan, several of them simply said "that is what we heard our elders calling Him," or it is an Akan tradition of great antiquity. It has been known to

²⁰ The significance of this point, which is the basic import of this work, is given a full and detailed analysis in chapter five.

²¹ J.B. Danquah, The Akan Doctrine of God, pp. xxix, xxx, 7, 30, 43, and 152. R. S. Rattray, The Ashanti, p. 44. K. A. Busia, "The Ashanti of Gold Coast," p. 12. Sydney George Williamson, Akan Religion and the Christian Faith: A Comparative Study of Two Religions (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1965), p. 87. Hans W. Debrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967), p. 1.

²² Interviews with the following persons: Opanin Kofi Asokwa (Age 74). Agona-Asante, June 29, 1979; Nana Adu Gyebi (Age 83), Kumawu, Asante, June 29, 1980; Opanin Amon Kwadwo (Age 94) Aburi, Akuapem, July 3, 1980; Nana Kofi Toa, Mankessim-Fante, July 9, 1980; Nana Kwaame Nyame (age 68), Kyebi-Akyem, July 14, 1980; Opanin Kwaaku Aboa (Age 59), Dunkwa-Dankyira, August 6, 1980; Mr. Francis Ankobia (Age 80) and Nana Obiri Yeboa (age 75), Bekwae-Asante, August 7, 1980; Nana Kwadwo Taakese (Age 84), Takyiman-Bono, August 15, 1980.

the Asante, for instance, since time immemorial.²³

In Asante tradition, God has also been given a description which portrays Him as the real founder of the world as well as the power behind the formation of all nations. Old people in Asante sometimes refer to God as OSEI TUTU NYAM KESE, the Great Osei Tutu God.²⁴ Here God is recognized as the great force or power which helped Nana Osei Tutu, founder of the Asante nation in the seventeenth century, to build and solidify the new nation. He is the foundation of every great nation.

OBOOADE is used widely in Akanland to describe God as the Creator. This is one of the greatest attributes the Akan ascribe to God. He created "the thing," or He is the Creator of "things." He is the source of life and existence.²⁵ He was first before everything else, and, therefore, everything and everybody should bow in obedience to Him. He deserves homage from all His creatures. Just as He had power to bring things into the world, animate and inanimate, so He has the power to obliterate them as well.

ODOMANKOMA and DAASEBRE are two appellations of God which the Akan use to show that God is full of grace, mercy, sympathy, and kindness for His creatures, especially human beings. He is tender-hearted and full of good things for His sons and daughters, an attitude which manifests itself even in His dealings with plants and animals.

²³ Interviews: Kyeamee Osei Akoto (Age c. 70), Kumase, July 10, 1979; Nana Kwadwo Taakese, Takyiman-Bono, August 15, 1980; Nana Adu Gyebi, Kumawu-Asante, June 29, 1980; Opanin Kwaaku Aboa, Dunkwa-Dankyira, August 6, 1980; Mr. Francis Ankobia and Nana Obiri Yeboa, Bekwae-Asante, August 7, 1980.

²⁴ Interviews: Opanin Joshua Afum (Age 77) and Opanin Kofi Tutu (Age unknown, but also about 70), Wiamease-Asante, June 16, 1979; Kyeamee Osei Akoto, Kumase, July 10, 1979; Nana Akosua Agyeewaa (Age 70), Tema, August 9, 1979.

²⁵ The Guan People of Kwaame Danso in Bono-Ahafo Region in Ghana call God NWOROBRE KWAAME (Kwaame the Creator). Interview with Pastor Emmanuel Bruce Akyiano, Peki Dzake, August 18, 1979 (Age 60). Pastor Akyiano belongs to the Akyem group of the Akan.

NANA NYAMEE or AGYA NYAMEE (Grand-father God or Father God) is used in Akanland to attribute wisdom, respect, and power to God. The word NANA is the normal appellation for old people, male and female. It connotes respect, and therefore kings, chiefs, elders and other eminent personalities in Akanland are normally addressed with it. Some youngsters and children are even similarly addressed nowadays when they are given names of reverend ancestors or eminent elders.

When God is referred to in the Akan language as OSAHENE or OSAAGYEFUO, He is portrayed as the great general in battle who wins. He also leads the more powerful army in any bilateral contest. His forces are always victorious on the battlefield. All sober-thinking and far-sighted men and women always join his bandwagon against the forces of the devil which torment men all the time.

Just as God is the greatest general on the battlefield, the Akan see Him as the greatest king of the universe. All other kings are small ones, He is indeed "the King of kings." For this reason God is referred to as the OHENE KESE or OSORO HENE (that is to say, The Great King or The King of Heaven). All men, big and small, kings and subjects, masters and slaves, owe Him homage.

The powerful nature of God gives Him yet another appellation in Akanland, namely, TOTOROBONSU, the strong, mighty, and powerful One. Bonsu or whale is believed to be the greatest or strongest of all fishes in the sea. God is also seen as the mightiest in the whole universe, hence this attribute.

One of the heaviest of God's appellations among the Akan is TETEKWAFRAMOA, "the Ancient One," or in biblical terminology, the Ancient of days. God, to the Akan, is very old, full not just of years or even decades and centuries, but of millennia. Nobody knows His origins, nor can anybody tell His future. This point goes to emphasize the immortality of God. He is the eternal One.

Today the word OTUMFUO is used in reference to the Asantehene, king of the Asante in Ghana, but traditionally that is one of the appellations of God in Akan societies. It means the one who has the power over others, the almighty. OTUMFUO

NYANKOPON or OTUMFUO NYAMEE KWAAME is a common usage for the powerful God of the Akan.

As the name Kwaame is for every male born on Saturday, the Akan have a way of differentiating "God Kwaame" from all other Kwaames. In this connection, they mark Him out as KWAAME PANIN, literally "Kwaame the Elder."²⁶ All other Kwaames together or separately become Kwaame Ketewa (junior or small Kwaame) as opposed to senior or big KWAAME, the Creator.

As God in Akan theology is seen as a good and great caretaker of His children and creatures, He is known as OBAATANPA, the good mother. This should not give anyone the false impression that the Akan make God out to be a female. He is not. However, He has the noble characteristics of a good mother, who feeds her children, takes good care of them, and protects them from all dangers and enemies. OBAATANPA NYAMEE is freely used in many Akan religious songs in reference to the good motherly God. These songs are very popular in modern Ghana. They are made into albums and played on tapes, radio, and television for enjoyment, relaxation, and spiritual revival.

AWURADE NYAMEE is literally interpreted as "Lord God." AWURADE apparently derives from the Akan word OWURA which is a title for a gentleman. It means "Sir," thus, AWURADE is another Akan usage for God which implies respect for Him, as well as an acknowledgement that He is the Master of man.

As was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the many designations of the Akan Supreme God that we have so far outlined are by no means exhaustive. We have just brought out what can be considered as the most essential and common usages. As we consider more analyses and aspects of the Akan God, we may even discover some more of His names, attributes, and

²⁶ Interview with the late Mr. A.B. Mensah, Kumase, July 12, 1979. Mr. Mensah also gave the author a document on Akan traditional history on God man, and the origins of sin, in the course of the interview. Born in 1893, Mr. Mensah of Ntonso-Asante died in Kumase, August 15, 1980.

appellations which do not negate any previous designations, but rather expand them.

The Historical God

The indeterminable antiquity of the Akan God, added to His immortality, goes to emphasize the divinity of TWEADUAMPON NYAMEE KWAAME, the TETEKWAFRAMOA. To attempt to put God in human history may sound an empty or meaningless exercise. How can you confine the eternal One in terms of history? Every human being has his origin in birth and end in death. God does not fit into this garb. He can tell our history, but can we tell His? No, we cannot. What we, therefore, intend to do in this chapter is to merely talk about some historical aspects of the Akan God.

The Akan begin the history of God with the recognition that He was there before them. They came to meet Him. He, in fact, was their Creator. Akan tradition has it that God used to live with His children, the sons and daughters of men, on earth. They were next door neighbors. But, reminiscent of the Genesis story of how sin, committed by Adam and Eve, caused a chasm between God and man, the Akan relate the story of the old woman and God which brought the same result. According to this Akan "historical" legendary explanation of the origin of the new distance between the abode of God and that of man, an old lady who used to pound fufuo²⁷ in a wooden mortar with a wooden pestle every day was persistently hitting God who lived very close to man, just a few meters above the ground. A number of protests and warnings to the

²⁷ FUFUO is a popular traditional dish in Akan societies. It is pounded in a wooden mortar with a wooden pestle, with either a single person doing all the work, or a division of labor between the pounder (standing or sitting) and the okafuo (or the one taking care of the actual material in the mortar) at the base. Food items normally used to prepare fufuo are cocoyam, plantain, cassava, and yam. Soup goes with the pounded material to complete the delicious dish. In most traditional Akan families, fufuo is eaten at least once a day. Fufuo is to the Akan as rice is to the Liberian, Sierra Leonean, Chinese, and Japanese, and potato to the European and American.

old lady from God did no good. To avoid the nuisance, God removed Himself from the reach of the old lady and of men to live in the sky, His present abode. Thus God reluctantly put a gulf between Himself and the children of men. He was forced to do that by man himself.²⁸

Elaborating on this Akan legend of the old lady and God, a leading Asante traditional historian, the late Mr. A.B. Mensah of Ntonso-Asante,²⁹ beautifully connects the legend with the biblical story of the fall of man. According to him the Sky-God who was under constant pestering is God, the Supreme Being and Creator of Heaven and Earth, ONYANKOPON TWEADUAMPON KWAAME. The old couple who daily prepared their fufuo dish - in the above narrative and other versions of the story, it was just the old woman - represent Adam and Eve who ate the forbidden fruit. The pestle that was always hitting the Sky-God symbolizes sin that separates God from man, and the mortar, a place where a man hides to commit sins.³⁰

Although the old couple had pushed God far away beyond their reach, they still could not accept the fact that God was no longer in their immediate environs. They still needed Him badly. They could not do without Him. In spite of their foolishness, they still wanted their Creator and sustainer to be close by. He was simply indispensable. To effect a reconciliation in practical terms and in their own strength and wisdom, the old woman, her husband, and children decided to build a ladder with all the mortars on the earth to help them reach God again in the far sky. They nearly made it, but not quite. All the mortars of the world utilized, they still needed just one more to complete the edifice. Their limited wisdom could only tell them to pull off

²⁸ Interview with Okyeamee Agyeman Badu (age 68), Mampon -Asante, June 30, 1979. Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect, p. 10.

²⁹ Ntonso-Asante is also the hometown of the present author.

³⁰ A document on traditional Akan Accounts of Creation presented to the author - and currently still in his possession - by the late Mr. Appiah Boateng Mensah (1893-1980), Kumase, July 12, 1979.

the base mortar to finish off their effort; thereupon the whole structure came tumbling down, leaving in its wake casualties and havoc. Man's effort to reclaim God did not work. The Creator Himself had to take the initiative to bridge the gap, and effect a reconciliation.³¹

Akan theology and religion do not speak of reconciliation between God and man exactly like the Christian story of salvation through Jesus Christ, but as we shall see in the next two chapters, the Akan historical God implanted in the minds, traditions and culture of the ancient Akan methods, practices, rules and guidelines by which they could reach Him again. In reference to the story of the old woman and God (how God withdrew Himself from man and found a new abode far away in the sky) Bishop Akwasi Sarpong, an eminent Catholic theologian and scholar of Kumase, talks about what he refers to as the "divine paradox." God, according to Bishop Sarpong, is very near to man, but at the same time He is far away. He is everywhere and sees everything, but because His holiness and righteousness are completely incompatible with, and alien to man's natural way of life, He is far removed from him. That God did not punish or even destroy the stubborn old lady immediately for playing the nuisance, but withdrew to a distant abode and kept looking at her is significant. He simply wanted to illustrate His love for man, and to get it across to him that He would have loved to remain with man if only he had stopped wrongdoing or mended his ways.³²

This Akan tradition about the origins of God and man and their early relations did not close matters between them. One writer emphasizes that "the Akan, by their own wisdom, have been able to perceive God in a way that gives the West no basis for a feeling of superiority in the knowledge of the world".³³ That the Akan discovered and knew God for themselves without foreign tutors has been noted already in chapter one. What might sound a little presumptuous is the assertion that the discovery was by

³¹ Busia, The Ashanti of the Gold Coast, p. 192.

³² Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect, p. 10.

³³ Danquah, The Akan Doctrine of God, p. vii.

their own wisdom. A more modest position will seem to be that God in various ways and at different times revealed Himself to the Akan who proved to be receptive and appreciative of the new approaches. The first mistake of the old couple, culminating in the temporary break with God, was not going to be repeated. In a word, the subsequent generations of the Akan people had become more mature than their predecessors on God-man relations. This new position of the historical Akan evidently encouraged the Supreme Being, ONYAMEE KWAAME, to be more liberal and open with man in revealing more and more of Himself.

One of the ways through which the historical God revealed Himself to the Akan was in worship and reverence. They learned, devised, and discovered ways and methods of paying homage to their Creator and God.³⁴ The advent of Christianity to Ghana, and therefore the Akan country, was merely a homecoming for the Supreme Being. The groundwork for the reception of that faith in Akanland had already been done by the people's own religion and understanding of God. "Christ," Debrunner points out, "came into His own home when he came to Ghana, to a land whose religions present many aspects which He can and does use."³⁵

How the Akan discovered that Saturday is the Supreme Being's (ONYAMEE TWEADUAMPON KWAAME'S) sacred day or the appropriate day for His worship is a mystery.³⁶ As we shall see in chapter five, the traditional Akan has kept this memorial day of God throughout the ages. God revealed Himself historically to the Akan in His day of worship. To understand this aspect of Akan society is to fully appreciate the antiquity of its traditions and culture. This revelation also demonstrates a special love the great God of the universe has for the Akan people. Like the Israelites of

³⁴ See chapters four and five.

³⁵ Debrunner, A history of Christianity in Ghana, pp. 1 and 2.

³⁶ Danquah, op., cit., pp. xxix, xxx, 7, 30, 43, 151, and 152. Debrunner, op., cit., p. 1. Busia, op., cit., p. 192. Rattray, The Ashanti, p. 144. W.E. Abraham, The Mind of Africa (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Ed., 1966), pp. 56 and 108.

old, they became custodians of a great ritual of God - SATURDAY WORSHIP - and like them, the Akan were apparently expected to spread the gospel, namely, the sanctity of Saturday or Memeneda with God, and His requirement or expectation that all mankind similarly regards, treats, and reverences it as such, to at least their fellow Africans, or better still, to all mankind.

In relation to the sacred Saturday the historical God revealed to the Akan, He also created the days of the week of which Saturday is one. God created seven days which constitute the week. The Akan rendering of this is ODOMANKOMA BOO NNAMMERENSON.³⁷ Beginning with Sunday, the first day of the week, the Akan week ends on Saturday, the seventh and last day of the week.³⁸

One elderly Asante gentleman told the author that God also revealed Himself to man in Akanland in the "Badu Concept", (the tenth). Just as in Asante tradition every tenth born, boy or girl, became dedicated to the king either in theory and/or in reality, in the Christian tradition a tenth of one's earnings is God's.³⁹ The Badu (literally the tenth child), if it is a boy, automatically becomes the servant of the king and can be called upon from his boyhood to serve in the palace. If it is a girl, she is regarded as the king's wife and could really become that in maturity.

This brief summation of the revelation of the historical God to the Akan leads us to the worship and reverence accorded Him in traditional Akan societies. His manifestations in the Akan world render Him a Being deserving thanks, praise, homage, love, and special attention, and it is all these that go to form the worship traditions of the Akan for their Creator, NANA NYANKOPON

³⁷ Danquah, *op. cit.*, p. 62-66. Interview with Mr. A.B. Mensah, Kumase, July 12, 1979.

³⁸ See the Asante Asanaa (1982 Asante Calendar) prepared by Kyeamee Antwi Buasiako, of Kumase, one of the chief spokesmen or linguistics of the Asantehene in Kumase, Ghana. Also see footnote 11 above.

³⁹ Interview with Okyeamee Agyeman Badu (Age 68), Mampon-Asante, June 30, 1979.

TWEADUAMPON KWAAME.

Worship and Reverence

That God, the Supreme Being, deserves to be worshiped is a truism in Akan tradition. Anything having immediate reference to or relation with ONYAMEE KWAAME should be regarded with awe and reverence. KWAAME PANIN is sacred, so are all things belonging to Him. What has often been erroneously referred to as "ancestor worship" among the Akan is more of remembrance than worship. Ancestors are occasionally remembered in traditional Akan societies and favors sought from them, as they are believed to be in existence in the spirit world, not in the immediate or visible human world. They are never considered as having any creative powers entitling them to be worshiped as ONYAMEE KWAAME is. At best, the spirits, ancestors, and idols are just nearer to God than human beings. They probably understand the language of God better than man, as such they are useful as intermediaries. But they are not worshiped like a Christian worships Jesus Christ or a Moslem Allah. In Akan religion it is only God the Creator, the OBOCADE, that deserves to be worshiped. "If deity is to be worshiped at all," says Danquah, "it is the God Kwaame who should get the veneration."⁴⁰

The free use of the word "worship" creates a great deal of misconceptions in regard to the traditional Akan regard and attitude toward their ancestors. Sometimes we even describe a person fawning on his superior fellow human being as "worshiping him." Intense and deep admiration of someone or something too can be tagged "worshiping", but none of these types of indulgences, feelings, and practices is the same as the worship the Supreme God receives from the traditional Akan. Ancestral honoring among the Akan is simply that, and nothing more. Ancestors get periodic attention and honor, but they are not worshiped as God, the Supreme Being and Creator.

⁴⁰ Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God*, p. 151.

One of the commonest practices of worship or reverence for God among the Akan is the pouring of libation. Essentially the pouring of libation is the Akan tradition of praying to God and lesser beings or spirits. Drops of drink, normally alcoholic beverages, are poured on the ground, before any human being partakes of the drink. God and other beings, ancestors, idols, and so on, deserve to drink first, and even here there is a first of the firsts. God Kwaame is mentioned first to come for a drink in any traditional pouring of libation (TWEADUAMPON KWAAME, NSA OO! The next to be called is the earth, personified as Thursday Earth) ASAASE YAA, NSA OO! After these two come other Akan deities, ancestral spirits, etc. The drink is meant to cool down the throats of these deities and prepare them for a much more relaxed posture for hearing the petitions of human beings. The drinks may not be exactly what can be described as bribes or tips, but they are considered as being equivalent to "the traditional water" with which a person is welcomed to an Akan home. The libation welcomes God and other spirits home into the human world.

Libation pouring is a clear recognition by the Akan that they are under the control and direction of forces far more powerful and wise than they are. It is an acknowledgment that their collective and individual destinies do not lie in their own hands or wisdom. Those are the responsibilities of God Kwaame, and the spirits of their ancestors, especially the former.⁴¹ In pouring libations, therefore, the Akan are accustomed to asking that God, the Supreme and all-powerful Being, and lesser spirits ward off all dangers, evil forces and plans, as well as evil thinkers away from them. Such forces should, in fact, be obliterated altogether, if possible. God, the gods, and spirits are implored to shower abundant blessings and successes on the living, especially in the form of more children and material achievements. These powers are also requested to bless the particular plans, projects, and journeys that might have immediately occasioned the assemblage for the libation pouring.

⁴¹ Interview with Opanin Kwadwo Akyiano (Age 77), Apedwa-Akyem, July 14, 1980.

In all cases ONYAMEE KWAAME comes out as the leading deity to whom all prayers, petitions, requests are directed. "The Akan frequently use the expression *Se Onyame pe a...* (If God wills..., if God permits...) to show that the only condition for success is God's will."⁴² The pouring of libation is also used to welcome people home to Akanland; people like an august visitor making his first contacts with the Akan, or a son or daughter of Akanland returning home after a long absence.

The Akan tradition of libation pouring is synonymous with the Christian practice of praying to God or Jesus Christ directly, or as in some cases among Christians, through other persons described as "Saints." It must be emphasized, though, that this practice of praying through "saints" to God is not biblical. The Moslems do a similar thing in calling on Allah, or possibly through Muhammad or some other Moslem Divine to Him. In all three supplicatory fashions - Akan, Christian, and Moslem - the petitioners frequently ask God to show them signs that their humble requests have been heard, and that they would be granted according to their wishes. A spirit of resignation into the hands and goodwill of God, and a trust in Him to do the best for the petitioners are also manifest in all three categories of supplication.

One interesting aspect of the worship of God among the Akan is the role traditional fetish priests and priestesses play. These priests are the physical representatives of the powers of the idols they worship or keep custody of. They are, therefore, generally regarded with awe, fear, and some measure of respect, and yet these custodians of unseen powers themselves pay homage to ONYAMEE KWAAME.⁴³ They do so in their libation rites, and what is more, they show signs and gestures before starting their fetish dances (called "akom" in Asante) that God is superior to them and their idols. They usually do this by pointing their swords or dancing whisks ("bodua" in Asante) to the sky and earth

⁴² Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, p. 31.

⁴³ Interview with Maame Abenaa Ampoma (Age 58), Dunkwa-Dankyira, August 6, 1980. Also with Nana Kwadwo Taakese (Age 84). Takyiman-Bono, August 15, 1980.

several times before plunging fully into the dances. These gestures are interpreted as "except the sky (God), except the earth" ("gye soro, gye fem"). The priests in effect are saying that, but for God and Earth, they and their idols would control the whole world, man, animals, and all other things. They are next to God and the goddess Earth in power and pre-eminence. But even here Earth Yaa is not equated with God Kwaame because she was made by Him. Earth is seen as another mighty force in the universe of God the Creator.

The "Badu Concept" is another form of worship, reverence, and homage to God practiced by the traditional Akan society.⁴⁴ But this is not the only dedicatory tradition that pays reference to TWEADUAMPON KWAAME, the Almighty One. The "Bagyina or Gynaye Institution" in traditional Akan societies is also a form of worship and acknowledgement of the greatness of God Kwaame.⁴⁵ This institution or practice is the tradition whereby a lucky surviving child whose mother has lost all her other children is dedicated to God for the preservation of his life. The mother might have given birth to several children who kept dying one after the other. In the traditional religious concept, such a misfortune is normally interpreted as the working of some evil forces, spirits, or persons, and as God is regarded as supreme, and above everybody and everything else in the whole universe, a child dedicated to Him is considered to be in safe hands. No harm or danger can reach him because he is under the wings of the great OBAATANPA, TWEADUAMPON KWAAME Himself.

Idols and fetishes in traditional Akan societies were not

⁴⁴ See chapter three, note 13.

⁴⁵ Interviews with the following: Maame Yaa Fosuaa (Age 40) and Opanin Amon Kwadwo (Age 94) both of Aburi-Akuapem, July 3, 1980; Opanin Kwadwo Akyiano, Apedwa-Akyem, July 14, 1980; Mr. Kwadwo Boadi (Age 44), Okomfuo Kwasi Buo (Age 46), Nana Kofi Kra (Age 60), and Nana Abenaa Asubonten (Age 79) all of Esreso-Amansie, Asante, August 6, 1980; Mr. Francis Ankobia (Age 80) and Nana Obiri Yeboa (Age 75), Bekwae-Asante, August 7, 1980; Nana Kwaaku Buo (Age 73) and Nana Kofi Safo (Age 71) both of Sakora-Wonoo, Asante, August 9, 1980; Nana Kwabena Mensa (Age 47), Mr. Anthony Afena (Age 62), and Nana Kwadwo Taakese (Age 84) all of Takyiman-Bono, August 15, 1980.

anti-God institutions. They were miniature gods, necessary as links and intermediaries between mortals and ONYAMEE KWAAME.⁴⁶ This may jam the ears and minds of people who cannot appreciate the Akan way of life but if such people can live with some Christian practices like praying through the Virgin Mary to God Almighty or Christ Jesus, then Akan traditional idol worship and fetishes should not sound too strange. This should not be taken as a blanket endorsement of all the old ways of reaching God among the Akan. It merely wants to emphasize the point that as much as a Christian Gospel carrier desires to help the Akan see the proper paths to God, he needs to be equally concerned with the problems of his less fortunate co-believers who see nothing wrong in idolizing the Virgin Mary or some other "Saint."

The traditional Akan today still believes in the efficacy of idol and fetish powers in human affairs, although his contemporary Christian or Moslem compatriot may pity his ignorance. Akan folks converted into the folds of Christianity and Islam are convinced that many of their people's traditional ways of communicating with the Supreme Being were wrong. They, that is, traditional Akan people with their entire package of religious practices and concepts, could be tolerated in the age of ignorance, but with the new dispensation and new light there is no excuse for hanging on to the idol and fetish media.⁴⁷ This position of the Christian or Moslem Akan is, of course, not surprising, considering the fact that neither of these two persons accepts the other's way of worshiping God. The Christian crusade seeks to win the traditional Akan as well as the "benighted" Moslem. Similarly, the target of the Moslem jihadist is as much the "heathen" Akan as the "infidel" Christian.

⁴⁶ Interviews with the following: Oheneba Kwabena Bekoe (Age 87) and Nana Oduro Daako (Age 69) both of Akropon-Akuapem, July 3, 1980; Nana Kofi Ansa (Age 78), Larteh-Akuapem, July 3, 1980; Nana Kwaame Kusi (Age 88), Kumawu-Asante, June 29, 1980; Maame Elizabeth Ampon (Age 65), Kumase, June 27, 1980; Nana Opoku Fofie (Age 75), Breman-Kumase, June 25, 1980; Kyeamee Osei Akoto (Age c. 70), Kumase, July 10, 1979.

⁴⁷ Interview with Nana Opoku Fofie (Age 75), Breman-Kumase, Asante, June 25, 1980.

The greatest and most significant Akan traditional way of worshipping ONYAMEE TWEADUAMPON KWAAME is the NYAM DUA rite, also written as ONYAMEDUA, NYAME DUA, NYAMEE DUA, NYAMDUA, and NYAMDUAA. NYAM DUA simply means "God's Tree," and every single Akan interviewed by the author pointed out or agreed that this traditional Akan way of worship and reverence for God Kwaame is the most noble and ancient of all the rites.⁴⁸ Many versions and different detailed accounts of the NYAM DUA rite or culture were gathered by the author from the persons interviewed, but they were similar and essentially the same story in general.

One writer summarizes the NYAM DUA tradition thus: To the ancient Akan of Ghana, the Onyamedua tree (*Alstonia boonei*) served as a symbol of their dependence on God. The tree either grew in palaces, shrines and houses, or a stump of it with a forked branch was placed at entrances to these places. A pot containing rainwater (Nyankonsu, God's water) was placed on the tree or stump, and periodically the water was used to bless the inmates of the house and any other persons who needed to be blessed. It was also the custom for women in their monthly period to leave the households, and before they returned to their houses, the heads of the households would sprinkle on them the water from the pot sitting on the Onyamedua tree by way of purifying them and making them acceptable once again in the homes.

The Onyamedua tree still serves as a symbol of dependence

⁴⁸ In addition to all those mentioned above in this chapter and the previous ones, the author also interviewed the following in connection with the Akan Nyamee Kwaame: Nana I. K. Agyeman (Age 85), Kumase, June 4, 1979; Opanin David Manu (Age 50), Mampon-Asante, June 30, 1979; Opanin John Gyapong (Age 69), Opanin Jacob Kwabena Amoh (Age 69), Maame Beatrice Offeh (Age 70), and Opanin Moses Boateng (Age, not disclosed) all of Koforidua, July 21, 1979; Nana Kofi Konadu (Age 80), Nana Kwasi Brempon (Age 81), Nana Kwasi Amoa (Age 73), Nana Kwaaku Boakye (Age 60), Mr. Kwaame Brobe (Age 53), and Mr. Joseph Sekyere (Age 36) all of Ntonso-Asante, September 1, 1979; Opanin J. D. Sarpong (Age 57), Kumase, June 3, 1980; Mr. James Sam Arthur (Age 73), Pastor S. K. Essel (age 67), Swedru-Agona, Fante, July 9, 1980; Nana Ayietsi Kwei (Age 76) and Mr. Sripi Ampah (Age 77) both of Apam, Fante, July 9, 1980; Okomfuo Atta Biem, (Age c. 60), Ntonso-Asante, August 13, 1980.

on God among the Akan today. Among the regalia of the Asantehene is an Onyamedua stump covered with leopard skin, which is often carried by an attendant following closely behind him when he is in procession. Here too it indicates the dependence of not only the Asantehene but also the entire Asante nation on God.⁴⁹

The sacred NYAM DUA (GOD'S TREE) assumes that name only after it has reached the home or shrine of its user. As an ordinary tree in the bush or forest it is known throughout Akanland as SONNURO.⁵⁰ Its most important traditional use is medicinal. One lady interpreted SONNURO as "a tree full of medicine," SO NNURO (literally, "carries medicine"). Another called it "dubaatan" (mother of medicine trees).⁵¹ A chief in Kumase observed that SUNNURO might have been taken as God's tree by the Akan because of its straightness and beauty, signifying the uprightness of ONYAMEE KWAAME, the Supreme God.⁵²

The leaves and bark of the tree, as well as the liquid that is obtained from its stem are all recognized as great curatives. The author was informed that these parts of the tree, ground together, or separately with other mixtures like palm wine, water and other leaves, are a panacea for many ailments - fever, constipation (cured by the bitter liquid from the stem), smallpox, measles (ntenkyem), hernia (nkwee), stomachache, etc.⁵³

⁴⁹ Opoku, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33. See also Busia *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁵⁰ The natural name of SONNURO for NYAM DUA was given the author by the majority of persons interviewed in places like Mampon, Kumase, Breman, Kumawu, Esreso-Amansie, Bekwae, and Sakora-Wonoo all in Asante; Aburi and Akropon both in Akuapem; Apedwa in Akyem; Dunkwa in Dankyira; Takyiman in Bono. A 70 year-old Asante lady interviewed in Tema, near Accra, also confirmed this (Nana Akosua Agyeewaa, Tema, August 7, 1979).

⁵¹ Interviews with Maame Yaa Fosuaa (Age 40), Aburi-Akuapem, July 3, 1980 and Maame Abenaa Ampoma (Age 58), Dunkwa-Dankyira, August 6, 1980.

⁵² Interview with Nana Nsumankwaahene of Kumase, Baafuo, Odeefuo Dumfeh Gyeabuo III (Age 49), Kumase, June 4, 1980.

⁵³ Interview with Nana Kwaaku Buo and Nana Kofi Safo, Sakora-Wonoo, Asante, August 9, 1980.

Elders in Takyiman summed all this up by emphasizing that SONNURO is amuduro (a medicine for curing internal pains).⁵⁴ The wood of the tree is also used for making many carvings like stools, drums, bowls, "eta" (a piece of wood for grinding), etc. The bitter liquid from the stem that causes "running stomachs," thus relieving people suffering from constipation, is ironically added to liquid rubber to make it harder and more solid.

It is this NYAM DUA (GOD'S TREE) that came to be widely used in Akan societies to represent the physical presence of ONYAMEE KWAAME, and therefore, a symbol of worship and reverence for Him. It is traditionally believed to be "immortal," in the sense that the stem that is cut from the bush and planted in homes and at shrines is never allowed to die away. Sometimes it naturally reproduces at the place it stands, or if it shows any signs of dying away the custodian immediately replaces it with a new tree obtained from the bush or forest.

NYAM DUA is straight, slender, and soft, and it normally branches into a four- or three-forked receptacle at the top of the main stem or any of its offshoots. A three-forked receptacle is interpreted in Akan tradition to be equivalent to the Trinity in Christian theology - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, each represented by a fork.⁵⁵ This trinitarian interpretation of the three-forked Akan Nyam Dua probably suggests a Christian influence. It may also relate to an African religious growth and development over the centuries of human history. For instance, traditionally, the Yoruba people of western Nigeria refer to Saturday as "ojo aba meta" literally, the day of the three fathers (who may also be taken to be the Trinity of Christianity). Considering the fact that Yoruba oral traditions claim that Ile-Ife, their ancestral home from where they spread out into other parts of western Nigeria and elsewhere in West Africa, is where God first created man, this meaning of

⁵⁴ Interview with Nana Kwabena Mensa, Mr. Anthony Afena, and Nana Kwadwo Taakese, Takyiman-Bono, August 15, 1980.

⁵⁵ Interviews with Opanin Kofi Asokwa (Age 74), Agona-Asante, June 29, 1979 and the late Mr. A.B. Mensah (1983-1980), Kumase, July 12, 1979.

Saturday in Yoruba tradition is interesting and thought-provoking.

A four-forked receptacle on the other hand, I was told, means, that ONYAMEE KWAMEE is everywhere, represented by the four cardinal points of the earth - North, South, East and West.⁵⁶ Man cannot escape God. The Creator is present at all four corners of the earth. When the forked stem of the NYAM DUA is cut from the bush and brought home, it is planted in the compounds of houses, palaces, shrines, and at many other worship locations, in front of a house, for instance.

In the receptacle of the tree is put a pot, a bowl, or container traditionally made of earthenware or china, brass, wood or coconut shell.⁵⁷ The pot (or "kukuo") is filled with water (usually rainwater or "Nyankonsuo") and some leaves called "somme" in Asante are added. Some of the "somme" are bound together to form something like a cushion and deposited at the base of the forked receptacle. The pot or "kukuo" rests on this "somme" cushion in the receptacle. The "somme" leaves are used to add protective powers to the NYAM DUA.⁵⁸ The mixture in the pot is called "dudo," and is believed to be perpetually containing God's blessings and healing powers which are for the healing of the nations and individuals. An elderly man in Kyebi, Akyem-Abuakwa, told the author that the "dudo" in the NYAM DUA

⁵⁶ Interview with Opanin Moses Kwakye (Age 56), Kumase, June 21, 1980.

⁵⁷ One gentleman interviewed said that in Nzimaland (where coconut palm trees are abundant) instead of the pot used in Asante, an empty coconut shell is put in the forked receptacle of the NYAM DUA. This shell, which is hard, lasts longer than the fragile Asante pot. Interview with Pastor W.B. Ackah (age 56), Accra, July 13, 1980.

⁵⁸ Interviews with Nana Kwaaku Poku (age 85), Edweso-Asante, June 10, 1980, Nana Adu Gyebi (Age 83), Kumawu-Asante, June 29, 1980, and Nana Kwaaku Buo (Age 73) and Nana Kofi Safo (Age 71) both of Sakora-Wonoo, Asante, August 9, 1980. There are two types of "somme", "somme bede" (female which is white) and "somme nini" (male, which is red). It is only the white or female "somme" that is used with rites involving the NYAM DUA.

pot is very effective for curing a child under convulsion.⁵⁹ The child is washed with the mixture in the firm belief that ONYAMEE KWAAME will finish off the job of restoring the child to full health, God having been called upon already to bless the dudo and perform miracles with it. Opanin Kwaaku Amoa of Dunkwa in Dankyira put in a personal experience on the efficacy of the "dudo" solution. As a child he was frequently bathed with the NYAM DUA "dudo" because he was sickly, and his having been preserved to the age of 59 was a clear testimony of "dudo" power.⁶⁰

The above description of NYAM DUA power was the everyday traditional usage of the rite. But there were occasions when other ceremonies were performed with the NYAM DUA. Two of the most important events of the NYAM DUA rite or culture were the "washing of souls" ("kra dware" or "kra dwade"), and the calling on God Kwaame on His weekly holy, rest, or "birthday," SATURDAY, the last and seventh day of the week to receive His due homage.⁶¹ Both ceremonies were similar in many ways, the biggest difference being that whereas the head of a house or somebody else could have his "soul washed on any day of the week," usually on one's week-day, "the washing of the soul" of KWAAME PANIN (Kwaame the Elder or God) was always performed on Saturday.⁶²

⁵⁹ Interview with Nana Kwaame Nyame (also called Kwaame Hene) (Age 68), Kyebi-Akyem, July 14, 1980. Nana Kwaame told the author that he was given his name by his parents because they were not sure he would survive. He was dedicated to God Kwaame so He might preserve his life.

⁶⁰ Interview with him in Dunkwa, August 6, 1980.

⁶¹ Danquah, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁶² Interviews with the following: Nana I. K. Agyeman, Kumase, June 4, 1979; Kyeamee Osei Akoto, Kumase, July 10, 1979; Nana Kwaaku Poku, Edweso-Asante, June 10, 1980; Mr. James Sam Arthur, Dompooase-Adansee, Asante, June 14, 1980; Nana Adu Gyebi, Kumawu-Asante, June 29, 1980; Nana Kofi Ansa, Larteh-Adomfore, kuapem, July 3, 1980; Nana Kofi Toa, Mankessim, Fante, July 9, 1980; Opanin Kwadwo Akyiano, Apedwa-Akyem, July 14, 1980; Nana Kwaame Nyame, Kyebi-Akyem, July 14, 1980; Opanin Kwaaku Amoa, Dunkwa-Dankyira, August 6, 1980; Nana Kwadwo Taakese, Takyiman-Bono, August 15, 1980.

In the "washing of the soul" rite, the elder or person who is the subject of the ceremony takes his bath early in the morning of the special day, and puts on a white cloth ("nnwera"). White mashed yam, cocoyam, or plantain is prepared and put in an "ayoa" or "ayowa" (a small earthenware or metal pan) with three boiled white eggs on the mashed food ("eto").⁶³ The pot or "kukuo" normally placed in the forked receptacle of the NYAM DUA in the compound of the house is taken down temporarily, and the prepared food is put in its place for the ceremony, which traditionally lasts the whole day. A white chicken is slaughtered, its blood smeared around the tree, and its feathers used to adorn it. On many occasions, a chain is run through the NYAM DUA (a hole having been bored from its forked receptacle to its very base in the ground). This chain is supposed to link God and His children on earth, a ladder by which ONYAMEE KWAAME descends from His abode in the sky to bless men and the earth with good and long life, as well as prosperity. God and His servants (angels) are expected to come down and partake of the food in the "ayowa" and bless the one washing his soul.⁶⁴ White clay and white linen are also used to decorate the NYAM DUA to make it more attractive to God who, it is believed, likes only white things that go with His purity, holiness and righteousness. In short, the elder in a house who washed his soul with the NYAM DUA rite uses it for "KWABAN" (life preservation).⁶⁵ He calls on ONYAMEE KWAAME to come with the good things of life. All ills, difficulties, problems and mysteries are directed to God for

⁶³ The three boiled eggs are for God (in Christianity the Trinity) and the mashed yam or plantain for his angels. Interview with Mr. A.B. Mensah (1893-1980) Kumase, July 12, 1979.

⁶⁴ Interviews with the following: Nana Paul Ansa (c. 1872-1980), Agona-Asante, June 29, 1979; Opanin Moses Kwakye (Age 56), Kumase, June 21, 1980; Nana Kwaame Kusi (Age 88), Kumawu-Asante, June 29, 1980; Okomfuo Kwasi Buo (Age 46) and Nana Abenaa Asubonten (Age 79), Esreeso-Amansie, Asante, August 6, 1980; Nana Kwaaku Buo (Age 73) and Nana Kofi Safo (Age 71), Sakora-Wonoo, Asante, August 9, 1980; Nana Kwabena Mensa (Age 47) and Nana Kwadwo Taakese (Age 84) Takyiman-Bono, August 15, 1980.

⁶⁵ Interview with Opanin Kwadwo Akyiano (Age 77), Apedwa-Akyem, July 14, 1980.

remedy and solution.

When God or ONYAMEE KWAAME'S soul is washed, it is done on Saturday only. The rite and ceremonies are very much similar to those in the above description. It is the head of the household, clan or family who presides. An elder in any of these groups could also be chosen to lead out. In worshiping God in palaces and at shrines, it is usually the chief priest (Okomfo or Nsumankwaahene) that performs the ceremonies and rites. Things that are given to God on His special day include white mashed yam or plantain, white eggs, a white cloth or calico to adorn the NYAM DUA, a slaughtered white sheep, white clay, and white "somme." All these white things are chosen specially for the pure and holy God of the Akan who is righteous, kind, just, and loving. He accepts them as a token of His interest in the affairs of men. A sick child (or even an older person) in the house is seated beneath the tree during the ceremonies, and prayers offered to God on his behalf for a restoration of his full health. It is believed that in many cases ONYAMEE KWAAME hears and answers the petitions positively. God is always more than willing to help His children out of their difficulties if they give Him first place in their lives and obey Him. The Akan traditional worship of God Kwaame on His appointed day, Saturday, and the reverence and gifts that go with it, tell Him clearly that they respect and love Him.⁶⁶

To conclude this chapter, it may be of interest to readers to note two stories in Asante tradition which go to confirm that the Akan sincerely respect ONYAMEE KWAAME, and reverence Him for His power and goodness to them. The first is that of "The woman and a highwayman" ("wudinii"). The narrative goes like this. One

⁶⁶ Interviews with these persons: Nana Kwaaku Poku (Age 85), Edewso-Asante, June 10, 1980; Nana I.K. Ageyeman (Age 85), Kumase, June 4, 1979; Kyeamee Osei Akoto (Age c. 70), Kumase, July 10, 1979; Mr. James Sam Arthur (Age 73), Dompooase-Asante, June 14, 1980; Opanin Amon Kwadwo (Age 94), Aburi-Akuapem, July 3, 1980; Nana Kofi Ansa (Age 78), Larteh-Adomfore, Akuapem, July 3, 1980; Nana Kofi Toa (Age 56), Mankessim-Fante, July 9, 1980; Nana Kwadwo Akyiano (Age 77), Apedwa-Akyem, and Nana Kwaame Nyame (Age 68), Kyebi-Akyem, July 14, 1980; Mr. Francis Ankobia (Age 80) and Nana Obiri Yeboa (Age 75), Bekwae-Asante, August 7, 1980; Nana Kwadwo Taakese (Age 84), Takyiman-Bono, August 15, 1980.

day a lady returning from her farm, loaded with foodstuffs, was accosted by a highwayman who decided not merely to rob and rape her, but also to rip her dead. The poor woman begged the callous man to permit her to pray to God first before her doom, a request that was surprisingly granted. In a fairly loud supplication, the woman called on "Agya Nyamee" (Father God) to come to her rescue. Miraculously, there was one hunter by the name of Kwasi Nyamee (alias Agya Nyam) hunting in the nearby bush. The hapless lady's cry to God for help was interpreted by Agya Nyam as a direct and desperate appeal to Him for the services of a "Good Samaritan," thereupon He dashed to the danger spot and saved the poor lady. The story ends there. Whether the armed robber ended up as a corpse from Agya Nyam's bullet or a narrow escapee in the bush is beside the point.⁶⁷

A reliance on ONYAMEE KWAAME had proven effectual for the lady, and the lesson to her and all her countrymen was clear and powerful. This story goes to reinforce the power of God in the affairs of men, thus making people in traditional Asante or Akan-land more respectful of ONYAMEE KWAAME and all other things that relate to Him, for instance, remembering, paying homage, and worshiping Him on His holy day, Saturday.⁶⁸

The second story is equally exciting and purposeful in Akan-God relations. This is the story of two men, one trusting in God for the preservation of life and the other putting his faith in the power of a king - the "Onyamee nkum wo a, oteasefuo boa ye kwa" (literally, if God has not sanctioned your death, man cannot bring it about) story. According to the late Mr. A.B. Mensah of Ntonso-Asante, this was a real story that happened in the history of Dwaben-Asante during the reign of one of their kings, Nana Akuamoa Boateng. Two of this King's servants one day entered into an argument on the greatness of God and earthly kings. One took the position that man's life lies in the hands

⁶⁷ Interview with the Mr. A. B. Mensah (1893-1980), Kumase, July 12, 1979.

⁶⁸ Interviews with the late Nana Paul Ansa (c. 1872-1980), Agona-Asante, June 29, 1979, and the late Mr. A.B. Mensah. (See note 28 above).

or power of God Almighty-ONYAMEE TWEADUAMPON KWAAME.

The other strongly disagreed, arguing that it is rather the king who has that power. The argument somehow reached the king, who was furious at the "impertinence" of a mere servant whom he considered a mean "thing" in his power, but who, at the same time, basked in whatever joy he could reap from the position of the "King's power" man - "ohene nkum wo." Before he could take any drastic measures against the "impertinent" servant, however, the king wanted to first prove him wrong beyond all doubts.⁶⁹

He gave a black cloth to "Nyamee nkum wo" (the one who argued for God), and a white one to "ohene nkum wo" (the other who argued for the king) as their cover clothes, and sent them away to spend the night in an isolated building a few kilometers from his palace. Thus far, the two servants were unaware of the fact that their argument had reached their lord. During the night, the story continues, "ohene nkum wo" complained about his cloth. He did not feel comfortable in it, saying it was too starchy and therefore irritating his body. He was also feeling cold in it. He managed to convince "Nyamee nkum wo" to exchange his black cloth for his white, congratulating himself for his "smartness." Meanwhile, the king had instructed his executioners to reach the two isolated servants and decapitate the one in black. They obeyed the order and did their job. In the morning "Nyamee nkum wo" was there, alive, but "ohene nkum wo" was gone, dead.

The lesson of this episode to the king and the rest of his people was unmistakable. ONYAMEE KWAAME had demonstrated His power and wisdom before men, and they adopted a more humble posture before Him. It is said all the Akan who heard this story became more convinced of the wisdom of paying due and proper homage to the Supreme Being. Skeptics are bound to dismiss a story like this as naive. But maybe on the reverse side of the coin, as the good book of Christianity says, the wisdom of

⁶⁹ The king's solution to the dispute was, in fact, designed to teach others, and not the "impertinent" servant, a lesson, as his plan, he hoped, would end in the death of the "hapless" servant.

skepticism is foolishness with Akan tradition and culture.⁷⁰

Akan worship and reverence for ONYAMEE KWAAME do not come from an emptiness. They have a solid base in His many revelations to them. Through these revelations and experiences, the traditional and ancient Akan developed their systems of paying homage to God the Creator, the OBOOADE. Their styles may look odd and unsophisticated, and some of their religious beliefs and practices are not exactly the types the true God can endorse - idols, fetish shrines, and reliance on other forces and spirits for guidance, for instance - but behind the tangled maze were honest efforts and attempts to know ONYAMEE KWAAME as He really is. One of the truths about God they discovered, and of which they are proud custodians even to date, is Saturday as God's holy and special day, and this is the substance of the next chapter.

God and Saturday in Akanland

Some time in the 1920s during the governorship of Gordon Guggisberg in Ghana, the Queen Mother and the women of Asante reportedly sent a silver stool as a gift to Princess Mary of Britain through the governor. In a message accompanying the present, the Queen Mother made reference to the Akan God of Saturday, ONYAMEE KWAAME, thus: "We pray the great God Nyankopon, on whom men lean and do not fall, whose day of worship is a Saturday, and whom the Ashantis serve just as she [Princess Mary] serves Him, that He may give the King's child and her husband long life and happiness, and finally, when she sits upon this silver stool, which the women of Ashanti have made for their white Queen Mother, may she call us to mind."⁷¹

Such a powerful and clear testimony coming from Kumase, the Asante capital, and from a group or an individual who can be taken at its word as a true representative and custodian of

⁷⁰ 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 19.

⁷¹ W.E. Abraham, The Mind of Africa (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1st Phoenix ed. 1966), p. 108.

unalloyed Akan tradition and culture is a message for mankind. If God is not remembered in Akanland for anything, it is for His day of worship, Saturday, the seventh and last day of the Akan week. The traditional Akan man has no problem recognizing ONYAMEE KWAAME for His day, worshiping or paying Him homage in accordance with the wisdom of the elders and custom, as well as loving and obeying the will and ways of his Creator, the OBOOADE. His modern and fashionable counterpart is not that fortunate. He has difficulties trying to live in the two worlds - Akan traditional ways and the fads and demands of today - at the same time. This problem often makes him a confused man. But if there is anything he is positive and categorically sure of, it is the knowledge that God, the Supreme Being, is called KWAAME in his language, and that the elders say His special day - "birthday" or day of worship - is Saturday. Anyone trying to deny this fact of Akan tradition would be considered crazy, or, at least, dishonest.

The Akan call SATURDAY "MEMENEDA," interpreted by some as a day in which traditionally you just eat or swallow food and rest ("Mene" means swallow).⁷² Another elderly Christian gentleman connected the name "Memeneda" with the name of God revealed to Moses in the Bible, "I AM THAT I AM OR I AM,"⁷³ and said it is the day of "MENE" (I AM), hence "MEMENEDA" (the day of I AM).⁷⁴ Memeneda is also, in Asante tradition, referred to as "DAPAA" ("a good day," a real or special or precious day) - MEMENEDA DAPAA.⁷⁵ On the Asante traditional calendar, every sixth

⁷² Interviews with the following: Nana Kofi Konadu (Age 80), Nana Kwasi Brempon (Age 81), and Nana Kwasi Amoa (Age 73), Ntonso-Asante, September 1, 1979; Nana Kwaame Nyame (Age 68), Kyebi-Akyem, July 14, 1980. The first three are Christians, the last one is not.

⁷³ Exodus 3:13 and 14.

⁷⁴ Interview with Okyeamee Agyeman Badu (Age 68), Mampon-Asante, June 30, 1979.

⁷⁵ Interview with Mr. Francis Ankobia (Age 80) and Nana Obiri Yeboa (Age 75), Bekwae-Asante, August 7, 1980.

Saturday is called MEMENEDA DAPAA (Saturday, the Good Day).⁷⁶ As much as every Saturday is a good and important one for ONYAMEE KWAAME, each sixth one (six weeks which are actually 42 literal days are taken as 40 days and are called "adaduanan" in Asante) is even more special. It precedes the "Great Akwasidae" (Great Sunday) festival during which homage is paid to Asante gods, spirits, and departed elders and their stools, among other rites and ceremonies. In preparation for the Akwasidae, the kings, chiefs and elders of Asante pay a special homage to ONYAMEE KWAAME on MEMENEDA DAPAA, petitioning Him for blessings and a good Akwasidae.

Traditionally, the Akuapem regard the weekly circle as beginning from Sunday (first day of the week),⁷⁷ and ending with Saturday (seventh day of the week). This is true of the Asante as well, and indeed, of all Akan people.⁷⁸ They have a saying that God created seven days ("ODOMANKOMA OR ONYANKOPON BOO NNA BOONSON").⁷⁹ In the Fante country, the author was informed that tradition has Saturday as the seventh day of the week as well as a rest day for man in honor of God the Creator.⁸⁰ Opanin Kwadwo Akyiano of Apedwa and Nana Kwaame Nyame of Kyebi, both in Akyem-Abuakwa, pointed out that all the Akyem people know Saturday to be the seventh of the week days, as well as a holy

⁷⁶ See Asante Asranaa (1982), that is, 1982 Asante Calendar (literally months or moons of the Asante with the seven days of the week) prepared by Otimfuo Kyeamee Antwi Buasiako of the Asantehene palace, Kumase.

⁷⁷ Interview with two chiefs with a Presbyterian background: Nana Oheneba Kwabena Bekoe (Age 87), Osafohene, and Nana Oduro Daako (Age 69), Mpotihene, both of Akropon-Akuapem, July 3, 1980.

⁷⁸ See note 6, above.

⁷⁹ The late Mr. A.B. Mensah's (1893-1980) document on Akan Accounts of Creation presented to the author in Kumase, July 12, 1979. Also Danquah, *op. cit.*, pp. 62 and 65.

⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. Botchway (Age not disclosed), Nana Ayietsi Kwei (Age 76), and Mr. Sripi Ampah (Age 77) all of Apam, Nana Kofi Toa (Age 56) of Mankessim, and Pastor S.K. Essel (Age 67) of Swedru-Agona all on July 9, 1980.

day of God the Creator, the OBOCADE.⁸¹ At Edweso in Asante an elderly Roman Catholic man observed that the name Kwaame for God in Akan societies "derives from His having sanctified the seventh day of the week, SATURDAY, as the day the people He created should use for worshipping Him."⁸² Another elder from Breman, Asante, and also a Roman Catholic by faith, corroborated this point, fashionably calling Saturday "God's creative week-end."⁸³

As was pointed out in chapter two, God receives the Akan dayname of KWAAME, Saturday boy. The day is recognized as of special significance for or belonging to Him, a fact that is acknowledged by all the people interviewed by the author, as well as by scholars who have done research on the Akan, their traditions and customs. Rattray, writing in the early 1920s, affirms that the Asante call God Onyamee or Onyankopon Kwaame "whose day of service is a Saturday," adding that this Asante God is the same as the Jehovah of the Israelites whom they worshiped on the Sabbath or Saturday.⁸⁴

Two decades later, Dr. J.B. Danquah produced another monumental work on the Akan and made similar and even more penetrating remarks on the Akan God of Saturday.⁸⁵ Danquah also noted that the Akan recognize that "all men are issue of the first progenitor, the ultimate ancestor and creative Nana whose day is Saturday: Nana Nyankopon Kwaame ... the divinity whom the Akan call Nyankopon Kwaame, the "Greater" God of Saturday." This God of the Akan is also "The Supreme Being, the Saturday Sky-God."⁸⁶ Talking about the qualities of this Supreme Being in Akan theology, the writer again refers to God as Kwaame or

⁸¹ Both were interviewed on the same day, July 14, 1980, by the author in their respective towns.

⁸² Interview with Nana Kwaaku Poku (Age 85) of the Asona Clan, Kronkohene of Kumase, Edweso, June 10, 1980.

⁸³ Interview with Nana Opoku Fofie (Age 75), Breman-Kumase, June 25, 1980.

⁸⁴ Rattray, *The Ashanti*, pp, 141 and 144.

⁸⁵ Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God*, pp. xxix and xxx.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Kwaamen whose day of worship or birthday is Saturday.⁸⁷ The sacredness of Saturday to the Akan Supreme God, ONYAMEE KWAAME, is again underscored by Danquah:

The God of religion is therefore called "He of Saturday," either because He is supposed to have been born on Saturday or that Saturday is the appropriate day for His worship. On every fortieth Saturday, called Dapaa or Dapaada, Open or Free Day, special ceremonies are performed in respect of Saturday's God.⁸⁸

Subsequent researchers who followed the trail of Danquah also discovered the same essential truth about the Akan God, namely, His sacred day of Saturday. Dr. K.A. Busia, an Akan scholar from Wankyi in Bono, enumerating the various titles which the Asante ascribe to the Supreme Being, observed that "he is also personalized as Onyankopon Kwame the Great One who appeared on Saturday."⁸⁹ Williamson did not contradict his predecessors on this point. "Onyankopon," he wrote, "also receives the dayname Kwame, the name of a male born on Saturday, which is reckoned to be the Supreme Being's day of worship. This dayname also indicates that the Supreme Being is thought of as personal."⁹⁰ Professor Abraham, also an Akan of the Fante group, endorses the Saturday concept and connection with the Akan God by calling Him "Onyankopon Kwame (Onyankopon, whose day is Saturday)."⁹¹ Dr. Debrunner, a Presbyterian missionary from Europe who worked in Ghana for many years, discovered in his study that the paramount chief of Akuapem always began his libations with these words: "Almighty God, worshiped on Saturday, accept this drink of palm-wine."⁹²

It is interesting to note that the Asantehene in Kumase also

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁸⁹ Busia, *The Ashanti of the Gold Coast*, p. 192.

⁹⁰ Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith*, p. 87.

⁹¹ Abraham, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁹² Hans W. Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, p. 1, quoting B. S. Akuffo, *Ahemfi Adesua*, p. 108.

traditionally made God and His Saturday big in a special way. King Osei Tutu and his chief priest and adviser, Okomfo Anokye, revered as the great founders of the Asante nation, are believed to have set up a special shrine at Asokore-Mampon, a suburb of Kumase, in honor of ONYAMEE KWAAME. Okomfo Anokye, it is said, gave special instructions to the kings and chiefs of Asante on the rites and traditions associated with the proper worship of God at Asokore-Mampon on Saturdays. The shrine was traditionally known as "Osei Tutu Nyam Kese" (the great God of Osei Tutu).⁹³

The spread of the Akan people throughout the greater section of southern Ghana was apparently one reason for the universality of the ONYAMEE KWAAME concept among societies in this area of the country. His holy day was never lost sight of among the descendants of the migrants. The Fante people of Mankessim and other towns, for instance, still recount their Takyiman-Bono origins with pride and nostalgia. A Fante gentleman at Mankessim noted that the Akan of Takyiman-Bono did not only settle and consolidate their customs and traditions on his town, but it was from Mankessim that other migrants founded Fante towns and districts like Apam, Gomoa, Anomaabo, Akyemfo (Saltpond), and Oguaa (Cape Coast).⁹⁴ An Nzima gentleman observed that the Nzima designation of "Nyamee Kwaame" for the Akan God of Saturday derived from ancient contacts with the Asante who reportedly introduced many of their customs and traditions into the Nzima country.⁹⁵

With the passage of time and changes of locations some traditions, customs, and practices may fade away or become slightly or substantially modified. The earth, for instance, is called Asaase Yaa (Thursday Earth) in Asante, but Asaase Efua

⁹³ Interviews with the following: Opanin Joshua Afum (Age 77), Wiamease-Asante, June 16, 1979; Kyeamee Osei Akoto (Age c. 70), Kumase, July 10, 1979; the late Mr. A.B. Mensah (1893-1980), Kumase, July 12, 1979; Nana Akosua Agyeewaa (Age 70), Tema, August 7, 1979.

⁹⁴ Interview with Nana Kofi Toa (Age 56), Mankessim-Fante, July 9, 1980.

⁹⁵ Interview with Pastor W.B. Ackah (Age 56), Accra, July 13, 1980.

(Friday Earth) in Fante.⁹⁶ But in contrast, both of these Akan societies call God ONYAMEE or ONYANKOPON KWAAME. The name, and especially the holy day of God, are the same throughout Akanland. God, indeed, does not change in traditional Akanland.

Akan recognition of the momentous nature and sacredness of God and His Saturday is clearly demonstrated in many traditional practices and customs in Asante. One of these, I was told, is that in traditional Asante, wars were never declared on Saturdays, nor did the Asante fight any battles on Saturdays in times of war.⁹⁷ Emergencies and other odd developments could disrupt the norm, otherwise the tradition was firm. One cannot be sure exactly what happened on "Kromanten Memeneda" in the Asante war with the Akyem at the Pra River in the early eighteenth century. But possibly a surprise attack on this Saturday, a traditional no-fighting day, might have brought about the disaster. Or, could it have been the result of a violation of the sacredness of Saturday on the part of the Asante?

An observer on this Akan history noted in 1924 that the great Asante oath, "Kromanten Memeneda," that came out of this sad episode had a far-reaching mortifying effect on the Asante:

"Since then the Ashantis have always considered Saturday, the day of the week on which the disaster occurred, a most unlucky day, and they will never start a journey or an enterprise, however significant, on that day. This oath is rarely used verbatim and is usually referred to indirectly in such remarks as "that great oath", "the dreadful day", or "the day of the gods' punishment".⁹⁸

Saturday as a "non-action or non-personal enterprises" day had been an Asante tradition before Kromanten. It was a day reserved for ONYAMEE KWAAME'S worship going back into deep antiquity. The observer's idea that Kromanten was possibly "a

⁹⁶ Williamson, *op.*, *cit.*, pp. 88-89.

⁹⁷ Interviews with the late Mr. A.B. Mensah, Kumase, July 12, 1979 and Nana Kwaaku Poku, Edweso-Asante, June 10, 1980.

⁹⁸ The Gold Coast Handbook, 2nd ed., (Accra: Government Printing Department, 1924), p. 51.

punishment from the gods" sounds more convincing, as probably a disregard of the sanctity of Saturday in Asante tradition might have occurred in some quarters.

Another significant Asante tradition connected with the sacredness of Saturday is the question of market days in that country. As a practice all Asante towns and villages traditionally have a day each (that is, from the seven days of the week) for their market. On the market day of a town or village, traders in the town, as well as from neighboring towns, villages, and hamlets bring their foodstuffs and other items of trade to the market place for business. The modern Asante city or town may not be a good example of the tradition of each town having just one day for its market, as just about all days are market days in such an urban community, but traditionally the rule or convention worked. Specific examples are these: Mampon-Sunday; Adwira-Monday; Agona-Tuesday; Mampon-Wednesday; Ntonso-Thursday; Asaaman-Friday. No town or village in traditional Asante had market on SATURDAY, ONYAMEE KWAAME'S Holy Day.⁹⁹

Yet another Asante tradition on Saturday sanctity relates to funerals. Saturdays were never funeral days in traditional Asante.¹⁰⁰ Given the importance of funerals in Asante, and generally Akan, tradition and custom, this fact is extremely significant for our argument. Nothing was allowed to overshadow the pre-eminence and specialty of ONYAMEE KWAAME'S day in Asante plans and programs, not even the great Asante pastime, funerals! This may sound strange and contradictory in the face of the fact

⁹⁹ Interviews with the following: Nana I.K. Agyeman (Age 85), Kumase, June 4, 1979; the late Nana Paul Ansa (c. 1872-1980), Agona, June 29, 1979; Okyeamee Agyeman Badu (Age 68), Mampon, June 30, 1979; Kyeamee Osei Akoto (Age c. 70), Kumase, July 10, 1979; the late Mr. A.B. Mensah (1893-1980); Nana Kofi Konadu (Age 80) and Nana Kwasi Brempon (Age 81) both at Ntonso, September 1, 1979; Nana Kwaaku Poku (Age 85), Edweso, June 10, 1980; Mr. James Sam Arthur (Age 73), Dompooase, June 14, 1980; Nana Kwaame Kusi (Age 88) and Nana Adu Gyebi (Age 83), both at Kumawu, June 29, 1980; Mr. Francis Ankobia (Age 80) and Nana Obiri Yeboa (Age 75), both at Bekwae, August 7, 1980; Nana Kwaaku Buo (Age 73) and Nana Kofi Safo (Age 71), both at Sakora-Wonoo, August 9, 1980.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, same interviews.

that today Saturday funerals are the norm and fashion in Asante, and, indeed, all of Ghana. But the more important fact is that Saturday funerals are a new introduction, originating in government workers first having half-Saturday off and now all-Saturday off every week.¹⁰¹ All persons interviewed on this issue noted that traditionally funerals in Asante were held on Mondays and Thursdays.¹⁰² These two were the usual days for funerals. The rest of the days were not totally divorced from these ceremonies, except Saturday, but they were uncommon funeral days. Bishop Kwasi Sarpong, the Catholic theologian of Kumase, has discovered this same truth. "Traditionally," he writes, "the days for funerals are Mondays and Thursdays, because they are said to be propitious days. To these days, Saturdays have been added as it is on Saturday that workers are free to attend funerals."¹⁰³ Even today, Monday and especially Thursday funerals are not unknown in many places in Asante or Akanland generally.

Finally, we need to point out also that the traditional Asante dayname for every European or a person of European origin, red in complexion, is KWASI or AKWASI (Sunday European) in clear contrast with ONYAMEE KWAAME (Saturday God). This is not to be naively taken to mean that the Asante consider all Europeans, male or female, to have been born on Sunday. The tradition in Asante, and indeed all Akanland, is that it was the European - Catholics from Portugal in the late fifteenth century - who introduced Sunday worship and observance into the country.¹⁰⁴ Nana Kwaaku Poku stressed that "Akwasi Bronii ("Sunday Red Man") was the man who brought Sunday worship. The day has become a joyous and merry-making one, but it is a new one. It was never instituted by God at creation as was Saturday, the seventh day

¹⁰¹ Interview with Mr. Francis Ankobia and Nana Obiri Yeboa, Bekwae-Asante, August 7, 1980.

¹⁰² See note 29.

¹⁰³ Sarpong, *Ghana in Retrospect*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Nana Kwaaku Poku (Age 85), Edweso-Asante, June 10, 1980. See also *Signs of the Times*, Vol. 107, No. 12, December, 1980, p. 3.

of the week." But for the European missionaries who brought Christianity to Akanland, the Akan would never have known about "a Sunday God." The only thing they knew, and had lived with through the ages, was that God is called ONYAMEE KWAAME, and that His day of worship is SATURDAY. Christ indeed, the Lord of the Sabbath, was in Akanland ages before European (or the Red Man's) Christianity, in its Sunday garb, made its debut there only a couple of centuries ago.

To be aware of truths in Akan traditional relations with God, the Supreme Being, is important and rewarding. It broadens our scope of the world in which we live. But what is more important, it throws before us a great challenge, especially if we love and respect truth for whatever it is worth. God, the ONYAMEE KWAAME of the Akan, is important in the affairs of men, individually and collectively. How does modern man relate to his Creator, and what are his Creator's expectations of him? We want to examine these questions briefly in the next chapter to see whether or not ONYANKOPON KWAAME of the Akan of Ghana has any meaning or message for the rest of mankind.

Modern Trends and God's Expectations

Discovering the truth about the Akan God of Saturday is a commendable achievement on the part of any man. Any formal education or pursuit of knowledge today makes truth its basic target. But to know ONYAMEE KWAAME is just the first step in man's growth. Knowing Him and living or dying in His truth is a far nobler achievement. The wise man even reminds mankind that that constitutes the whole duty of man.¹⁰⁵ Ghana, Africa, and the rest of the world are all going through "revolutions," the aim of which all is to find the best life. The Akan man and his fellow Ghanaian compatriot could also contribute meaningfully toward the quest for a better world by telling the all-important truth about ONYAMEE KWAAME and the sacredness of His holy day,

¹⁰⁵ Ecclesiastes 12:13

SATURDAY, to all mankind.

It has become fashionable these days to live in this world as if God Kwaame is of no consequence in the affairs of men. Millions daydream that they can subtract Him from their plans and programs and still make it. The sad reality that such people need to accept, however, is that REAL SUCCESS in both the spiritual and mundane worlds is not man-made, but GOD-MADE! We may feel very confident in ourselves and assume that we have the master-key to all human problems that come our way. But we need to remember that we came to meet this world. It was not created by us. A creator is somewhere, and having made this whole complex universe, it is only proper and right that He receive His due homage from His creatures, us mortals. By recognizing our limitations vis-a-vis the omnipotent ONYAMEE KWAAME, we begin the road to our own betterment and the good life. The modern Akan man and the rest of mankind need to retrace their steps and re-discover God and His true ways if they are to make any headway in the battle of life, and in this connection ONYAMEE KWAAME'S sacred Saturday is a MUST for every son and daughter of Adam and Eve.

This is not saying that respecting and keeping God's holy day, Saturday, or for that matter any other day, is the condition for salvation. God's love, grace, and mercy for mankind are our only hope and source of salvation. No man, however, can live with God, anywhere in the universe, while deliberately and knowingly disregarding a specific requirement or command of His, and one of the key directives from our loving God to all mankind is that we remember, respect, and honor His holy Sabbath day, Saturday. By honoring Him this way, we recognize God as our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer for now and eternity.

Christianity has almost completely destroyed the NYAM DUA tradition and rite among the Akan.¹⁰⁶ The sincere Akan man who wants to know God well and intimately should not lament over this and brood over imagined wrongs done to his traditions. He should

¹⁰⁶ Interviews with the following: Nana Kwaame Nyame (Age 68), Kyebi-Akyem, July 14, 1980; Nana Kwaaku Buo (Age 73) and Nana Kofi Safo (Age 71), Sakora-Wonoo, Asante, August 9, 1980.

rather rejoice in the knowledge that truth has met truth. Christianity has brought to Akanland some wonderful truths about how ONYAMEE KWAAME is to be worshiped, for instance, that idols, fetish shrines, and other types of intermediaries are not recognized by Him, or, to put it bluntly, are offensive to Him. In the age of limited knowledge or crass ignorance God winked at things, but in the new light and opportunity to know better, no excuse can pass. The Akan man should rather rise to the occasion and show to the carriers of Sunday Christianity that he, too, has a message for them in exchange for the love they have shown Him. God Kwaame has made him a great custodian of a precious truth about Himself which many, including his benevolent Sunday Christian missionaries, have missed. The great OBOOADE also desires that Europeans should be taught by the Akan the correct day of worshiping God, namely His holy Sabbath, the sacred and sanctified seventh day of the week, called "Memeneda" in Akanland and "Saturday" in the English countries! All cultures have their strong and seamy sides, and the progress of man and of our world hinges on the ability of these cultures to demonstrate some measure of resilience all the time.

Before the modern Akan man can effectively accomplish this task, however, he needs to set his own house in order and do some polishing of his observance of God's sacred day. The Christian way and colonialism have, admittedly, overwhelmed him in many ways, for example, by creating the atmosphere that forced him to play low on Saturday, ONYAMEE KWAAME'S day, and simultaneously high on Sunday, the new and man-made "holy day." The unfortunate new fashion among the Akan generally is to use Saturday to do anything for themselves but worship God Kwaame. It is the big week-end day for business, pleasure, travel, games, house cleaning, funerals, and so on. By desecrating the day, the modern Akan man tells the Sunday missionary what he probably wants to hear, namely, that Saturday is no longer sacred, and that a new day, Sunday, has replaced it. That would be a blatant dereliction of duty and a serious betrayal of trust on his part as a custodian of ONYAMEE KWAAME'S sacred truth.

Revolutionary Africa, to a great extent, believes in a

return to culture and tradition, the way things were done by our forefathers. Some of these old ways are deemed extremely vital to a rebuilding of our societies for progress and a better life, although a wholesale resurfacing of the norms of the past is by no means to be advocated. Bishop Sarpong has a very sane and sober counsel for the government and people of modern Ghana who are struggling for survival in the modern world economy. "The Salvation of Ghana," I submit, "lies in a judicious return to the religious atmosphere of the past."¹⁰⁷ This author, in line with this same advice, submits that the way out of the Akan man's problems, and indeed of all the formidable problems of mankind, is basically religious. We need not merely return to the religious atmosphere of the past, we seriously need to reestablish the hoary religious principles of our ancestors. This includes the principle of the pre-eminence of God Kwaame and his ways in the affairs of men. God should be worshiped, and homage paid Him in His and not in our ways. His sacred day should be observed and revered. We should "stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein," and in that way we shall find rest for our souls.¹⁰⁸ Man wants a solution to the problems and challenges of his times, and yet he ironically spurns the very panacea he needs, namely, God and His ways.

Debrunner affirms that Christ or God was in Ghana before the arrival of missionaries. "This is not the place," he continues, "for an adequate evaluation of the tribal religions of Ghana. But it can be shown that Christ came into His own home when He came to Ghana, to a land whose religions present many aspects which He can and does use."¹⁰⁹ His concluding observation on this same point is even more revealing: "Invisibly, in a mysterious way, Christ has been in ancient Ghana as well as in modern Ghana

¹⁰⁷ Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect, p. 134.

¹⁰⁸ Jeremiah 6:16.

¹⁰⁹ Debrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana, p. 134.

before any of us [missionaries].¹¹⁰ These were the candid remarks of a European scholar, researcher, and missionary after he had discovered in Akanland (among the Akuapem) that traditionally the Almighty God is worshiped by the people on Saturday, hence His name ONYAMEE KWAAME.¹¹¹

The Akan man, and indeed every Ghanaian, can study further and unravel some more mysteries about ONYAME KWAAME for his own good and that of the rest of mankind. The name and ways of God Almighty are powerful and more than sufficient for our present and future needs. The great KWAAME PANIN of the Akan is synonymous with the JEHOVAH of the ancient people of Israel, and history is replete with the wonderful experiences they had with Him when they humbled themselves before Him and walked according to His directions. Anytime they forsook or blatantly disobeyed Him and His prophets, they ran into many problems. The Bible says that when their cup became full with their rejection and crucifixion of Christ, the Messiah and Savior of the world, they permanently declared the great JEHOVAH redundant. By crossing the Rubicon, the children of Israel deliberately exchanged the "good guy" (GOD) for the "bad guy" (the devil and the world), thereby opening the pandora box which has been following the Jews ever since.

Has the modern Akan man also already crossed the Rubicon and thrown ONYAME KWAAME overboard? Is he in danger of doing so now? One researcher has noted that "religion is at the root of African culture and is the determining principle of African life," and, therefore, that "it is no exaggeration to say that in traditional Africa, religion is life and life, religion."¹¹² "Religion," he says, "gives the meaning and significance to their [Africans'] lives both in this world and the next. It is hence not an abstraction but a part of reality and everyday life."¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 1.

¹¹² Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, p. 1.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Modern trends, however, indicate that the modern Akan man is progressively shifting ONYAMEE KWAAME to the background. He has replaced His sacred day with another one in his weekly worship of the OBOOADE. Things he never used to do on God Kwaame's day, he now does them all and more without any compunction. He feels no urge to sound a warning to his fellow men that God Kwaame could be badly angered by man's disregard and violation of His laws and ways.

The late Dr. Danquah did not just endorse what we have already noted to the effect that "long before Christianity came, we can be certain that God had Himself been His own witness, He had given evidence of His existence and His goodness, to lead to the development of a high religion in the Ghanaian Society,"¹¹⁴ but He had a special image of the Akan as saints for the way they related to God: "In a matter of fact terms, if we know what the Akan doctrine is concerning God, it should be no difficult matter to deduce who His community of saints ought to be and what their saintliness or supreme neighbourliness should be accounted to embrace."¹¹⁵ If indeed "tradition is the determinant of what is right and just, what is good and done,"¹¹⁶ then the ONYAMEE KWAAME tradition of the Akan is worth our close study. Danquah has no hesitation in recommending to all mankind that "if deity is to be worshiped at all it is the God Kwaame who should get the veneration."¹¹⁷ For evil to be completely eliminated from a man's life, he needs to know God fully.¹¹⁸ For man to reach the ideal and maturity that God expects of him, and which make it possible for him to share in divine immortality, he needs to discover an OBOTANTIM (a rock of ages), and in this connection his best bet

¹¹⁴ Danquah, The Akan Doctrine of God, p. xxv. See also notes 5, 6, and 7 above.

¹¹⁵ Danquah, op. cit., p. xxx.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 151.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 69.

is "the God Kwaame, He is the God who counts."¹¹⁹

Stressing the importance of the Akan God and His ancient truths and ways, the late Akan scholar makes some sober remarks which are a real noble legacy to later researchers who would embark upon more study on the Akan. "No system of knowledge," he writes, "however ingenious, however elaborate, civilized or refined, can be of any worth which pretends to create its own truths." The universe is a reality and those who deal with it must realize their dealings in verity and in truth.¹²⁰ The truth in the Akan traditional world is that ONYAMEE KWAAME'S sacred day is Saturday. No human doing or rationale can torpedo this everlasting truth.

One elderly man interviewed, pointed out frankly without mincing any words, that one of the reasons for the problems and troubles Ghanaians are going through today is that we have disregarded customs and traditions like observing God's holy day, SATURDAY. He was of the opinion that Ghanaians, or at least the Akan, are showing gross disrespect to ONYAMEE KWAAME by treating His sanctified day as of no consequence.¹²¹ One may argue that such remarks are too simplistic, and disregard other forces at work against Ghana. True, there may be more to it than just sacrilege, but if there is God in the solutions being adopted to disengage the nation and the people from a number of entanglements, He is just too small. Our commitment to ONYAMEE KWAAME, obviously, is not strong enough. Things he could readily do for us which could clear away our woes and sufferings are still undone. We cannot handle the problems successfully ourselves, and yet we are unprepared and unwilling to give way to the Almighty God, the real solution to all human problems.

Both the traditional and the modern Akan man need to retrace their steps to ONYAMEE KWAAME. Their Christian brothers and sisters who have been blessed with some new light have more to

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 152.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 107.

¹²¹ Interview with Nana Kwaaku Poku (Age 85), Edweso-Asante, June 10, 1980.

do. They have to come up to themselves, build an amalgam of the good from the two cultures of their birth and adoption, and tell the good news about their Supreme God, ONYANKOPON TWEADUAMPON KWAAME, to all Ghanaians, Africans, and the rest of humanity. Time is ever slipping away like a rushing stream, and we need to work harder for ourselves and our fellow men than ever before. There is power, progress, prosperity, and above all life, real life, in the name ONYAMEE KWAAME whom man rejects to his own detriment and confusion now, and eternal ruin and doom subsequently.

Conclusion

It is clear from the analysis above that the Akan of Ghana have been greatly blessed by the omnipotent and omniscient God with one of the greatest truths about Himself. Sharing His wisdom and His revelations among His mortal children on earth, the Supreme Being stopped in Akanland and made the people one of the custodians of the truth about His sacred day, Saturday. The Akan call this MEMENEDA, and it is the seventh and last of the seven days of their week. Because GOD or ONYAMEE is traditionally worshiped on Saturday in Akanland, His dayname is KWAAME, which is the normal Akan name for a male born on Saturday.

There were several ways of paying homage to ONYAMEE KWAAME on His special day in traditional Akanland, the most important one being the NYAM DUA culture. The practice of this culture or rite was that on each Saturday or at least every sixth Saturday (Called MEMENEDA DAPAA, Saturday, the Good or Real Day), the head of a family, household, or a clan "washed" God's soul for Him. The NYAM DUA (or God's Tree), which always stood on the compound of the house or palace or in front of it, was used to represent God Kwaame. A number of rites were performed, all of which were interpreted to mean worship for God, the OBOOADE (the Creator). Worship for God on His holy day, Saturday, taught the Akan to always to remember the God who created them, who sustains them, and in whose hands their destiny lies.

Another significant way by which the Asante, the largest single group of the Akan, remembered ONYAMEE KWAAME'S special day was that it was the rule or custom not to fight battles on Saturdays during wars nor declare wars on Saturdays. Other personal or mundane things like Saturday market days and Saturday funerals were untraditional. A lot of changes have taken place in traditional Akan societies since the advent of Christianity and European imperialism and colonial rule. The NYAM DUA rite, for instance, has almost petered away in the face of missionary activities and work in Ghana, but the name of the Akan Great God is still ONYAMEE KWAAME, the God whose special, holy, real day

or birthday, is Saturday.

An Akan proverb says it is impossible to make a knot without making use of the thumb ("YENNSAN KOKROMOTII HO MMO PO"). Similarly, the Akan traditional religion regards God Kwaame as an indispensability in the orderly arrangement of human affairs. Success in any human venture is attributed to the love, goodwill, mercy, kindness, and the grace of KWAAME PANIN (Kwaame the Elder, that is God Almighty). His power, wisdom, and ways are the factors that produce good results and real satisfaction to man. The Akan man and all men can only work and live properly in this world with God, and not without Him. Therefore, His revelations to man should be accepted wholeheartedly by all who seek the best life, and in this connection His day of worship, Saturday, must be respected. If we want ONYAMEE KWAAME to do our business for us, we need to reciprocate by doing His business for Him first. This is not the question of "hand go, hand come" or the golden rule. It is simply the question of first things first.

Mankind is yearning for relief from the burdens of life. His lot is not particularly enviable in the present world. Ghanaians, and Africans as a whole, are in dire need of help to redirect their efforts toward the good life. Let us try God and His ways to see if they are not the trump card we need for our woes and our predicaments. We may be one of the first in human history to discover a panacea for all world problems. Don't we, the Akan, have some great things to offer the rest of our compatriots and mankind at large? Are we sure we have exhausted the potential of ONYAMEE KWAAME? Can't we be pacesetters and a light for a world groping in darkness and confusion? A positive and practical approach to these questions may be all we need and should care for.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Abraham, W.E. The Mind of Africa. Phoenix ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Busia, Kofi Abrefa. "The Ashanti of the Gold Coast. African Worlds: Studies in the Cosmological Ideas and Social Values of African Peoples. Ed. Daryll Forde. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 192.

Danquah, Joseph Buakye. The Akan Doctrine of God: A Fragment of Gold Coast Ethics and Religion. 2nd ed. London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. 1968.

Debrunner, Hans W. A History of Christianity in Ghana. Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967.

Opoku, Kofi Asare. West African Traditional Religion. Accra: F E P International Private Ltd., 1978.

Rattray, Sutherland. The Ashanti. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923.

Sarpong, Peter. Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture. Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1974.

Williamson, Sydney George. Akan Religion and the Christian Faith: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Two Religions. Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1965.

The Gold Coast Handbook, Second Edition. Accra: Government Printing Department, 1924.

Periodical

Signs of the Times, Vol. 107, No. 12, Dec., 1980, p. 3.

Part II.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana,
1888 - 1988

The Origins

In line with the reforming spirit in Christendom that gained a new momentum with Martin Luther's confrontation with Roman Catholicism in 16th century Europe, Seventh-day Adventism emerged in mid-nineteenth century America as an evangelistic and reforming Christian movement. Its remoter origins lay in the Old Testament doctrine of the seventh-day or Saturday sabbath of the Lord instituted by God to crown his work of creation as recorded in Genesis 2, the eschatological expositions outlined in the books of Daniel and Revelation, as well as the prophecies of Christ himself alerting all mankind who care to believe and watch to the events leading to the climax of world history and His own second advent as forecast in the four Gospels.

It all began in the USA in early 19th century, when key religious leaders and enthusiasts like William Miller, father of the modern Advent Movement in America, Joseph Bates, John Andrews, Hiram Edson, Joshua Himes, Frederick Wheeler, Rachel Oakes, Stephen Haskell, Uriah Smith, John Loughborough, and James and Ellen White became keen Bible students on prophecies, the sanctuary, Christ's second advent and events leading to the end of the world, and related subjects. Pioneer William Miller set the ball rolling with his Millerite Movement which awakened many from their religious slumber in the 1830s and 1840s, but which was badly shaken in the historic "Disappointment of 1844". The Millerites, through a conscientious study and an avid consumption of biblical prophecies and sanctuary doctrines, had become convinced that Christ would return to the earth for the second time to judge all mankind that ever lived on this planet soon, and upon that scriptural evidence and conviction finally fixed October 22, 1844 as the D-day. When that day passed without the event they had anticipated becoming a reality, dozens of Millerites lost much of their former love and enthusiasm in the movement, while many more simply threw in the towel and quit.

But there was a remnant few that could not be so easily defeated by a disappointment which they blamed more on their own

misunderstanding and misinterpretation of biblical doctrines than on the accuracy of the doctrines themselves. These faithful few re-studied their Bible and prayed harder for more enlightenment and understanding, so they could reorganize themselves, their findings, and their strategies for a better and renewed evangelistic thrust into unentered hearts, minds, and territories. Pulling all their resources and talents together, they finally emerged from their studies with a clearer understanding of their mistakes as the Holy Spirit, visions, dreams, prayers and continued study filled in the gaps for them. Coming out of the post-1844 reorganization of the Advent Movement in the late 1840s also was Ellen Gould White (maiden name being Ellen Gould Harmon), an unassuming grade school drop-out, whom official Seventh-day Adventists later accepted as their special messenger from God as well as a prophetess. With her husband James White beside her, encouraging and supporting, Ellen G. White used her God-given talents, endowments, divine messages and directions to prop up and give directions for the birth and growth of Seventh-day Adventism for the better part of her long life which ended at 87 in 1915.

The period spanning from 1831 to 1863 served as the gestation years of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Movement. It saw the unfolding of the full story of William Miller and the Millerite Movement, the Disappointment of 1844, the renewed Advent Movement, the emergence of James and Ellen White, the birth of periodicals and other types of literature for the dissemination of Christian evangelistic and missionary messages, the adopting of the name "Seventh-day Adventists", and finally, the organization of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as the official name of the world church at Battle Creek, Michigan, USA in 1863.¹²²

¹²² For a comprehensive account of the tender years of world Seventh-day Adventism see the following: M. Ellsworth Olsen, A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1925.

C. Mervyn Maxwell, Tell it to the World: The Story of Seventh-day Adventists, Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1977.

James White, father of Seventh-day Adventist's (SDA) literature ministry, founded The Present Truth and The Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald in July, 1849 and November, 1850 respectively to disseminate the truths and other crucial gospel messages he and others had discovered from the Bible.¹²³ It was through these and other reading materials, as well as literature carriers like Hannah More, that Seventh-day Adventism made its debut in West Africa in 1863, interestingly enough, the very year the world SDA Church was officially organized in the United States.¹²⁴

Hannah More, a single American lady from Massachusetts, who was then vacationing at home from her missionary base in Liberia, discovered the SDA message in 1863 there in the United States through one of the pioneers of the Church, Stephen N. Haskell. Back in Liberia after her vacation, More kept in touch with Haskell who flooded her with Adventist literature. Convinced and converted to Seventh-day Adventism, Hannah More, who worked for another Christian denomination there in Liberia, ran into some trouble with her employers. They could not live with her and her new faith together and, therefore, fired her. She subsequently returned to America, but not until she had visited several places along the West African coast and dumped large amounts of SDA reading materials at her ports of call.¹²⁵

Dawson and Dolphijn, the Dual Beginners

Simultaneously, other SDA enthusiasts in America, and later

R. W. Schwarz, Light Bearers to the Remnant, Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1979.

¹²³ R. W. Schwarz, Light Bearers to the Remnant, pp. 74-76.

¹²⁴ C. M. Maxwell, Tell it to the World, pp. 177 and 178. R. W. Schwarz, op. cit., pp. 148 and 149.

¹²⁵ For a comprehensive view of the story of Miss Hannah More see Susan Davis, I was a Stranger; The Story of Jesus Christ in the Person of Hannah More, Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1979.

also in Europe, began using ships and their captains for help in sending gospel literature to many countries around the globe. There is much evidence that the literature ministry played a key role in bringing Seventh-day Adventism to Ghana and elsewhere in West Africa, although whether it was this or personal evangelism that first introduced Ghanaians to this Christian Movement is not yet clear. For instance, as of now, our knowledge of the beginnings of Seventh-day Adventism in Ghana makes any assertion of Francis I. U. Dolphijn of Apam in Fanteland as the first indigenous pioneer SDA believer in Ghana too dogmatic. A definitive conclusion on this issue awaits further research. Official SDA documents and accounts on the pioneering days in Ghana give the honor of native pioneering to Francis Dolphijn, although some strong oral traditions and other historical evidences seem to point to William Kwesi Atta Dawson of Fetteh and Mayenda, also in the Fate country in Ghana, as the real indigenous father.¹²⁶

The resolution of the pioneer riddle between Dawson of Fetteh/Mayenda and Dolphijn of Apam is not made any easier by the irony of documented Dolphijn having left practically no trace of the faith he loved and labored for in his home of Apam, while the unofficially documented Dawson of Fetteh/Mayenda has left irrefutable monuments of Seventh-day Adventism in chapels, congregations, and pastors within the system in his two-hometown base. Official General Conference accounts know Dolphijn as the pioneer believer in Ghana. They give no such credit to Dawson. On the other hand, oral traditions collected from several places in Ghana emphasize Dawson as the real pioneer who was not converted by any literature dumped in Ghana from Europe or America, but who, as an enterprising pioneer, discovered Adventism in America himself and brought it back home to Ghana

¹²⁶ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana Seventh-day Adventism: A History", a manuscript completed in May, 1984, pp. 11-18, and 217-218. Henceforth cited as K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA". This manuscript is slated for publication by the SDA Church in Ghana in due course.

years before Dolphijn became an Adventist.¹²⁷ Solomon Kofi Essel, a direct grandson of Dawson believes Dolphijn's first brushes with Seventh-day Adventism came through his historic forebear, and that Dolphijn's conversion to the new faith in 1888 from his former one of Methodism originated in Dawson's pioneering share-your-faith outreach going in the direction of his merchant friend, Francis Dolphijn, about the early eighties or possibly in late seventies.¹²⁸

The Chadwick Visit, 1892

Be it as it may, official Seventh-day Adventism in Ghana, with General Conference sponsorship from the United States, took off when the church organization in Battle Creek, Michigan, then world headquarters of the movement, sent Lawrence C. Chadwick, a member of the Foreign Mission Board of the General Conference, to Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone on a fact-finding mission for the church in 1892. A major factor behind this late 1892 visit of Chadwick to West Africa was that the General Conference and other SDA organs and believers in America were aware of the existence of groups and isolated individuals in this area of the world who professed belief in Seventh-day Adventism. Francis I. U. Dolphijn and his band of believers at Apam in Ghana were a typical group. In a letter to the International Tract Society of the Seventh-day Adventists in early 1890 Francis Dolphijn noted that he gave himself "to the faith of the Seventh-day Adventists

¹²⁷ Interviews with Pastor S. K. Essel (born at Fetteh in 1913), Anyinam, Akyem, August 7, 1978 and Swedru, Agona, July 9, 1980; Chief G. E. Annan, Fetteh, Gomoa, July 16, 1978; Nana Kwadwo Awotwe or Duku II (aged about 50) and Madam Mary Brew (aged about 88), Mayenda, July 13, 1978; Nana D. K. Akuoko (born about 1896), Offinso, Asante, June 2, 1979; Mr. J. A. Sackey (c. 1897 - 1981), Abokobi, Accra, July 16, 1980. The general opinion gathered from these sources seems to indicate that pioneer Dawson once lived in the United States for a number of years before he returned home to Ghana in the 1887s or 1880s with the new faith in his sack.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, the Swedru interview of July 9, 1980 with Pastor Essel.

in the year 1888".¹²⁹ Dolphijn did not only embrace the new faith, he also went on sharing it with others, won a few individuals and friends he could reach, and kept in touch with believers and the church headquarters in America and elsewhere, repeatedly sending desperate macedonian calls to the General Conference for a formal inauguration of Seventh-day Adventism in Ghana (then referred to by its colonial name as the Gold Coast). Chadwick's pioneering visit by an official General Conference man to West Africa in 1892 was a major feasibility study in the church's plan to begin work in Real Africa (referred to by some as Black Africa).

Chadwick was in West Africa from about September or October to December, 1892 and called on Coker and his group of Christian believers in Sierra Leone who had been in touch with the General Conference for some time. Coker and his friends belonged to another Christian church, but were hoping to switch over to Seventh-day Adventism one day. He next called on another believer, Gaston, in Liberia, a one-time resident of Washington, D.C., where he apparently picked up Adventism. His last call was on Francis Dolphijn and the small band of SDA believers at Apam in coastal Fanteland, Ghana, where, according to his own account, "I found the work on the Gold Coast in a much better condition than I had expected. A few of the brethren there can speak English. I gave them some instruction, but did not baptize anyone, preferring to leave that till a later time. There are on this coast about fifty or sixty people obeying the truth ..."

Chadwick subsequently returned to America and reported his findings and impressions on West Africa and the future of Seventh-day Adventism there to the General Conference Session in January, 1893. He gave a glowing report on the people, place, believers, and the church's future there, and concluded his report by calling on the General Conference to make haste and dispatch three resident missionaries to West Africa to serve the three countries he visited, namely Sierra Leone, Liberia, and

¹²⁹ Lawrence C. Chadwick, "WEST AFRICA", in *Review and Herald* (or simply *RH*), Vol. 67, No. 13, April 1, 1890, p. 198.

Ghana, each worker being stationed in one country.¹³⁰

The First Decade, 1894 to 1904

Two Americans, Karl G. Rudolph and Edward Leroy Sanford, arrived at Apam in Ghana on Thursday, February 22, 1894 to become the first official SDA resident missionaries in the country and in all Real Africa, pre-dating their fellow trailblazers in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe (the later Solusi Mission) by at least four months.¹³¹ Dolphijn's Apam, thus, became the first headquarters of official Seventh-day Adventism in Ghana. In company with Dolphijn and his followers, Rudolph and Sanford got down to business in the coastal areas, preaching the gospel of salvation through Christ and scattering SDA tracts and pamphlets. But the bad old buggy of West Africa, malaria, allowed Sanford only some four or five months of real labor in Ghana for perishing souls. He had to quit the country for continued service elsewhere at home in order not to perish himself.¹³²

Rudolph stayed on in Ghana as the lone foreign SDA missionary for another year and one half following Sanford's departure. The mosquitoes bugged him too, but he hung on with joy and fortitude, drawing up a curtain between him and America in words charged with energy, power, and humility for panicky and over-inflated-sacrifice-minded modern missionaries who sometimes feel that their home bases are equal to heaven: "I am of good courage in the Lord, and am too busy to become lonesome or homesick." He moved his base from Apam to Cape Coast in September, 1894. Cape Coast was, at the time, the leading educational, christian, and most enlightened center at the coast, although Accra had taken over from her as the capital of colonial

¹³⁰ For Chadwick's 1892 visit to West Africa see K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 31-44.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46. The SDA Zimbabwean pioneers from America got there on July 4, 1894.

¹³² Karl G. Rudolph, "FROM OUR WEST AFRICAN GOLD COAST MISSION", in *The Home Missionary*, Vol. VI, November, 1894, No. 11, p. 259.

Gold Coast in 1877.

On October 3, 1895 a second batch of American missionaries landed at Cape Coast to join Rudolph, Dolphijn and other indigenous believers keeping Adventism going in Ghana. Dudley Upton Hale led the group comprising himself, George Thomas Kerr, his wife, Eva Elmore, and their baby son, William Franklin, and G. P. Riggs. Ordained minister Hale took over from Rudolph as head of the SDA work in Ghana. The Kerrs were professional nurses and came to help promote the medical missionary sector of the Adventist gospel crusade. Riggs was a seasoned literature evangelist, he was to concentrate his missionary activities on colporteuring.

The combined work of these ambassadors of Christ succeeded in rooting Seventh-day Adventism on the soil of Ghana and in the hearts of a number of Ghanaians, although not too many. Adventism was a late-starter in Ghana among many Christian denominations, and it was not an easy thing to compete too successfully with older Christian missions, particularly Fante Methodism. While Hale was preaching, Riggs sold out books, pamphlets and tracts. The Kerrs set up a small nursing school and a clinic which were later banned by the British colonial authorities. Almost successful was an interior mission base at Esiam in the Saltpond interior on a personal property of an early believer, Essien, but the ubiquitous mosquito pulled all plans down. Riggs almost died at Cape Coast from malaria. He got away to Britain a ghost of himself, but could not reach home in Florida, USA. He died in Liverpool, Britain on January 8, 1897 after only eleven months of colporteuring in Ghana,¹³³ during which time he once sold \$180 worth of books in three months, good money for its time.

Losing two children in the mission field within four months during the latter half of 1896, George and Eva Kerr had every reason to quit, but they held on, determined to put the bitter experiences behind them and continue on for Christ. But their own health did not help them in their determination, and finally they had to change their base of operation by going to South Africa

¹³³ Riggs left Cape Coast on September 10, 1896, a dying man.

on the instructions of the General Conference.¹³⁴ Rudolph had in earlier petered away from the work at Cape Coast when he developed some mental problems, possibly the result of high fever. The Ghanaian mosquitoes had no respect for Hale either, but he too hung on for some time until family ties in America pulled him back home. His first term in the country as a missionary for Ghana Adventism came to an end on June 10, 1897 when he sailed from Cape Coast.

Hale, however, did not quit the country in mid-1897 until he had performed the first SDA baptism in Ghana, and indeed, all West Africa, some three months before. It all started with the Dolphijn conversion in the previous decade. Dolphijn's missionary endeavors as well as those of others, and past and present literature ministry in coastal Ghana, worked together to put a few families and individuals on record as Adventist believers in late nineteenth century Ghana. The Dolphijn family of Apam, comprising Francis I. U. Dolphijn, a widower, and his three children, Isaac, Fred, and Joyce, and the Hayford family of Shama, near Sekondi, headed by J. D. Hayford, were two of the most outstanding Adventist families in the early history of the church in Ghana. Essien, Mends, Mullens (or Mullins), and other lesser known believers, were also early members of the fold.

George Peter Grant's conversion was the most sensational, the talk-of-the-town at Cape Coast in the late nineties. Grant was a Cape Coast man of a noble pedigree with a well-paying job with a prominent merchant company on the coast, belonging also to a traditional Fante christian faith, Methodism. Coming to a clear conviction and understanding that Saturday, the seventh day of the week, is the pure and true biblical Sabbath God expects all men to keep holy and respect, Grant gave up his job which required Saturday work and his religion which required Sunday or first day of the week worship, and declared for Seventh-day Adventism in 1896. Hale was one of the key men who led George P. Grant into the truth, but he could not convince his wife, Elizabeth Furgesson Grant, and for the rest of his life Grant had

¹³⁴ The Kerrs left Cape Coast on April 16, 1897.

to do it all alone without his wife as far as the requirements and commitments of his new faith were concerned. She was indeed a real pest to him on that level, and he died in 1948 as the sole Adventist in his family, Elizabeth Grant having succeeded in dissuading her children from following what she considered "the great folly of their misguided father."¹³⁵

Before he left Cape Coast for home in June, 1897, Hale made history by baptizing Francis I. U. Dolphijn, his two sons, Isaac and Fred, and George Peter Grant into the SDA fellowship possibly at Esiam, but most probably at Cape Coast on Sabbath, March 27, 1897.¹³⁶ That was a memorable grand finale for the records of Hale's first missionary sojourn in late nineteenth century Ghana for Seventh-day Adventism. Hale returned to Ghana in 1903 to continue from where he left off, but the six-year interval between his first quitting in 1897 and return in 1903 was not allowed to lie fallow.

Indigenous pioneers like the Dolphijns, the Hayfords, and to some extent G. P. Grant, kept the faith aflame. They also kept in touch with the General Conference, Dudley Hale, the Kerrs and others, always pleading for the return of Hale or his replacement with other resident foreign missionaries for the church in Ghana. Enlightened and progressive J. D. Hayford's far-looking vision settled on indigenous young believers as the future leaders of the SDA work in Ghana, sponsoring several of them for studies abroad, including Fred Dolphijn and his own son, Sydney Hayford, for future service to the church.¹³⁷ Dolphijn, Grant, and Hayford

¹³⁵ For G. P. Grant's conversion and its resulting impact on his family relations see K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 83-88 and pp. 111-113. Also interviews with the Reverend F. C. F. Grant (aged 84), Accra, July 2, 1978 and Madam Julie Grant (aged 85), Anamaabo, August 2, 1982. Reverend Grant and Julie Grant are two of the children of G. P. Grant of Cape Coast.

¹³⁶ D. U. Hale, "AFRICA", RH, Vol. 74, No. 44, November 2, 1897, p. 700.

¹³⁷ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 104-111. Fred Dolphijn returned to Ghana from Britain a qualified mechanical engineer, but later left Adventism after the death of his father and joined the Ghana Railroad System at Sekondi. He died at Apam about 1949 or 1950. Sydney Hayford later worked at Bonny in Nigeria as a

all at one time or another became full-time or part-time workers for the church, particularly in the literature ministry. Dolphijn and his children worked as travelling companions of some of the early missionaries, serving as their interpreters as well as comrade preachers of the gospel. J. D. Hayford played a similar role in the company of Dudley Hale on many occasions.

After six years of official General Conference absence in Ghana, but six years of active service by indigenous believers among their own folks, good old D. U. Hale, together with his family this time, returned to Cape Coast on Tuesday, March 3, 1903 for a second term of missionary labors in Ghana. James M. Hyatt and his wife, Marion E. Hyatt, an African-American couple from Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, followed the Hales to Cape Coast a week later as members of the third batch of SDA resident missionaries in Ghana. Determined to locate in the interior with General Conference active moral encouragement and financial support, Hale, led by J. D. Hayford, got a place in the Sekondi interior at a place called Formayea near Manso, a railroad station some 25 kilometers from Sekondi toward Tarkwa and Kumase. The Hyatts preferred to stay on at Cape Coast and labor there. A gentleman's agreement was, thus, arrived at between Hale and Hyatt to locate at two separate bases and labor for God and Seventh-day Adventism from those ends. Whether or not American Jim Crowism (segregation) was the deciding factor on this issue that followed Hale and Hyatt to Africa is unclear, but the agreement they came to was perfectly in line with that tradition.

Hale and his family soon ran into trouble with their health, and after only a brief stay in Ghana - about six months - they left the country for good about October, 1903, bringing the second Adventist interior base, Manso, to another premature end. Esiam, the first, had similarly been abandoned in 1897 when the Kerrs and Hale left Ghana that year for health and family reasons.

school master where he promoted Seventh-day Adventism. See also interview with Nana Kweku Abandoh (born in 1901), Apam, August 2, 1982. Nana Abandoh is the son of Joyce S. Dolphijn, Francis Dolphijn's only daughter and third and last child.

James and Marion Hyatt, the first official Afro-American SDA missionaries to Ghana and all West Africa, stayed on for almost two more years until about June or July, 1905 when they relocated elsewhere in West Africa for continued service to their Lord, Seventh-day Adventism, and their kin and kith at home, Africa. James Hyatt and his wife worked widely along the Ghanaian coast, and its hinterland, visiting places like Accra and Aburi, as well as many Fante towns and villages selling books, tracts, pamphlets and preaching the present truth of their church. They also continued to keep Cape Coast as the Adventist base in the country and took care of a little flock of believers who continued in the truth. Before they left Cape Coast, Ghana for Freetown, Sierra Leone in mid-1905, the Hyatts had succeeded in working the truths of the Bible into several hearts and minds at Cape Coast, and one of these Hyatt converts, Christian Abraham Ackah of Kikam in the Nzima country in the south-western corner of Ghana, was to carry the Dolphijn-Grant-Hayford banner of Ghana Seventh-day Adventism to an even loftier height. By the time they left Ghana in mid-1905, the Hyatts had served there continuously for some two years and three or four months, the longest term, up to that time, for any official church envoys from the General Conference. They were a committed couple for God and Africa. Indeed when they left Ghana they did not hasten to America, "home", they merely changed places in Africa, among their African brothers and sisters on this side of the ocean.

After a decade of official SDA work in Ghana, the General Conference reported at the end of 1904 that the church in that West African country boasted of one company, seven members, four isolated Sabbath-keepers in a group, a Sabbath school of thirty members, one licensed minister, one canvasser, two laborers, one school, two teachers, and twenty-five students.¹³⁸

Ackah and the Kikam Age, 1903 - 1914

Of the early twentieth century Cape Coast SDA converts of

¹³⁸ RE, Vol. 82, No. 19, May 11, 1905, pp. 26-27.

the Hyatts and others, Christian Abraham Ackah of Kikam and Samuel Duncan Morgue of Cape Coast were easily the most prominent, and they subsequently became key Adventist leaders in West Africa. Among his labors for the church in West Africa was Duncan Morgue's role as one of the official pioneer SDA missionaries who began the work in Nigeria in 1914. Ackah preferred to stay on at home and do his Master's service there following his conversion to Adventism in 1903. "I was known by the public", he told the General Conference in 1908, "as a Sabbath-keeper in the year 1903, when Bro. James M. Hyatt and his wife were in town, but now I am known by individuals as a minister while I am not."¹³⁹ Ackah's chief ambition was to make the SDA Church one of the top Christian denominations in Ghana and hopefully become its first ordained presiding minister. He made no apology for the latter part of his ambition and was candid about it to the brethren in America: "I am here to put this before you, that I like to be trained up and baptized as a minister for the Gold Coast Mission schools and Churches after our school building at Kikam, which will be completely built before September. The house is built at my own expenses."¹⁴⁰

Until 1908 Cape Coast was still the main Adventist base in Ghana. James Hyatt left in 1905 but Ackah kept the flock together and started another SDA school there at Cape Coast, the Ackah School, in February, 1907. The following year C. A. Ackah decided to transplant the substance of Ghana Adventism from Cape Coast, his business home, to Kikam, his native home. The Kikam SDA Church and School took off simultaneously about June, 1908 under C. A. Ackah who carried Adventism to his home in Nzimaland and succeeded in building the church around pioneer Kikam converts like Ackah Kwaame, J. Crosby Essien, Kwesi Yambuam, Moses E. Andoh, Robert Essien, Mary Ackah, Moses Amoo, Isaac Ayiam Ansah,

¹³⁹ C. A. Ackah to the General Conference, July 8, 1908, General Conference Archives (or GCA), file No 21, In-coming Letters, Foreign (or ILF), 1908-A, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

and Wilson Cobinnah.¹⁴¹ Meanwhile, David Caldwell Babcock, a 51-year old American southerner and one-time missionary to Guyana, had arrived in Sierra Leone in August, 1905 to head the SDA work in West Africa. Babcock simply followed Hyatt's lead and set up his headquarters at Freetown rather than return the SDA headquarters in West Africa to Cape Coast. From there he visited Ghana on four different occasions between 1905 and 1914, paying more attention to the work in Sierra Leone, his immediate backyard, than to that in Ghana, on the distant coast, to the disappointment and concern of veterans like Dolphijn and Hayford, as well as young and vivacious new believers like Ackah. Babcock's time in Freetown saw the development of a great deal of tension between the old head of the work in West Africa and the young and ambitious C. A. Ackah over the operation of the SDA work in Ghana.

Ackah kept in touch with the General Conference leadership in Washington, D.C., which had superseded Battle Creek, Michigan in 1901 - 1902 as the headquarters of the World SDA Church. His ability to get things from and done by Washington over Babcock's head particularly offended the old man. But somehow the two men succeeded in working together for the progress of Adventism in Ghana. For instance, after working hard with others to build Adventism in Nzimaland, Ackah succeeded in getting Babcock down to Ghana in October, 1909 to baptize some believers and organize the first and second SDA churches in the history of the movement in Ghana. Kikam, Ackah's original home church in Nzimaland, became the first SDA company to be fully organized as a church, and this was done by David Babcock on Tuesday, October 19, 1909 right there at Kikam with Ackah in attendance.¹⁴² This first full-fledged SDA church began with thirty-four baptized members, with teacher-evangelist J. A. Bonney, an Ahanta from Akwedai in the present-day Western Region of the country, in charge at

¹⁴¹ Interviews with Pastors J. M. Arloo (1899 - 1983) and I. A. Benson (born in 1912), Kikam, July 15, 1978.

¹⁴² K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", p. 190.

Kikam.¹⁴³ On Sabbath, October 23, 1909 Babcock organized the second SDA church in Ghana, that of Axim, the Nzima capital.¹⁴⁴ Finally, Ackah and Babcock agreed on the transfer of all the church's assets at Kikam from Ackah's personal control to that of the General Conference, represented in West Africa by Babcock, and the deal was formally effected.¹⁴⁵

A combination of indigenous and alien efforts was one of the arms Ackah used in establishing Seventh-day Adventism in his native Nzimaland. C. E. F. Thompson and his wife from Sierra Leone and their fellow countryman, D. N. Doherty, as well as T. M. French and his wife Katherine, Americans, were some of the foreigners who worked for Adventism at Axim and elsewhere in Nzimaland early in this century. Both Lucinda Katherine Peabody French and C. E. F. Thompson were buried there at Axim while still in harness for their Lord in January, 1911, and March, 1912 respectively.¹⁴⁶ Other helping hands in Nzimaland before 1914 were indigenos like old man J. A. Bonney, J. D. Hayford, possibly veteran Francis Dolphijn, S. Duncan Morgue of Cape Coast, and John Kwabena Garbrah of Shama who was won for Adventism by J. D. Hayford in 1908, and was subsequently engaged as a teacher at Kikam by Ackah on September 28, 1908.¹⁴⁷

In the three years following the organization of the Kikam and Axim churches, Ackah's hopes of one day becoming the ordained head of the church in Ghana did not materialize. Babcock's habit of sending Sierra Leoneans and Americans to Ghana to supersede him frustrated Ackah who finally decided to reach the brethren

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

¹⁴⁶ T. M. French, "Death of Sister T. M. French", *RH*, March 23, 1911, p. 10 and Pastor J. K. Garbrah, "Memoirs", p. 52 (this is a transcribed version of the original memoirs given this author by a son of the late Pastor Garbrah, c. 1882 - 1962, Mr. Isaac Kofi Garbrah in 1980.

¹⁴⁷ See Garbrah, "Memoirs", p. 38 and interview with Mrs. Anna Garbrah (aged about 90), Pastor Garbrah's widow, Shama, July 14, 1978.

in America, imagining that they would be more understanding and sympathetic to his views, which included his objections to the way Babcock and other missionaries were operating the church and handling its funds. He hoped to convince the General Conference to replace Babcock and his subordinates with better workers. Ackah left Ghana in 1911 for Britain on his way to the General Conference in Washington, D.C., which he apparently never reached. He is believed to have died in Wales, Britain in 1912 at the premature age of about twenty-nine.¹⁴⁸ Thus, Ghana Adventism lost a great leader, educator, and the potential first indigenous ordained minister of the church in 1912. At 24, when he first set up the church and the school in his home town of Kikam in 1908, C. A. Ackah, unlike the older folk like Dolphijn, Hayford, and Bonney, had a whole world and future before him for Adventism, but his trip to Britain proved a tragedy for the church he loved.

In 1913 the General Conference attached West Africa to the European Division of the World Church, with headquarters in Hamburg, Germany under the presidency of L. R. Conradi. He called for a conference of all the workers in West Africa in Freetown in December, 1913. The Freetown Conference came out with a breakdown of the Adventist work in West Africa into three separate fields, namely, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Nigeria, thereby offloading some of the burdens of the work from Babcock's back, but also implying a reduction of his world of authority. Veteran David C. Babcock was appointed to head a pioneering team, comprising himself, R. P. Dauphin of Sierra Leone, and S. Duncan Morgue of Ghana, to Nigeria. R. S. Greaves became the new head of the work in Sierra Leone whose mission headquarters were subsequently transferred from Freetown to Waterloo. William H. Lewis, an American, then working in Sierra Leone, J. A. Davis, and James J. Dauphin (a younger brother of R. P. Dauphin), two Sierra Leoneans, and Kofi Christian and J. K. Garbrah (Ghana's

¹⁴⁸ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 154-155 and 209-210. Also Interviews with Dr. C. A. Ackah, Jnr. (born in 1908) son of C. A. Ackah, Snr., Cape Coast, July 16, 1978 and Pastor W. B. Ackah (1924 - 1983), nephew of the senior C. A. Ackah, Accra, July 7, 1980.

only delegate to the Freetown Conference of December 2-8, 1913), two Ghanaians, were grouped together for Ghana. The Ghanaian team under Lewis was instructed to push into the interior and establish its base there. R. P. Dauphin and W. H. Lewis were ordained to the gospel ministry there in Freetown on December 13, 1913 before they sailed for their respective assignments. Adventist believers in West Africa at this time in late 1913 were officially 165. Of this number, Ghanaian believers totalled 75. The remaining 90 were shared among the Canary Islands (2), Sierra Leone (83), and Nigeria (5).¹⁴⁹

Asante, The New Base

Seventy-five converts in Ghana after twenty years of Seventh-day Adventism in the country did not sound too encouraging in General Conference and Division circles. Coastal Ghana was considered a hard ground, hence the advice to William H. Lewis and his colleagues to reach farther into the interior. Older Christian missions in Ghana, particularly Methodism, Roman Catholicism, and Anglicanism, had covered a great deal of ground of the Fante, Ahanta, and Nzima areas where Adventism had been operating since the 1880s. Accra and the eastern areas were equally saturated with Presbyterianism to be of much help to infant Adventism. The Sabbath Truth which Adventists viewed as their most powerful trump card for proselytization among Sunday Christians had not been as successful as they had anticipated, even among the Akan people in the coastal areas.¹⁵⁰ The fairly new exotic tradition of Sunday worshiping among these people had taken firm roots and it was not easy to sell new ideas among

¹⁴⁹ Japheth Agboka, "The Beginning of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Ghana (Gold Coast): A Continuation, 1905 - 1917". A Term Paper, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA, Fall, 1975, p. 45.

¹⁵⁰ Francis I. U. Dolphijn, an Akan from the Fante coastal town of Apam, had hoped he could use the Akan traditional Saturday God argument to make the SDA message sound really good, but he had not been as successful among his people as he had imagined he would.

them.

But in Asante, the older indigenous tradition of Saturday as God's special and holy day was less adulterated and forgotten. Indeed, even today the "Onyamee Kwaame" (Saturday God) tradition of the Akan of Ghana is widely acknowledged, although not that much practiced. Among the Akan of Ghana God (Onyamee or Onyankopon) is universally called Kwaame, the dayname they give to any male born on Saturday, be he an Akan or not. Many Akan still practice the traditional worship of Onyamee Kwaame or keep the "Nyam Dua" (God's Tree) symbol in their houses, compounds, palaces, and shrines in reverence to God, the Creator, whom they recognize as having a special interest in the sacredness attached to Saturday, the seventh and last day of the Akan week.¹⁵¹

In many Adventist circles beyond Ghana, the Akan tradition of the Saturday God, one of the key pillars of Seventh-day Adventism, was casually known, and for a long time several General Conference men and missionaries had been advising the establishment of the Adventist base in Ghana in the interior, home of the Akan God of Saturday. Asante, easily the strongest center of Akan tradition in Ghana, was patently the target of these advocates of an interior base, and it was destined to be William H. Lewis' destination in late 1914 when he arrived in Ghana for the first time for business for God and Seventh-day Adventism.

The Saturday Church's timing for entry into Asante, 1914, was also a good one. Earlier in the previous century, Christianity had generally held no attraction for the kings of

¹⁵¹ For a detailed analysis of the tradition of the Saturday God of the Akan see K. Owusu-Mensa, "Onyamee Kwaame: The Akan God of Saturday" an unpublished 73-page manuscript with the author completed in June, 1982, especially chapters 4 and 5. See also J. B. Danquah, The Akan Doctrine of God: A Fragment of Gold Coast Ethics and Religion. London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1968, pp. xxix-xxx, 7, 30, 43; R. S. Rattray, The Ashanti. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923, pp. 141 and 144; K. A. Busia, "The Ashanti of the Gold Coast" in Daryll Forde (ed.) African Worlds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 192; S. G. Williamson, Akan Religion and the Christian Faith. Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1965, p. 87; Hans W. Bedrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana. Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967, p. 1; W. E. Abraham, The Mind of Africa. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966, pp. 56 and 108.

Asante and their people. Coming in the train of British imperialism, a disruptive force against the integrity, prosperity, and continuation of the Asante Empire, European Christianity had badly offended the Asante. Both in the 1840s and 1870s Asante chiefs politely but firmly rejected Methodist inroads into the Asante traditional system, bluntly pointing out to the missionaries in the latter decade that Christianity had spoiled the Fante and whatever they were worth traditionally. Prince Owusu-Ansa of Kumase, a liaison diplomat between Asante and the British for the better part of the nineteenth century, failed to reconcile the two sides after four decades of conscientious and honest labors because British imperialism and Asante integrity were mutually exclusive.¹⁵²

British seizure of the Asantehene in January 1896 in Kumase and his subsequent exile to the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, their attempt to effect another seizure, this time the sacred Golden Stool of Asante, the resultant Asante-British War of 1900, and Asante annexation to the British Empire were not a history that could win the British Asante love, or anything associated with Europeans and people described as "white men" generally.¹⁵³ Basking in the British ascendancy in Asante in the late nineties, christian missionaries and missions like Presbyterianism which tried to proselytize in that country later realized that they had miscalculated their steps. They had to withdraw and await a more favorable time, or at best go forward at a snail's pace. By 1914, however, a more sober atmosphere had settled on Asante-British relations, as the British colonial system, after its complete victory over Asante, had adopted a more mature approach to reconciling the Asante to the fait accompli. It was, for in-

¹⁵² K. Owusu-Mensa, "Prince Owusu-Ansa of Asante, 1823 - 1884", in Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria. Vol. 9, No. 3, December, 1978, pp. 23-44.

¹⁵³ For a background analysis of the poisoned relations between Asante and the British by the 1890s see K. Owusu-Mensa, "The Bond of 1844 in the Context of Nineteenth Century Asante-British Relations", in Nwanna Nzewunwa (ed.) Essays in African History, Being Proceedings of the 27th Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria held at the University of Port Harcourt, April 13-17, 1982, pp. 181-194.

stance, becoming less and less rough and rude toward Asante petitions for the return of the Asantehene and other exiles, and this finally culminated in the actual return to Kumase of Nana Prempe I, the Asantehene, in 1924. Seventh-day Adventism could not have chosen a better time for a missionary debut in Asante than the decade preceding the return of Prempe I. Or putting it in a religious language, the move was providentially directed.

William H. Lewis hurried to Ghana in October, 1914 not just to pioneer for Seventh-day Adventism in the interior of the country, but immediately to hasten to Nzimaland to save what he could for Adventism in the wake of Prophet William Wade Harris' Movement in that part of Ghana.¹⁵⁴ With the cooperation of his colleagues - J. A. Davis, J. J. Dauphin, J. K. Garbrah, J. A. Bonney, S. B. Essien, and Kofi Christian - Lewis set things in order in Nzimaland for his church. Leaving the rest at the coast for service there,¹⁵⁵ Lewis, together with Dauphin and Christian, joined a Kumase-bound train at Sekondi. When he first set foot on the soil of Ghana at Sekondi on October 3, 1914, Lewis came alone without his family which he had left in the Canary Islands, where all of them, including the pastor, had been resting and recuperating from some minor health problems before plunging into business in Ghana. But the support he immediately lacked from his wife in the distant Canaries, he got from his own courage, enthusiasm, and determination to succeed, as well as from the support of his colleagues and believers in Nzimaland, and the sustaining grace and power of God.

In Kumase, one late October afternoon in 1914, Lewis, Dauphin, and Christian seemed lost. All they knew of the Asante capital when they alighted from the train was where they stood at the railroad station, but a sympathetic and loving Methodist minister, Pastor Waters, a Briton, found and gave them all the

¹⁵⁴ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 224-236. See also O. U. Kalu (ed.) The History of Christianity in West Africa, Harlow, Essex: Longman Group Limited, 1980, pp. 296-299.

¹⁵⁵ Davis, Garbrah, and Essien were soon to join the Lewis team in Asante, leaving Bonney as the sole experienced worker in Nzimaland for some time.

care, comfort, and hospitality they needed for a breather.¹⁵⁶ But comfort in Kumase was not the goal of these Adventist trailblazers. After only a night's rest with Pastor and Mrs. Waters, the pioneers paid their benefactors their gratitude, bid them farewell and were back on the trail again, most probably on Thursday, October 22, 1914, in search of an interior mission station. They made their way in a north-easterly direction from Kumase along the present-day Kumase-Tamale Road by way of towns like Tafo, Mamponten, Aboaso, Ntonso, Kona, Agona, Gyamaase, Mampon, Adwira, Atebubu, Yagyi, and Salaga. The Lewis team made its first contact with an Asante ruler at Ntonso, some twenty-two kilometres from Kumase, on October 22, 1914 when the team called on Nana Kofi Dei, the then chief of the town, with the proposal of beginning Adventism in Asante there. Fearing a duplication of the same thing, however, - the chief reportedly had promised a welcome for another Christian mission whose minister had called on him from Kumase earlier on - Nana Kofi Dei prevaricated and Lewis and his men consequently skipped Ntonso, at least for the meantime.¹⁵⁷ It became one of the first three key centers of Seventh-day Adventism during Lewis' time, but it lost its chance of becoming the first headquarters of the church in interior Ghana.

The trailblazers reached Agona, Asante, some thirteen kilometers beyond Ntonso on Friday evening, October 23 and spent their first Sabbath in Asante there on Saturday, October 24, 1914 with Nana Kwaame Boakye, chief of Agona, and his people.¹⁵⁸ Although Lewis preferred to locate his headquarters at Wiamoase, an Agona sub-town, Nana Boakye would have nothing of that, and

¹⁵⁶ William H. Lewis (1882 - 1972), "True Adventures in Africa. A Story of the pioneer days of the Advent Movement in Sierra Leone and Ghana, West Africa", (1971), an unpublished manuscript at the Heritage Room, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA, p. 28. Hereafter cited as "True Adventures".

¹⁵⁷ Interviews with Nana Kwasi Brempon (born about 1896), Ntonso, Asante, August 12, 1978 and September 1, 1979.

¹⁵⁸ W. H. Lewis to W. A. Spicer, November 6, 1914, p. 8, GCA, File No. 21, ILF, 1914-L.

gave him a place there at Agona which, there and then, became the SDA base in Asante for the better part of almost two decades until it was superseded by Bekwae in the early thirties. The Adventist pioneers at Agona and elsewhere in Asante had it comparatively easy converting a number of the people and establishing churches among them. Nana Boakye, for instance, was personally favorably disposed toward the SDA Mission. He liked school for his people and that was part of the Adventist program there. He and his fellow rulers in Asante were now generally relaxing their former spite for Europeans and their ways. Above all, Adventists' emphasis on their God as "The Saturday God" fascinated him and his people, the Asante, whose hoary traditions and custom recognized exactly the same God, Onyamee Kwaame, the Akan God of Saturday.

Seventh-day Adventism, thus, took off in Asante on a very promising footing, and soon, Lewis was reporting to Washington of some forty-five converts at Ntonse, Agona, and Asaaman, the triumvirate nucleus of the soon-to-become viable SDA community in Asante before his friend and benefactor, Nana Kwaame Boakye, died at Agona on Saturday, April 10, 1915.¹⁵⁹ Many other towns and villages in the Agona area like Wiamoase, Kofiase, Yonso, and Asokore soon had their own Adventist communities as well. In many of these towns, as well as at Ntonso, Agona, and Asaaman, schools and congregations took off simultaneously. The success of these early days of Adventism in Asante from the Lewis age to about the mid-thirties depended heavily on the combined efforts of Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian workers, among whom Ahanta and Nzima workers, particularly the latter, were outstanding.¹⁶⁰ J. A. Bonney and J. K. Garbrah, Ahantas, were two key builders of Adventism in

¹⁵⁹ W. H. Lewis to T. E. Brown (probably Bowen instead), April 23, 1915, pp. 1 and 3, GCA, File No. 21, ILF, 1915-L. C. B. Mensah, "Ghana Asafo Abakosem ne Memeneda Akwanhwefo Gyidi" (A History of the Church in Ghana and Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists), p. 7. This manuscript was written by Pastor Mensah about 1962 or 1963 while president of the Ghana Mission of SDA headquartered in Kumase.

¹⁶⁰ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 259-261, 275-276, and 298.

Ghana during this period, and although C. A. Ackah did not live to see the move to Asante, he established Kikam from where the Essiens, Arthurs, Quashies, Nyamikehs, Arloos, Mensahs, Bensons, Erzuahs, and others provided the great Nzima element in the growth and progress of Adventism in Asante.¹⁶¹

Other pioneer builders of the SDA Church in Ghana in the teens and twenties were J. A. Sackey of Abokobi, Accra who became the first teacher-evangelist at Mayenda, home of veteran Dawson, in 1924, A. B. Mensah and D. K. Ofori both of Ntonso, and R. K. Antwi of Akrofooso, Asante, classmates of Sackey, who also began service for Adventism in 1924. T. B. Oattie of Akrofooso and J. D. Boakye of Kwaaman-Asante were even senior workers of the church. Key laymen in the early years included D. K. Akuolo, Kofi Gyebi, and Kwaaku Kwaaten of Ntonso, Paul Ansa of Agona, Yaw Amanfo, Moses Nimo, and Philip Kwabena of Asaaman, Yaw Boama of Wiamease, and Yaw Kyereme of Kofiase.

W. H. Lewis and his family left Ghana for the United States in mid-1917. He is reported to have been badly injured in a motor accident and that was the major reason for his premature departure from Ghana for good, although he himself plays low on this and highlights rather a doctor's report on his family which declared his wife and their three daughters medically unfit for a continued stay in Ghana.¹⁶² By the time Lewis was leaving Ghana in mid-1917 Seventh-day Adventism had fairly strong bases in three areas in the country, namely Asante, Mayenda in Fanteland, and Kikam in the Nzima country. Nationwide the church had about 100 baptized members and many more unbaptized believers, and the Agona, Asaaman, and Ntonso Primary schools alone had over 100 students.¹⁶³ The Ackah School at Kimam too was still functioning.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 272-273. Also Lewis, "True Adventures", pp. 71-72.

¹⁶³ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 268-269.

The Garbrah Age

Akora (old man) J. A. Bonney was the oldest and most senior Ghanaian worker at Lewis' departure. Next to him was J. K. Garbrah. Both were also Ahanta, one from Adwedai and the other from Shama. Akora Bonney immediately stepped in for the injured and departing Lewis as temporary superintendent of the Ghanaian field of the Mission, pending the appointment of a substantive successor to Lewis. All old-timers who saw and knew Akora Bonney - people like J. M. Arloo, I. A. Benson, A. B. Mensah, D. K. Akuoko, T. B. Oattie, R. K. Antwi, Yaw Kyereme, and J. A. Sackey - told this author in interviews that Akora Bonney was referred to everywhere as Pastor (Osofo) Bonney. He was probably ordained as a minister or some high official in the Methodist Church before his conversion to Adventism, and was never again ordained in the Adventist Church.¹⁶⁴ Bonney kept things going until a reorganization of the church hierarchy after the 1914 - 1918 European War brought in a train of European workers and supervisors in the persons of Thomas Baker, L. F. Langford, Jesse Clifford, H. Boyce, H. Kirby Munson, George D. King, John Jacob Hyde, and Frank Lewis Stokes in a decade.

L. F. Langford became the general superintendent of a rejuvenated West African Combined Mission, born in 1918 with his base first at Waterloo, Sierra Leone and subsequently at Agona, Ghana. Thomas Baker and H. K. Munson at times acted as heads of the work in Ghana while Langford was stationed at Waterloo. Langford moved fully to Agona about 1923 or 1924. In the previous year Jesse Clifford was transferred to Nigeria where he and others established the SDA Church firmly in the eastern section of the country before he returned to Ghana in 1931. Between 1924 and 1927 the official headquarters of the church in Ghana moved to Kumase from Agona, but J. J. Hyde returned them to Agona when he assumed the leadership position of the church in 1927. The young and energetic Briton, F. L. Stokes, joined the work force

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 263-264, 275 and 287.

in Ghana in late 1927, staying on continuously at his mission base, Ghana - except when he went home on furloughs - for some 16 or 17 years.¹⁶⁵

But if anybody made history in the growth and progress in Seventh-day Adventism in Ghana in the twenties it was without doubt John Kwabena Kaipro (or Kepro) Garbrah of Shama. Garbrah started with the Adventists as a member and a worker in 1908.¹⁶⁶ His long career with the church until his retirement in the mid-thirties was a checkered one, particularly during the first eight years, but when he got ordained in 1921 he immediately became a historic model for fellow younger indigenous workers in the system.

Garbrah had been converted by J. D. Hayford and engaged by Ackah as a teacher for the Kikam Ackah School in 1908. He dropped out of the work force, but not out of the faith, on three different occasions before his final engagement in April, 1916, twice at Kikam and once at Agona. On the first occasion in March, 1909 he sharply disagreed with the Ackah group at Kikam over some employment policy and did not return until November, 1911, when he was re-engaged.¹⁶⁷ On the second, he was temporarily laid off by W. H. Lewis in October, 1914, again while at Kikam, over a misunderstanding between him and Lewis as to what constituted "proper marriage", the traditional African way or the exotic European fashion.¹⁶⁸ It was only a short break, for Garbrah soon reorganized himself and his marriage and joined Lewis at Agona in Asante in April, 1915.

On the last occasion, this time at Agona, Garbrah again objected to some Lewis style of doing things and ordering people about and quit after only six months at Agona in October, 1915, and moved to Kumase. He worked for the Ghana Railroad there in

¹⁶⁵ Frank Lewis Stokes (born in 1904) to the author from Auckland, New Zealand, October 16, 1978. See also interview with same, Washington, D.C., USA, July 27, 1981.

¹⁶⁶ Much of what follows on Garbrah is based on his own "Memoirs" cited above.

¹⁶⁷ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 188 and 210-216.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

Kumase for a brief period, and subsequently found employment with his former Methodist Church which placed him at Dwaben, Asante. This "bread-and-butter business" of his with Methodism gave Garbrah no peace, for he caused his employers considerable embarrassment and confusion when he ignored the traditional Methodist Good Friday worship and continued to preach the Real Sabbath to his Sunday congregation. The resulting consternation in Methodist circles in Kumase, Dwaben, and elsewhere in Asante over what was considered "his indiscretion" led to the firing of Garbrah and his final rediscovery and re-engagement by Lewis in late April, 1916.¹⁶⁹ This time he stuck firmly to the SDA work and system to his retirement about 1935 and death in 1962.

Only five years after his final re-engagement for Adventism, J. K. Garbrah made history by becoming the first Ghanaian to be given full ministerial credentials in 1921 in faraway Sierra Leone. He put it all together tersely:

On the 23rd day of April, 1921 I put to sail on my third trip to Sierra Leone for General Conference; on May 7, 1921 Mr. Lowe (a European), Mr. McClement (a European), Mr. Harding (a Sierra Leonean), and I were ordained into the ministry at Waterloo in Sierra Leone.¹⁷⁰

In view of the rather unpleasant checkered history of Garbrah with Adventism summarized above one cannot help but assume that the man must have been a real gem in Adventist circles. He, apparently, was a hard and conscientious worker when on business, a style of life and commitment which he must have amply demonstrated before 1921, particularly between 1911 and 1914 and again 1916 and 1921. With Dolphijn, Hayford, Ackah, and Duncan Morgue out of the scene in the forefront of Ghana Adventism by 1921, Akora Bonney seemed the logical person to be invested with ministerial credentials. He did not die until about 1925. That Garbrah was ordained over good old Bonney was probably due partly to the latter's own religious disposition and views, but it also tells a great deal about the personality, utility, devotion, and

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 264-266.

¹⁷⁰ Garbrah, "Memoirs", p. 74.

commitment of the former in relation to his chosen career. He, for instance, buried several children of his own in Asante while serving his church and his Lord there in the teens and twenties.¹⁷¹

After his ordination in 1921, Garbrah became a model for the younger workers, and an invaluable asset to the European leadership of the church. All these years Adventism had skipped Kumase for any serious proselytization, thereby earning the uncomplimentary label, "adabantwea" (unrecognized by the government or officially unknown or obscure). This did not mean that the colonial government did not know that Seventh-day Adventism existed in the country. It did. But that tag simply meant that Adventists were a "small people" publicly and that is why they shied away from cynosure like metropolitan Kumase, and buried their heads in the sand in remote corners like Kikam, Mayenda, Agona, Ntonso, Asaaman, and Kofiase. Ghanaian Adventists were, of course, not offended by these misinterpretations and misunderstandings of their purposes and style of operation, but they were concerned about the salvation of the teeming thousands of Kumase. Consequently in October, 1921 Thomas Baker and Jesse Clifford placed the newly-ordained Garbrah in Kumase to officially pioneer Adventism there.¹⁷² That was the second major Garbrah breakthrough.

Clifford called 1921 "the best year" of Adventism in Ghana since the pioneering days of Lewis in Asante.¹⁷³ Garbrah's ordination alone made that year a good one. His Kumase breakthrough made it still better. When these two landmarks are added to the wide activities of workers and laymen alike and the statistical growth in the SDA system in the country, Clifford's assessment of 1921 was substantially correct and verifiable. According to his report, 1921 began with 197 baptized members and

¹⁷¹ Ibid., passim.

¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 75-76. See also K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 302-313.

¹⁷³ J. Clifford, "Gold Coast, West Africa", RH, September 14, 1922.

364 Sabbath School members and ended with the increased figures of 242 and 544 respectively.¹⁷⁴ Tithe income for 1921 shot ahead of that of the previous year by \$189.¹⁷⁵ In conclusion, he added: "Last autumn we made our first attempt at Harvest Ingathering work in this field and through the united efforts of workers and members more than \$486 was gathered in. Thus in all, nearly \$1,900 was raised in this field last year to help support the work now carried on".¹⁷⁶ The church in 1921 had resident workers at eight stations, namely, Kumase, Kikam, Ntonso, Agona, Asaaman, Wiamoase, Asokore, and Kofiase, and seven primary schools with 136 students, Agona being the top school where students from the other places went to finish standard seven, the terminal point in the primary school system.¹⁷⁷

Garbrah, the pioneer city evangelist in Asante, labored in Kumase for four years, October, 1921 to December, 1925. He began a church there, set up a school, and invited George O. Quainoo at Agona to come and help him with the school work in 1924. His own first son, Gyiabu, taught briefly for his father also in 1924. Garbrah highly impressed the colonial authorities in Kumase who consequently suggested the transfer of the SDA headquarters from obscure Agona to famous Kumase, 1924 to 1927. He was subsequently transferred to the coast in December, 1925, but not until he had successfully uplifted the Adventist banner in the famous Asante capital. Of the 30,000 adherents Christianity claimed in Ghana in 1925, Adventists boasted of a little over a thousand, shepherded by 26 African and 3 non-African workers and 350 students in day schools.¹⁷⁸ By 1926 SDA schools totalled ten, with well over 50% of former students of these schools becoming

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ H. K. Munson, "A Good Report from the Gold Coast", RH, March 26, 1925.

Adventists after school.¹⁷⁹ Garbrah's work in Kumase had so cleared the air of obscurantism that had surrounded Adventism for decades that even the colonial governor, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, while visiting Kumase in 1925, took time off to see what the church was doing at Agona as well, and that visit, interestingly, coincided with the inauguration of the young people Missionary Volunteers' Society in the church in Ghana.¹⁸⁰ The governor left Asante highly impressed with the youth and school programs of the mission.

J. J. Hyde, who came to head the SDA Mission in Ghana in 1927, did not just return the headquarters to Agona from Kumase, he also pulled Garbrah back to that same town in January, 1928 from Axim where he had been laboring for the past two years. Hyde badly needed Garbrah, the only indigenous ordained minister, with him there at Agona. F. L. Stokes also later joined Hyde from Britain at the same time, and when Munson left in the early thirties, F. Edwards came to replace him on the Agona School staff. 1928 also saw the final transfer of students from the Kikam SDA School to Agona. When Jesse Clifford took over from J. J. Hyde as head of the Ghana Mission in 1931, J. K. Garbrah, operating from Agona as his major base, went on various missionary errands until his retirement about 1935. He visited the coast on a number of occasions, strengthening the congregations at places like Fetteh, Mayenda, Axim, and Kikam. He went to the Kwaame Danso area in present-day Bono-Ahafo Region to help the beginnings of Adventism to take root. He did the same thing at Osiem and the Koforidua area in today's Eastern Region for his church, and it is from Osiem that he reportedly retired from active gospel service to God and Seventh-day Adventism in the mid-thirties. The national funeral conducted for veteran J. K. Garbrah by his church in his hometown of Shama, Western Region,

¹⁷⁹ George Kwasi Amofa, "Seventh-Day Adventists in Ghana", M. A. Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana, 1972, pp. 67-68.

¹⁸⁰ H. K. Munson, *op. cit.* The Missionary Volunteers' (M. V.) Society, now known as the Adventist Youth Society, is a young people's organization in the SDA Church dedicated to building its members and others for Christ.

in August, 1962 briefly but vividly told the story of a servant of God who was once a pillar in the growth and progress of Seventh-day Adventism in Ghana.¹⁸¹

The Passing Order, 1931 - 1959

Few leaders of the SDA Church in Ghana since its inception in the 1880s have established their marks on it and its adherents more than Jesse Clifford who presided over the destiny of the movement for almost two decades. When he arrived in Ghana in 1931 as the new superintendent of the mission, Clifford was no novice in mission administration and adventure. He served in Ghana from 1919 to 1923, and then went to eastern Nigeria to set up a viable and dynamic mission for Adventism. When he returned to Ghana in 1931 he was already a successful missionary and a man of action.

J. J. Hyde before him had upgraded the Agona SDA School to a government assisted or recognized institution, and had also begun the Agona Training School as a future seminary and teacher training college designed to produce workers for the church - in the gospel and teaching ministries. Clifford added one area of his own to the program of getting more and more Ghanaians fully committed to the work. He set out recruiting more and more young men with only primary school education. The rather meager monthly salary of any of his workers he called "holy money", explaining to his men that the holiness of the money made it an sufficient wage.¹⁸² The Lord blesses it and makes it sufficient for all the needs of the poor worker. I. A. Benson, D. N. Agboka, J. K. Amoah, C. B. Mensah, and I. K. Ansong were some of the Clifford "holy money" men in the early thirties.

The Clifford Age, 1931 - 1948, also saw some earnest attempts and actual results of a broadening-out process. Clifford was obsessed with the imminent return of Christ and, therefore,

¹⁸¹ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", p. 330.

¹⁸² Interview with Pastor I. A. Benson, Kikam, July 14, 1978.

determined to spread the gospel fast. Nothing that did not immediately contribute to a preparation of saints for Christ's soon-coming kingdom interestet him. In 1932, with the approval of the colonial authorities, Jesse Clifford transferred the headquarters of the SDA Church in Ghana from Agona to Bekwae, south of Kumase.¹⁸³ The basic factor underlying this Clifford move was his determination to broaden out of the Agona area in the northern sector of Kumase and reach the southern sector of the city as well with the gospel of salvation as understood and interpreted by Seventh-day Adventists. Clifford, however, had to move with care and discretion so as not to offend the Agona people and their traditional rulers who had been good to the church for almost two decades.

The excuse he used as the immediate reason for the move to Bekwae was a nasty experience he had at Agona in 1931 as a result of a rebellion there against Nana Kwadwo Apau, the Agonahene, in which some Adventists in the town had a hand. In the process of reconciliation between the chief and the rebels, who had earlier surrendered, high feelings over the issue resurfaced at which stage some of Clifford's clients were brutally and publicly assaulted right in his presence, and in the resulting chaos and confusion the pastor himself had his own share of the insult and manhandling. Clifford felt very strongly about this incident, and it served as a very welcome and convenient rationale for a move he had planned for, but had been cautious in effecting.¹⁸⁴ Agona continued to be a citadel of Adventism after the 1932 Clifford move to Bekwae, but it never regained its former position as the hub of the church's administration in Ghana. But the Bekwae or Amansic area of Asante was just one of several major areas in Ghana Clifford directed his attention to in the thirties and

¹⁸³ J. Clifford to the District Commissioner, Bekwae, May 13, 1931; Acting District Commissioner of Bekwae to the Acting Commissioner, Eastern Province, Kumase, May 18, 1931; F. W. Applegate, Acting Commissioner, Eastern Province to the Acting Commissioner, Bekwae, May 21, 1931; all in File No. 1799, National Archives of Ghana (NAG), Kumase, Ghana.

¹⁸⁴ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana ADA", pp. 334-339.

forties. The others were the Takyiman area in Bono-Ahafo, the Atebubu-Kwaame Danso area, also in the same region, the Osiem-Koforidua area in the Eastern Region, the Accra area in Greater Accra Region, and the Buem-Krakye area of Volta Region.

From the late twenties into the thirties men like J. B. Takyi, K. D. Attah, and S. R. Offen were instrumental in establishing Seventh-day Adventism in places like Oforikrom, Takyiman, Nkoransa, and Tuobodom, all in the Takyiman area. An unknown Nzima trader who showed some Kwaame Danso truth-seekers the way to Agona, J. K. Garbrah, Paul Ansa, and others pioneered the SDA message in that area, also in the early years of the Clifford presidency. Thomas Agyei, opening up Adventism at Okagyakrom and Broda in the Buem area of the Volta Region in the early forties, was aided by men like C. B. Mensah, F. L. Stokes, and T. H. Fielding in the work of consolidating infant Adventism there.

But the most spectacular conversions to Seventh-day Adventism during this period took place at Oseim near Koforidua in the Eastern Region. There, men like Samuel Brako, Charles K. Boadu, Daniel Nkruma, and Samuel Appiah Dankwa became Saturday worshipers before Seventh-day Adventism reached them. They had read themselves into the Sabbath truth and been preached to by a strange man in black who passed through their town some time in August, 1932. They subsequently got in touch with Clifford at Bekwae, but some misunderstanding between Samuel Brako and Clifford led to the former establishing his own church, the "Savior Church" (Memeneda Gyidifo or Saturday believers) or Memeneda Kokoo (Saturday worshipers who wear red robes). Charles Boadu, S. A. Dankwa, and others, however, declared for Seventh-day Adventism.¹⁸⁵

J. K. Garbrah helped at Osiem just before he retired in 1935, but subsequently it was F. L. Stokes who became the resident leader of the work in that area, basing at Asokore-Koforidua. In 1941 Clifford sent D. N. Agboka from Bekwae to

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 343-347. Also interview with Pastor S. A. Dankwa (born 1910), Osiem, Akyem Abuakwa, August 7, 1978, and Hans Debrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana, Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967, pp. 332-333.

pioneer the SDA work in Accra, working under Stokes at Asokore. T. H. Fielding who replaced Stokes at Agona as head of the work in that district in early 1935 worked hard for the Ghana church in ten years¹⁸⁶ in his district and elsewhere, as well as in Kumase, where he demonstrated his talents as a great city-evangelist whose ideas and approach were far ahead of his age.¹⁸⁷ Beginning in the mid-thirties with Daniel Ntim through the forties with evangelist C. B. Mensah and others, Adventism took roots at Mampon-Asante. A similar growth was experienced at Asekyedomase-Asante with pioneer laymen like Isaiah Kyei and Paul Nsiah about the same period.

Ironically SDA higher education took roots in Ghana during the time of Jesse Clifford who is generally known and remembered as a non-pusher in that area.¹⁸⁸ The first Adventist post-primary institutions started as seminaries at Agona, Bekwae, and Asokore in the thirties, and in 1939 the first SDA teacher training college in the country began at Bekwae with Charles A. Bartlett, a Briton, as the principal. This innovative Adventist training college so impressed the colonial administration that in 1941 it adopted it for the whole nation for some time.¹⁸⁹ In January, 1945 the Bekwae school was officially recognized by the colonial government as a two-year certificate "B" teacher training college, and three years later it was again upgraded to a four-year certificate "A" institution.¹⁹⁰ The new educational program needed more hands for its successful running so James C. Vetter, an American missionary, was brought in to assist Bartlett at Bekwae. But the church did not start a secondary school until

¹⁸⁶ Pastor T. H. Fielding's undated letter (post marked August 16, 1978) to the author, Plymouth, U. K., two pages. Hereafter cited "The Fielding Letter".

¹⁸⁷ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", p. 359.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 365-367.

¹⁸⁹ S. K. Odamtten, "The Seventh-Day Adventist Church and Education in Ghana", in *The Oguaa Educator*, Vol. 6, No. 2, April, 1976, pp. 81-82.

¹⁹⁰ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", p. 369.

1953 when Bekwae again pioneered with the first SDA secondary school in Ghana.

It was also during Clifford's time that a new church organization originating from the General Conference created the African West Coast Union Mission in 1943 with William McClements, another Briton, as head, and first based in Ibadan, Nigeria and later in 1947 in Accra, Ghana. Clifford also saw to it that more Ghanaians were ordained into the gospel ministry for a more meaningful and deeper commitment on their part to the church and God's cause. S. B. Essien followed behind J. K. Garbrah in 1935 as the second ordained minister and ten years later, C. B. Mensah became the third to be similarly invested. D. N. Agboka, J. K. Amoah, J. M. Arloo, and I. A. Benson were all ordained in the late forties before Clifford took off for good in early 1949. New missionary arrivals like Jesse Gibson, Peter H. Stearman, Howard J. Welch and new indigenous converts like Solomon Enoch Opam of Broda, John Kwaning and James Adu of Kokofu, Asante, and Joseph Sapon Dwumoh of Bipoa, Asante, all in the forties, were to add greatly to the progress of the church in Ghana on several fronts.

When Jesse O. Gibson, an American, succeeded Clifford as the president of the Ghana Mission of SDA in 1949, organized Adventist churches were twenty with 1,947 baptized and 2,790 non-baptized members.¹⁹¹ Gibson, who first arrived in Ghana in 1946 and was ordained in Accra the following year, was formally appointed mission president in late 1948 but had to wait until Clifford left in early 1949 to fully assume his new post.¹⁹² He was demonstrably a progressive and far-sighted administrator. He moved the headquarters of the church from Clifford's Bekwae to his own Kumase in 1949 for a better leverage for evangelism in all Ghana. He broke down the Clifford one-man-show as father and controller of everything and divided the mission into many districts and put Ghanaian ministers like S. B. Essien, C. B. Mensah, J. M. Arloo, I. A. Benson, J. K. Amoah, and D. N. Agboka

¹⁹¹ *SDA Yearbook*, Washington, D.C.: General Conference of SDA, 1950, pp. 237-238.

¹⁹² Interview with Pastor Jesse O. Gibson, Washington, D.C., USA, July 30, 1981.

in charge. His idea to put more dynamic energy into the program of evangelistic outreaches led to his inviting Levi H. Davidson and E. L. Brown, seasoned Jamaican literature evangelists, to Ghana in 1949, and the four years these men spent in Ghana inaugurated a new spirit and progress in that arm of the SDA gospel ministry. Howard J. Welch, another American educator, also arrived in the late forties to push Adventism in Ghana and West Africa along the educational line for many years.

Gibson's Africanization dreams for Seventh-day Adventism in Ghana led him into pushing C. B. Mensah into the position of associate president of the mission in Kumase about the time he was leaving there to pick up another appointment in Accra as president of the West African Union Mission in 1952.¹⁹³ In 1950 Gibson raised a thousand dollars to send evangelist Emmanuel Bruce Akyiano to Tamale in north Ghana to officially pioneer the SDA Church there.¹⁹⁴ This move proved successful, for it resulted in rooting the faith in the Chumuru and Nawuri areas of the north, and through the years those areas, Tamale and Bolgatanga, have become the major centers of Adventism in the north. Simultaneously, J. S. Dwomoh reached out into the Mo country in the middle north to spread the gospel there as well. Here too, Kintampo and its environs took the message, producing their own preacher-son, J. K. Konto, who served the church well for many years.

The last group of foreign leaders of the Ghana Mission of SDA spanned from 1952 to 1959, between Jesse Gibson and C. B. Mensah as presidents. These men were A. J. Mustard, H. J. Welch, and W. J. Newman. Between these years Adventism in Ghana grew from 30 organized churches with 3,002 baptized members to 49 and 5,526, respectively. Mustard's emphasis on direct gospel ministry saw the ordination of many active soul winners like Andrew Agyei, S. K. Essel, Arthur M. Moyer, and Owusu Ansah during his two-year term in the Kumase presidency, 1952 - 1954. Welch, the next president (1954 - 1956), was essentially an educator and did much

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

to build the Bekwae schools for progress and expansion, thereby producing many Adventist teachers for the system. The last foreign baton holder, W. J. Newman (1956 - 1959), is mostly remembered for his meticulous and efficient office administration which set the records of the Ghana church right before the installation of the first Ghanaian president of the mission, Charles Bennet Mensah of Kofiase, Asante in January, 1959.¹⁹⁵

A few other developments before 1959 also helped the church to increase its potentials in Ghana for the gospel ministry. H. D. Wilson of Sierra Leone arrived in Ghana in 1954 to head the seminary program at Bekwae and add more spirituality to the Bekwae atmosphere. But the old man managed for just a little over a year, dying in Kumase in early 1955. Hugh Ivor Dunton and Richard D. Jordan, a Briton and an American respectively, were two of the many more foreign missionaries who helped with progress at Bekwae. Budu Seidu, Robert Reeks, Adusei Poku, I. K. Boateng, I. K. Garbrah, I. K. Ansong, J. K. Amoah, J. H. Mensah, D. N. Agboka, H. K. Owusu, Twum Antwi, S. E. Opam, and C. Y. Kyereme were some of the early Ghanaian workers at Bekwae who also put in varied contributions.

After the brief successes of the SDA medical ministry in Ghana in the 1890s and 1930s, a full-fledged officially sanctioned Adventist hospital began at Atibie in the Kwawu area of Eastern Region in 1955 with Dr. John Ashford Hyde, son of the veteran J. J. Hyde, as the first medical director. Komla A. Gbedmah, the famous Ghanaian politician of the Kwame Nkrumah era and an Adventist convert of Jesse Gibson in Accra in 1946, used his political links and influence to help the Adventists get the Kwawu Hospital to manage.¹⁹⁶ It was officially opened by the Ghanaian minister of health, J. H. Allassani, on Sunday, July 14,

¹⁹⁵ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 429-431.

¹⁹⁶ Yaw Afari Ankomah, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana", a B. A. (Hons) Diploma in Education Degree Research Paper, Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana, August, 1982, p. 55.

1957.¹⁹⁷ The Hydes had a fruitful period of some eight years of medical ministry in Ghana, putting the institution on an enviable footing, and producing two healthy children there themselves before taking off for good in 1963.¹⁹⁸

At the West African Union Mission level in Accra before 1959, the general operation of Adventism in West Africa had seen McClements, Gibson, and Welch as the successive presidents. Ghanaians were not directly involved in top administrative functions then. W. B. Ackah, the first Ghanaian top man there, surfaced only in 1963 as a departmental director. Coleridge Dunbar Henri, an Afro-American pastor and evangelist, came to the Union in 1957 at the transitional time of the Gibson to the Welch presidency to break the color monopoly control there. Henri's advent into the Union heralded the subsequent Africanization process there which started with Ackah in 1963 and reached its full maturity in 1981 when Matthew Ango Bediako became the first Ghanaian president of the union.

The New Age (Since 1959)

Historic 1959 climaxed the Seventh-day Adventist growth process in Ghana with an enviable milestone when C. B. Mensah was elevated to the presidency of the mission in January that year. As one of the faithfuls who accepted Clifford's "holy money" deal in the early thirties, this humble son of Kofiase got his first major recognition in the SDA system when he became the first Asante worker to be ordained in 1945, preceding several of his more senior colleagues both in age and in the work. Clifford got him and others after him ordained to continue with the work when he was gone, and in 1952 Mensah reached the Kumase office of the Ghana Mission as a departmental director as well as the associate president in line with Gibson's Africanization plans. With political colonialism collapsing in Ghana in the late fifties,

¹⁹⁷ West African Advent Messenger (WAAM), Vol. 16, Nos. 6 and 7, June-July, 1962, p. 1.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Mrs. Myrtle A. Hyde (born in 1920), widow of Dr. J. A. Hyde, St. Albans, United Kingdom, June 29, 1981.

the remaining days of religious colonialism there were obviously not going to be many. That C. B. Mensah's elevation came only two years after Ghana won independence in March, 1957 was perfectly in keeping with the spirit and logic of the age.

But with Ghanaian Adventists and the new president himself what loomed highest in their interpretation of the new developments in the church was the challenge Mensah's elevation presented them. The appointment called upon them to justify the African stuff and meddle in the things of God. The new president and his people determined to carry the banner of Adventism to even loftier heights and make God proud of the Ghanaian and his commitment to His work. In a year the new leader and the whole church together had raised the church membership, baptized and non-baptized, to over 16,000 in some 230 organized and unorganized churches.¹⁹⁹ This tremendous and encouraging achievement was attributed largely to the purposeful laymen of the church. President C. B. Mensah saw the immense potentials of guided evangelistic-oriented laymen, organized them, and sent them out to gather in precious souls, and the above was the result.²⁰⁰ Bearing the true image of his mentor and spiritual father, Clifford, C. B. Mensah also helped produce dynamic laymen soul-winners - referred to as "nsofokwaa" in the Asante language. Prominent among these were men like Kwaaku Kwaaten, Paul K. Nyamaa, Robert K. Mensa, and Paul Donkor of Ntonso; Paul Nsiah, Yaw Mensa, Joseph Nimoh, Yaw Kyei, Kwaaku Dua, and Jacob Frimpong of Kumase; James Kofi of Gyaakye; Amos Okrah of Sakora-Wanoo; David K. Akuoko of Offinso; Abraham Amponsa of Antoa; and John Kwaning and James Adu of Kokofu.

With the help of the church in Ghana C. D. Henri of the Union in Accra brought in Earl E. Cleveland, another Afro-American and also a leading world Adventist evangelist, from the General Conference in Washington, D.C., in April, 1959 for a mighty evangelistic campaign in the city of Accra. It was a big success, netting young converts like Seth Armah and Jacob Jonas

¹⁹⁹ WAAM, Vol. 13, No. 11, November, 1959, pp. 3 and 6.

²⁰⁰ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 453-454.

Nortey, key workers in the Lord's vineyard today. Kwesi N. Ghanney, a police officer then and now a leading layman of the church in Accra, was another Cleveland convert in 1959.²⁰¹

The new president also organized camp meetings at non-Adventist bases as a new evangelistic strategy and succeeded in winning many souls and erecting many churches that way.²⁰² This innovation opened the gate for similar plans for soul winning that the various churches adopted, popularly known today as "rallies". The Young People's Society, the Dorcas Welfare Society, the Singing Bands, and Choirs, all groups in the SDA Church, these days have their own rallies periodically for fellowship, relaxation, recreation, and proselytization. Working with the key Adventist concept of the urgency of the times or Christ's imminent soon-coming, C. B. Mensah led the mission to emphasize soul winning during his entire six-year presidency in Kumase. He also presided over the opening of two teacher training colleges for the church at Asokore and Agona in 1962 and 1963 respectively.²⁰³ The very first year of Mensah's administration also witnessed the birth of the Adventist College (now Seminary) of West Africa (ACWA, but now ASWA) in September, 1959 to train workers for the church in West Africa. The school was located at Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.²⁰⁴

One side of the education of Adventist youth that has been a problem in many places around the world has been the question of Saturday examinations in public universities and similar institutions of higher learning. Adventist students at the University of Ghana, Legon-Accra faced this problem directly in the sixties.²⁰⁵ In the initial stages it was individual struggles and this writer, for instance, had his own side of the story, a

²⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 448-450.

²⁰² Ibid., pp. 450-452.

²⁰³ Interview with Pastor C. B. Mensah (born in 1918), Accra, July 6, 1978.

²⁰⁴ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 458-460.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 482-484.

successful one at that, in 1965. In subsequent years the church had to intervene for its young people on this issue and also succeeded in getting a Saturday-free concession for them when the University ruled in favor of only a Monday to Friday examination schedule.²⁰⁶ But this has not always been a successful deal and is a perennial problem in which in the final analysis, when a human solution has not been possible, experience has shown that a biblical solution relying on Matthew 6:33 and Acts 5:29 works. Adventist students' fellowships in public universities in Ghana and elsewhere in West Africa are born for spiritual revivals as well as for discussions and decisions on common problems like university requirements and schedules which offend the SDA concept of the sacredness of the Sabbath, Saturday.

In 1961 Thorvald Kristensen, a Dane, succeeded Welch, who moved to Nigeria to become president of ACWA, as president of the Union in Accra. Two years before, a second Afro-American missionary, Maurice T. Battle, had joined the Union family at that base. E. A. Ntim was engaged by Kristensen for secretarial duties, and later in 1963, W. B. Ackah, straight from the Adventist college in Britain, Newbold College, with a B. A. in theology, became a Union departmental director, breaking the old foreign monopoly at that level of the church's work in Ghana and all West Africa. C. B. Mensah, A. N. Daitey, M. A. Bediako. H. V. A. Kuma, P. K. Asareh, J. J. Nortey, B. K. Batsa, and Japheth Agboka, as important Ghanaian personnel, have, through the years since Ackah's call to the Union, served or are still serving there in various important positions.

The early sixties also saw the arrival of more Afro-American missionaries like T. W. Cantrell, J. M. Hammond, and J. D. Johnson. This was apparently a new move to rely more and more on fellow believers of African descent to help with the evangelizing of their own kith and kin in Ghana. The Hammond-Johnson team, with the support and cooperation of fellow believers at home and abroad, concentrated on an earnest and programmed system of village evangelism in the Bekwae area of Asante for some seven

²⁰⁶ WAAM, Vol. 22, No. 9, September, 1968, p. 3.

years, 1961 - 1968, in addition to their teaching duties at the schools at Bekwae. They succeeded in erecting many chapels and filling them with converts to the glory of God.²⁰⁷ They also helped prepare some Bekwae students for the gospel, teaching, and medical ministries of the church in the future. The birth of Afriyie Johnson to the Johnsons in Kumase in 1964 after twenty-three years of a childless marriage was interpreted by Johnny Johnson as a reward for a missionary life fully approved and blessed by the Lord. Just before he took off for America after seven years in Ghana, C. D. Henri also led another campaign at Osu, Accra winning, among others, Hermann Vernon Adjei Kuma, a future leader of the church in Ghana, in early 1964.

When J. K. Amoah took over from C. B. Mensah as president of the Ghana Mission in January 1965, baptized Adventists were a little over 10,000, worshipping in 56 organized churches. Owen Austin Troy, yet another Afro-American, joined the Ghana Mission in 1964 in Kumase as secretary-treasurer and during his short two-year term helped push spirituality in stewardship with God. He also taught the church a more dignifying style of life and work for the departmental men at the office with his car-plan policy which made it possible for the men to own their own cars to facilitate their movements and work.²⁰⁸ Troy invited his fellow Afro-American preacher, C. E. Moseley, Jr. of the General Conference, to Ghana in December, 1965 when he preached the sermon at the first nation-wide campmeeting held in Accra, and subsequently conducted an evangelistic crusade in Kumase in January-February, 1966. This also increased the Kumase congregation with more converts. At the end of his first year in office Amoah was able to report baptized church membership of 10,295, unbaptized adherents of 22,978 both in 323 organized and unorganized churches.

²⁰⁷ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 465-470. Also interview with Pastor James Matthew Hammond (born in 1935), Takoma Park, Maryland, USA, August 1, 1981, and Johnny Durant Johnson (born in 1921), "Missionary Resume", Kaduna, Nigeria, December, 1983.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Pastor O. A. Troy (born in 1927), Washington, D.C., USA, July 23, 1981.

On September 5, 1967, the Ghana Mission began its own program of the Voice of Prophecy (VOP), a world-wide network of SDA radio broadcasting headquartered in Los Angeles, California, USA, at Kwaadaso in Kumase with Isaac Y. Obeng as its head.²⁰⁹ H. V. A. Kuma and C. B. Mensah, G. S. Aidoo, and the Advent Messengers (a singing group) featured well in gospel messages and songs on this program until the J. J. Rawlings regime banned almost all religious broadcasts on national radio in January, 1982. But many truthseeking souls had found the truth from the broadcasts before the ban was imposed.

In 1968 the North Ghana Mission was organized as a separate one from the parent mission in Kumase which then became the South Ghana Mission with Amoah still in charge. J. Onjukka went to Tamale to head the new mission. This was to help with effective administration and evangelism in that area of the country. A similar thing was done in 1977 when a new South Ghana Mission based in Accra was also created from the Ghana Conference (the new name of the former South Ghana Mission based in Kumase) with A. N. Daitey as its first president. J. M. Hammond, Walton S. Whaley, George E. Bryson, L. G. Antonio followed in that order as presidents at Tamale after Onjukka, and when A. N. Daitey left for Sweden for family reasons in late 1980, Ebenezer O. Sackey succeeded him as president of the infant South Ghana Mission.

In the meantime, the former South Ghana Mission had been elevated to a conference - Ghana Conference - in December, 1970 (Christmas Day, 1970).²¹⁰ That was the first Real African conference in the World Adventist Church, and it was a well-deserved achievement for a people that had first welcomed Adventism officially to Real Africa in February, 1894 with two General Conference resident missionaries. The significance of this achievement is that in the SDA system, a conference is autonomous and handles its own personnel and finances whereas a mission is fully subordinated to a union, division, or the

²⁰⁹ WAAM, Vol. 21, No. 11, November, 1967, p. 3.

²¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 25, Nos. 2 and 3, February-March, 1971, p. 1.

General Conference. Essentially, changing from a mission status to that of a conference is like shedding off a colonial skin for that of a new independent nation.

One evidence of the maturity of the Ghana Mission which was soon to become a conference was its ability to send more and more workers as missionaries to other West African countries. Daniel Cudjoe, an accomplished literature evangelist of Akwedai in Ahataland in Ghana, spent some 14 years (1963 - 1977) as a pioneer missionary to Gambia. Since 1969 J. J. Nortey, A. N. Daitey, C. T. Quarcoo, K. Owusu-Mensa, D. K. Amponsah, Jnr., Seth Amponsah, I. T. Agboka, M. J. Quartey, Mike Anim, and Harrison E. Dwumoh have been recorded in Adventist history as Ghanaian missionaries, past or present, at the Adventist Seminary of West Africa in Nigeria. W. B. Achah, another Ghanaian, also served as president of the North Nigeria Mission from 1972 to 1975.

Just before his retirement in 1975, J. K. Amoah saw to it that the Takyiman Adventist Girls' Vocational School was opened in September, 1974. The same year saw the demise of the Bekwae Teacher Training College and the conversion of its Agona counterpart to a secondary school in conformity with a new government policy and ruling. Meanwhile, the Kutu Acheampong military regime had also nationalized the SDA-operated Kwawu Hospital in September, 1973.²¹¹ However, in August, 1977 the church began a clinic at Asaaman, Asante to revive its medical ministry.²¹² The Takyiman and Asaaman institutions were officially opened on March 18 and 20, 1984 respectively.

M. A. Bediako (1975 - 1981), H. V. A. Kuma (1981 - 1984), and P. K. Asareh (1984 -) as presidents of the Ghana Conference (called Central Ghana Conference since 1977) inaugurated the ASWA Age of the church's history in Ghana. All are graduates of ASWA. Bediako was in Kumase until 1981 when he became president of the West African Union and moved to Accra in succession to S. B. Johansen. Kuma came from the presidency of the Sierra Leone Mission to succeed Bediako in Kumase after two years in Freetown,

²¹¹ Yaw A. Ankomah, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

²¹² *Ibid.*

and when Kuma moved to Nigeria to join the theology faculty at ASWA, the conference elected P. K. Asareh, formerly a departmental director at the Union in Accra, to the presidency in Kumase in January, 1984.

The nine years of the leadership of the church in Ghana by ASWA graduates have seen real progress. Bediako, for instance, got the laymen of the conference to set up a trust fund for the church at the Prempe College Laymen's Conference in mid-1975. This fund had grown to over C 60,000 within one year of its inauguration.²¹³ It was dedicated for evangelism. He also brought in an Afro-American evangelist, Robert C. Connor, to conduct a large and successful campaign in Kumase in late 1980. Almost 800 souls were baptized as a result of this Connor crusade. Kuma, a talented evangelist, concentrated on soul-winning during his shortterm and criss-crossed the conference, conducting tent crusades with laymen and workers alike. His personal crusade at Asawaase in Kumase started a church there in 1982.

In 1980, the three church organizations in the country, Central Ghana Conference, North Ghana Mission, and South Ghana Mission, and their higher body, the West African Union Mission became a part of a newly-organized division of the General Conference, the Africa-Indian Ocean Division headquartered in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Hitherto the church in Ghana had been a part of the Northern Europe-West African Division base at St. Albans, United Kingdom. J. J. Nortey became the treasurer of the new division, and John Adu and Ebenezer K. Owusu, two other Ghanaians also became workers of its audit department.

From September, 1982 the world Adventist Church embarked upon an evangelistic crusade dubbed "One Thousand Days of Reaping", designed to baptize a thousand souls daily for a thousand days ending at the 54th Session of the General Conference, comprising delegates from all over the world, in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, June, 1985. The church in Ghana moved along with this program to beat its target of 40,000 baptisms.

The church also became involved with the building of a new

²¹³ K. Owusu-Mensa, "Ghana SDA", pp. 514-517.

college in the Accra area to help students get a christian education with the weak cedi of Ghana at home. Dr. Walton S. Whaley became the pioneer president of the new Adventist Missionary College in Ghana which opened in October, 1983. In addition the church got fully involved in helping to ease the food problem that troubled many Ghanaian homes during the great famine of 1983 through the Seventh-day Adventist World Service (SAWS), with Glenn Howell and Seth Laryea in charge in Accra, but working in the regions as well through representatives like Ernest K. Kwarteng in Kumase.

Conclusion

100 years of Seventh-day Adventism in Ghana since the 1880s have seen growth and progress, slow even if they are. As of late 1983 the total baptized membership of the SDA Church in Ghana was 54,000 in 159 organized churches and many more companies and unorganized churches.²¹⁴ This gives no cause for complacency in a country of some 12 million people,²¹⁵ but it is nothing to be ashamed of either. Ghanaian Adventists' main concern is to work harder every day and reach all they can before doomsday. The members of the faith believe in two cardinal principles or teachings in the Bible, the seventh day or Saturday as God's immutable, sacred, and sanctified day which He requires all men to observe, and the imminent second-coming of Christ to judge all mankind, dead and living, and apportion reward (eternal life) or punishment (eternal destruction) as each deserves. A combination of these concepts gives them their name, and they believe in preaching the gospel across the globe, in direct gospel, medical, teaching, and literature ministry, in love, truth, and kindness to every man they can reach. They do not claim perfection, but are working toward heaven through the power and grace of God. This world had very little attraction for them. Their beliefs,

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 558.

²¹⁵ People's Daily Graphic, Wednesday, August 1, 1984, p.

style of life, and mode of operation are all sounding an unmistakable and clear message to all mankind, namely, theirs is a pilgrimage that will soon end in victory and bliss. All who care are invited to join their ranks.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Abraham, W. E. The Mind of Africa. Phoenix ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Busia, Kofi Abrefa. "The Ashanti of the Gold Coast." African Worlds: Studies in the Cosmological Ideas and Social Values of African Peoples. Ed. Daryll Forde. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 192.

Danquah, Joseph Buakye. The Akan Doctrine of God: A Fragment Gold Coast Ethics and Religion. 2nd ed. London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1968.

Debrunner, Hans W. A History of Christianity in Ghana. Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967.

The Gold Coast Handbook, Second Edition. Accra: Government Printing Department, 1924.

Opoku, Kofi Asare. West African Traditional Religion. Accra: F E P International Private Ltd., 1978.

Rattray, Sutherland. The Ashanti. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923.

Sarpong, Peter. Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture. Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1974.

Williamson, Sydney George. Akan Religion and the Christian Faith: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Two Religions. Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1965.

Periodicals

Signs of the Times, Vol. 107, No. 52, December, 1980, p. 3.

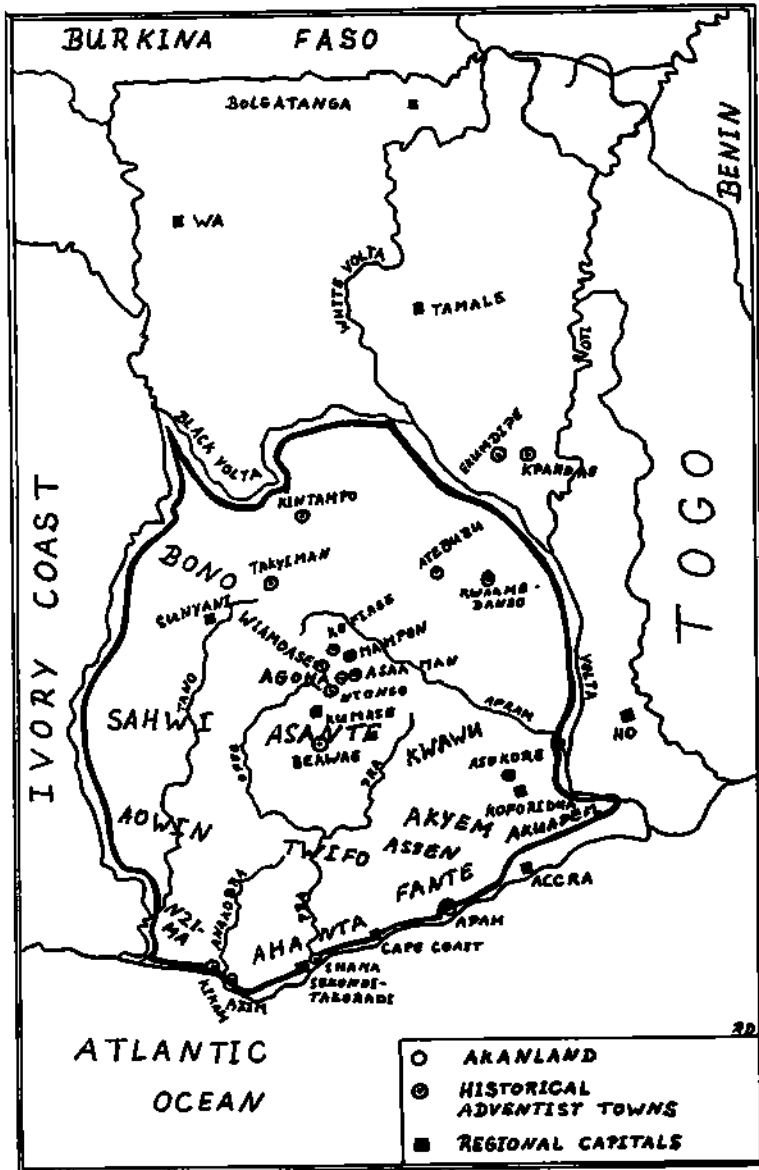
Maps

GHANA'S LOCATION IN MODERN AFRICA

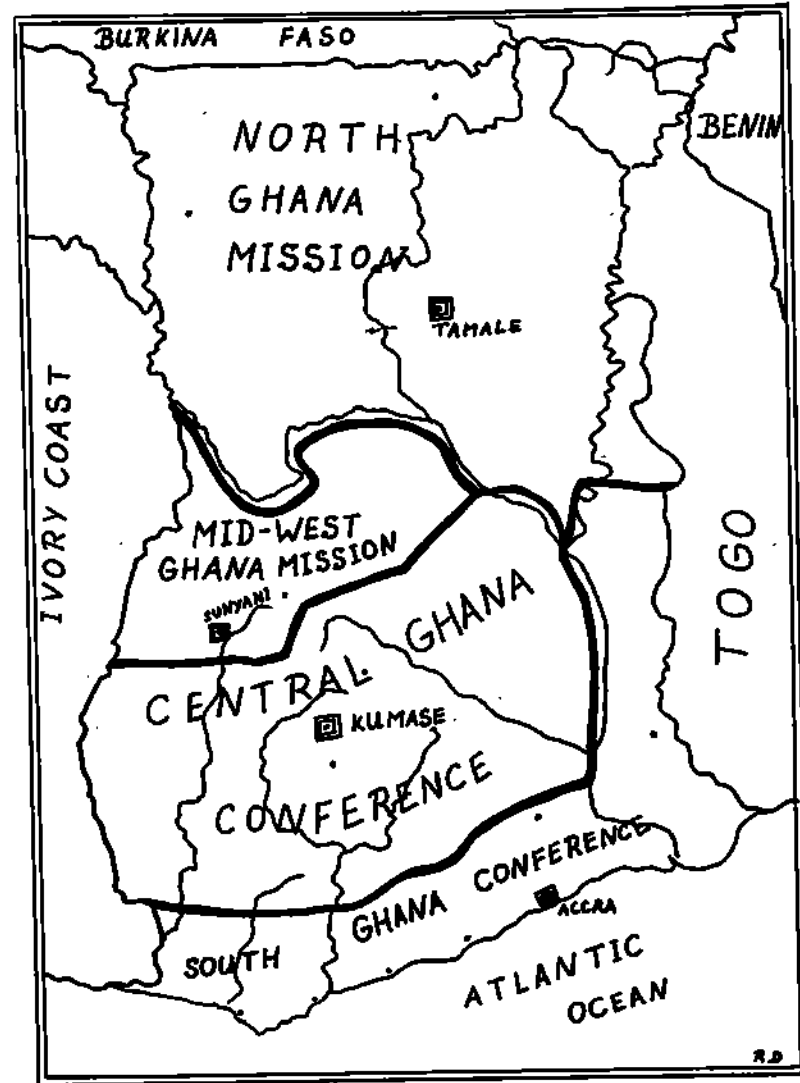


500 0 500 1000 2000
KILOMETERS

GHANA (WEST AFRICA): HOME OF THE AKAN GOD OF SATURDAY



THE FOUR SDA FIELDS IN GHANA



FIELD BOUNDARIES

**ARCHIVES OF INTERNATIONAL ADVENTIST HISTORY
ARCHIV FÜR INTERNATIONALE ADVENTGESCHICHTE
ARCHIVES DE L'HISTOIRE ADVENTISTE INTERNATIONALE**

- Band 1 Baldur Ed. Pfeiffer (Ed.): *Seventh-day Adventist Contributions to East Africa, 1903-1983*. 1985.
- Band 2 Daniel Heinz: *Ludwig Richard Conradi. Missionar der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten in Europa*. 1986.
- Band 3 Hugh Duntton, Baldur Ed. Pfeiffer, Borge Schantz (Eds.): *Adventist Missions Facing the 21st Century. A Reader*. 1990.
- Band 4 Baldur Ed. Pfeiffer, Lolhar E. Träger, George R. Knight (Hrsg.): *Die Adventisten und Hamburg. Von der Ortsgemeinde zur internationalen Bewegung*. 1992.
- Band 5 Daniel Heinz: *Church, State, and Religious Dissent. A History of Seventh-day Adventists in Austria, 1890-1975*. 1993.
- Band 6 Kofi Owusu-Mensa: *Saturday God and Adventism in Ghana*. 1993.