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Seventh-Day Adventist Church Mission in the Ahafo Territory, Goaso, Ghana: A Historical Study

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Abstract

The Seventh-day Adventist Church mission in the Ahafo territory, Goaso is one of the mission field which needs to be investigated to ascertain findings. Thus, the mission work at Ahafo area has attracted numerous divergent views from historical scholars. The main question motivated by the study is, who were the pioneer key players of Ahafo Adventist Church mission? What are some of the challenges faced by Seventh-day Adventist Church mission in Ahafo territory? What are the significant contributions of the Seventh-day Adventist mission work? These questions demand answers, hence the need for this research paper. Essentially, the study will basically inform the readers that the Seventh-day Adventist mission in Ahafo used both educated and uneducated evangelists, social services, small group ministries, schools, choruses, hymns, relational and radio evangelism to expand missionary enterprise.

Keywords: History, Seventh-day Adventist, Mission, Work, Ahafo, Area

Introduction

The significant impact of the Adventist Church in Ghana and for that matter, the Ashanti region, in particular, has influenced the historical development of mission in the Ahafo area. The Seventh-day Adventist Church calls people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the everlasting Gospel embraced in the three angel message of Revelation 14: 6-12, and to prepare the world for Christ's soon return.¹ Thus, this paper seeks to highlight the historical development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church mission in the Ahafo territory. It also provides an account of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's contribution, its challenges regarding the mission. It highlights the summary and conclusion, and bibliography.

Contributions of Missionary Enterprise in the Ahafo Territory

The contributions of Ahafo Adventist Church mission limit it from 1985 to 2015. The Seventh-day Adventist Church's mission in the Ahafo territory actively began in 1985. The outreach programmes in the Ahafo contributes to no small extent of the worldwide mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Thus, the dissemination of the Advent message at the Ahafo area was started by pioneers like Elders John Manu, Stephen Ofori Aboagye, Benjamin Osei, Ellen Mensah, Elizabeth Manu and Samuel Kwarteng, James Boamah, Samuel K. Dompheh, Twum Barimah, Nyantakyi Fordjour, Bossie Kessie and Joseph Addo.²

Historically, Adventist Mission in the Ahafo territory commenced in 1960 at Nkasaim, and then spread to Goaso, Sankore, Tapa, and Kenyasi. The most significant contribution was made in 1970 when Pastor Aikins Amponsah together with some laities established Churches at Tapa, Camp No. 1, Apenkrom, Alavanyo and Camp No. 4. It has been in historical

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¹ Abuom District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Inauguration and Fund Raising" (Abuom: Precise Cab Print, 2015), 6.

² Goaso South District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Inauguration and Fund Raising" (Goaso: Emmareg Press, 2013), 8.

antecedent that from 1948 to 1960, the Seventh-day Adventist Churches were set up at Goaso, Sankore, Kwapong, and Kenyasi. The pioneer elders who served immensely in the Goaso District were John K. Manu, Stephen Ofori Aboagye, Joseph Addo and Paul Bright Arthur. The early Adventist at the Ahafo territory contributed positively to singing for the growth of the Adventist Church in 1985. The historic camp meetings in the Ahafo area occurred at Kenyasi, and it was honored by Sankore, Kwapong, Goaso, Kenyasi, Manhyia No.4 and Alavanyo churches.³

Historical records divulge that personalities like Kwabena Armah, Danso Abeam, and Joseph Korankyi contributed significantly to the establishment of Churches in the Ahafo area like Asumura, Pomaakrom, Manukrom, Weijakrom, Aglago, and Ayomso. Another immense contribution was evangelistic activities engaged in by Francis Andrew, Adusei-Poku Agyei and Flacus Amponsah where fifty, thirty-two and twenty souls were gained respectively. In 1962, John Manu from Mampong Nsuta in the Ashanti region worked tirelessly in Sankore to establish the Seventh-day Adventist Churches at Kwapong, Manhyia No. 4, and Asikasu.

In the Kenyasi sector, Samuel Koranteng and John Manu planted Seventh-day Adventist Churches at Hwidiem, Kenyasi No. 1, Asamang, Kenyasi No. 2, Asempaneye, Bogyampa, Tawiakrom, Atwedie, and Gotifi. In Tapa area, Kingsley Adupong and James Kokonu contributed significantly to the establishment of Akwasiasse, Wiaso, Anyinasusu and Tapa Central Seventh-day Adventist Churches.

Critically, the Adventist Mission in Ahafo area developed through the contributions of Gospel Ministers like Daniel K. Debrah, Stephen K. Onyinah, Aikins Amponsah, William Gabriel Mensah, Paul M. Djikunu, Benjamin K. Opoku, James K. Anto, Daniel K. Marri, Samuel Adu-Gyamfi, Agyemang Kwaku Pambuor, Martin Appiah Kyeremeh, John Akumfi-Ameyaw, Edward Nyarko, Joseph Agyemang and Desmond Osei Tutu Acheampong. Between 1983 and 1986, Elder Paul Bright Arthur acted as the Goaso District Pastor for three years.⁴

Initially, the Adventist leaders in the Ahafo area focused on the evangelistic activities. Thus, the preaching of the Adventist message became part and parcel of their lives. Therefore, they sowed the seed of self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Consequently, soul winning and Church planting contributed immensely to the growth and the development of the Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Table 1: Church Membership in Ahafo Area from 1985 to 2015

Year	Church Membership
1985	1,100
1990	1,834
1995	2,357
2000	3,742
2005	4,922

³ Goaso South District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Inauguration and Fund Raising" (Goaso: Emmareg Press, 2013), 17.

⁴ Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "First Elders' Council" (Goaso: Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2017), 7.

2010	5,952
2015	7,630

(Sources: Ayomso District of Seventh-day Adventist Church Inauguration, 2016, 10).

Soul winning and church planting became the hallmark of the Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church. This has led to the opening of many Seventh-day Adventist Churches in almost every villages and town in Ahafo. Through these activities, Adventist Church has witnessed phenomenal growth. Whenever the Gospel is proclaimed and converts made, the Church makes time to nurture and disciple them. Thus, Pastors and elders are assigned to teach the converts the word of God. This system agrees with Christ method of evangelization. The proclamation of the Good News should aim at nurturing Christians or Adventist believers. Between the periods 1985 to 2015, the Seventh-day Adventist Church membership at Ahafo increased from 1,100 to 7,630.⁵The table above showed that within the period of 30 years the Church membership in Ahafo amounted to 7,630. This presupposes that from 1985 to 2015, there has been 1000 increment of Church membership per year and 84 per month respectively. This indicates a huge achievement attained by the missionaries in the Ahafo territory. The tremendous significant success chalked by the evangelists, elders, and Pastors concerning Church planting from 1960 to 2015. These are shown below:

From 1960 to 1965, there were seven Churches in the Ahafo territory namely Nkasaim, Goaso, Kenyasi No. 2 Central, Kwapong Central, Sankore Central, Manhyia No. 4, Alavanyo with two Districts, Goaso and Sankore respectively established. The study divulges that from 1966 to 1975 the Goaso District made a significant contribution by planting seven Adventist Churches at Mim Central, Akrodie Central, Tapa, Apenkrom, Hwidiem, Goaso Central, and Kenyasi No. 1. The study reveals that from 1976 to 1985 the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Ahafo area developed and grew into four Districts namely Goaso, Sankore, Kenyasi and Mim with twenty-one Churches, namely; Asumura, Nakete, Pomaakrom, Manukrom, Ayomso, Weijakrom, Kumaho, Atimkrom, Fawohoyeden, Edwinase, Anwianwia, Kukuom, Atwedie, Tawiahkrom, Obengkrom, Acherensua, Apenamadi, Asukese, Kensere, Dominase and Beposo. Within this period, there has been a significant change both in the number of Districts and Churches in the Ahafo sector. The reason is that it was at this time that active missionary work began. Hence, Districts, Churches, and Church membership were positively impacted. More Pastors and evangelists were also involved in the outreach programmes.

In 1990, three Districts working together were able to plant twenty-two Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Goaso area. The churches were Manhyia, Dadiesoaba Central, Noberkow, Mensakrom, Camp No. 1, Adwumam, Abuom, Kokooso, Dodowa, Adwumakase, Oppongkro, Asarekrom, Kwaopretye, Mim New Town, Gambia No.2, Kasapin, Driverkrom, Adenkyekeye, Asanteman Council,

⁵ Ayomso District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Inauguration and Fund Raising" (Ayomso: Frank Creativity), 10. This implies that the relationship between the laities and the Pastors was cordial and as a result it had yielded a positive evangelistic results of Church membership of 7,630 within thirty years period.

Asemaneye, Ntotroso Central, and Gotifi.⁶

From 1991 to 1995, four Districts substantially contributed to the increase of Churches in the Ahafo territory by seventeen. Hence, these Churches were Mehame, Dantano, Asuadai, Annum, Amankwakrom, Anwiam, Fawoman, Manhyia No. 1, Agyarekrom, Bediako, Gambia No. 1, Peterkrom, Nyankomago, Wam, Adiemmra No. 4, Asamang, and Atuahenekrom. Again, from 1996 to 2005 four Districts (Goaso, Sankore, Kenyasi, Mim) planted Adventist Churches at Edwinase, Kwakunyuma, Anwianwia, Duakrom, Mpemase, Pesewkrom, Tettekwo, Durowakrom, Afidowa, Kwadwokumikrom, Kwadwommokrom, and Bogyampa.⁷

From 2006 to 2010, Goaso, Sankore and Mim Districts set up Adventist Churches at Nkrankrom, Siana, Asufufuo, Mintumi, Owusukrom, Nsuta, Yaabeneagya, Agravi, Biaso, Mim Maranatha which increased Church membership from 4,922 to 5,952. From 2011 to 2015, nine Districts established Churches like Dechem, Sienchem, Worammuso, Gyasikrom, Dadiesoaba Freedom in Christ, Twabidi, Akotoso, Gyedu, Wamahiniso, Ntotroso Step to Christ, Ntotroso Heritage, Goaso Victory, Goaso Prince of Peace, Aglago, Tweneboa, Nyamebekeyre, Akrodie New Life, Kwapong Victory, Hope Kenyasi No. 1, Maranatha Kenyasi No. 2, Sankore Philadelphia, Sankore Macedonia, Awewoho and Kwabenakumah. Thus, in 2015, Church planting helped to improve Church membership tremendously.

The Ahafo Adventist laypersons employed house to house visitation to preach the Good News to the local people. The involvement of the laypersons in the mission accounted for the success of Adventist mission since the converts could easily relate to the ordinary people. These soul winning methods had direct implications for the Churches and their missions. It has helped in the opening of new Churches and also contributed to the numerical strength of the Adventist Church.

The Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist missionaries focused on paramount areas and used that as their basis to propagate the Good News in the hamlets, cottages and the villages. In spite of transportation challenges, many of the evangelists went on foot to the smaller towns to disseminate the Adventist message. Other missionaries also used bicycles to share the word of God. They defied all odds and developed a strong passion for evangelizing to the people at Ahafo. Therefore, through this method, they were able to win more souls to plant many Churches.

The evangelists took massive soul winning drives. They trekked to nearby and outlying villages with the Gospel. The soul-winning method took several forms. There was sometimes door to door evangelism or mass evangelistic rallies, crusades or conventions in towns and villages. The door to door evangelism can be termed as mass evangelism. Mass evangelism is deemed as an effective means of introducing a church in a community. This system can be

tagged as an "open-air" campaign.⁸ During evangelistic campaigns, participants are challenged to give their lives to Jesus Christ and convert to Adventism. Public evangelism involves the use of public address system and human support. This form of evangelism most often attracts a large number of people.

Again, the literates and illiterates, rich and poor, men and women deemed it possible to evangelize to win more souls for Christ. Thus, this system helped to plant new Churches. Additionally, the Church organized retreats, conventions, and rallies to disseminate the Good News. The Ahafo evangelists made the converts feel responsible for the mission. They also related well to the indigenes. With this, the converts were able to give both in cash and kind to support the mission work. Hence, most of the people in their various communities readily understood and accepted the Adventist message. They were made aware that the mission belonged to the Lord and not just individual evangelists. This finally helped them to comprehend the Seventh-day Adventist message.

Strategically, Adventist hymns and choruses contributed positively to the growth and development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ahafo.⁹ In 1985, the leaders of the Church realized that they could spread the Gospel through Adventist hymns and choruses. Through song ministration, people got to know and understand the Adventist message thereby giving themselves to Christ. This system usually helped to increase Church population.

Historically Speaking, the early Adventist leaders and evangelists identified themselves with the indigenous people. When they arrived at the Ahafo region, they ate the local food and slept in the same room with the people. The strategy of familiarization with natives helped the Adventist pioneers at Ahafo to disseminate God's word effectively and efficiently. In a nutshell, the Ahafo Adventist Gospel workers employed Christ's method of evangelization. Thus, they mingled, sympathized, ministered to the physical needs of the people, won the peoples' confidence, and bade them follow me as elaborated by Ellen G. White.¹⁰

It is also crystal clear that the small group ministries as one of the outreach activities helped to increase church membership by 30%.¹¹ This increase is a significant contribution to Church population in the Ahafo area. The paper posits that one hundred and twenty Adventist Churches in the Ahafo area participated in community services on first Sunday of every month. Thus, the small

⁶ Ebenezer Nti, Elder of Mim Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, interview by the author, Mim, 20 December 2017.

⁷ Secretary of Mid-West Ghana Conference "Statistical Report" (Sunyani: Mid-West Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 3.

⁸ Africa-India Ocean Division of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department," *Quinquennial Action Plan* (Abidjan: Africa India Ocean of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000-2005), 15.

⁹ Gambia District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Inauguration and Fund Raising" (Gambia: Excel Press, 2016), 4.

¹⁰ Africa-India Ocean Division of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department," *Quinquennial Action Plan* (Abidjan: Africa India Ocean of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000-2005), 20.

¹¹ Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department" (Goaso: Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2017), 2.

group ministries helped to increase Church membership. The introduction of social services to mission effort is another contribution made by the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Ahafo. This contribution marks a significant paradigm shift in the work of the Church. Thus, the Seventh-day Adventist Church runs several schools, University, hospitals and clinics to serve humankind. Apart from this, the Adventist Church at Ahafo donates charitable items to the people at children homes, prisons, leprosarium and mental hospitals. The Women’s Ministries Department and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) are the arms of the Adventist Church in charge of these social services. Thus, the Adventist Relief Agency (ADRA) provides physical, social and emotional needs of the people.¹² They also render spiritual assistance to people when the need arises. These social services furnish developmental growth to the natives at Ahafo. It consequently improves the well-being of the body, spirit, and soul.

Besides this, community development was adopted as a way to improve the Seventh-day Adventist mission in the Ahafo territory. This act agrees with the biblical teaching of caring for the needy and alleviating the suffering of the poor as exemplified in the ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 4:18-19).¹³ This method helped to develop the economic lives of the people. It is, therefore, to be noted that the evangelists at Ahafo were guided by the principle of salvation through community development. For instance, as the Ahafo mission work expanded, many Adventist evangelists supported the needy. The leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Ahafo provided the missionaries with financial and material support to help them discharged their duties. They educated the Church members concerning the challenges in the Church to solicit their support for the missionary work.

Essentially, project giving, tithe, and offering contributed positively to the growth and development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church mission in Ahafo. Thus, the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Ahafo educated their members on how to return tithe and offering.¹⁴ The return of tithe and offering assisted the Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church to generate income for Church operation and evangelism. The tithing and offering system currently provide significant support to the Seventh-day Adventist Church mission at Ahafo.

Moreover, radio evangelism has also contributed significantly to the growth and development of the Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church membership. Interestingly, evangelistic campaigns have been going on through three radio stations in the Ahafo area. These radio stations are Success Fm; Goaso, Anapua Fm; Kenyasi and Adunu Fm;

Sankore.¹⁵ Besides these radio stations, information centers have been situated in towns like Mim, Nkasaim, Abuom, Camp No. 1, Kukuom, Apemkro, Hwidiem, Kasapin, Gambia No.2 and Ayomso. Thus, the evangelists have been preaching the Seventh-day Adventist message on these radio stations and the information centers on every Sabbath morning. To the glory of God, these electronic media yielded one hundred and fifty (50) souls at the end of 2015 period of review.¹⁶

Meanwhile, the Adventists who hailed from the Ashanti region focused on education as part of their missionary activities. One cannot mention the origin and history of Seventh-day Adventist education or schools in Ahafo without alluding to the educational policy of the Church. Thus, the policy of the Seventh-day Adventist education is Christ-centered education emerging from the premise that man fell in the Garden of Eden and should be redeemed and restored to the original state of creation.¹⁷ Hence, there is a need to restore man to the image of the Creator. There is also a convincing philosophy within the policy to make Christ the center of all learning. The method of redeeming and restoring the image of Christ in lost humanity is explained as the integration of faith and learning. The Seventh-day Adventist Church educational policy evolved, and therefore its central pillars have always been constant from the beginning. The policy calls for the need to give an alternative to secular education by teaching physical fitness, emotional soundness, social issues, mental alertness, moral values and the fear of God in students of the Seventh-day Adventist schools. Thus, the philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist schools can be termed as "wholistic education."¹⁸ The reason is that it touches the aspects of cognitive, affective and psychomotor. These factors motivated the educationist of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Ahafo to establish these schools.

Table 2: Seventh-day Adventist Schools in Ahafo Area

Town	Number Of Pupils In Primary School	Number Of Students In Junior High School (J.H.S)
Mim	294	142
Goaso	470	150
Sankore	275	138
Hwidiem	178	--
Kenyasi	103	--
Kwapong	328	153
Akroddie	260	--
Alavanyo	305	95
Ayomso	110	--
Fawohoyeden	67	--
Kukuom	278	105
Asumura	115	--
Total	2,783	783

¹² Secretary of Mid-West Ghana Conference “Statistical Report” (Sunyani: Mid-West Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 4.

¹³ Kwapong District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, “Inauguration and Fund Raising” (Kwapong: Excel Press, 2016), 3.

¹⁴ Kasapin District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, “Inauguration and Fund Raising” (Kasapin: Precise Cab Print, 2017), 4.

¹⁵ Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, “Communication Department” (Goaso: Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2017), 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923). 9.

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923). 229.

(Sources: Margaret Appiah, General Manageress of S.D.A Educational Unit, Goaso, 2017).

From the above table, it can be seen that there are 12 Primary Schools and 6 Junior High Schools in the Ahafo territory. The Primary Schools have a population of 2,783 and the Junior High Schools with 783 students.¹⁹ It can, therefore, be argued that historically, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ahafo has more primary schools than junior schools. But, Ahafo Adventist Church does not have any colleges and tertiary institutions.

Thus, the Seventh-day Adventist Church developed a network of primary, secondary, college of education and nursing, tertiary educational institute one after the other. The schools focus on the educational philosophy and policy of the Seventh-day Adventist mission. The Seventh-day Adventist education gives sound moral values to the students. The schools were initially meant only to provide trained personnel for Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to attain the Adventist aim of evangelization. Additional responsibilities were placed on the schools over time, other than the provision of staff only. Radically enough, the Seventh-day Adventist primary and junior schools at Ahafo area were established to train the Adventist children to understand the philosophy and mission of the Church. In the course of time, the Adventist Church established an Adventist University to provide tertiary education to Seventh-day Adventist ministers. The graduates were given a broad-based American-form of bachelor's degree in liberal arts. The early plan into tertiary education went against the grain of colonial educational policy but at the same time met the nationalist demands.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe (animate and inanimate). God created humankind perfect in His image. Human beings, by their own choice, rebelled against God and fell into a condition of sin, resulting in a separation between humans and God. The Seventh-day Adventist Church philosophy of education, therefore, is paramountly Christ-centered. The Seventh-day Adventist believes that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's character and purpose can be understood as revealed in Jesus Christ, the Bible, and nature.²⁰ The unique characteristics of Adventist education derive from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White point to the redemptive aim of true education that is to restore humanity to the lost image of Christ. Hence, these are the means of restoring humankind to their original relationship with God for effective mission.

Thus, the Seventh-day Adventist Church policy on the establishment of schools is subdivided into responsibilities and outcomes both for students and the Church's mission.²¹ The primary and junior secondary schools are expected to offer a climate in which the will of God can be comprehended by the pupils by which they can be led to

entrust their lives to God and to assist others. The schools are to foster an organized outreach program toward spiritual, mental, social and emotional development. Apart from that, they are to furnish the essential core of skills and knowledge for everyday living appropriate to their age. They are also to encourage a wholesome appreciation and respect for the home, Church, school, and community. Children who are supposed to complete the primary school should have the opportunity of committing their lives to Christ by conversion and baptism. They should demonstrate competence in thinking, communication, quantitative and interpersonal skills. They should be able to practice healthful and balanced living and appreciate the dignity of labor. The Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools are established to offer a formal and informal curriculum integrating academic and spiritual values to help the students attain positive morality for the Church's mission.²²

The philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Church healthcare is to deliver wholistic quality medical facility to save humans' life. It is upon this reason that Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church employed its healthcare ministry. In healthcare ministry, the construction of hospitals, clinics, health centers are another area to augment the medical mission of the Church. Thus, the healthcare helps to improve the health condition of the people in the various communities. Therefore, the hospitals and clinics in both urban and rural areas help in saving the lives of many people in the Ahafo region.²³ Thus, medical mission has helped to bring the Good News of salvation to the indigenes in the Ahafo territory. Therefore, through the medical mission, people get to know and understand the Adventist message. With this, they became Seventh-day Adventist Church members.

Historically, the Ahafo missionaries evangelized through literature.²⁴ In the first place, the literature materials served as a job to many evangelists. Hence, they earned income for their daily living. Besides, the Adventist tracks and pamphlets were employed by the evangelists to propagate the Good News. Through the literature ministry, many people accepted the Adventist faith. Thus, this also helped to bring in more members to the Church population.

Challenges of Missionary Work in the Ahafo Territory

In spite of the remarkable achievements of the Church in the area of soul winning and Church planting, education, and healthcare, the Church in its early days encountered numerous challenges. These challenges hurt the Adventist mission there. They are indicated below:

African indigenous religion and other denominations serve as a challenge to the Adventist mission. Christian denominations like the Roman Catholic Church, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church and African Faith came to Ahafo in 1905, 1930, 1935 and 1937 respectively. This presupposes that Roman Catholic, Methodist Church,

¹⁹ Margaret Appiah, General Manageress of Seventh-day Adventist Education Unit, "End of Year Report" (Goaso: Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2017), 11.

²⁰ Kasapin District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Inauguration and Fund Raising" (Kasapin: Precise Cab Print, 2017), 7.

²¹ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), 232.

²² Margaret Appiah, General Manageress of Seventh-day Adventist Education Unit, "End of Year Report" (Goaso: Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2017), 5.

²³ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁴ Elvis Kwame-Fosu, Elder of Fowohoyeden Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, interview by the author, Goaso, 21 December 2017.

Presbyterian Church and African Faith gained root before the inception of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ahafo.²⁵ Thus, the Roman Catholic Church and African Faith practised their service through African religious system. This system of worship suited the interest of the people at Ahafo. Hence, they were influenced to join such Churches at the expense of the Adventist Church.

Islam in the Ahafo sector served as a threat to the Adventist mission. Most Church Elders in the Ahafo area in 1985 were adherents of Islam. Some of the disciples could be described as Islamic fanatics. Thus, their entrenched beliefs in Islam made them oppose the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Consequently, they made efforts to resist the Adventist evangelists in disseminating the Gospel message.

The Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church mission has been fraught with the poor accessibility of roads.²⁶ Many roads in the Ahafo area are inaccessible to reach villages and towns to disseminate God's message. As a result of this, the Gospel workers find it difficult to reach such rural areas to propagate the Good News. Hence, poor accessibility of roads accounted for low Church membership in the Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Also, the inadequate transportation system is another problem hindering Seventh-day Adventist Church mission in Ahafo. During 1985, vehicles and cars were insufficient in the Ahafo area. Interestingly, only a few people went on foot to the villages to evangelize.²⁷ By dint of this, many evangelists could not penetrate in the rural areas to share God's message. Consequently, inadequate transport impeded the growth of missionary work at Ahafo.

Apart from transportation challenges, there were financial constraints. The people of Ahafo are predominantly peasant farmers.²⁸ Most of them engage in cocoa farming. Thus, cocoa farming is mainly a seasonal farming practice by some of the Adventists at Ahafo territory. On the strength of this, the Adventist believers receive colossal sums of money during the cocoa seasons which is usually between October and February. Since the Adventist farmers earn income on a yearly basis, the Church regularly gets a small amount of money which cannot cater for the operation of the Church throughout the year which negatively affects evangelization.

Inadequate missionary workers is also challenge faced by the Adventist mission at Ahafo area.²⁹ In the Ahafo territory, few people can read and write. In the light of this, only a few laities join the evangelistic campaign groups to propagate the Adventist message. In addition to this, high rate of illiteracy among the Adventist people in the Ahafo

territory has affected mission negatively. The reason is that most evangelists and Bible workers in the Ahafo region lack primary education at the time of evangelization process. As a result, most Gospel workers were not well versed in the Bible. Hence, they could not interpret scripture to suit the contemporary Biblical understanding.

Again, failure of some Church members to return their tithe and offering to Ahafo Adventist Church impede missionary activities.³⁰ Many Seventh-day Adventist believers in the Ahafo area originate from the Ashanti region. By dint of this, they usually return their tithe and offering to their mother Churches in the Ashanti region. Thus, only a few believers return tithe and offering to the Adventist Church in Ahafo. Therefore, this trend has negatively affected the performance of tithe and systematic offering which consequently affects the Adventist Church mission in Ahafo.

Malaria infection is also a great challenge faced by the Seventh-day Adventist evangelists in Ahafo.³¹ Many of the Ahafo evangelists contracted malaria in the course of discharging their God's work. Most of the reported cases were as a result of the missionaries being bitten by mosquitoes. On the strength of this, many of the victims were hospitalized. To the glory of God, some of the victims got healed whereas others passed away as a result of the malaria attack. For instance, in 1973, evangelist Sampson Awuah, a native of Goaso was infected with severe malaria and passed away. Evangelist Akwasi Ackah was also attacked by malaria and died in 1980. In 1984, Owusu Amoh, a renowned Adventist evangelist from Kumasi was hit by thunder and died instantly during an evangelistic campaign at Goaso. Therefore, the death of these missionaries negatively served as an impediment to the missionary enterprise in the Ahafo territory.

The poor communication system has been a problem faced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church mission at Ahafo area. The early Adventist leaders miscommunicated about the Adventist message to the citizens in the Ahafo territory.³² On the strength of this, it discouraged many people to accept the Adventist faith.

Summary and Conclusion

It is quite clear that the missionaries in Ahafo territory confronted with challenges like Islam and other religions, poor road and transportation system, inadequate missionary workers and finance, failure of some Church members to return tithe and offering, malaria infection, and poor communication system. In spite of all these pitfalls, pragmatic evangelistic plans can be employed to overcome such phenomena. In the first place, literacy schools should be constructed in the Churches, so that members can be taught how to read and write in Twi as well as in English. This will help to get more people to read in Twi and English more especially the Bible and other evangelistic materials. Hence, the indigenous people should be trained

²⁵ Beatrice Durowaa, Member of Manhyia Seventh-day Adventist Church, interview by the author, Goaso, December 2017.

²⁶ Cecilia Addai, Member of Hwidiem Seventh-day Adventist Church, interview by the author, Hwidiem, 23 December 2017.

²⁷ Sankore District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Inauguration and Fund Raising" (Sankore: Kuapaye Printing Press, 1986), 5.

²⁸ Ibid., 6.

²⁹ Stephenson Afreh, Member of Goaso Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, interview by the author, Akrodie, 22 December 2017.

³⁰ Maxwell Ntim-Antwi, "President Report at 2017 End of Year Review," 2017, Par., 9.

³¹ Goaso North District of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Inauguration and Fund Raising" (Goaso: Emmareg Printing Press, 2011), 6.

³² Yeboah Adu, Elder of Fawohoyeden Mizpah Seventh-day Adventist Church, interview by the author, Goaso, 23 December 2017.

to embark upon evangelistic campaigns.

Critically speaking, relational evangelization can be also embraced and practised. Essentially, Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church can focus seriously on the physical and social needs of the people in their communities where such people can be converted as Adventists. Hence, indigenized worship and medical mission can be employed to augment soul winning activities. Finally, broad educational and vocational programmes can be adopted to improve Ahafo Adventist missionary endeavors. It can therefore be concluded that Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church mission had contributed significantly to that of Ghana Adventist message and West Africa in general.

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