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Osei-Acheampong Desmond Tutu

Theological seminary,
Adventist University of Africa,
Kenya, Nairobi

The Historical Socio-Political and Economic Factors and Their Implications on Ahafo Adventist Mission

Osei-Acheampong Desmond Tutu

Abstract

The Ahafo Adventist missionary enterprise has been influenced by historical socio-political and economic factors for the past fifty years. It is therefore pertinent that these phenomena need to be investigated to arrive at the best answers to ameliorate the Gospel message. This research paper will specifically deal with question like, how does the socio-political feature determine the Seventh-day Adventist mission in Ahafo? What are some of the economic activities that influence the Seventh-day Adventist mission in Ahafo? This paper seeks to educate and inform the readers that Ahafo area composes of multiplicity of ethnic groups where many of them are predominantly farmers with only few Government workers. The study will positively conclude that in spite of the socio-political and economic challenges, the missionary endeavors have been going on well.

Keywords: Social, Political, Economic, Ahafo, Seventh-day Adventist, Mission

Introduction

The Ahafo area had been saddled with a lot of socio-political and economic mishaps in early and mid-ninetieth century. In spite of all these difficulties the Adventist Church in Ahafo had made a tremendous achievement in the missionary activities. Therefore, this study is necessary to find out how certain external determinants influenced Adventist mission work in the Ahafo. This research paper basically focuses on the historical development of the Seventh-day Adventist mission in the Ahafo territory of Ghana. It also seeks the historical socio-political and economic profile of Ghana, the Brong Ahafo Region, and the Ahafo territory. It also examines socio-political and economic determinants on mission work, summary and conclusion.

Socio-Political and Economic Profile of Ghana

Ghana is situated on the West Coast of Africa. Ghana is currently divided into ten administrative and commercial regions, with Accra as its capital. Ghana's population is estimated to be about 28 million people (World Bank, 2015). The people of Ghana include several different ethnic groups; the Akans 44%, Moshi-Dagomba 16%, Gonjas 16%, Ewe 13%, Ga 8%, Gurma 3% and Yoruba 1%.¹

Ghana is a country with a multi-party system of governance. Ghana was colonized by the British from 1897 until 1957 when she gained her independence. It was total emancipation through some stalwart leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Arko Adjei, Edward Akuffo-Addo, Joseph Boakye Danquah, Obetsebi Lamptey and William Ofori Attah.² In 1957, Ghana (formerly known as the Gold Coast) became the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's founding president, served for nine years before hewas overthrown in 1966 through a coup d'état.³

Correspondence:

Osei-Acheampong Desmond Tutu

Theological seminary,
Adventist University of Africa,
Kenya, Nairobi

¹ Ghana Statistical Service, *Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire Survey* (Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 1987), 11.

² Daniel Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), 39.

³ Jerry Wiseman, *Democracy in Black Africa: Survival and Revival* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 53.

Meanwhile, after Nkrumah's regime, Ghana was governed by a series of military despots with intermittent experiments with democratic rule, but most of them were curtailed by military takeovers. Democratic governance was restored in 1992 with a new constitution when Jerry John Rawlings, who had been Ghana's military leader since 1981, was elected as president.⁴

Ghana has held five consecutive elections which have broadly been considered to be "free, fair and transparent."⁵ Currently, Ghana is dominated by two political parties namely; the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC).⁶ The democratic governance which has now gained root in Ghana is what has made the nation a leading democracy in Africa.

Ghana is blessed with several resources such as gold, bauxite, diamond, manganese, silver and the like.⁷ Ghana's economy has gone through a lot of strides towards reaching middle-income state.⁸ As a result of mismanagement on the part of successive governments, the economy of Ghana has not reached the expectations of the citizens.

Ghana's economy primarily relies on three sectors namely; agriculture, industry, and services.⁹ The economy of Ghana is dominated by agriculture which employs about 40 percent of the working force of the population.¹⁰ Ghana is the second leading exporter of cocoa in the world. It is also a significant exporter of goods like gold, bauxite, diamond, manganese and timber. The country has many tourist attraction centers like castles, Damango Tourist Center, Fiema Monkey Sanctuary, Cape Coast Kakum forest, and Kintampo waterfalls. Thus, tourists come from far and near to visit the country, and this significantly gives Ghana a considerable sum of money. These factors have also contributed positively to the socio-political and economic activities in the Brong Ahafo Region.

Socio-Political and Economic Profile of Brong Ahafo Region

The Brong Ahafo Region is one of the ten administrative Regions in Ghana. The region was carved out of the former Ashanti province in March 1959 when a bill was passed under a certificate of urgency by parliament.¹¹ Sunyani became the administrative capital of the region. The Brong Ahafo Region covers an area of 39,557 square kilometers and shares boundaries with the Northern Region to the north, the Ashanti and Western Regions to the south, the Volta Region to the east, the Eastern Region to the

southeast and La Cote d'Ivoire to the west.¹²

The Brong Ahafo Region has 22 Administrative Districts where each is headed by a District Chief Executive (DCE), who is under the political, administrative jurisdiction of the Regional Minister Section 140 of the Local Government Act 1963 (Act 462).¹³ The Local Government Act 1963 (Act 462) established Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) with the primary aim of coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the activities of sector departments like Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDA).¹⁴

The Brong Ahafo Region lies in the forest zone which produces cocoa and timber.¹⁵ The northern part is the savannah zone which also produces grain and tuber. The Region has two main ethnic groups namely the Brono and the Ahafo who are part of the Akan people.¹⁶ The majority groups are the Akans while the Mo-Degha of Mo, the Nafana of Sampa, the Libya of Banda, Koulongo of Seikwa and Badu, and Nchumuru of Atebubu and Sene are the minorities.

According to the 2010 population census, Brong Ahafo has a population of 2,924,827 with an average annual growth rate of 3.1 %. And people in economically active jobs represent 45% of the population between the ages 15-65.¹⁷ Available data indicates that 48.5% of the population in the Brong Ahafo Region age between 15 years and above are illiterate.¹⁸ With this statistics, the males form 42.1% whereas the females take 57.9%. As a result of the high illiteracy rate in the region, reading and information flow regarding posters, brochures, and written adverts are scarce. Thus, the leadership of Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church has put in place literacy school to educate such people to know how to read and write in Twi and English language.

Economically speaking, the Brong Ahafo Region is endowed with natural resources especially tourist attraction sites, mineral deposits, forest and timber species, fertile soil and suitable climatic conditions.¹⁹ The region has a tropical climate with high temperatures averaging 23.9°C and a double maximum rainfall pattern. Rainfall ranges from an average of 1000 mm in the northern parts and 1400 mm in the southern parts. Agriculture is the primary occupation of the people in the Brong Ahafo which forms the backbone of the region's economy accounting to 66.4% of production. On the strength of this, the Brong Ahafo Region is commonly

⁴ Frank M. Bourret, *Ghana, the Road to Independence, 1919-1957* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), 47.

⁵ John Herbst, *The Politics of Reform in Ghana, 1982-1991* (Fallbrook, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 66.

⁶ Noah Chazan, *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics: Managing Political Recession* (Boulder: West View Press, 1983), 82.s

⁷ Thomas Killick, *Development Economics in Action: A Study of Economic Policy in Ghana* (London: Heinemann, 1987), 22.

⁸ James R. Aryee, "Divestiture Program in Ghana: Experience and Lesson," *Ghana Economic Outlook* 3 (1998): 320-323.

⁹ Job C. Ahiakpor, "Economic Policy Reform and the poor: Consistency or Betrayal?" *Journal of Modern African Studies* 29 (1991): 583-600.

¹⁰ Timothy M. Brown, "Macroeconomic Data of Ghana," *Economic Bulletin of Ghana* 21(1972): 415-425.

¹¹ Philomena Nyarko, "Government Statistician," *Brong Ahafo Region Analytical Report*, 2013.

¹² Joseph Agyemang, "A Strategy for Small Group Implementation in the Goaso South District, Ghana," (MA Project, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 2013), 27.

¹³ Ghana Statistical Service, "Regional Analytical Report" (Sunyani: Ghana Statistical Service, 2013), 11.

¹⁴ Ibid., 12.

¹⁵ Ibid., 28.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ghana Statistical Service, *Population, and Housing Census: Brong Ahafo Regional Report* (Sunyani: Ghana Statistical Service, 2013), 14.

¹⁸ Dome Anane, "The Nature of the New Members in the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Sunyani East District, Ghana" (MA Project Kenya, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 2009), 32.

¹⁹ Thomas W. Swan, "Economic Control in Dependent Economy," *Economic Record* 50(1956): 339-356.

described as the backbone of Ghana's economy. The Brong Ahafo productive activities have also contributed significantly to the socio-political and economic activities. Thus, peace, unity, tranquility and economic viability have been restored to Ahafo area which finally promoted the growth and historical development of Seventh-day Adventist Church mission in Ahafo, Goaso.

Socio-Political and Economic Profile of Ahafo Territory

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ahafo is headquartered in Goaso. Thus, Ahafo takes its foundation from the colonial Ashanti region which was created as far back as 1912.²⁰ The Ahafo territory shares common boundaries with the Ahafo Ano Districts to the north and east, the Dormaa Municipal to the north-west and the Juaboso Bia and Sefwi Wiawso Districts in the Western Region to the west and south respectively.²¹ The Ahafo territory has a wet semi-deciduous climatic zone which experiences a substantial amount of rainfall. The region experiences double rain with the annual rainfall between 1250 mm and 1750 mm.²² With this; the significant rains are in April and July while the minor season occurs between September and October. Thus, the mean monthly temperature for the Ahafo area is about 25.5°C.

Ahafo has a population of 1,001,105 representing 3.6% of the Brong Ahafo Regional total population.²³ Available facts indicate that the males constitute 50.4% and the females 49.6%. Meanwhile, sixty percent of the population in the Ahafo territory is rural dwellers.²⁴ The residents in Ahafo are mostly Akans who constitute about 80%, and the other tribes form 20%. Christianity is the predominant religion which represents 60%, followed by Islam 38%, African Traditional Religion 1%, and the Animist also covers 1%.²⁵

Historical evidence indicates that agriculture is the mainstay of the economy of the people in the Ahafo area. In the light of this, the majority of the population in the Ahafo is predominantly farmers.²⁶ Thus, such people engage in vegetable and cash crop production, fishery, forestry, mining and only a few government workers.²⁷ Besides agriculture, industries, and services, the area has two major historical tourist sites namely, "mimbuor" and "the white-necked rock fowls" (popularly known as Anamie), which generate massive income to the local economy.²⁸ Significantly enough, the economic and political stability have contributed positively to the growth and development of Seventh-day Adventist Church in

Ahafo in particular, and for that matter Ghana and numerical strength in the world Church in general.

Socio-Political and Economic Determinants on Ahafo Adventist Mission Work

The relative peace and tranquility Ghana enjoyed over the past thirty-five years had significantly contributed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church mission in Ahafo.²⁹ As a result of peace and harmony in Ghana, the Adventist missionaries were able to go to villages, towns and cities to proclaim the word of God. With this, many converts were baptized to the glory of God. Hence, these believers were educated to return tithe, systematic and project giving so as to improve the Ahafo Adventist Church financial position.

The effective economic viability in Ghana over some years has helped the Ahafo Adventists to establish Basic and Junior High Schools.³⁰ Essentially, Seventh-day Adventist Educational system is to develop the pupils or students physically, socially, morally, mentally, emotionally and spiritually dimensions. As a result many students are capable to attain the needed respect and the positive attitude in school, home and church. Again, these pupils or students are supported in receiving creative and evaluative roles in developing ethical, religious and social values compatible with the doctrinal teachings of Seventh-day Adventist Church. Here, such educated people can work within or outside Adventist Church with the motive of serving God and humanity. On the strength of this, Seventh-day Adventist Church members in Ahafo would be committed them to the discovery, critical evaluation, and application of knowledge to human's thought and behavior. Consequently, this normally aids to augment missionary endeavors of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ahafo.

Currently, Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church has 12 and 6, Primary and Junior High Schools respectively. The Primary Schools have population of 2,783 and the Junior Schools with 783 students.³¹ Critically speaking, plans have been laid in place to establish Valley View University Campus at Goaso to run Graduate Programmes in Education.

Another great contribution made by Ahafo Seventh-day Adventist Church is the introduction of health emphasis or medical mission.³² Thus, the medical mission has helped to educate people on their diet and physical fitness. Essentially, the Adventist leaders in the Ahafo intend to establish hospital in Goaso to improve health condition of their Church members as well as the people in the community at large.

Again, socio-political and economic viability in Ghana promotes the propagation of the Gospel message. This is because, as a result of peace and harmony, the missionaries are able to discharge their evangelistic activities well. Thus, the proclamation of God's message yields many souls. In the light of this, more Churches have been planted. Available record postulates that from 1960 to 1965,

²⁰ Philomena Nyarko, "Government Statistician," *Asunafo North Municipality Analytical Report* 23 (2014): 110-117.

²¹ Ghana Statistical Service, *Population and Housing Census: Asunafo North Municipal Analytical Report* (Goaso: Ghana Statistical Service, 2014), 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 2.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ National Population Council, *National Population Policy*, Revised Edition, 1994, par 11.

²⁵ Mohammed Koku-Doku, *Asunafo North Municipal Chief Executive Report* at 2015, par.8.

²⁶ Julius Abaala and Sabina Obeng, "Ministry of Food and Agriculture Census and Gender: Lessons Learned in Africa" (Accra: Ministry of Agriculture, 2005), 5.

²⁷ Ministry of Food and Agriculture, *Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development*, 2011-2015.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

³¹ Margaret Appiah, General Manageress of Seventh-day Adventist Education Unit, "End of Year Report" (Goaso: Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2018), 7.

³² Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Health Ministries Department" (Goaso: Green-View Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2016), 4.

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ahafo planted seven Churches.³³ These Churches are Nkasaim, Goaso, Kenyasi No.2 Central, Kwapong Central, Sankore Central, Manhyia No.4 and Alavanyo. Between 1966 and 1975, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ahafo established another seven Churches which include Mim Central, Akrodie Central, Tepa, Apenkrom, Hwidiem, Goaso Central and Kenyasi No.1.

Historical analysis posits that from 1976 to 1985, Ahafo Adventist planted 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. From 1986 to 1990, twenty-two Churches were set up. Thus, these Churches are Goaso Manhyia, Dadiesoaba Central, Noberkow, Mensakrom, Camp No.1, Adwumam, Abuom, Kokooso, Dodowa, Adwumakase, Oppongkrom, Aarekrom, Kwaopretey, Mim New Town, Gambia No.2, Kasapin, Driverkrom, Asanteman Council, Adenkyekye, Asempanaye, Ntotroso Central and Gotifi.³⁴

More importantly, seventeen Churches were opened from 1991 to 1995.³⁵ These Churches include Mehame, Dantano, Asuadai, Annum, Amankwakrom, Anwiam, Fawoman, Manhyia No.1, Agyarekrom, Bediako, Gambia No.1, Peterkrom, Nyankomago, Wam, Adeemmera No.4, Asamang and Atuahenekrom. Again, from 1996 to 2015, the Adventist

Church at Ahafo planted twelve Churches.³⁶ They are Edwinase, Kwakunyuma, Anwianwia, Duakrom, Mpmase, Pesewkrom, Tettekwao, Durowakrom, Afodowa, Kwadwokumikrom, Kwadwommokrom and Bogyampa. Between 2006 and 2010, ten Churches were established. These Churches are Nkrankrom, Siana, Asufufuo, Mintumi, Owusukrom, Nsuta, Yaabeneagya, Agravi, Biaso and Mim Maranatha.

Radically speaking, the socio-political and economic stability helped the missionaries to undertake their missionary activities thereby setting up twenty-four Churches from 2011 to 2015. These are Dechem, Sienchem, Worummuso, Gyasikrom, Dadiesoaba Freedom in Christ, Twabidi, Akotosu, Gyedu, Wamahinso, Ntotroso Step to Christ, Ntoroso Heritage, Goaso Victory, Goaso Prince of Peace, Aglago, Tweneboa, Nyamebekyere, Akrodie New Life, Kwapong Victory, Hope Kenyasi No.2, Maranatha Kenyasi No.2, Sankore Philadelphia, Sankore Macedonia, Awewoho and Kwabenakumah.³⁷ Recently Churches like Amanfrom, Prince Emmanuel, Adu Gyamfi Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dormaa Agogo, Asante Camp, Bedabuo, Kwaadei, Marfokrom, Ahenkro, Manhyia Zongo and Buokrom have been established.

³³ Benjamin Osei, Elder of Manhyia Seventh-day Adventist Church. Interview by the author, Manhyia, 4 January 2018.

³⁴ Nyantakyi Fordjour, Elder of Hwidiem Seventh-day Adventist Church. Interview by the author, Hwidiem, 13 March 2018.

³⁵ Simon Assim, Elder of Oppongkrom Seventh-day Adventist Church. Interview by the author, Goaso, 19 February 2018.

³⁶ Stephen Aboagye, Elder of Kwapong Seventh-day Adventist Church. Interview by the author, Kwapong, 22 February 2018.

³⁷ Adu-Gyamfi Kumanin, Elder of Prince Emmanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church. Interview by the author, Goaso Zongo, 17 May 2018.

Summary and Conclusion

It is quite obvious from the study that the positive economic stability experienced in Ghana impacted significant growth development of Seventh-day Adventist Church mission in Ahafo in particular, and for that Ghana, and numerical strength in the world Church in general. Since, the inception of the Seventh-day Adventist Church mission in Ahafo, many laities had been involved in the outreach programmes. By dint of tremendous performance exhibited by the laypersons, the Ahafo Adventists have been able to plant 120 Churches with a population of 7630. In healthcare, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ahafo frequently embarks upon health seminars to educate and promote the Church members and the entire community on how to enjoy healthy living.

Most importantly, the stable and positive socio-political and economic factors have assisted the leadership of Ahafo Adventist Church to set up more Primary and Junior High Schools. Thus, the establishment of these schools has contributed to the social, moral, mental, emotional, and spiritual growth and development of such individuals. Therefore, the study can be concluded that, even though there has been some socio-political and economic instabilities in Ghana in the mid twentieth century, yet these factors somehow have contributed significantly to the Seventh-day Adventist mission in Ahafo. This has consequently augmented Adventist mission in Ghana at large.

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