



Presbyterian Church Of Ghana Hope Congregation Sakumono Estates

HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOPE, SAKUMONO ESTATES

PREAMBLE

'So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plans and he who waters are equal, and each shall receive his wages according to his labour. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.' 1 Cor. 3: 7 - 9.

The building of the Sakumono Estates as a response to the high demand for residential accommodation and its commissioning in June 1989 saw a number of people moving into the estates originally referred to as "Affordable Estates". By late 1990, the population had increased considerably,

The growth in the population of the Estate gave rise to the need for the establishment of churches by the various Christian denominations to overcome the problem of travelling to Accra and Tema for the purpose of worship. The Presbyterians were not left out in this regard.

FIRST MEETING

A group of Presbyterians namely Mrs Shormeh Gyamfi-Aidoo, Mr. Isaac Akesseh and Mr. Seth Terkper got together and convened a meeting of all Presbyterians in the estates. The meeting was held on the evening of December 29, 1990, in the Sakumono Estates Managers office. A total of 25 persons attended many of who are still in the congregation today. There was complete agreement among them on the need to form a local church.

To this end the following persons volunteered to constitute a planning committee to plan the establishment of the church. They were Mr. W.I.K Dorcoo, Mrs Monica A. Otoo, Mrs Shonneh Gyamfi-Aidoo, Mr. G. S. Klufio, Mr. Seth Terkper and Mr. Isaac Akesseh. The meeting also agreed that until the work of the planning committee was over, Bible Study and prayer meetings would be held to keep members together. The committee made contact with Mr. S.K. Otu-Masi, a Catechist of Prince of Peace Presbyterian Church, Tema, who had also moved into the estates, to provide leadership, Accordingly, Mr. Otu-Masi led the first Bible Study and prayer meeting of the Group on January 8, 1991. Subsequently, Bible study and prayer meetings were held weekly on every Tuesday and this continued well after the commencement of forenoon church services.



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Through the efforts of Catechist Otu-Masi, the planning committee made contact and established a working relationship with Rev. Jonathan Ayitey Mensah and the Session of the Prince of Peace Presbyterian Church, Community 2, Tema, As a result, the Session of that congregation offered guidance and subsequently donated five wooden benches to enable the commencement of the first forenoon church service. Additional ten benches that the planning committee contracted and few more chairs collected from the house and shop of Mad. Mavis Gordor (Lommava) complemented these benches.

FIRST FORENOON SERVICE

The first forenoon church service was held on Sunday February 17, 1991, in one of the classrooms of the Day Nursery Complex (now Bethel Day Nursery). The number of worshippers for the day was sixty-four (64) including children. The sermon for the day was delivered by Catechist Otu-Masi and the Scripture passages were read in English, Twi and Ga. The offertory for the day totaled. Seven Thousand, Four Hundred and Eighty-Five cedis (¢7,485.00).

The growth of the congregation was phenomenal. By the third forenoon service the number of worshippers had jumped to seventy-two (72). This number continued to increase weekly.

The congregation had its first visit by a Reverend Minister on Sunday March 10, 1991. Rev. Jonathan A. Mensah of Prince of Peace Presbyterian Church gave the message that day.

The Minister and Session of Prince of Peace Church formally released Catechist Otu Masi on full-time basis to the congregation on May 7, 1991. With the consultation of the congregation the planning committee was also enlarged and constituted into an Interim Management Committee (IMC), with the inclusion of the following members: Mr. Ernest Armah, Mr. Edward Ashiley, Mrs. Vida Ofosuhene, Mr. Kwabena Otu Danquah, Mad. Mavis Gordor and Mrs Eugenia Bampo-Akuffo.

On the eve of Good Friday, on Thursday March 28, 1991, members attending the Passion week evening service found that the Church had been locked out of the Nursery premises and its benches thrown outside. A member of the IMC. Mr. W.I.K. Dorcoo, then offered his compound at House number C 13/A/C32 to be used as a place



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of worship that evening under a canopy he has erected for his own domestic use, Church activities continued at this compound for quite a long time.

The first Holy Communion service was conducted on Good Friday March 29, 1991. It was officiated by Rev. Jonathan A. Mensah assisted by Rev. Owusu Sarpong who was then on attachment to the Prince of Peace Church. Rev. Mensah also carried out the first baptism on Sunday July 28, 1991. Fifteen children were baptized on that day.

SELECTION OF A NAME

The members desired to give a name to the congregation before its inauguration. After much prayer, it chose the name 'PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOPE' from among a list of names suggested by the members themselves. This was done through secret ballot during the forenoon service on October 27, 1991. Prof D. Nortey, a lay preacher and friend of the young congregation, who preached the sermon on that day, supervised the selection.

INAUGURATION

On the first anniversary of the church on February 18, 1992, it was inaugurated at a colourful ceremony. This was conducted by the then Ga Presbytery Chairman, Rev. Dr. B. Y. Quarshie. Rev. Ayitey Mensah the then Presbytery Clerk and other Ministers assisted him. The first Session of the congregation comprising twelve Presbyters was also commissioned and inducted into office.

Inauguration Committee:- Messrs. Ben Botwe (Chairman), Cat. S.K. Otu-Masi, A.B. Afari, W.I.K. Dotcoo I.K. Akeseh, Opintan, G.L.S. Klufio P.K. Koomson Mad. Gladys Yeboah, Mrs. Eugenia Bampoe-Akuffo.

SEARCH FOR PERMANENT PLACE OF WORSHIP

The difficulties and inconvenience faced in securing a stable and permanent place of worship led the church to intensify its efforts to acquire land for the building of a befitting temple to the glory of God. While the church pursued private arrangements to acquire a plot, it also worked together with other churches in the Estates under the umbrella of the local council of churches to lobby the Tema Development Corporation (TDC) for the release of land for the purpose.

The prayers were answered and the TDC allocated a parcel of land for five churches in the estates. This parcel of land was later found to be too small for the five congregations. After some appeals to the roc, they agreed to graciously allocate



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another parcel of land in another location to supplement. The five churches decided to ballot for these plots. The church by the Grace of God selected the parcel of land where the chapel building currently stands. Acquisition formalities were completed and the right to enter the land was given by the TDC in August 1993.

SOD-CUTTING CEREMONY

A building Committee made up of Messrs E. Monear (Chainman), W. I. K Dorcoo, K. Otu-Danquah, Isaac Siaw Adu, E. Appiah Ansah, Sackey, Cat. Otu Masi and Mrs. Monica Otoo and Ms. Esi Coleman was formed in October 1993 to begin the preparatory work for the start of the Chapel building. In November 1993, Rev. Jonathan Ayitey Mensah, the then Presbytery Clerk and District Minister of Tema Community 2 District conducted the Sod Cutting ceremony, Rev. S.E. Ampiaaw and Rev. Kennedy Annor, the then Pastor in charge, assisted him at a simple but joyous ceremony.

FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY

The Building Committee and Session worked tirelessly and accepted architectural drawings by Mr. Fred Addo of Archi-Tech Consult for a chapel that would seat 1000 congregants with a basement capable of seating 600 people. They also selected Becca Construction Ghana Limited as the main contractors for the project. The chapel site was adequately prepared and the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony was held on May 29, 1994. The ceremony was administered by the then Acting Moderator, Rev. I.A. Sowah, assisted by Rev. Dr. B. Y. Quarshie the then Ga Presbytery Chainnan. Other Ministers who were at the ceremony were Revds, J. Ayitey Mensah, Dr. David Kpobi and Kennedy Annor.

DEDICATION OF BASEMENT FOR WORSHIP

In February 1995, the Building Committee was reconstituted with the following as its members; Messrs E.N.L Abbew (Chairman), Clement Teneh, W.I.K. Dorcoo, I. Akesseh, I. Siaw Adu, D. K. Nyarko, D.O. Sekyere, Cat. Otu-Masi and Ms Esi Coleman, The Committee worked around the clock and completed the first phase of the building, that is, the basement of the building. The session took the decision to move to the basement since the then place of worship in the Holy Child Primary School had become too small and could not hold all worshippers conveniently. The Basement was therefore commissioned and dedicated for use on Sunday September 1, 1996 at a moving and colourful ceremony where the church finally performed the exodus from its temporary place of worship to the basement Rev. Dr. B. Y. Quarshie performed the dedication.



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Due to the intensive nature of work on the Chapel Building, the Building Committee was reconstituted again for the next phase of work with the following as members; Messrs Samuel Aggudey (Chairman), Clement Tetteh, W. Ahiadonney, L.K. Boateng, D.K. Nyarko, E.N.L. Abbew, Kwasi Opoku and Mrs Elizabeth Amoyaw Osei. This committee has worked hard to see to the completion and roofing of the main superstructure. Outstanding works are now fittings and other finishing.

CHURCH GROWTH

The Church established evangelism work as one of its main tools. The Bible Study and prayer meeting that was began at the initial stages of the formation of the congregation was consolidated into a group spearheaded by Mrs. Vida Ofosuhene and Mrs. Monica Otoo and other members who later joined their ranks. The group engaged in door to door evangelism within the estates and later extended their exploits beyond the fringes of the estates. These efforts were largely successful and had the effect of publicising the existence of the congregation in the estates. This drew in quite a number of new members and Presbyterians who had moved into the estates.

In 1992 the Church opened a children's Service point at Lashibi for the children of the increasing number of worshippers from that area to forestall the problem of transporting these children, whose number had grown to about 25, to the estates for worship. It was the aim of the church to use the children's service as a focal point for the establishment of a preaching point. Under the co-ordination of Mrs. Eugenia Bampo-Akuffo and Mrs. Vida Ofosuhene, Mad. Beatrice Amanartey was trained to handle these children with support from the other children's Service teachers. On account of proximity the Ashiaman Central Presbyterian Church n~ for the release of the group to them in 1994.

The church continued its evangelistic work and with the support of the District opened a preaching point for worshippers who had settled at the newly completed Lashibi estates of communities 18, 19, and 20. Mrs. Monica Otoo who had just completed the final part of the Catechist's course was given charge of this preaching point. The first service was held on the first Sunday in July 1999.

This narration would not be complete without the mention of the efforts of the Pastors and Agent who have served at the station in being instrumental fur this pace of growth.



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DEVELOPMENT OF CONGREGATIONAL GROUPS

Congregational Groups developed almost immediately after the formation of the Church. Children who had worshipped together with the adults at the first church service on February 17, 1991 were separated at the second forenoon service on February 24, 1991. The children's service was thereby born under Mrs. Eugenia Bampoe-Akuffo and Mrs. Sylvia Tetteh who volunteered to be teachers. They were later to be joined by other volunteer teachers.

The Women and Men's Fellowships were the next groups to be formed after women and men in the small congregation came together to organise these fellowships. The Women's Fellowship was formed on February 24, 1991 and continued from then on to grow to become one of the most dynamic in the congregation. The Men's Fellowship followed in May 1991. The group had initial organisational problems but managed to survive with the help of the Prince of Peace Men's Fellowship.

The Bible Study and prayer Group developed out of the weekly Bible study and prayer meetings which had been instituted following the formation of the church. The Group was formalized in May 1991.

The singing groups were to be formed later in 1991. While the youth in the congregation were encouraged to constitute the nucleus of the church choir under Mr. P. W. K. Nartey, the Singing Band was put together by the late Micheal Ansah in December 1991. The Church choir was later expanded. By the inclusion of some adults. The Choir later became the first group to be inaugurated on September 16, 1992 during which choir robes were dedicated.

The youths in the congregation were also formalized as a group in 1992 when Mr. Kwabena Otu-Danquah was appointed by the IMC as Organizer for the Youth. The Junior Y developed in the course out of this youth group under the supervision of Mrs. Monica Otoo and Mr. Seth Terkper. By the Grace of God the Church by its fifth anniversary had full complement of all congregational groups which had been inaugurated

MINISTERS AND AGENTS

The church was right from inception placed under the Tema Community Two District. This stirred some controversy with the Nungua District protesting to the church hierarchy that it should have been placed under Nungua since the church is located on



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Nungua land. The congregation left this issue in the hands of the Presbyterian Church hierarchy. In the end the congregation was left under Tema Community 2 District. Initial spiritual leadership was provided by Catechist Otu-Masi with the then Tema Community 2

District Minister Rev. Ayitey Mensah providing pastoral oversight.

Since the birth of the church, several Ministers have had Pastoral charge of the congregation. The first full-time agent was Cat. Otu-Masi who took office on May 7, 1991. Rev. Kennedy Obiri Annor (November 1992 - August 1994); and Rev. Erasmus N. B. Odonkor, (September, 1994 – September, 2006) and Rev. (Mrs.) Esther Agbodeka, 2nd Minister (September 2008 – September 2010); Rev. Gideon Buenor Puplampu, (October 2006 - October 2011) and Rev. (Mrs.) Vera Gyan-Amponsah, 2nd Minister (September, 2010 – September, 2011).

The present Pastoral team includes Rev. William Quaye (November, 2011 – to date), Rev. K.K. Asante Sarpong, 2nd Minister (September, 2011- to date), Rev. Dr. Sule Saa (January, 2011 – to date), Cat. Cynthia Lomotey (September, 2008 – date); Cat. Elvis Aboagye (September, 2008 – to date); Cat. (Mrs.) Salome Matey-Johnson (March 2010 – to date) and Cat. Mrs. Akua Appiah-Ansah (April 2012 – to date)

During the period the church has had visits by a number of guest preachers both Ministers and lay preachers from within the Presbyterian Church and larger Christian community to share the Word of God and aid the spiritual growth of congregation.

CHURCH MANAGEMENT

The six- member Planning Committee that was put in place to plan and execute the full establishment of the church was with the consent of the congregation enlarged and constituted into an Interim Management Committee (IMC) to assist the Agents. The following six members were added to the IMC: Messrs Ernest Armah, Edward Ashiley, K. Otu-Danquah and Mrs. Vida Ofosuhene, Mrs Eugenia Bampo-Akuffo and Mad. Mavis Gorder, Mr W.I.K. Dorcoo was selected as the first Senior Presbyter with Mr. Isaac Akesseh as Session Secretary.

The congregation once again unanimously agreed that the IMC be converted into the first Session that was inducted on Inauguration Day on February 18, 1992. The second Session was elected and inducted into office in March 1996. The sixteen members were Messrs W.I.K. Dorcoo (Senior Presbyter), Isaac Akessea (Session Secretary), G.L.S Klufio, E.N.L. Abbew, R.L. Opintan, Ernest Armah, Mr. Ben Botwe, Eric Appiah Ansah, and S. A .K.Kwakye. The female members were Mrs. Monica Otoo, Mrs. Shormeh Gyamfi-Aidoo, Mrs. Vida Ofosuhene, Mrs. Elizabeth Amoyaw-Osei, Ms. Juliana Osei, Mrs. Vida Adu Gyamfi, and Mrs. Akosua Essiah.



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The term of office of the second Session ended after four years. The third and current Session was duly elected and inaugurated in March 2000. To cope with the increasing number of worshippers, Session was enlarged to eighteen. They are: Messrs Ben Botwe (Senior Presbyter), Isaac Akesseh (Session Secretary), Ernest Armah, Eric Appiah, Anseh, Clement Tetteh, Frank Boateng, Sampson Asare Fianko, Alfred Kwasi Opoku and Philip Doku. The female members are Mrs. Vida Ofosuhene, Mrs. Akosua Essiah, Mrs. Vida Adu Gyamfi, Mrs. Elizabeth Amoyaw Osei, Mrs. Abigail Ahulu, Mrs. Flora Dorcoo, Mrs. Kezia Koomson, Mad. Beatrice Narteh and Ms. Suzzie Attafuah.

The sixth and current session was duly elected and inaugurated in 2012. Members of the current session includes Mr. Alfred Kwasi-Opoku (Senior Presbyter), Vivian Danso-Dodoo (Director of Finance), Mr. Kingsley Ansah (Clerk of Session), Mrs. Margret Doku (Assitant Clerk of Session), Mrs. Agatha Otu-Danquah, Mrs. Vida Ofosuhene, Mrs. Elizabeth Amoyaw-Osei, Mr. Dominic Ansah, Mr. Eugene Koranteng Asante, Mr. David Ofori-Atta, Mr. Ronald Oppong Adom, Mr. D. H. Yeboah, Mr. Clement Tetteh, Mrs. Akua Appiagye, Mrs. Flora Dorcoo, Mr. Percy Ansah, Dr. K. O. Antwi-Agyei, Mrs, Vida Adu Gyamfi and Mrs. Lydia Twumwaa.

Several sessions have been established and served this congregation well till today.

The congregation also opened a church office manned by an Administrative Secretary in March 22, 1999 to assist with the increasing administrative work.

10TH ANNIVERSARY

The 10th Anniversary celebrations of the Church was launched on 21st January, 2001 followed by a month long programme of activities. The Theme for the anniversary was "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8)

Some of the activities preceding the Thanks-giving Service were:

- (a) Fasting and Prayer Week
- (b) Revival
- (c) Bazaar
- (d) Walk for Jesus
- (e) Night of Hymns
- (f) Dinner Night
- (g) Candle Light Procession etc.



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It was crowned with Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, 18th February, 2001. Dignitaries from the Head Office of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana who attended the thanksgiving service were the Moderator of the General Assembly Rev. Dr. Sam Prempeh the General Assembly Clerk, Rev. Dr. Charles Djan-Duah. Others were Ga Presbytery Chairman. Rev. Peter M. Kodjo, the District Minister, Rev. D.A. Nyarko and a host of Reverend Ministers from the Church, local sister churches as well as invited guests to give glory to the Lord. Certificate of Honour was presented to pioneers of the Church Anniversary brochure and cloth were printed for sale as well as other souvenirs.

HOSTING OF RETIRED REVEREND MINISTERS OF THE GA PRESBYTERY

The Church hosted 13 retired Ministers at a Special Service on Sunday, 8th July, 2001. The following retired Ministers participated: Revs- E.S. Mate-Kodjo, S.S. Odankor, E. Ayite-Atiapa, C.K. Sackey, Martin Mireku, D.A Ayerson, Joshua N. Dzeagu, J.W. Amoa, C.B. Ashong, E.A Adzei and William Yaw Asare. The Sermon was preached by Rev. Peter Kodio, Ga Presbytery Chairman and attended by family members of the Rev. Ministers.

CONCLUSION

We say Ebenezer for thus far the Lord has brought us and we are immensely grateful to the Lord Almighty. Our prayer is that the Lord will grow his church from glory to glory.