

GHANA METHODISM IN THE DIASPORA

The Methodist Churches in the Diaspora have largely been established through the efforts of Ghanaian Methodists - Lay and Clergy. In the mid-eighties, groups of lay persons and ministers who had travelled to the United States of America and Canada decided to develop local Ghanaian congregations that would give true meaning to their worship life and to encourage and support one another (Kirk Sims). What mostly began initially as African Community Churches or Interdenominational congregations serve as an offshoot for the establishment of Ghanaian Methodist Churches in North America. Until the official proclamation of the North America Mission, many of the congregations had been established not as a part of any systematic mission strategy of the Methodist Church Ghana.

FORMATION OF EARLY GHANA METHODIST CONGREGATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

Methodism took root in Ghana in a soil already prepared by successive generations of Christians. The expansion of Ghana Methodism in North America is the impact of decades of pioneering role played by Ghanaian Methodists and other Christians in United States and Canada.

The Washington, DC Metropolitan Area: In Washington, DC when Rev. Kow Ghunney arrived in 1982 to attend school, Rev. Kofi Bart- Martin had already arrived in November 1980 to pursue a Master of Divinity degree at Wesley Seminary, Washington, DC. Soto Kofi as he is popularly known raised the issue of starting a Ghanaian Orthodox worshipping community to do chaplaincy work among Ghanaians in the area. The only African churches in the area were a Ghanaian spiritual church and a Nigerian one. Rev. Kow Ghunney agreed with Rev. Bart- Martin and they started canvassing for people. With a copy of the Ghana Church Union from Rev. Bart-Martin, Professor John Ebiasah developed the articles of incorporation for the registration of the church to be called "Ghana Community United Church." The ministers found a space at the basement of the All Souls Church Unitarian, 1500 Harvard Street, NW, Washington, DC. At the same time, Rev. Bart- Martin, serving on a student attachment at Calvary United Methodist Church, 1459 Columbia Road, consulted with the pastor, Rev. Mamie Williams and the Ghana community moved there for worship in the afternoons.

Around the same time, the Peninsula Conference of the United Methodist Church recruited student pastors from Wesley Seminary including Rev. Ghunney and Rev. Bart-Martin. They agreed to let Lay persons steward the church and they will alternate in coming to perform the sacraments if offered positions. Rev. Bart-Martin was offered a position. Rev. Ghunney was left to shepherd the congregation while Rev. Bart-Martin visited occasionally when his schedule permitted. Later, Rev. Ghunney got a student attachment at Chevy Chase United Methodist Church. He subsequently arranged for the Ghana church to move to 7001 Connecticut Ave, Chevy Chase, Maryland.

When Rev. Ghunney finished his master's program and left to teach in Ghana, Ghana United Community Church was left without a minister. Lay persons took care of the congregational life and on first Sundays of each month for the first year, Rev. Bart-Martin administered the communion and performed baptisms. In 1989, Rev. Ghunney came back from Ghana to do his doctoral program and Rev. Bart-Martin took a leave of absence from the United Methodist Church to help the Ghanaian congregation. In the meantime, Rev. Birikorang Ansah, Rev. John Bonful and Rev. Owusu Afriyie, all students in the area had joined the church and were providing pastoral care. When Rev. Bart-Martin and Rev. Ghunney returned to the Church, there were some misunderstandings, and the leadership told the two ministers that they should apply and rejoin

as Ministers the church they had started. When they stepped out of the meeting, Rev. Bart- Martin, Rev. Kow Ghunney and Bro. Kofi Abruquah agreed to start a Ghana Methodist congregation based on the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Methodist Church Ghana. Subsequently, Ebenezer Methodist Church was born.

The New York/New Jersey Area: In August 1985, Rev. Jacob Owusu Sarto, spearheaded the formation of the Ghana Methodist Church by visiting Ghanaian Associations looking for members of the Methodist Church in Ghana. He carried his campaign for membership to the various gatherings of the Ghanaian communities in New York. By December 1985, Rev. Sarfo had gathered about 62 names with addresses and telephone numbers. He invited them to a meeting at the Salem Methodist Church in Harlem on January 4, 1986. About 52 Ghanaians attended the meeting. Rev. J. O. Sarto informed them officially of the intention to form a Ghana Methodist Church. All the people at the meeting embraced the news and agreed to be involved in the formation of the Church. On January 11, 1986, the first worship took place at Salem United Methodist Church. Thirteen members were present at the first church service. The Church was inaugurated on April 17, 1988, by Rev. Dr. Joseph Bassaw, who deputized for Rev. Dr. Jacob Stephens, the then President of the Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana.

The Wesley United Methodist Church of Ghana, Brooklyn New York (as the church was originally called), started as an off-shoot of the Ghana Methodist Church in Manhattan (now Ghana United Methodist Church in the Bronx). Brooklyn members who worshipped there often encountered considerable travelling difficulties in getting to Manhattan. In April 1988, some of the Brooklyn members decided to form a prayer group which ultimately became the Ghana Wesley United Methodist Church in Brooklyn.

The idea to start Ghana Emmanuel Methodist Church began with the Ababio family of Newark, New Jersey after they had visited the Ghana United Methodist Church in the Bronx, New York in April 1998. They happened to meet Bro. Ebenezer Aduku now Rev. Aduku who was the organist of the Bronx Church and who also resided in New Jersey. During their second visit to the Bronx church, on their way home with Rev. Ebenezer Aduku, the decision to start a new Methodist Church in Newark, New Jersey began. With much excitement, the Ababio family and Bro. Ebenezer Aduku discussed the possibility of starting a new Methodist Church in Newark, New Jersey. Initially, they agreed to hold prayer meetings out of which the church emerged. The Friday prayer meetings started on May 15, 1998. The following members were present on that memorable day, Mrs. Elizabeth Ababio, Sis. Doris Ababio, Bro. Richmond Ababio, Sis. Evelyn Ababio, Bridget Ababio, and Rev. Ebenezer Aduku. Later, Sis. Kate Matilda Appiah joined the group. Bro. Ebenezer Aduku usually led the prayer meetings.

The Atlanta, Georgia Metropolitan Area: Rev. Dr. Albert Oswald Quainoo led the gathering of Ghanaian Christians living in Metro Atlanta in the mid -1980s. The result was the establishment of the then Ghana Community Church. Soon some members who longed for the brand of Methodism they are accustomed to in Ghana formed other churches. Very Rev. Jubilant Boakye Danquah, then an auxiliary minister of the

Church together with other members, formed the Ghana Methodist Church Atlanta on September 15, 2002. At the same time, some members of the Ghana Methodist Church separated to form Bethel Methodist Church.

On January 6, 2007, Ghana Community Church, and Ghana Interdenominational Church (GIC) became unified as the United Ghana Christian Church (UGCC) under the pastoral care of Rev. Professor Emmanuel Y. Lartey of Candler School of Theology, himself a minister of the Methodist Church, Ghana. Ghana interdenominational Church had been formed in 1997 as an offshoot of Ghana Community Church after Ghana Community Church become affiliated with the United Methodist Church. The name was consequently changed to Ghana Ebenezer Methodist Church.

When Very Rev. J. B. Danquah return to Ghana, Very Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Lartey took pastoral oversight of all the Methodist congregations and affiliated churches in Atlanta. The two separated churches, the Ghana Methodist Church and the Ghana Bethel Methodist re-united as Ghana Methodist Church. With his heavy schedule, Dr. Lartey asked Rev. Dr. Jacob Atuahene Nsowaah, then chaplain at the Atlanta VA Hospital, to take pastoral charge of Ghana Methodist Church. After a year Rev. Dr. Atuahene was posted out of the state of Georgia. Rev. Dr. Lartey directed one of his doctoral students Rev. Isaac Ishmael Arthur, a minister of the Methodist Church Ghana, to take charge of the church. In 2009, Ghana Ebenezer Methodist Church, hosted the first ever Annual General Meeting of the North America Mission.

The UGCC was listed under the Methodist Church Ghana as one of its Mission Churches in the United States, but never joined the North America Mission. For three years, everything went on smoothly until some members began to exhibit character traits that undermined the very decorum of the church. Consequently, Rev. Professor Lartey resigned. Several members left and traced their tracks back to the Methodist Church Ghana tradition. Rev Ismael Isaac Arthur was approached by these members to help form what became Mount Zion Ghana Methodist. Mount Zion Ghana Methodist was duly accepted into the North America Mission.

The Toronto, Canada Metropolitan Area: In the late 80s and early 90s, several Ghanaian immigrants who have arrived in Toronto, Canada with Ghanaian Methodist background came together to fellowship with the Kingsview Free Methodist Church of Toronto. Rev. John Velnic was the Minister in charge in and around this period of 1992. At the inspiration of Madam Agnes Summers (Makola), Bros. Adjei-Sefa and Yaw Asamoah and others The first service of Ghanaian Methodists was held on May 22, 1994, attended by 25 adults and 16 children at the basement of Madam Agnes Summers's residence at 152 Falstaff Avenue, North York. The service was officiated by the Rev. Dr. Charles Coffie. Divisions arose because of differences on church location, and the Most Rev Prof. Kwesi A Dickson, then Presiding Bishop, mandated a reconciliation which resulted in a unity service in May 1997. Eventually in 1998, one of the factions was given the green light by the Ghana Conference Office to seek formal affiliation with the United Church of Canada. Two Churches in Toronto - Ghana Wesley directly under Methodist Church Ghana, and Calvary United Church of Canada serving under the United Church of Canada, are the strongest societies in the Toronto Circuit.

The Columbus, Ohio Metropolitan Area: Very Rev. Prof. Joseph Osei arrived in the United States in 1986 to pursue an M. A in Philosophy degree at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. In 1991, he completed a PhD in Philosophy at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. Prof. Osei spearheaded, together with Pastor Nicholas Asare, and Dr. Emmanuel Nyarko, on September 23, 1993, the establishment of the African

Christian Church, the first church in Columbus, Ohio dedicated to meeting the needs of the growing African immigrant population in the area. The African Christian Church, which is now Christ International Community Church (CICC), with members who originally came from Nigeria, Ghana, Burundi, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, became the springboard for the establishment of Ghanaian and African congregations in Columbus including Ebenezer United Methodist Church and Calvary Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

THE ANNUAL MEETINGS: INITIAL ATTEMPT AT A GHANA DISTRICT (DIOCESE)-1998-2004

In 1998, Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin, Minister in Charge of Ebenezer Methodist Church discussed the idea of bringing together the existing Ghana Methodist churches in North America as a nucleus for building a North America District of the Methodist Church Ghana with Rev. Acquah Arhin in New York. Rev. Bart-Martin developed the theoretical framework for such an endeavor.

In the summer of 1999, Rev. Bart-Martin had further discussions on the subject with Rev. Ansah Arkoful, Rev. Casely Essamuah, Rev. John Bonful and Bro. Kofi Abruquah and Bro. Nana Dankwa Society Stewards of Ebenezer Methodist Church, for a meeting for that purpose in Washington, DC. With their consent given, and with the financial support of Ebenezer Methodist Church, several members accepted to host the participants in their homes. Bro. Abruquah suggested that Society Stewards should be part of the delegations.

At the initial meeting in August 1999, representatives from Bronx, Brooklyn, Newark and Washington, DC were present. Rev. Bart-Martin presented the following reasons for inviting the delegates to the meeting:

1. To provide pastoral care and chaplaincy for Ghanaians, especially Methodists in North America.
2. To build more Ghana Methodist congregations in areas where there were many Ghanaians.
3. To share ideas and confront difficulties together to enhance the work of God in the diaspora.
4. To explore building a North America District of the Methodist Church Ghana, which eventually could be separated from Canada and United States as Districts.
5. To serve as facilitators in the mobilization of resources for the Ghana conference.

The representatives of the Churches, comprising both the clergy and laity, gathered at 6306 Riggs Road, Hyattsville, Maryland. The ministers who were in attendance were Rev. John A. K. Bonful, Rev. John Ansah Arkorful, Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin, Rev. Samuel Acquah-Arhin and Rev. Casely B. Essamuah. After hours of discussions, the meeting enthusiastically accepted to the concept. To steer efforts after the then Districts of the Ghana Conference, Rev. John A. K. Bonful was elected as the Presiding Officer of the Mission District as we called it then.

At the first meeting, a Lay Chairman was not elected. Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin was elected Secretary with Rev. Acquah Arhin as Assistant Secretary. Eventually, academic work did not allow Rev. Acquah Arhin to serve, so Bro Ernest Tetteh was tasked to assist Rev. Bart-Martin.

At the second meeting held in April 2000, Bro. Kwadwo Fosu was elected as Lay Chairman with Bro. Kofi Abruquah, as Assistant Chairman of the Lay Movement Council. A resolution was sent to Conference headquarters requesting the creation of the North America District of the Methodist Church Ghana. The then Presiding Bishop Most Rev. Dr. Samuel Asante Antwi argued that without circuits we couldn't request a district and therefore created the four circuits. By October 1, 2001, communication had been received from the Methodist Headquarters, declaring the following Mission Circuits:

1. Washington Mission Circuits, comprising Ebenezer, Calvary, and Gaddie! Aquaah Societies.
2. New Jersey Mission Circuit, consisting of Ghana Emmanuel Methodist Church.
3. New York Mission Circuit - Ghana Wesley, Brooklyn, New York, Ghana Methodist, Bronx, New York.
4. Atlanta Mission Circuit - Ghana Community Church, Atlanta, Georgia.
5. Canada Mission Circuit - Ghana Methodist Church, Toronto, Canada.

The former Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Samuel Asante-Antwi, on Sunday August 17, 2003, at Calvary Redeeming Methodist Church (Christ Episcopal Church, 109 South Washington Street, Rockville, MD), officiated the inaugural service of the Washington Mission Circuit. The Very Rev. John Hammond, resident Minister of Rev. Gaddie! R. Acquah Memorial Methodist Church, was appointed as the Superintendent Minister and Bro. Kofi Abruquah was inducted as the first Circuit Steward.

In the same period was also initiated the formation of the Association of Ghana Methodist Church Choirs of North America. The initiative was by the Church choir of Ebenezer Methodist, Maryland in conjunction with Ghana United Methodist Church Choir of Bronx, New York, the Ghana Community Church Choir of Atlanta, Georgia, and Ghana Methodist Church Choir of Toronto, Ontario. The Choirs of the North America Churches first met at a conference from July 2-4, 1999, at Ghana Methodist Church, Toronto, Canada.

Ever since September 1999, the governing bodies of the collective Societies have sought a relationship with the Methodist Church Ghana. This has sometimes been fraught with difficulties as the Societies were gripped by disunity and division, and the Ghana office was not clear on the way forward.

In response to the calls for direction from the Ghana Conference, in May 2004 the Most Rev. Dr. Robert Aboagye-Mensah, who had been appointed presiding Bishop the year before, attended a meeting of Ghanaian Methodist church leaders in North America. As a response to conflicted input at that gathering, he charged the Rt. Rev. Ebenezer K. Dadson, (then serving as minister at Bronx), Rev. Professor Emmanuel Lartey, (then a Professor at Columbia Theological Seminary) and Rev. Dr. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (then a visiting research fellow at Harvard Center for the Study of Religions) to assess the situation and suggest a way forward. In its June 2004 report, the committee concluded that, if nurtured well, Ghanaian Methodist congregations, whatever their affiliation, could become significant extensions of MCG's mission. But they also noted that many Ghanaian Methodist congregations had been "fraught with problems ranging from conflicts regarding proper modes of Ghanaian Methodist worship, unstable pastoral leadership, difficulties with financial management, church discipline, power struggles, definitions and meanings of affiliations and related issues of governance and control."

THE FELLOWSHIP OF GHANAIAAN METHODIST IN NORTH AMERICA - 2005-2006

The 5th Annual "Synod" of the Societies in North America, held in Newark, New Jersey on May 28, 2005, was chaired by the then Administrative Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana, the Rt. Rev. Kow B. Egyir. The meeting discussed a resolution to constitute an organization, regardless of affiliation to be known and called the Fellowship of Ghanaian Methodist in North America. The resolution was passed at the Annual Synod of the Ghana Methodist Churches on April 29, 2006, in the Bronx, New York. Eleven (11) Societies of the Ghanaian Methodist in the United and Canada, proclaimed the birth of the Fellowship by adopting and subscribing to a Covenant Agreement to Constitute, and Articles of Organization to establish this umbrella organization. The question, the meaning and the definition of affiliation was the bane of the Fellowship.

TO-BE OR NOT-TO-BE -THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA OR THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 2007

On April 13, 2007, the Fellowship of Ghanaian Churches in North America met in Charlotte, North Carolina. At this meeting, Very Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Larrey addressed the delegates on the State of the work of God in North America. His spoke on the theme: **"To Be or Not To Be"**

- to resolve to belong either to the Methodist Church Ghana or the United Methodist Church. The decision, however, which was taken by the Laity, did prevail. It was the decision to hold a Retreat/ Camp Meeting of Ghana Methodist Churches in North America. The proposed host was Ebenezer Methodist Church, Hyattsville, Maryland, being the first Ghana Methodist Church in USA directly linked with the Methodist Conference. Ebenezer Methodist Church and later Ghana Wesley United Methodist Church, Brooklyn, turned down the request to host the meeting. The Retreat/Camp Meeting was eventually hosted by Calvary Redeeming Methodist Church, Maryland from October 19-21, 2007.

On Sunday October 21, 2007, at the 4-H Conference Center, Chevy Chase, Maryland, at the Retreat/Camp Meeting, Lay representatives of 17 Ghana Methodist Churches in North America, deliberated, on the theme: "Mission among Ghanaian Methodists in North America - Challenges, Conflicts, and the Future." The session acknowledged that the various Ghana Methodist Churches in North America are operating under various Conferences including the Methodist Church Ghana, the United Methodist Church of America and the United Church of Canada. Others are independent and voted on the following resolution:

1. To-be: to identify with and operate under the Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana;
2. Not-to-be: to identify with and operate under the United Methodist Church of America and United Church of Canada;
3. Neutral: not operate under either (1) and (2) but to operate as an independent mission in North America.

Ten (10) Societies voted to operate under the Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana, one (1) not to be, three (3) neutral, one (1) abstain and three (3) absent. The ten Societies who voted to operate the Methodist Church Ghana committed to the Methodist Church

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Ghana and promise to abide by the fundamental rules, regulations, and traditions of the Church as stipulated in the Constitution and Standing Orders, Catechism, and other documents of the Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana. The Societies further resolved to work in cordial relationship with the Methodist Church Ghana through its leadership, Committees and Organizations to establish a strong Ghana Methodist presence in North America.

THE METHODIST LAY MOVEMENT AND THE NORTH AMERICA MISSION

The Methodist Lay Movement, North America Diocese, since the inception of the effort to bring together Ghana Methodist Churches in North America, has played a pivotal role and served as the galvanizing force for the mobilization of members to serve the Church of God. The formation of the Methodist Lay Movement Council, North America Diocese began twenty-three years ago. At the second meeting of the Methodist Churches in North America, held in April 2000, Bro. Kwadwo Fosu was elected as lay Chairman with Bro. Kofi Abruquah, as Assistant Chairman of the lay Movement Council. The Lay Movement Council of North America rallied members to support the North America Mission and the journey towards of Mission to become a Diocese of the Methodist Church Ghana.

The Council was instrumental in organizing Camp Meetings and the coordination of the activities of the Organizations. At the first Retreat/Camp Meeting held in Chevy Chase, Maryland, in September 2007, the lay Movement Council, as provided in the Constitution and Standing Orders of The Methodist Church Ghana, constituted Coordinating Councils for the Association of Methodist Men's Fellowship, Women's Fellowship and the Youth Fellowship. Since there was an Association in place then, the Council left the Choirs for a later discussion. The Association of Methodist Men's Fellowship in the North America Diocese was inaugurated, the first of the Organizations in the Church, on May 16, 2008, in Toronto, Canada, by the then Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana, the Most Rev. Dr. Robert Aboagye-Mensah. In attendance was the then lay President of Conference, Mr. James A. Amissah Abaidoo-Brew.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF GHANAIAAN METHODIST CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA - 2008

To bring clarity to the issue of affiliation and governance structure, the Fellowship adopted the following resolutions on April 19, 2008 at Rockville, Maryland:

1. The Annual Meeting of Ghanaian Churches in the Methodist Family in North America, having been in existence since 1999, was formalized as a Fellowship of Ghanaian Methodist Churches under the Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana. The name was adopted in the absence of suitable terminology in the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Methodist Church Ghana. The composition of the Fellowship included the following:
 2. Ghanaian Methodist Churches under the Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana.
 3. Ghanaian Methodist Churches under the United Methodist Church, USA.
 4. Ghana Methodist Churches is affiliated to the United Church of Canada.
 5. The Fellowship shall be open to Ghanaian Methodist Churches recognized by the United Methodist Church (USA), the United Church of Canada, and any other Methodist Conference that shall fellowship in the future.
 6. That until otherwise decided, member-Churches of this Fellowship shall respectively operate according to the governing instruments - the Constitution and Order or Disciplines of the particular

Conference to which they belong.

7. Those Churches under other conferences - United Methodist Church (USA), United Church of Canada, shall operate according to the terms of agreement that may be established between the Methodist Church Ghana and their respective Conferences.
8. That the Fellowship, thus established and duly promulgated, respectfully request that in view of the unfolding circumstances, the said Concordant Agreement operating between the Methodist Church Ghana and the United Methodist Church be revisited possibly to suite the changing trends and to meet the growing needs of the Ghanaian Churches in North America.
9. That notwithstanding our different affiliations, we hereby resolve to be one Fellowship of Methodist Churches supporting one another and uniting together for a common witness of our faith in Jesus and spreading scriptural holiness among all people. That the Fellowship hereby further resolves that all her member-churches, irrespective of their individual conference membership, shall have a covenant relationship with the Methodist Church Ghana due to the peculiar nature of our situation as Churches in Diaspora.
10. That having been in viable existence and gone through transitional changes since 1999, during which Mission Circuits have been created in various cities by the Conference of 2000, this Fellowship now eagerly, but humbly request that it be duly vested and recognized as the umbrella organization for all the Ghanaian Methodist Churches in North America for the purpose of enforcing proper administration, monitory, planning and coordination.

THE MISSION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGM) - 2009

The resolutions allowing member-Churches to operate according to the governing instruments - the Constitution and Order or Discipline to which they belong but having a covenant relationship with the Methodist Church Ghana continued to be a challenge. When Covenant Methodist Church hosted the Annual Meeting of the Fellowship in April 2008, in Rockville, Maryland, none of the Ghana United Methodist Churches attended the meeting. The Ghana Association of Methodist Choirs North America was also invited but did not attend. At that Meeting, delegates agreed that it was time to end the said Fellowship since there was indeed no Fellowship but a Union of Churches who by all intents and purposes belong to The Methodist Church Ghana. The Meeting thus resolved that an Annual General Meeting of the Churches who pledged allegiance to The Methodist Church Ghana will meet for the first time along the lines of a properly constituted Synod in 2009 in Atlanta, Georgia

The first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the North America Mission was hosted by Ghana Ebenezer Methodist Church at the Lodge at Simpsonwood, Norcross, Georgia from April 23-26, 2009, under the theme: "Arise, Shine for Thy Light is Come" {Isaiah 60:1}. The AGM endorsed Very Dr. John Bonful as Mission Chairman, Very Rev. Stephen Kwaku Owusu as Mission Secretary and Bro. Joel Yamson as Honorary Mission Treasurer. Instrumental to the organization of the AGM were Bro. Joseph Essilful-Ansah and Sis. Karen Essilful-Ansah. The Annual General Meetings of the North America Mission was held from 2009 to 2016.

THE ABURI CONFERENCE AND THE NORTH AMERICA POLICY - 2010

Due to the special nature and peculiar circumstances of the mission work in North America, the Methodist Church Ghana held a round table conference from May 13-16, 2010, at the Hephzibah Retreat Center, Aburi in the Eastern Region of Ghana for all Ghanaian Methodist Churches in North America. The purpose of the consultation attended by over 30 representatives from churches in USA and Canada, was to share experiences and decide on policy issues relating to the work of the Methodist Church Ghana in North America. As a result of the roundtable discussion, the way forward was settled in tightening the ties with the Methodist Churches in North America.

The Aburi policy resulting from the Aburi Conference and approved by the Methodist Church Ghana Conference of 2010 had the vision to bring spiritual freshness and hope into the lives of Ghanaian immigrants and others in North America. The overall mission was to preach the Christian gospel and worship in the African and Wesleyan tradition, and selflessly and with integrity, engage in innovative and caring social interventions. The policy was intended to apply to the following bodies in North America:

1. Ghana Methodist Churches directly linked to The Methodist Church Ghana
2. Ghana United Methodist Churches who are members of the United Methodist Church, USA
3. Ghana Methodist Churches within the United Church of Canada
4. Ghanaian Methodists in the United Methodist, United Church of Canada, and other Christian churches in North America

To effectively and efficiently implement the mission objectives set out in this policy and other Methodist Church documents, The Methodist Church Ghana Conference of 2010 appointed a Supervising Mission Coordinator (SMC), the Rt. Rev. Benjamin Kwabena Asare, to oversee Church in North America.

ARRIVAL OF THE SMC AND POST ABURI - 2011

Rt. Rev. Benjamin Kwabena Asare, the Supervising Mission Coordinator (SMC) arrived in the United States on October 1, 2011. On December 2-4, 2011, thirty-one {31} Ghana Methodist Churches in North America met at a Unity and Reconciliation Conference at the 4-H Conference Center, Chevy Chase, Maryland. Bishop Benjamin Asare paid tribute to the pioneers whose work has resulted in Ghanaian Methodist Churches in the U.S. and Canada. The best tribute according to Bishop Asare was to make sure that the pioneering work was continued and sustained to the glory of God. There was the need therefore for unity and reconciliation to heal brokenness and remove the divisions as barriers to missions. Reconciliation is only possible through forgiveness.

THE OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION OF THE NORTH AMERICA MISSION - 2012

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the North America Mission, held from May 4-6, 2012, at Chevy Chase, Maryland. The theme of the AGM was "Our God of Renewal" (Rev. 21:5 / 2 Corinthians 5:17). The AGM concluded with the official proclamation of North America Mission by the former Presiding of the Methodist Church Ghana, the Most Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Asante, assisted by the former Administrative Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Kwaku Asamoah-Okyere.

CREATION AND INAUGURATION OF CIRCUITS- 2013-2014

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the North America Mission, held from May 4-6, 2012, proposed the demarcation of four (4) Mission Circuits - Washington, DC, Newark, NJ, Toronto, and Atlanta, GA for approval by the Conference. The creation of the Mission Circuits was approved by the Expanded General Purpose Council of the Methodist Church Ghana meeting in Sunyani in August 2013. The Mission Circuits were inaugurated on the following dates:

1. Washington Circuit- Sunday January 26, 2014
2. Newark, NJ Circuit - Sunday February 16, 2014
3. Atlanta Circuit- Sunday February 23, 2014
4. Toronto Circuit- Sunday March 30, 2014

TOWARDS THE NORTH AMERICA DIOCESE - 2014-2016

On Saturday December 14, 2013, the Mission Advisory Committee (MAC) of the North America Mission, meeting in Rockville, Maryland, constituted a Committee to propose a roadmap for the consideration of the Mission Annual General Meeting (AGM) to send a resolution to the Conference requesting the creation of a Diocese in North America. This is in fulfillment of long held aspirations and the culmination of many years' discussions working through challenges. It was a course for great optimism and a period for sober reflection on the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of the Methodist Church Ghana in North America. Members of the Diocesan Roadmap Committee include the Very Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Asare-Kusi (Chairman/Convenor), the Very Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah (Secretary/Recorder), the Very Rev. Prof. Kwasi Kwakyi-Nuako, the Very Rev. Moses, Bro. Abraham Aboagye-Agyemang (Mission Lay Movement Council Chairman), Bro. Emmanuel Nana-Yeboah (Mission Lay Movement Council Vice Chairman) Bro. Baffour Amoateng (Immediate Past Mission Lay Movement Council Chairman), Bro. Dr. David Firang (Mission Lay Movement Council Secretary), and Lawyer Kwame Asato-Adjei (Legal Advisor).

On Saturday March 15, 2014, the Mission Advisory Committee deliberated on two questions provided by the Roadmap Committee. On Diocesan Status:

1. That the North America Mission should request a full Diocesan status, submitting a Memorial to the Kumasi 2014 Conference.
2. That the North America Mission should request a full Mission Diocesan status, submitting a Memorial to the MCG Conference - Kumasi 2014.

The MAC recommended that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) accepts the report of the Roadmap Committee and sends a resolution for a full Diocesan Status to the Kumasi Conference 2014. The AGM accepted the MAC recommendation. The MCG Kumasi Conference 2014 however, decided that the North America Mission will be accepted as a Mission Diocese pending confirmation by the Expanded General Purpose Council meeting in August 2015.

The 9th Biennial / 47th Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana, meeting from 17-23 August 2016, at the Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquah Methodist Cathedral, Tarkwa, and under the chairmanship of the Most Rev. Titus Awotwi-Pratt, Presiding Bishop, approved the motion to establish the North America Mission Diocese.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE NORTH AMERICA MISSION DIOCESE - 2017-2021

On Sunday April 30, 2017, the Immediate Past Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana, Most Rev. Titus K. Awotwi Pratt assisted by the former Past lay President, Mr. Kwame Agyapong Boafo, and the Immediate Past Administrative Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Or. Paul K. Boafo inaugurated the North America Mission Diocese in Toronto, Canada. The inaugural Synod took place from April 28-29, 2017 at Ghana Methodist Church of Toronto. The theme for the Synod was "Go and Make Disciples of All Nations: Rekindling the Methodist Evangelical Heritage for Church Growth." The Presiding Bishop's Deputy for the North America Mission Diocese was Very Rev. Dr. William Agyei Mpere- Gyekye and the Lay Chairman was Bro. Kwadwo Agyemang.

The Second Synod of the North America Mission Diocese was held at Ghana Emmanuel Methodist, Newark, New Jersey. The Synod was attended by the Immediate Past Presiding Bishop Titus K. Awotwi Pratt, the Immediate Past lay President, Mr. Bernard Clement Kwasi Botwe, and the Immediate Past Administrative Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Paul K. Boafo. The theme for the Synod was "Go and Make Disciples of All Nations: Sustaining Our Gains Through Effective Stewardship."

The Atlanta Circuit hosted the 3rd Synod of the North America Mission Diocese from May 2-5, 2019 at Calvary Methodist Church - Dallas Fort Worth under the theme: "Go And Make Disciples Of All Nations: Intensifying Our Teaching Ministry Towards Disciple Making". The Synod was attended by the Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Dr. Paul Kwabena Boafo and his wife Mrs. Helena A. Boafo, the Immediate Past lay President, Bro. Bernard Clement Botwe and his wife Mrs. Joana Botwe, Administrative Bishop, Rt. Rev. Michael Agyakwa Bossman & Mrs. Elizabeth Bossman, the General Director of Finance, Very Rev. Anthony Cobbah and his wife Mrs. Alice Cobbah and the Director of Foreign Missions, Very Rev. Dr. Dominic Sylvester Dadzie. The Special Guest of Honor was Rev Dr. Kobena Arthur, a Commander of the United States Navy and Officer in Charge of Religious Support for the US Marine Corp Pacific.

Due to the Covid-19 health pandemic, the North America Mission Diocese Synods of 2020 and 2021 were held via Videoconference. Held on Saturday May 2, 2020, the Expanded Standing Committee Meeting, under the theme: Discipleship: Teaching Everyone To live like Christ (Colossians 1:28-29) was chaired by the Very Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Y. Lartey, deputizing for the then Bishop's Deputy, the Very Rev. Dr. William Agyei Mpere-Gyekye and assisted by the Immediate Past lay Chairman, Bro. Sekyere Yaw Mensah. The 2021 Synod which took place from April 16-18, 2021, was chaired by the Very Rev. Prof.

Emmanuel Y. Lartey, Bishop's Deputy, having been appointed to the position by the Presiding Bishop the Most Rev. Dr. Paul Kwabena Boafo in October 2020. The Bishop's Deputy was assisted by the Immediate Past lay Chairman, Bro. Sekyere Yaw Mensah. The theme of the Synod was "Discipleship: living Like Jesus Christ In North America Today."

INDUCTION OF BISHOP'S DEPUTY, LAY CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSIONING OF MINISTERS - 2021

The North America Mission Diocese - NAMD devoted three days, Friday July 16, Sunday July 18, 2021, to celebrate three different history- making milestones in Atlanta, Georgia. A special delegation from Ghana, comprising the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana, the Most Rev. Dr. Paul Kwabena Boafo; the Administrative Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Michael A. Bossman and their spouses, Helena, and Elizabeth respectively, attended and presided over the celebrations along with the Very Rev. Professor Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, President, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana.

The first of the celebrations, which took place in the evening of Friday July 16, 2021, was the induction of the Bishop's Deputy of the NAMD, the Very Rev. Professor Emmanuel Y. Lartey, who is the Candler Professor of Pastoral Theology and Spiritual Care at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta. Prof. Lartey's appointment marked the first time in the history of NAMD that the Ghana Conference had appointed a North America-based minister to be the Presiding Bishop's Deputy to shepherd the affairs of NAMD. Previously, the Mission selected its own leaders and the following have served in the office of Chairman, the Very Rev. Kofi Bart Martin, and the Very Rev. Dr. J.A.K Bonful. When the NAMD was officially proclaimed as a Mission, Bishop Benjamin K. Asare was appointed from Ghana to the role of Supervising Missions Coordinators (SMC). The Very Rev. Dr. William Mpere-Gyekye was appointed from Ghana as the first Bishop's Deputy. Unfortunately, due to immigration challenges, he was unable to be physically present in the USA during the period of his tenure. In the interim between the departure of Bishop Asare and the appointment of Dr. Mpere-Gyekye, the Very Rev. Professor Joseph Osei, based here in the USA, served as Acting Supervising Missions Coordinator.

The second celebration, which also took place on Saturday July 17, was the induction service for Nana Yaw Sekyere Mensah as lay

Chairman of NAMD. Sekyere Mensah, a professional banker and tax accountant, is the youngest person to be elected to such a significant lay leadership role within NAMD. The ceremony lies in the fact that this is the first of its kind officiated by the church in Ghana for any of its

churches outside Ghana. Previous men who have served in this role were installed in their offices by the leaders here. As a matter of fact, because the former SMC was unable to migrate to the USA for his tenure, the immediate past Lay Chairman, Brother Kwadwo Agyeman was never formally installed into office. As part of the celebration on Friday night therefore, Bro Agyeman was recognized for his service and duly given the gown and medallion, so that he could play his role as one of the leading liturgists in the following day's induction service for his successor.

The third celebration, on Sunday July 18, was the commendation and commissioning service for two women and six men who had completed all the requirements to begin their probation as ministers of Methodist Church Ghana, serving within the NAMD. While in 2020, one of NAMD's ministers, the Rev. Ebo Edumadze Quainoo, was ordained and this year, David Abubekr was commissioned, at services in Ghana, this is the first time that a group of ministers - eight of them - were commissioned in NAMD, and on NAMD soil. Additionally, all these ministers were trained and equipped by NAMD-based Ghanaian ministers and laity serving as faculty, using the approved ministerial preparation from MCG. Those commissioned were Eric Adarkwah, David Baffour Akoto, Comfort Owusu Fordjour, John Kweku Abaka France, Sylvester Owusu-Ansah, Justice Sewu, Grace Sarfo Twum-Antwi and Benjamin Agyei Yeboah.

At the request of the Presiding Bishop, the Bishop's deputy, Bishop Lartey gave the charge to the newly commissioned ministers. Using 2 Timothy 4:5, he focused on the last three words, fulfill your ministry. To do so, Bishop Lartey stated that they needed to always, know the context of the ministry setting; Know the breadth of the ministry and finally the goal for which they do ministry. An amount of \$10,000 was raised in appeal for funds for ministerial training.

SYNOD RESOLUTIONS FOR FULL DIOCESAN STATUS - WASHINGTON, DC 2022

The North America Mission Diocesan Synod met at Ebenezer Methodist Church, College Park, Maryland, from April 22-24, 2022, under the theme: "Living By Faith In Jesus Christ in North America." The Representative Session on Saturday April 13, 2022, took a step of faith and

voted unanimously to petition the 11th Biennial/ 50th Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana meeting in Winneba, Ghana from August

16-20, 2022 for recognition as a full Diocese of the Methodist Church. The following resolutions were adopted:

1. That Conference 2022 grants full Diocesan status to the North America Mission Diocese.
2. That Newark, New Jersey Circuit be the Cathedral for the new North America Diocese.
3. That the Mission Diocese, as required, provides the Bishop's Manse located in the adjacent Atlanta Circuit or any other Circuit as determined by Synod.
4. That if resolutions 1-3 above are granted, the current Bishop's Deputy becomes the Diocesan Bishop.

The Synod also elected and nominated Bro. Dr. Alex Adu-Osei to the Conference to be appointed as the Lay Chairman of the North America Mission Diocese effective October 1, 2022. For their distinguished contribution to the growth and development of the North America Mission Diocese, the following were mentioned for special Diocesan recognition - Bro. Joseph Baffour Amoateng, Bro. Emmanuel Nana-Yeboah, Bro. Edwin Oppong Boateng, Bro. Dr. David Firang and Sis. Comfort Tweneboah-Owusu.

CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA· WINNEBA 2022

Delegates at the 12th Biennial and 50th Annual Conference of The Methodist Church Ghana, at the Ebenezer Methodist Cathedral, Winneba approved the creation of two new Dioceses and a revised Church Constitution. The Conference on Friday, August 19, 2022, approved the creation of the North America

Diocese and confirmed the Bishop's Deputy, the Very Rev. Prof Emmanuel Yartekwei Lartey as the Bishop-elect to take office as Diocesan Bishop effective October 1, 2022. The new Diocese which comprises of four Circuits - Newark **NJ**, Atlanta, Washington DC, and Toronto Circuits, with the Ghana Emmanuel Methodist Chapel, Newark, New Jersey as the Cathedral. The Conference also approved the nomination of Bro. Dr. Alex Adu-Osei as the Lay Chairman of the North America Diocese effective October 1, 2022. Delegates at the Representative Session of Conference on Friday, August 19, 2022, also approved the creation of the Ho Diocese from the Terna Diocese and the election of the Very Rev. Matthew Zikpi as Bishop-elect to take office from October 1, 2022.

When the North America Mission Diocesan delegation to Conference led by the Bishop's Deputy, the Very Rev Prof Emmanuel Lartey and including the Lay Chairman, Bro. Sekyere Mensah, the Synod Secretary, the Very Rev. Joseph Owusu-Atuahene, the Honorary Treasurer Bro. Kwasi Boakye-Yiadom, Very Rev. Dr. Samuel Edubate Nketsia, Very Rev. Isaac Kwabena Boamah, Sis. Jessica Mills-Odoi, and Sis. Cecilia Baffoe Clement rose to receive recognition by the Conference signifying the approval of the full Diocesan status, it was the culmination of twenty three (23) years since the initial effort.

THE METHODIST LAY MOVEMENT AND THE ORGANIZATIONS

After supervising the constitution and election of officers of the Circuit Lay Movement Councils, and the Organizations, the North America Mission Lay Movement Council under the Chairmanship of Bro. Joseph Baffour Amoateng, met at Gaithersburg, Maryland from September 13-15, 2013, for the first Biennial Conference of the North America Mission Lay Movement. The Guest Speaker was Mr. John Ekwun Kweku Pratt, the former Lay President of the Conference, Methodist Church Ghana. The Conference elected Bro. Abraham Aboagye-Agyemang (now Nana Tetrete Okuamoah Sakyim 11, Omanhene of the Wassa Amenfi Traditional Area) as Chairman of the Mission Lay Movement Council. The second Biennial Conference of the Mission Lay Movement Council took place in Columbus, Ohio, from August 28-30, 2015. The Guest Speaker was the former Lay President of the Conference, Methodist Church Ghana, Mr. Kwame Agyapong Boafo. The Conference was attended by Bro. Kwasi Anti-Aboagye, the Caretaker of the Ghana Methodist Church of Sydney, Australia.

The 2015 Conference recommended that the Chairman of the Council should be elected by the North America Mission Annual General

Meeting (AGM) as the Lay Chairman of the Mission, in line with the practice of the Methodist Church Ghana. As a result of the decision, Bro. Kwadwo Agyemang was elected Lay Chairman by the AGM at Ebenezer Methodist Church, College Park, Maryland on April 30, 2016.

The 3rd Annual Synod of the North America Mission Diocese, from May 2-5, 2019 at Calvary Methodist Church - Dallas Fort Worth elected Bro. Yaw Sekyere Mensah as Lay Chairman. The Synod of 2022 elected Bro. Dr. Alex Adu-Osei as the Lay Chairman of the North America Diocese.

The Diocesan Lay Movement Council, undertaking its coordinating role has ensured the constitution of Diocesan Councils for the following Organizations except, the Methodist Brigade:

1. Association of Methodist Men's Fellowships
2. Women's Fellowship
3. Methodist Guild
4. Christ Little Band
5. Susanna Wesley Mission Auxiliary
6. Association of Methodist Church Choirs
7. National Union of Methodist Singing Bands
8. Methodist Girls Fellowship
9. Methodist Youth Fellowship

OFFICERS WHO HAVE SERVED THE NORTH AMERICA DIOCESE

Since 1999, executive officers have been elected to serve in different capacity to provide leadership for the administration of the North America Mission/Diocese. The following is the list of officers who have served or are serving beginning from the present:

No.	Name	Office/Tenure
Bishop/Bishop's Deputy/SMC/Chairman		
1	Rt. Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Y. Lartey	Bishop, North America Diocese (2022-Present)
2	Very Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Y. Lartey	Bishop's Deputy, NAMD (2020-2022)
3	Very Rev. William Mpere-Gyekye	Bishop's Deputy, NAMD (2018-2020)
4	Very Rev. Prof. Joseph Osei	Ag. Supervising Missions Coordinator (2016-2018)
5	Rt. Rev. Benjamin K. Asare	Supervising Missions Coordinator (2011-2016)
6	Very Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin	Chairman, North America Mission (2010-2011)
7	Very Rev. Dr. John A. K. Bonful	Chairman, North America Mission (1999-2010)

No.	Name	Office/Tenure
Lay Chairman/Mission Lay Movement Council Chairman		
1	Bro. Dr. Alex Adu-Osei	Lay Chairman, North America Diocese (2022-Present)
2	Bro. Sekyere Yaw Mensah	Lay Chairman, NAMD (2019-2022)
3	Bro. Kwadwo Agyemang	Lay Chairman, NAMD (2016-2019)
4	Bro. Emmanuel Nana-Yeboah	Ag. Mission Lay Movement Council Chairman (2015-2016)
5	Bro. Abraham Aboagye-Agyemang	Mission Lay Movement Council Chairman (2013-2015)
6	Bro. Baffour Amoateng	Mission Lay Movement Council Chairman (2010-2013)
7	Bro. Kwadwo Fosu	Mission Lay Movement Council Chairman (1999-2010)

No.	Nam e	Office/Tenu re
Synod Secretary/Mission Secretary/Secretary		
1	Very Rev. Dr. Samuel E. Nketsia	Synod Secretary, North America Diocese (2022-Present)
2	Very Rev. Joseph Owusu-Atuahene	Synod Secretary, NAMD (2018-2022)
3	Very Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah	Synod Secretary, NAMD (2016-2018)
4	Very Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Asare-Kusi	Mission Secretary, NAMD (2011-2016)
5	Very Rev. Kofi Bart-Martin	Secretary, North America Mission (1999-2010)

No.	Nam e	Office/Tenu re
Assistant Synod Secretary/ Assistant Mission Secretary/ Assistant Secretary/ Administrator		
1	Very Rev. Thomas Atta-Akosah	Assistant Synod Secretary, NAMD (2022-Present)
2	Very Rev. Moses Antwi	Assistant Synod Secretary, NAMD (2019-2022)
3	Very Rev. Thomas Atta-Akosah	Assistant Synod Secretary, NAMD (2016-2019)
4	Very Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah	Assistant Mission Secretary, NAM (2012-2016)

No.	Name	Office/Tenure
5	Sis. Karen Essilful-Ansah	Administrator, North America Mission (2009-2011)
6	Bro. Ernest Tettey	Assistant Secretary, North America Mission (2006-2010)

No.	Name	Office/Tenure
Honorary Treasurer/Mission Treasurer/ Treasurer		
1	Bro. Kwasi Boakye-Yiadom	Honorary Treasurer, NAMd (2018-Present)
2	Bro. Prof. Nathan Austin	Honorary Treasurer, NAMd (2014-2018)
3	Bro. Victor Joel Yamson	Honorary Mission Treasurer, NAM (2009-2014)

AUGUST 1999 TO AUGUST 2022 -THE MISSION JOURNEY CONTINUES

In August 1999, the effort to bring together Ghana Methodist Churches in North America into a North America District (Diocese) began and in August 2022, the Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana approved the North America Diocese. From January 13-15, 2023, members of the Church will gather in Newark, Jersey to celebrate the inauguration of the North America Diocese and the induction of the Rt. Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Yartekwei Lartey as Diocesan Bishop, Bro. Dr. Alex Adu-Osei as Lay Chairman and the Very Rev. Dr. Samuel Edubate Nketsia as the Synod Secretary. The celebration is a recognition of the efforts of the pioneers, the conclusion of a chapter and the beginning of a new chapter in the mission work of Ghanaian Methodist in North America. The mission to make disciples of all nations continues.

To the Glory of God, it is right to conclude that Ebenezer - thus far the Lord has helped us.