

Introduction

In September, 1979 Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) started a new school at an old Adventist institutional base known as Bekwae in Asante, Ghana. It was an experiment for venturing into higher education as an additional tool for more effective soul-winning drives for the soon-coming everlasting Kingdom of Christ. The visionary leaders behind the venture were determined to give both the young and the old opportunities to rise up and shine for Christ and His cause on earth. They were also confronted with new challenges that seriously narrowed their options for SDA workers, current and prospective, in acquiring higher educational accolades at old centers in places like Nigeria, Britain, and the United States. But even at home the challenges and struggles still persisted and escalated. They dogged the path of the evolving school that hanged around elsewhere before landing more solidly in the environs of the country's capital city, Accra, in 1989. Since that year, Valley View University (VVU), with the support of the global SDA Church, individuals at home and abroad, private organizations, and governmental agencies, has come to stay for its mission. In thirty years, 1979 to 2009, VVU has established itself as a "Johnny Just Come" (JJC) viable partner in the worldwide SDA educational system, humble though its achievements are.

The Bekwae Take-Off, 1979-1983

Up to 1979, the top local educational institutions the SDA Church in Ghana could boast of were only two secondary or high schools, a teacher training college, and a vocational school. Ministers and other workers of the church normally got trained in places like Newbold College in Britain, Andrews University in the United States, and especially what is now Babcock University (formerly Adventist College of West Africa and Adventist Seminary of West Africa) in Nigeria. Prompted by the Central Ghana Conference of SDA, led by Matthew Ango Bediako, the parent body of that conference, the West

African Union Mission (WAUM) of SDA, and the Northern-Europe West Africa Division (NEWAD), boss of WAUM, endorsed the conference's decision and move to start a ministerial training school at Bekwae, Asante, Ghana in September, 1979. The school's business was to upgrade the workers of the conference intellectually and spiritually for better services for the Lord. Antecedents in the thirties, forties, and fifties in Ghana SDA education history and new developments in the eighties formed the background of these new moves by the conference leaders.¹ This new vision for a local ministerial training school, together with its future broader dimensions of a junior college and eventually a university, was cast in the late seventies.²

Having pioneered official Seventh-day Adventism in West Africa through the labors of indigenes like Francis Dolphijn of Apam and William Dawson of Tetteh in the 1880s, Ghana in 1979 was essentially over-ripened to showcase a tertiary institution for the mission of Christ as well.³ Before 1959 much of what passed for Adventist ministerial training institutions in West Africa used Bekwae, Asante, Ghana as the base. But in that year Ghana was passed over for Nigeria as the place for siting the first four year college for Adventists in West Africa.⁴ Many Ghanaian young Adventist workers got their first college degrees from the Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA) from the sixties into the seventies. Matthew

¹Kofi Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism: A History*, Accra, Advent Press, 2005, pp. 217-221, 269-274, and 335-336, hereafter abbreviated K. Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana SDA*.

² Walton S. Whaley, "A prayer and An Act of Kindness: The Early Days of Valley View University", July, 2008, pp. 2 and 6, a paper written by the first substantive president of VVU and submitted to the *Review and Herald* for possible publication. This work will hereafter be cited as "The 2008 Whaley Paper".

³ For the early pioneering days of Seventh-day Adventism in Ghana see Kofi Owusu-Mensa, *Saturday God and Adventism in Ghana*, New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 1993, pp. 58-62, hereafter cited as K. Owusu-Mensa, *Saturday God*, and K. Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana SDA*, pp. 18-31.

⁴ For a background analysis of this point see Kofi Owusu-Mensa, "The SDA Mission and Higher Education in West Africa", November, 2009. This article was written for a book Babcock University in Nigeria is to publish this year, 2010, to crown its 50th Anniversary which was celebrated last year, 2009.

Bediako, Japheth Agboka, Hermann Kuma, Emmanuel Abbey, Ebenezer Sackey, Anthony Yeboah-Amoako and Osei Kwasi Kumah were some of these products from the Nigerian school. But new administrative moves by the relatively new Africa-Indian Ocean Division (AID) of the world SDA Church that controlled the church in West Africa, coupled with some economic constraints and challenges, completely changed the entire landscape.

The late seventies and early eighties were generally bad years for Ghana politically and economically. Coup makers were part of the problem. They brought in a bad image for the country from potential foreign investors. The Ghanaian currency itself, the cedi, fell badly vis-à-vis other world currencies. These turbulent developments made it harder for prospective Ghanaian students to find their way to Nigeria for college education.⁵ Adventist leaders of the Central Ghana Conference headquartered at Kwaadaso, Kumase, Asante, Ghana took the initiative and set up what was popularly known as the “Bekwae Seminary” to locally train workers for the church in a tertiary institution.

The spirit of togetherness, partnership, and globalization in the new Adventist institution that characterized its foundations was an asset that has greatly helped with the growth and development of Valley View University through its thirty years. At Bekwae in 1979 and the early eighties, it was a beautiful Adventist community from all corners building up the “school of the prophets”. Ghanaians, other West Africans, Europeans, and Americans all pitched in for Christ and His cause. Isaac Kwaame Boateng, headmaster of the Bekwae SDA Secondary School, hosted the new institution. Emmanuel Osei was the first on-the-spot head of the Bekwae Seminary.⁶ Anthony Yeboah Amoako, Solomon Enoch

⁵ “The 2008 Whaley Paper”, p. 1

⁶ Interviews with Isaac Boateng, Kumase, Asante, June 5, 2009, Matthew Bediako, Oyibi, Accra, June 12, 2009, Emmanuel Osei, Kumase, Asante, July 27, 2009, Brempong Owusu-Antwi, Oyibi, Accra, September 3, 2009, all in Ghana.

Opam, and Tabi Agyei were among teachers at the Bekwae SDA Secondary School recruited to help teach the Bekwae seminarians. Nikki Aulikki, a young lady from Finland, and Jon Jonsson, a pastor from Iceland, were also European teachers of the seminarians. Walton Sanford Whaley, the first substantive president of the new school which officially became known as Adventist Ministerial College, together with his wife Leola, became the Americans helping to globalize the nature of the evolving saga at Bekwae. Pioneer students at the “Bekwae Seminary” were also an international community, comprising Ghanaians like John Donkor, Daniel Mari, Eric Ossei Yeboah, Charles Kwaaning, William Cobbina, Philemon Aboungo, Ezekiel Okofo Boansi, and Agyeman Pambour and Sierra Leoneans like Samuel Sankoh and Samuel Yokie.⁷ Other later students who got to Bekwae for the training there included Stephen Addo Kwakye, John Nyamekye, Sampson Adjare, Thomas Bobie-Danso, Paul Appiah Mensah, and Sampson Twumasi.⁸

The Adventist Ministerial College at Bekwae was the “baby” of the Central Ghana Conference of SDA. Matthew Bediako, Brempong Owusu-Antwi, Nathaniel Gyimah, and Hermann Kuma were several of the bosses in Kumase who helped run the school from a distance. Right from the word go, the Bekwae students had been assured of absorption into the SDA work in Ghana and the rest of the West Africa on completion of their four-year training programs.⁹ The students at Bekwae, while doing their theological studies, were simultaneously preparing for some public examinations for possible admission into other tertiary institutions at home and abroad.¹⁰ As soul-winning was their main calling, the busy

⁷ Interview with Eric Osei Yeboah, Kumase. Asante, Ghana, June 5, 2009.

⁸ Interview with Stephen Addo Kwakye, Oyibi, Accra, Ghana, August 12, 2009.

⁹ K. Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana SDA*, P. 335.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.335-336

students at Bekwae also did practical evangelism in their neighborhood, conducting an evangelistic crusade in early 1983 that won over 250 souls for Christ and Seventh-day Adventism.¹¹

Mid-way through their programs, however, the “Bekwae Seminary” students were given a shock of their lives. Their division headquarters administration in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, under president Robert Kloosterhuis, handed out a new policy to the effect that, henceforth, the minimum qualification for entry into the SDA ministerial work was going to be the bachelor’s degree.¹² The students were devastated by this Abidjan hand-out, which also essentially killed the “Bekwae Seminary” in 1983/1984 because the school was then programmed to produce only ministers and other workers whose formal educational levels were just like those of only 12 graders in the American educational system. But providentially, the death and burial of the Bekwae Adventist Ministerial College became the life and development of the Adentan Adventist Missionary College in the Accra Metropolis, giving substance to the words of Christ Jesus and the Apostle Paul that seeds must die before they can germinate and rise up to produce wonderful results (John 12:24 and I Corinthians 15:36).

The Adentan Phase, 1983 – 1989

What appeared like the end of the story in 1983 for the Bekwae Adventist Ministerial College or the “Bekwae Seminary” was really only a transitional stage in the evolution of what we have today as Valley View University. Providence worked out a continuity and linkages that kept “ the school of the prophets” going, evolving, and growing to higher heights as the years rolled on.

Adventist church leaders at the AID headquarters in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, including the Ghanaian treasurer of the division, Jacob Jonas Nortey, in close touch with their counterparts at the WAUM

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 335.

headquartered in Accra under Matthew Bediako as the president, decided to set up a new school in the Accra area in 1983 from the ashes of Bekwae. They picked up Walton Whaley of Bekwae fame and experience for continuity to head the new school at Adentan, an Accra suburb. Whaley himself liked the Accra area for his new experiment for the evolving Valley View University.¹³

The Accra Metropolis became the final home of the evolving Adventist tertiary institution after some real “brotherly fight” between the Central Ghana Conference headquartered in Kumase and the South Ghana Mission headquartered in Accra over “the glory of hosting.” The struggle for this “glory” nearly tore the church in Ghana apart, leaving behind some hard feelings that dogged the progress of the school for some time. The brethren, however, finally allowed the Holy Spirit to take full control of the situation for Christian togetherness and unity to prevail for a forward march, arm-in-arms, for Christ and His mission for mankind in these closing scenes of world history.

One of the key players in the evolving Valley View University saga has been Joseph Addo Bulley, an Accra man of solid Adventist credentials dating back to his conversion to the faith in 1959, an Earl E. Cleveland convert.¹⁴ Bulley, a humble self-made man of moderate resources, put his life and property on the line for God and Adventism to help lay down solid foundations for the growth and development of VVU. His property at Adentan, Accra became the main temporary campus of the new school in the Accra Metropolis which was re-christened “Adventist Missionary College” (AMC). That was also an interesting name of continuity and linkage with the earlier Bekwae school, Adventist Ministerial College (AMC). Several other property owners at Adentan like Frimpong Ansah of Asante Mampon, the first

¹³ Interview with Walton S. Whaley, Oyibi, Accra, Ghana, October 30, 2009.

¹⁴ K. Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana SDA*, p. 266.

governor of the Bank of Ghana in the country's freedom era, helped Bulley to help AMC, but essentially Bulley was the rock on which AMC rested for some five years at Adentan, 1983 through 1988.¹⁵

The Whaley team that pioneered for the Adventist Church and its evolving school at Adentan from October, 1983 to his departure in 1987 was also a demonstration of continuity, linkages, togetherness, partnership, and globalization of Adventist resources and personnel for the cause of Christ on earth. The students comprised Ghanaians, Sierra Leoneans, Liberians, Togolese, and even a Congolese. Pioneer AMC students at Adentan in 1983, twenty of them, included Stephen Addo Kwakye, Amos Oppong Afriyie, Lydia Maku Ago, the only female, E. Akuoko-Konadu, Atta Kwabena Assenso, Atta Kwarteng Assenso, Joshua Attoh, E. Okofo Boansi, Kofi Deku, Michael Owusu, Benjamin Oyortey, Joe Dalmeida, Paul Koroma, and Samuel Sankoh.¹⁶ These business and theology students, programmed for a two-year junior college work, also had international teachers as their mentors. Ghanaians were naturally in the majority, but other nationalities also featured well. Ghanaian teachers included names like Japheth Agboka, George Stephen Aidoo, Andrews Ewoo, Daniel Sackey, John Attakora Mensah, Victoria Aryee, K. D. Ameley, Robert Akuamoah-Boateng, Kofi Ohene Konadu, Safo Mensah Ntim, Bernard Gomasi and Kofi Owusu-Mensa. Their American colleagues were Walton Whaley, his wife Leola, and Judith Sundsted. L. G. Antonio was of British citizenship while Pascal Latour and his wife Juliet were truly both Indian and French.

During the Adentan Age of the evolving VVU, then simply known as AMC, several batches of students came after the pioneers. Later students from 1984 to the end of 1988 included people like Jemima Aryee, Esther Cooper, Theresa Dweh, James Denis, Joe Fayie, John Flomo, Samuel Yokie, Kwao Tetteh Abbeyquaye, William Ackah, Jr., Enoch Affum, David Ameyaw, Amofa Anane Asamoah, Joseph

¹⁵ Interview with Joseph Addo Bulley, Madina, Accra, Ghana, June 14, 2009.

¹⁶ Interview with Joshua Attoh, Oyibi, Accra, Ghana, August 6, 2009.

Asare, James Badu, Charles Bediako, Emmanuel Boateng, Andrews Fosu, George Kumi, Sampson Twumasi, Samuel Attah-Oduroh, Abigail Assenso, Thomas Ocran, Emmanuel Takyi, Emmanuel Koroma, Joseph Wright, John Andor, Segla Kossivi, S. Gameti, Yaw Ofori-Amanfo, Ayodele Adekale, Felix Yaw Adu-Gyamfi, Isaac Kwabena Donkor, Elijah Nyamaah, George Opey, Gabriel Yaw Ahimah, Emmanuel Imbrah, Kwame Kyei-Gyamfi, Linda Agboka, Kwadwo Kwarteng Ampofo, and Francis Tenortey. That was a small “Organization of African Unity” for Christ and His cause on earth. Adding that to the body of international faculty on campus, AMC, was a veritable little “United Nations” of Adventists for Christ in Ghana.

The AMC family that served these students included many staff members as well. Cafeteria workers included Uriel Laryea, Valentine Patience Nortey, Patricia Annang, Mary Agyeiwaa, Victoria Acheampong, and Henrietta Dua. Osei Kofi Nti, Doris Acquah, and Samuel Mawutor were office secretaries while Samuel Yanney was the college driver, serving everybody.

Academics, games, services to the community, school promotion trips, sharing the SDA faith at Adentan and the Accra Metropolis generally, and winning souls for Christ were all lumped together as AMC evolved in the mid and late eighties. Most students who passed out of AMC in the 1980s continued on with their studies in places like Nigeria, the United Kingdom, the United States, Kenya and the Caribbeans as well as at home in Ghana and are now serving the Church and mankind in various roles and capacities at home and abroad, demonstrating globalization in action. Some have doctoral degrees, one is a Ghanaian legislator¹⁷ and many are also SDA pastors, teachers and administrators. The Adentan

¹⁷ Interviews with K. O. Amoyaw and Fred Agyei Baah, former and current presidents respectively of the Mid West Ghana Conference of SDA, Kumase, Asante, Ghana, September 6, 2009.

AMC family left a legacy of at least two SDA Churches in that Accra suburb and another one at Sesame or Sesemi near Abokobi in the Accra Metropolitan.¹⁸

At the Permanent Site, 1989 – 2009

In line with Ellen Gould White's counsel on developing Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions in rural environments, Adventist leaders in Ghana and beyond fixed the permanent home of today's Valley View University at Oyibi in Rural Ga, some 40 kilometers from downtown Accra, the Ghanaian capital. It was the third and final resting place of "the school of the prophets" in Ghana which hopped at Bekwae in 1979 as the Adventist Ministerial College (AMC), stepped at Adentan in 1983 as the Adventist Missionary College (AMC), and finally jumped to Oyibi in 1989 as Valley View College (VVC) before rechristening itself eight years later in 1997 as Valley View University (VUU). The siting and re-naming themselves also portrayed the good old characteristics of the partnership, togetherness, and globalization of Seventh-day Adventism and its mission to the world that have been running through them all along.

Oyibi origins in the VUU saga in themselves are a strong evidence of the spirit of "we all belong" which underlay the determination of Adventist believers in the Ga-Adangbe area of southern Ghana to get the evolving Adventist College sited on their land. Hitherto, just about all

¹⁸ See for example "A Brief History of Pastor Latour" by the All Nations SDA Church, Adentan, Accra, Ghana, no date, but received by this author, K. Owusu-Mensa, at Oyibi, Accra, Ghana, August 19, 2009. This document will henceforth be cited as "The All Nations Piece".

important and key SDA institutions were located in Akanland or the interior of Ghana, weakening togetherness and globalization in Ghana itself. The “Oyibi Victory” for Valley View University in its final landing was, therefore, viewed in certain quarters as a rectification of a “too-one-sided” operation of the Adventist global work in Ghana.¹⁹ John Alfred Daitey was the man who pioneered the SDA Church into Oyibi for the Valley View University story.²⁰ The church eventually bought some 300 acres of virgin land from some Ga chiefs, families, and landowners at Oyibi, leased out for some 99 years.²¹

Moving from Adentan to Oyibi was also a struggle. Some of the students, many of them city boys and girls, picketed and protested against the move, unwilling to go to “the bush”, and had to be moved there reluctantly by the college administration headed by Christus Andoh Mensah as the Acting President.²² The official move from Adentan to Oyibi for AMC/VVC was in January, 1989.²³ Many of the pioneer students at Oyibi who crossed over from Adentan were among those this writer, Kofi Owusu –Mensa, left in his World History Class in late 1988 for a

¹⁹Interview with John Alfred Daitey, a former secretary and president of the South Ghana Conference of SDA, Accra, Ghana, June 14, 2009.

²⁰ *Idem*. See also “The 2008 Whaley Paper”, pp. 5-6.

²¹ Central Ghana Conference of SDA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, November 4, 1982, Information to the committee by the President, H. V. A. Kuma. See also Seth Laryea, “Development of Physical Facilities”, p.1, a paper submitted to this author, K. Owusu-Mensa, by VVU President, Seth Laryea, and which was received at Oyibi on September 30, 2009. This paper is hereafter cited as Seth Laryea, “DOPF.”

²² Interview with Samuel Yanney, VVU driver since 1985, Oyibi, Accra, Ghana, October 14, 2009.

²³ Interview with Samuel Mensah Ansah, the AMC/VVU transitional Treasurer, Amakom, Kumase, Asante, Ghana, May 23, 2009.

Sabbatical at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, USA in 1989.²⁴ Some of these pioneer AMC/VVC students that began a new life at Oyibi from Adentan were Felix Yaw Adu-Gyamfi, George Opey, Gabriel Ahimah, Daniel Oduro-Sarpong, Micheal Achianor, David Kyei Agyapong, Elijah Nyamaah, Alfred Acquaye, Willaim Boadi-Beckson, Obed Mfum- Mensah, Joseph Kwaku Amankwah, Seth Asare-Tawiah, Philip Quarshie, Klihpord Oduro Darkwa, Zubairu Bundu, Damson Anim Oppong, Emmanuel Imbrah, Kwadwo Kwarteng Ampofo, Kwame Kyei-Gyamfi, Linda Agboka, Francis Ternortey and Rose Newman.

Pioneering at Oyibi brought in not just international students, but also an international faculty and staff - Ghanaians like C.A. Mensah, S.M. Ansah, S.Y. Mawutor, S. Kusi Appiah, Daniel Oduro-Mensah, Nabi Donkor and Samuel Larmie, Indians and French people like Pascal Latour and his wife Juliet, and Filipinos like Eliezer Lingayon and his wife Ellen.

The Oyibi virgin bush was indeed frightening in 1989 and 1990. It was virtually empty, except for its snakes, scorpions, anthills, bush meat, crickets, termites, cockroaches and other pests. Infrastructure and buildings for a college were nothing to write home about. A wooden building for a men's dormitory, a duplex for ladies' dormitory and deans' house, an all-purpose administrative – library – classroom block, and a cafeteria – chapel-classroom complex were all the new campus could boast of as the college's real assets on the ground. The ubiquitous good old J.A. Bulley, together with his "boys", was a real helper who continued his good deeds and services for the struggling campus. All these early structures on campus were nothing but "Bulley Projects". One of the city girls who touched down at Oyibi in the early nineties for

²⁴ K. Owusu-Mensa's "Diary", entries for October 25 and November 8, 1988.

university education cursed her mother many times with sleepless night tears for her bad decision to dump her at Valley View College, a school comprising only a few girls and mainly old men studying theology, her “fathers”. Water, accommodation for students, faculty and staff and transportation were all pioneering challenges and problems on campus at Oyibi in the early nineties, but these could not stop Adventists in Ghana and their brother and sister supporters and collaborators across the globe from moving forward for Christ and His rescue mission for mankind. Succeeding was a daunting task, but the global Adventist Church, led by its Ghanaian believers, was determined to do just that for God, by His grace.

The strength for this determination derived, as usual, from the global togetherness spirit driving the evolution process. The leadership factor put together a concatenation of ad hoc presidents, reflecting Adventist working – togetherness for God and humanity. Over the entire 30 - year history of Valley View University, the school has been served by two long – term substantive presidents, Walton Whaley (1980 – 1987) and Seth Laryea (since 1995) and “six small” presidents, short- timers, from 1987 to 1994, namely Arlyn C. Sundsted, C.A. Mensah, Israel Agboka, Donald Eichner, Francis Chase, and Ronald Joachim. Three of these eight VVU presidents were indigenous Ghanaians while the remaining five were alien Americans, but all working together globally for God. These presidents also worked with international faculty, staff, and students to build up VVU through the years.

International faculty members and related helpers, beyond those already mentioned above, who have helped VVU through her struggles, challenges, and humble achievements over the years include the Indian Kenneth Swansi and wife, the Nigerian Oluseyi Oduyoye, the

Rwandese Juvenal Balisasa, Pierre Nzokiswanimana, and Samuel Kanyandekwe, the German Ursula Gorch- Akafu, the Togolese Jean Elorm Doufodji, the Kenyan Philip Maiyo and his wife Grace Maiyo, and the Americans Christopher Carey , Lydia Andrews, and Afriyie Johnson. Ghanaian faculty completing the globalization efforts and strides of Valley View University over the years, beyond those referred to above, are counted in the dozens. They include men and women like, Alfred Adonu, Dzedzorm Asafo, Alex Briandt-Coker, Ama Foriwaa Karikari, Daniel Opoku-Boateng, Eden Adeku, Emmanuel Takyi, Brempong Owusu-Antwi, Samuel Kwasi Attah-Oduroh, Francis Tenortey, Vida Mensah, Charles Amoah, Francis Mensah, Amos Oppong Afriyie, Matthew Annoh-Appiah, Esther Boafo, John Pepra-Mensah, Isaac Dowuona, Kwasi Okyere-Darko, Josephine Ganu, Irene Apea, Isaac Owusu-Dankwa, Abraham Amponsah, Peter Boateng, Emmanuel Boateng, Gifty Gyamera, Abraham Okrah, Christiana Pokuaa, Francis Opoku, Kofi Boateng-Agyenim, Mabel Owusu-Antwi, Elizabeth Abenaa Obiri-Antwi, Geoffrey Nimoh, Bernard Bempong, John Appiah, Joseph Aaron Hagan, and Henry Quarshie.

Valley View University international students have, over the years, come from Ghana, other West African nations, Central Africa, the Congos, Rwanda, Sudan, and Mauritius. The international staff members at VVU have also included the Nigerian Sumbo Oduyoye, the Sierra Leonean Rosa Johnson, the Rwandese Yunis Kanyandekwe, and the Ghanaian Emmanuel Kwandahor. These groups of team players, together with the office secretaries, grounds workers, cafeteria staff, security personnel, and other workers of the VVU family have been working hard and cooperatively with the church leaders and organizations all over the world to build up the institution through the years.

Academically, VVU has chucked many successes. In 1995 it got affiliated with the SDA Griggs University in USA for bachelor degree programs for its students in theology and religion. The name “Valley View ” itself was adopted in 1989 not just to reflect the beautiful campus in a valley, looking down from the nearby towering Akuapem Hills, but also to help the school pick up some dollars from donors who fancied the name.²⁵ The school got even higher recognition when in 1997 it was given official Ghana Government National Accreditation to run its own bachelor degree programs, the pioneer in Ghana for that among private tertiary institutions.²⁶ That same year the old title of the institution of “college” was shed for the new higher status of a “University”. It also became a “Division School” in the same year from its former status of a “Union School” in the SDA world education system, off-loading its troublesome financial burdens on to the shoulders of the parent church organization headquartered in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Warmly in the usual global spirit and understanding the division dutifully accepted the challenge.

Visiting VVU in his official capacity as the first sitting Ghanaian President to do so, President John Agyekum Kufour of Ghana (2001-2009) addressed the school at its 12th Commencement Ceremony on Sunday, May 28, 2006, gave the school its official Charter, and topped it all up with his government’s gracious donation of one billion cedis (about

²⁵ The Matthew Bediako Interview. Also interview with Peter Osei Mensah, a former board chairman of VVU, Oyibi, Accra, Ghana, October 1, 2009. Seth Laryea, VVU president too has made similar comments to this author on the naming issue.

²⁶ K. Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana SDA*, p. 275.

US\$100,000.00 at the time) for the growth and development of Valley View University.²⁷ His government also gave a “Kufour Bus” to VVU to help it with the transportation needs of the school.

In the meantime, under the Laryea administration, VVU has developed several academic departments, running bachelor degree programs. These departments include Computer Science, Business Administration, Theology and Religion, General Education, Education, Development Studies, and Nursing. Others are also just emerging. Distance Education has come to stay and a new VVU campus is also developing at Takyiman in the Bono Ahafo Region of Ghana.

Students’ enrollment figures increased steadily beyond the low figures in the early nineties through the years from the late nineties to the 30 – Year Anniversary in 2009. In the 1st semester 1996/97, 2nd semester 1996/97, and 1st semester 1997/98 they were 83, 95, and 89 respectively.²⁸ For the first five semesters of the 21st century VVU enrolled 565, 671, 845, 895, 925 respectively.²⁹ The students’ enrollment figures continued their upward trend. For the 1st and 2nd semesters of 2005/2006 they were 1,092 and 1,240, for 2006/2007 they were 1,559

²⁷ K. Owusu-Mensa, “Diary”, 2006, entry for May 28, 2006. See also *Daily Guide*, Monday, May 29, 2009, *Daily Graphic*, Monday, May 29, 2006, p. 6, and *Ghana News Agency*, Monday, May 29, 2006, p. 4.

²⁸ VVU Enrollment Statistics, Office of Admissions and Records.

²⁹ *Idem*

and 1,934, for 2007/2008 they were 2,408 and 2,581, and for the first semester of 2008/2009 it was 3,071.³⁰ The figure for the first semester of 2009/2010 was 3,279.

Graduating students over the years also steadily increased in their numbers as VVU grew and expanded its programs. They were 9 in 1995, 20 in 2000, 133 in 2003 and 207 in 2005. At its 30 – Year Commencement Ceremony on Sunday, November 29, 2010, Valley View University graduated some 362 students, thirty of them emerging with top honors. From 1995 to late 2009, VVU has nurtured and sent out a cumulative total of 5,694 graduate alumni with bachelor degrees into the world to help better the lot of mankind and get themselves and others ready for Christ’s Second Coming, salvation for their souls and eternity with their Lord and Redeemer, Christ Jesus.

One key area where VVU has also developed significantly since the early nineties is physical facilities. Here too the spirit of partnership, togetherness and globalization is evident. Adventist all over the world, governmental and private organizations, and individuals have pitched in and are continuing to do so for the growth and development of Valley View University. The school itself has been working directly with various groups to put in the required infrastructural projects. The J. A. Bulley Block, the main administrative building on campus, was the first key building that appeared as an addition to the moderate structures of the early nineties. The president’s residence was built for the school by the SDA Church fields in Ghana in the late nineties. Ghanaian SDA Churches in Europe have helped build up some four faculty homes on campus. The Ghanaian SDA Churches in USA have helped put up the only

³⁰ *Idem*

women's dormitory for students on campus and have also built two guest house complexes for the institution. The Kwasi Opoku- Boatengs in Fresno, California, Ghanaians have helped to get the Westside SDA Church in Fresno to build a faculty duplex for the school. A big three-story faculty home, housing six families, is already in use.

Other huge structures on campus include the cafeteria – big – auditorium complex, the Charles Andrew Clerk Hall, and the Columbia Union Hall, all built through partnership deals with friends and organizations beyond Ghana. The Opoku-Boatengs of Fresno also built a bakery on campus in partnership with VVU. The bakery is now the school's property. The Opoku-Boatengs have been bought off the deal.

A Women Center, run by the South Ghana Conference of SDA, training young women in useful skills, is also on campus. Adventist World Radio has a viable studio on campus and in February 2009, a bank, Prudential Bank Limited, opened a branch on campus for the VVU family.

Another key physical development system has also been operating on campus since 2001, handled mainly by development partners from Germany. It is designed to build a friendly ecological campus for VVU and its neighboring communities. The 300 – acre land property is being developed through these German friends and partners as their contribution to the growing institution. Twenty hectares (49.42 acres) of the VVU land property on campus have been reserved for its farming activities – mangoes, pawpaw, maize or corn, are among the food items produced at the VVU farms.

Two men's halls have also been put up, one of them still going through developmental processes. A University Hospital serving the family on campus and the neighboring communities is also in full swing as at the 30 – Year milestone. Other physical facilities are in place, showing that VVU is still growing and developing step by step.

As an SDA institution, VVU lives to fulfil the church's mission and purposes, sensitizing men for Christ and getting them experience the love of God in preparation for Christ's soon – coming kingdom. Over the years VVU has practicalized this life style in many ways. The campus itself is saturated with good Seventh-day Adventism, even in this sin – soaked world where we live and work. Adventist workers, students, life-styles, and programs all play their part. Currently, there are four regular churches operating on campus. Week of Spiritual Emphasis programs are run every semester with visiting speakers who, over the years, have baptized some 346 souls for Christ and Seventh-day Adventism, not too bad a figure compared to Noah's seven in 120 years. The Oyibi village, host of VVU, now has a viable Adventist Church. Several other neighboring towns and villages do as well.

Impacting the world for Christ and the good of humanity, Valley View University has many other ways, programs, and activities for globalization and positive community involvement. The computer science department, for instance, has used its students to design programs that can be used to help several government departments in their work – the Electoral Commission, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority, the Prisons Service, and the Ghana Telecommunication System.³¹ Some faculty members have gone out for further

³¹ *Daily Graphic*, Thursday, May 25, 2006, p. 40.

academic qualifications – doctoral and masters degrees – and returned to the school’s programs and teaching. In 2009 alone five returned with doctorates and several others will get their doctoral degrees this year, 2010. Others have gone on sabbaticals and returned and two more will do so in the next two years. This writer Kofi Owusu-Mensa went on a sabbatical in 2001/2002 in New Haven, Connecticut, USA as a Project Luke Fellow. Seth Laryea was also on sabbatical in USA in 2004/2005.

In 2005 Kofi Owusu-Mensa got VVU to fund the publication of *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism: A History*, 416-page book, as the first volume of a VVU Monograph Series, a publication that was formally launched on campus on Friday, November 18, 2005.³² His manuscript, “Thirty Years of Valley View University 1979 To 2009”, is to roll off the Advent Press in Accra, Ghana this year, 2010, as the second volume in the series.

Currently many VVU alumni are serving as teachers, pastors, and administrators in the global Adventist world and in the world of business and public service. Enoch Affum, Amofah Anane Asamoah, Sampson Kenneth Twumasi, Paul Koroma, Isaac Gyamera, and Damson Oppong for instance, are serving as pastors in North America. Fergus Owusu-Boateng, Elijah Nyamaah, Emmanuel Imbrah, George Kumi, Charles Bediako, and Isaac Kwabena Donkor are similarly engaged in Europe. Hensley Gungadoo is pastoring in Australia.³³ Andre Songna is working in Cameroun. Emmanuel Takyi, Francis Tenortey, Esther Boafo, Daniel Ganu, Josephine

³² VVU News, Vol. 18, November 25 – December 10, 2005, p. 2. See also “Book on SDA Launched”, *Daily Graphic*, Monday, November 21, 2005, p. 41.

³³ K. Owusu-Mensa, “Diary”, 2009, entry for February 1, 2009.

Ganu, Isaac Owusu-Dankwa, Daniel Bediako, Daniel Berchie, Peter Boateng, Emmanuel Boateng, Ama Foriwaa, and Robert Osei Bonsu are shining alumni now serving their alma mater as faculty members. Thomas Ocran, Anthony Kessie, and Kwanin Boakye, VVU alumni, are SDA conference presidents in Ghana today.

Valley View University students and their faculty coaches distinguished themselves in Ghana and Kenya in the Zain African Challenge Competition in 2009, collecting \$10,000.00 in teaching aids for the school and getting some additional cash donations for themselves. VVU topped all the rival universities in Ghana in this competition.³⁴

But it has not been all roses. Over the years VVU has lost many precious members of the family, faculty, students, and workers or staff. Precious souls like Bernard Gomasi, an early faculty member at Adentan, have been laid to rest.³⁵ The list also include names like Kwabena Owusu, A. M.Barwuah, J. K. Donkor, John Andor, William Ackah, Jr., Andrew Bekae, Joshua Gebu, James Tetteh, Moses Okoampa, Stephen Addo, Kwadwo Amponsah-Gyan, Michael Madi, Oppong Brenya, Emmanuel Agyeman-Mensah, Patricia Annang, Grace Osei, Kofi Odum Essuman, and Omotoyosi Olamiju. They, however, rest in assurance that their colleagues still alive by divine grace are holding the fort and shinning for them and their Lord in the gospel ministry, corporate world, and God’s vineyards across the globe. Because of Valley View University somebody will get to heaven and that is the bottom line of the saga.

³⁴ *Daily Guide*, Friday, June 18, 2009, p. 7.

³⁵ K. Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana SDA*, p. 356.

