

PAUL ADU

The first African Methodist missionary to Northern Ghana

“**Y**esu Christo wanna, I wanna kusinti.”
This translates in Walla language as *Jesus Christ is coming, and He will soon come.*

The thunderous words of a man whose love for his Master and savior were not kept to himself. He responded to a call to serve people His master loved. And like Paul and Silas, Christ has always used people- Paul Adu said yes to serve Jesus.

On the 21st of September 1915, Reverend Paul Kwabena Mensah Adu was born to his parents Opayin Kwame Adu and Obaapyin Akosua Oweridua in Kintampo. His parents lived in Kintampo to serve an idol in their quest for a solution concerning child mortality which they suffered. His parents led Paul and other siblings into idol worship. It was also in Kintampo that Paul Adu met Jesus.

Around 1922, a Methodist missionary from Wenchi traveled to Kintampo to preach the gospel. This led to the conversion of his older brother which was met with great disapproval by their Father. Paul and his older brother added salt to the sore when they joined the singing band of the church. Their father tried to get them out of the church, but this attempt was short-lived when he was rather encouraged by the priest of their traditional cult to permit them. The priest commented that he perceived the Spirit in their new faith was stronger than his. This revelation facilitated an opening for Kwabena to be baptized, which led to a change of name from Kwabena to Paul. Before the death of Paul Adu’s father, he too received Christ.

In 1937, Paul Adu was recommended by Rev. C. C. Ohene, the Methodist superintendent minister of Koforidua to study at the Wesley College in Kumasi. He finished in 1939 as a teacher – catchiest. Paul’s Christian service was characterized by urgency and determination. As a lay minister, he founded a school and a church in Atebubu. He also founded more churches in other places like Yeji and Kwadwo-Bofokrom in the Brong Ahafo regions (Bono East Region) of Ghana.

His zeal for the Lord was further encouraged when Rev E. Sawyer entreated him to apply to train for the ministry at Trinity College, a Methodist training institution. So, in 1946 he started his training and completed it in 1949. He was then sent to Agona Swredu the following year. In 1953, aside from being ordained into the ministry, he was appointed to a five-member commission by the Methodist church to study the northern territory properly, as the church had begun to consider the need to propagate the gospel to those areas too. It was in this quest by the Methodist church that led to Paul Adu being sent to the northern territory two years after this commission. He became a pioneer missionary of the Methodist church to the northern territory of the Gold Coast.

Paul Adu’s entry into the northern territory was a miraculous breakthrough. It was the resurrection of almost forty years of tormented mission endeavors by the Methodist mission. Early attempts suffered for many reasons, but Paul Adu was the breakthrough pioneer missionary to these unfriendly and unchartered territories.

These northern territories were predominantly Muslim, but Paul was not shaken at all. His determination to serve God in these lands could not be swayed. He started local worship meetings with the Akan Speaking people in Tamale which led to the beginning of the Tamale United Methodist Church. In Tamale, his work saw progress due to his heart of tolerance for the Muslims. He encouraged believers to love the Muslims, and he was the leading example. After a year of tireless ministry and successful work in Tamale, he was sent to Wa. In Wa, he started a school for the blind, as he thought that would be a great way to reach the people there, and it was tuition-free. He also helped provide people with free medical care. His tenacity led him on to yet another mission. He started a night school for the farmers and all who were not available in the day. He did everything to befriend the locals. Through his work and service, the people began considering the

gospel of Jesus Christ. The message was welcome in neighboring villages and towns, which also led to the establishment of nine primary and middle schools. He also started schools for children of farmers. This was a response to a call to be educated. He taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and gave religious instruction. Paul Adu took advantage of every opportunity to get close to the people in Wa and through this won some of the students for the Lord.

His work in the north of Ghana produced people who continued in the ministry of the Lord. Men like Edison Tinsari, Peter Bakpanla, Nathan Samwini, Edward Diuri, and Iddi Musa.

Paul Adu was not only a minister of the word but also a linguistic example of who a missionary should desire to be. He fluently spoke Waala, Dagbani, Dargaati, and Hausa. And like Paul the Apostle, this grace was not in vain. He laboured to translate the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles Creed, and some hymns and choruses into Walla. Anytime the Walla Church prays the Lord's prayer, they declare the faithfulness of a faithful, determined, tenacious missionary: Paul Adu.

Like many pioneer missionaries of Jesus, he had some painful marks on his body. He lost his first wife in 1942, before serving the Lord fully in the ministry. In 1956, he lost a son while serving the

Lord in the north of Ghana. His second wife also lost her life upon their return to Ghana in 1965, after an unsuccessful surgery in the United Kingdom due to a terminal disease. He married for the third time, in 1967, and was blessed with four daughters.

Paul's tenacity, passion, and determination to bring the gospel to all, and particularly, his unwieldiness to send the gospel to a previously failed mission field - northern Ghana - are extremely commendable. His love for people who were not from his native town was a clear sign of the power of His master's Love at work in a man who was willing and obedient.

He retired in 1981 and went home to be with His Lord and master in 1991. Paul Adu was an Energetic preacher, a faithful missionary, and a memorable example of faithful Christian service. He served the Methodist church for forty-two years.

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