



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TO THE

54TH ANNUAL SESSION

OF THE

GHANA BAPTIST

CONVENTION

AUGUST 2017

1.0 INTRODUCTION

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step”, it is said. The Executive Presidency system which was finally approved in 2013 and took off in 2014 though on a slow pace without the necessary implementing structures, and amidst a lot of fears and uncertainties, has gradually been established with notable achievements to the glory of God.

On behalf of the Convention, I would like to express my sincere thanks to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for His goodness, mercy and divine leading that has carried us through my tenure as President of the Ghana Baptist Convention these past three and half years. I would like to express my sincere thanks to my Vice Presidents for their support through the years. To the current staff of the Convention as well as those who retired during the period, my sincere appreciation to you for helping me achieve my targets. I would like to appreciate staff working in our institutions for your commitment to work despite the constraints of inadequate resources during this reporting period. To the members of the Denominational Board who have provided counsel, critique and helpful input into all our deliberations throughout the last three and half years, I dove my hat in sincere appreciation. To all our Pastors, Deacons, Auxiliary leaders and members of all our Churches, thank you for giving me and my colleagues, the Vice Presidents, the opportunity to serve you.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all our prayer partners who have been behind us throughout this period; the sleepless days and nights of fasting and prayer; the encouragement and counsel during difficult moments and your commitment to see the Kingdom of God thrive, I say Ayekoo!! In the Lord, your labour will not be in vain!!

EXECUTIVE PRESIDENCY

Executive Presidency, a path that had never been chartered by Ghana Baptist Convention, as earlier indicated came into effect on January 6, 2014 with a new untested Constitution. The new system was expected to have the full complement of staff namely; President, two Vice Presidents, 4 Full Time Sector Heads and Full Time Association Heads with the necessary logistics for effective implementation. However, the new system took off with only the President and Vice President (Ministries) in place. The necessary logistics, accommodation for the Presidency and official vehicles for their work were not available at the time the system took off.

Many of our members expected the President to wield power to do anything he wanted to do without taking into consideration our policy of autonomy with cooperation of the local Churches. While many expected the Presidency to wield power, local Churches had the money, and the centre was still weak without the needed resources. Ceding control of power at the local level to accept new directives from the Presidency was a challenge and new to

the whole system. The Presidency had to contend with an untested Constitution in some areas that were not fully clarified in a new system that was unknown in Ghana Baptist life.

Despite all the above, we have successfully worked our way through the first full term of the Executive Presidency. This report will review the tenure of the Presidency and will highlight some of the strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the Executive Presidency and suggest some possible ways out of them. It will follow the format of the seven-point strategic vision with which we have worked since assuming office in January 2014.

2.0 THE CONVENTION'S STRATEGIC VISION

The Ghana Baptist Convention seeks to reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, making impact, visible and effective in Ghana and beyond. To ensure that the Ghana Baptist Convention grows, gains more visibility and makes impact as a major denomination in the spiritual and socio-economic lives of Ghanaian citizens, the President introduced a new strategic seven-point Vision to drive this agenda on assumption of office. This vision was shared with the Presidency, staff, Local Ministers' Fellowships, Associations, Local Churches, Institutions of the Convention and later at the 2015 Annual Session, where it was adopted as the Convention's Strategic vision. The thematic areas of the seven-point strategic vision are:

1. Rebranding and visibility of the Convention
2. Enhancing Ownership of the Convention by member Churches
3. Increasing the Financial Base of the Convention.
4. Human Resource Development (staff, Ministers and greater participation of lay professionals within the Churches)
5. Supporting Pastors in rural and deprived areas and retirement benefits for Ministers
6. Deepening the Spiritual Base of the Convention.
7. Evangelism and Mission

3.0 REBRANDING AND VISIBILITY OF THE CONVENTION.

To ensure that the Ghana Baptist Convention is better known nationwide and internationally as a theologically sound, spirit-filled, vibrant, fast-growing and effective soul-winning denomination, the Presidency pursued the goal of rebranding the Ghana Baptist Convention and making it more visible during the period. This was pursued through various media and activities both locally and internationally.

Local Visibility

The pursuit of the goal of visibility paid off when by God's grace, 4 months into office, the President was elected Vice Chairman of the Christian Council of Ghana in April 2014 for a term of two- years. A month later, he was chosen as the speaker at the joint Catholic Bishops Conference and Christian Council of Ghana ecumenical service. These events made the Ghana Baptist Convention and our President visible within ecumenical circles in a very short time.

The Convention celebrated a year-long 50th anniversary which climaxed in July 2014. To highlight the activities and enhance the visibility of the Convention, 10 giant billboards were erected in parts of Accra, Tema and Kumasi. Other advertising materials to rebrand and make the Convention visible were T-shirts, anniversary cloth and fliers. Programmes undertaken to promote the Golden jubilee included:

- Clean up exercise at Ridge and Mental Hospitals in Accra
- Health walk and blood donation exercise at four locations in Accra
- Fun Games across the country by all Associations
- Prayer Rallies in Accra and Kumasi
- A public float in Kumasi
- Donations to the Komfo Anokye Hospital Children's Block and Kumasi Children's Home
- Youth Football gala

In 2015, at the national level, the President participated in the Presidential Breakfast at the Flagstaff House as a member of the officiating team; participated in the negotiation with the Ghana Medical Association to return to work during a strike action and was one of the speakers at the launch of Bible Week at the Christ Apostolic Church International, Osu, Accra. The President was among the officiating Ministers during the 5th memorial and remembrance service for the late former President of Ghana, Prof John Evan Attah Mills in July 2017. These events brought the Ghana Baptist Convention into the limelight within the corridors of power and in ecumenical circles in Ghana.

In April 2016, the President was elected Chairman of the Christian Council of Ghana for a term of one year, a position that a Baptist has never held before since the start of the Christian Council. He was also nominated by the Council to serve on the National Peace Council Board. These positions gave the President the opportunity to play key roles in the 2016 national Presidential and Parliamentary elections. In April 2017, he was re-elected Chairman of the Christian Council for another term of one year. All the above appointments enhanced the visibility of the Ghana Baptist Convention within ecumenical circles and in the country.

To enhance visibility of the Ghana Baptist Convention in Accra, the Head Office building which was completed by the previous administration was officially branded in 2014 as **Baptist House** with a big signage at the top of the building.

In the same vein, the Baptist Vocational Training Centre at Frankadua, on the Accra-Ho road, has constructed a rest stop and an eatery at the centre to provide a resting place for travellers on that road, whilst generating income for the centre through the sale of food items and crafts to travellers who stop there. The project is 95% complete and will be open to the public during the third quarter of this year.

To promote Baptist work in the Eastern Region, New Creation Baptist Church, Koforidua, in collaboration with an NGO, rehabilitated a road in the community where the church is situated. The Kade zone churches did a clean-up campaign around the community durbar ground, the Chief's palace and some principal streets in the Kade town. Similar activities have equally taken place in various local churches to move the agenda of visibility.

International Visibility

The Convention's visibility on the international scene was enhanced through the participation of the Presidency and other members of the Convention in All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF) and Baptist World Alliance (BWA) meetings. In 2014, the President was nominated to serve as one of the Vice Presidents of the Baptist World Alliance for a term of 5 years until 2020. The position of the President afforded him the opportunity to nominate several other members of the Convention to serve on various BWA Commissions, Committees and General Council. The participation and contribution of these members in BWA life has enhanced the visibility of GBC within the international Baptist fraternity.

In 2016, GBC hosted the All Africa Baptist Fellowship Congress in Accra. During the congress, the President of GBC was elected the President of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship while the President of the Men's Ministry was elected Vice President of AABF Men's Ministry for a term of five years ending in 2021. In attendance at the congress were the President and General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance. The BWA President testified, during his address at the 2017 annual gathering in Bangkok, of his positive experience in Ghana. That presentation brought Ghana into the limelight at the BWA gathering. The election of the President into the AABF office gave him the opportunity to showcase Ghana Baptist Convention on the African continent through seminars and conferences.

The President participated in several BWA and AABF meetings as well as the Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention of America Inc. in Cincinnati, USA in September 2016 and made presentations on behalf of GBC. These activities enhanced the visibility of GBC on the international scene.

The President was nominated to serve on the Search Committee for the recruitment of a new General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance who was presented and voted into office at the 2017 annual gathering in Bangkok, Thailand.

The influence of the President and GBC members on BWA led to the publication of four articles on Ghana Baptist Convention in the Baptist World Magazine Number 63:4 published by the Baptist World Alliance for October -December 2016. The articles were:

1. Ghana Takes Radical Route (The Executive Presidency and new structure of the Ghana Baptist Convention)
2. Ghanaians on Mission (SHOP)
3. Ecumenical Cooperation in Ghana
4. African Baptists Plan for the Future (AABF in Ghana)

The June 2017 publication of the same newsletter has an article on “*Funding Church Work-The Ghana Way*”.

All the above publications made the Ghana Baptist Convention visible to the Baptist fraternity globally.

Social / Print Media

Research has shown that by 2020, 70% of the world’s population of Christians will be 45 years and below (Rev. Dr. Elijah Brown). The Presidency therefore applied various means of communicating information to members of GBC and the general public. Social Media which appeals to the younger generation led the rebranding and visibility efforts of the Convention. The Convention website was remodelled to give it a new image. The Convention was placed on various social media platforms including Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Google Plus and Instagram to disseminate information about the Convention. All major Convention programmes like Annual Session discussions and talks were streamed on Facebook Live.

Because of this approach, information about the Convention reached between 8,000 and 180,000 people both in Ghana and outside Ghana each week.

Besides Social Media, all major Convention programmes were covered by the electronic and print media with the view to enhance the image of the Convention and make it more visible.

In 2016, the Transformed Newsletter was facilitated and published by the Baptist Relief and Development Agency (BREDA) to highlight the socio-economic programmes of the Convention.

Radio and Television

To promote the visibility of the Convention in a sustainable way, a programme to put the Ghana Baptist Convention on radio and television was initiated in partnership with one of our businessmen. A proposal for the setting up of a TV station was sent to the National Communication Authority and the appropriate fees paid. We are awaiting response and approval from NCA for the project to begin.

Some of our churches brought the Convention to the attention of the public through local radio broadcasting programmes.

Branding Through Advertising and Signage

Out of the 29 denominations and Para-church organizations forming the Christian Council of Ghana, the Ghana Baptist Convention is ranked third after the Presbyterian and Methodist churches. Even though the Ghana Baptist Convention has close to 2,500 congregations across the country, the presence of the Convention had not been felt as a major denomination in Ghana. The need for a uniform signage for all our churches was introduced in 2014 to help rebrand the Convention and her churches and make them more visible.

Currently, about 50% of Convention churches have changed their signage to the 2016 approved uniform signage. My sincere appreciation to all the churches that have obediently complied with the 2016 decision and have changed their signage in conformity.

Church Building Project

Even though the Ghana Baptist Convention has grown and is consistently planting churches, this has not been commensurate with the provision of church buildings. Some of our churches are still meeting in classrooms, under tents, in people's homes and under trees. In 2015, a programme was initiated in partnership with one of our businessmen for the construction of church buildings to give better image of the Ghana Baptist Convention in some communities.

Currently four church buildings have been constructed in Asesewa, Charismatic Baptist Church North Taifa, Redeemed Baptist Church, Oyarifa and University of Cape Coast (NUBS). 2 pavilions have been constructed in the North Volta Mission Field, 2 churches have been roofed and one is at the roofing level in the Wa Association. Construction of 6 other new buildings is in progress.

A donation of GHS9,000.00 (nine thousand Ghana Cedis) was received by the Evangelism and Missions Department towards the purchase of two (2) plots of land for Christ the King Baptist Church, Ayamfo and Salvation Baptist Church, Leman Krom in the Sefwi mission field. Out of that donation, two pavilions have been constructed for those churches.

In addition, two plots of land were bought at Wa for the Messiah Baptist Church at the cost GHC 5,500.00. The Convention supported the church with GHC 3,500.00. Some money was made available to roof a church in Wa and to build another one within the community. The roofing has been done and the construction of the village church is at the window level.

Ecumenical Relations

The Convention played a major role in ecumenical relationships. Beside BWA and AABF, the Presidency played key roles in the Christian Council of Ghana and attended several meetings of the Council as well as meetings between Christian Council, Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Councils.

The Vice President (Ministries) and Rev. Yaw Oppong Ankomah, the new South-East Sector Head attended the All Africa Baptist Fellowship (Western Region) meeting in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on behalf of the Convention.

Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer is celebrated on the first Monday in November each year. During the celebration, every WMU member worldwide pays a minimum of \$1 which is sent to the BWA-Women's Desk. Ghana raised the following amounts during the period under review: in 2014- \$2,400; 2015-\$3,000 and 2016- \$3,000. Similarly, WMU Africa Day of Prayer is held on the second Thursday in February each year where donations are collected for WMU Africa ministry. In 2016, the WMU raised and paid \$1,000 to the BWUA.

Baptist Young Ladies Projects

The Baptist Young Ladies' 2014 House Party was held at the BWRRC. 320 participants from Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo and Burkina Faso attended. Miss. Shirley Quarshie, a product of K.N.U.S.T. from Tema Central Association, won the quiz and was crowned Miss BYL. She adopted the Baptist Early Child Development Centre at Mafi Adefe as her project during her two-year reign. She and her Association provided quarterly, biscuits and drinks to children in the school. They also provided a pair of slippers (Chale Wote) to each of the children.

Kumasi Academy

Institutions of the Convention play a role in the visibility of the denomination for which Kumasi Academy is no exception. Kumasi Academy has risen to become a class A senior high school. The President launched the 60th anniversary celebration of Kumasi Academy on July 15, 2016. The anniversary will be climaxed in November 2017.

On behalf of the Convention, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Mrs. Eunice Appiah-Nkansah, the Headmistress of the school and a member of Asokwa Baptist Church for lifting the image of the school to such a high level. She retires at the end of August 2017.

An interview for her successor was conducted at the Baptist House in June and a new candidate to take over from her has been submitted to the Regional Director of the Ministry of Education for appointment.

The school suffered serious challenges early this year when seven students died under mysterious circumstances. Everything is being done to control and prevent the re-occurrence of such tragedy in the school.

The Convention is building a 16-seat WC toilet and bathroom facility for the girls' dormitory at Kumasi Academy. The project is at the lintel stage now. It is our hope that the project will be completed by the end of this year.

4.0 ENHANCING OWNERSHIP OF THE CONVENTION BY MEMBER CHURCHES

The second goal of the Presidency was to ensure that every individual Baptist member, Local Church, Association and Sector completely identifies with the beliefs and practices of Convention, and demonstrates commitment to the implementation of the Convention's policies, resolutions and programmes, abiding by them without any promptings or threat of sanctions.

This objective was pursued by bringing the Convention and its officers closer to the Local Churches, Associations and Sectors through constant visits with the intent to create closer relationship between the Headquarters staff, Churches, Associations, Sectors and institutions of the Convention. Between 2014 and the present, a total of 495 churches, Associations, Sectors and Institutions were visited by the Presidency and Secretariat staff. Beside the Presidency and Secretariat staff, visits were made by Sector and Association Heads and executives as well as Auxiliary leaders and their executives.

The President and the two Vice Presidents took part in the 2017 Easter Conventions organized by some Associations and zones. The President spoke on Easter Sunday at the Kade Zone in the Eastern Association; the Vice President (Ministries) was the speaker at the 4-day gathering of the Nzema Association while the Vice President (Administration) ministered in the Bolgatanga Association.

The Presidency facilitated the holding of several seminars and lectures with head office staff, Ministers' Fellowships, Sector and Association leaders, Ghana Baptist University College staff and some Convention institutions to elicit buy-in as far as this objective was concerned.

To ensure proper branding in terms of ownership of the Convention, a Convention cloth was launched as part of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Ghana Baptist Convention in 2014.

On this note, I would want to propose that we adopt the anniversary cloth as the official GBC cloth to avoid any further costs in printing new design. All Churches with websites were linked to the Convention website to show the oneness of the denomination.

A 3-storey building with 36 apartments under construction by the Men's Ministry began during the reporting period. The building is currently at the lintel level. The Ministry has spent about GH¢50,000.00 on the project after their Congress this year and they are determined to complete it in the shortest possible time.

5.0 INCREASING THE FINANCIAL BASE OF THE CONVENTION

To ensure that the Convention's overall financial budget and value of assets or economic worth increased steadily every year, the Presidency pursued the goal of increasing the financial base of the Convention during the reporting period. A Presidential Initiative Programme was introduced in 2014 to raise funds to purchase vehicles for the operations of the Presidency and a generator for the Baptist Women's Retreat Centre, Ejura.

Out of the Presidential Initiative project, a total of GHS 500,000.00 cash donations was received during the reporting period. The following donations in kind were received during the reporting period;

1. 2 units KIA Cerato Salon cars (used by Finance Department & BREDA)
2. 4 units 18 sitter Vans (3 Cine Vans, 1 to Asokwa Baptist Church)
3. 1 unit Pick Up Truck (Cinevan)
4. 1 unit Mini Van (Bepong Baptist Church, Kwahu for Afram Plains Ministry)
5. 1 Unit 3-Wheeler (Baptist Vocational Training Centre Frankadua, from SVANI Ltd.)
6. 1 unit Mitsubishi Pick Up (Children's Department: Provided by NABA)
7. 1 Unit Nissan Pick Up (Baptist Vocational Training Centre Frankadua with donation from International Ministries)
8. Full Set Public Address System (at Ejura from Trinity Baptist Church, London)
9. 250 KVA Generator (GBUC, STM Abuakwa from a member of Trinity Baptist Church, Accra)
10. Bore Hole Water Construction (at BVTC by Royal Bank)

The Following properties were acquired during the reporting period:

1. Baptist Medical Centre, Nalerigu; from International Mission Board of SBC for free
2. Accra Baptist Guest House; from IMB for a fee of GHS18,000.00
3. 2 units 4 Bedroom Houses at a cost of US\$245,000.00 (Res. of 2 Vice Presidents); out of the proceeds of the sale of the old Tesano Head office building for US\$1.1 Million
4. 4 Generators for Ejura and the Residence of the Presidency

5. 2 units Mitsubishi Pajero (Vice Presidents' vehicles)
6. 1 Unit Land Cruiser (President's Vehicle)
7. Offinso School Campus; (A joint venture with National Baptist Convention of America Inc.)
8. Grinding Machine, Sewing Machines, Hairdryer, Generator for BVTC
9. Residence of the North Volta Home Missionary at Hohoe

The following designated cash donations were received during the reporting period

1. GHS172,000.00 to support Missions
2. GHS 42,000.00 to support Land Purchases
3. GHS110,000.00 from Trinity Baptist Church, London for General operations
4. GHS40,150.00 to support BVTC
5. US\$ 25,000.00 from ABC International Ministries
6. US\$26,000.00 from NABA
7. US\$18,250.00 from National Baptist Convention of America Inc. towards Offinso project
8. US\$12,572.00 from International Missions Board to support BMC
9. US\$18,000.00 from George Faile Foundation to support BMC
10. US\$5,000.00 from Kairos International and First Baptist Church Midland
11. US\$5000.00 from Praying Pelican to support BVTC Classroom project
12. US\$ 1,000,000.00 Grant from Helmslay Charitable Trust for BMC
13. GHS29,376.00 Local fund raising for BVTC
14. GHS 5,000 from WMU Mothers' Day given to the Evangelism and Missions Department

The Vice President Administration began a nationwide tour, meeting with the Sector Committees, Pastors and Deacons to update them on developments within the Convention. He took the opportunity to dialogue with them about funding the Convention through the faithfulness of churches in paying their 20% subscriptions.

Contribution of churches to the Convention grew by 55.30% from GH¢2.17m in December 2013 to GH¢3.37m in December 2015. (And relative to the provisional 2016 unaudited figure of GH¢3.92m, the contributions grew by 80.65% during the reporting period. Details of the Convention's financial progression will be given during the presentation of the finance report.

Tesano Property

The Old Head Office building in Tesano was sold during the period to support the cash flow of the Convention for GHS3,300,000.00 (US\$1.1 Million). Out of the proceeds, two houses

were purchased at a cost of \$245,000.00 as residences for our Vice Presidents. The rest of the money was used to pay off the UniBank Loan contracted for the completion of the Baptist House. The UniBank Loan has therefore been fully paid off.

To ensure that the financial base of the Associations increased, the Tema Central Association in 2016 put a financial task force in place to visit churches on Sundays during church services to collect Convention and Association subscriptions. Subscription payments from the churches in the Association to the Convention and the Association have significantly improved.

The Baptist Book Store

The Baptist Book store has been revamped and stocked with Christian literature as well as Academic books to serve the Ghana Baptist University College and other educational institutions in the education ridge of Kumasi, namely Kumasi Technical Institute, Anglican Senior High School, Kumasi Polytechnic, Grace Baptist School, Seventh Day Preparatory and Oxford Preparatory among others. For the first time in our history, the Baptist Bookstore contributed an amount of GHS66, 000.00 from its operations to the Convention this year.

Baptist Guest Houses

To mobilize resources to strengthen the operations and programmes of the Convention and to facilitate places of rest for guests of Convention and its member churches, the Ghana Baptist Convention took over from the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, USA, and the Baptist Mission Hostel on the Switchback Road, Accra in September 2015. This property which was run as a household has been converted into an active Guest House of the Ghana Baptist Convention. The Guest House provides accommodation, food and laundry services to guests of the Convention and Christians from other denominations and missions.

Since the takeover, the following renovations have been undertaken on the property to improve the facility and enhance revenue collection: the driveway to the entrance of the guest house has been re-surfaced with bitumen coating; all the previous air conditioners replaced to improve guest comfort; 50% of sanitary wares and all towels, bed sheets etc in the guest house have been replaced. Grassing of the frontage of the facility and planting of additional trees to improve the appearance of the entrance have been completed. Moving forward, a Contract has been awarded for acid washing and painting of the outside of the building which will soon begin.

The Guest House is now self-sustaining. Since its operation in September 2015, the Guest House has generated enough revenue to pay for all the renovations as well as its staff. The Guest House contributed GHs177, 000.00 to the Convention in 2016.

Steps have been taken to bring the Tamale Guest House into shape just as the Accra Guest has to make it commercially viable.

Baptist Women's Retreat and Resource Centre, Ejura

There has been a change in the management of the Baptist Women's Retreat and Resource Centre, since the last Annual Session under the leadership of Mr. Bright A. Dadzie. We will like to express our thanks and appreciation to all retired staff and other personnel who provided oversight and services to the Centre in the past for their invaluable services to the Convention.

Considerable improvement has taken place at this Centre during the last three and half years. Notable amongst them are; the ceiling of the auditorium, provision of quality public address systems and musical instruments, a new podium and high table, provision of TV monitors and fans in the auditorium, washroom in the auditorium, completion of windows, nets and terrazzo of the floor of the dining hall, provision of bore-holes and improvement of the water systems, painting of the Centre, provision of a new generator, mower, waste containers, and the addition of the George Odoi House and Washing Machines by Calvary Baptist Church, Adenta.

There has been an improvement in the management of the Center's natural scenery to enhance attractiveness and restore guests' sense of security. On routine basis, the lawns and other natural growths on campus are closely monitored and managed periodically. The necessary chemicals are applied intermittently to keep pests and other harmful animals in check. Pockets of refuse dumped at various areas which was beginning to be a menace on site have been evacuated and new methods of refuse disposal instituted to improve cleanliness and the beauty of the environment.

Since October 2016, the new management has enforced Convention's ethics, beliefs and morals in all Centre businesses and engagements to enhance a credible image of the Convention. To increase security of the Centre and fortify vulnerable buildings, a private Security Company (1st Watch Security Services) has been engaged since June 2017 to provide security services for the Centre. Iron Gates have been installed at various entrances like the Kitchen/Dining Hall and White House. Other security measures including tagging of Centre workers during Retreats and programs have been adopted to deter unauthorized persons from intruding during programmes.

Revenue generation has increased dramatically over the last year. Over one hundred thousand Cedis (GH¢100,000.00) has been generated since the new management took over.

As of July, over fifty thousand Ghana Cedis has been deposited into the Centre accounts. Most of the renovations in place now were executed through internally generated funds from the Centre.

6.0 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (STAFF, MINISTERS AND GREATER PARTICIPATION OF LAY PROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE CHURCHES)

Staff Training

The need to significantly improve the quality and competence of Human Resources (Ministers and Workers) of the Convention and the engagement of experienced lay professionals in Convention initiatives and pastoral ministry were top priorities for my administration. To this end, the President led and facilitated weekly staff training sessions, seminars and workshops to equip Convention staff with the needed tools to promote buy-in of the President's vision and to enhance their performance. Three years down the line, I can say with confidence that every Secretariat staff knows his/her job requirements and expected deliverables.

Three members of staff completed Master of Arts in Ministry programme at the Trinity Theological Seminary and Baptist University College during the period. Currently 6 members of staff are pursuing Master of Arts in Ministry at the Ghana Baptist University College (STM Accra Campus).

Staff of the Catering Department of BVTC attended a workshop on setting SMART Goals. The Administrative/Accounts officers at BVTC attended a workshop on School census while a training session was organized for Early Childhood Development Centre teachers on classroom management and lesson preparation in May 2017.

Ministerial Training

Ministerial continuous training and a discipleship programme to equip and sharpen the skill of some of our pastors were initiated. A total of 42 Ministers took advantage of these programmes. Training programmes were held at Association and Sector levels. The Presidency with support from STM recruited and supported eleven (11) students to pursue Master's programmes to augment the staff at STM and Convention Secretariat with tuition scholarships.

A new presidential initiative to support 5 persons each year for the next five years to pursue Masters and Doctoral studies was proposed for discussion and accepted at the 2016 Annual Session for implementation. To this end, a budget of GHS100, 000.00 was approved in 2017 to support the project which is currently funding 6 staff from the headquarters and 1 PhD

student from one of our Churches. Five (5) other students have already completed an earlier programme.

It is my hope that going forward, other ministers and lay workers will take advantage of these training opportunities to enhance their competencies in the field of ministry.

Denominational Training Programmes

To ensure that there are adequate writers of Sunday School material, the Christian Education and Auxiliaries Department held a Writers' Workshop for 18 people in 2016 to equip them with the skill of writing Sunday School materials. In May 2017, Rev. Charles Asante was sponsored to attend a Christian Education Writers' Workshop in Nigeria organized by the AABF to equip Sunday School material writers across Africa.

Pastors and church leaders were educated on the need to manage their finances and to faithfully support God's work, through a financial management seminar held for the Eastern Baptist Association Churches. A day's workshop for the Koforidua churches to raise the capacity of staff of various departments in our local churches was also held by the Eastern Baptist Association.

A total of 178 persons were trained within the first quarter of this year in aspects of Evangelism by the Evangelism and Missions Department. Out of the lot, 73 persons were trained at the KNUST Students Chaplaincy Council (SCC) School of Evangelism and Discipleship.

Deacons' Associations

In line with article 24 (3) of the Constitution, the Eastern Baptist Association Deacons' Association was the first to be inaugurated in May 2017. It is our hope that other Associations will soon follow suit. To help resolve some of the problems that sometimes exist between Pastors and Deacons, a seminar was held at Akim Oda for Pastors, Church leaders and Deacons on their roles and responsibilities in the local church. A seminar for the Association, on how to draw personal development plans, was held at Asamankese.

Human Resource, Job Evaluation and Salary Rationalization Manuals

To ensure that job functions of Convention staff are clearly defined and the appropriate remuneration is accorded, a consultant was engaged to undertake a thorough job evaluation of all Convention job positions. A job evaluation document specifying every job function and what goes with it has been produced. A comprehensive salary rationalization with job grading has been produced for the Convention to ensure proper job and salary placement.

A new Human Resource and Financial Policy Manual has been produced for the Convention to ensure that all staff are fully abreast with their job expectations and remuneration packages.

In line with the structure of the executive presidency, the Northern Ghana Sector Head Rev. Paul Rufus Kaleem was engaged in late 2015. The Mid-Ghana and South-East-Sector Heads Rev, Charles Oppong Poku and Rev Yaw Oppong Ankomah respectively were engaged in July 2017. We are yet to find a Sector Head for South-West Sector.

We have rented an office space in Tamale for the Sector Head in the Christian Council office building. Trinity Baptist Church, Kumasi, donated a two-room apartment to the Mid-Ghana Sector for use as offices in 2016. The building is being rehabilitated currently. The project is about 80% complete through the collaborative efforts of the Convention and the Sector. Living Spring Baptist Church, Kumasi and Trinity Baptist Church have also contributed toward the project. Meanwhile Trinity Baptist Church has offered one office in its administrative block to the Sector for use as the Sector Head's office until the project is completed and fully furnished.

Ghana Baptist University College

The University College has a total student's population of 1, 205 as shown below:

- School of Business Administration 985
- School of Theology and Ministry 157
- School of Arts in Social Science Education 52
- School of Nursing 11

For the smooth running of the University College, the following appointments were made:

Vice-President – Dr. George Opoku,

Director of Innovation, Research and Partnership – Dr. John Atibila

Head of Human Resource Unit - Mrs. Agnes Odoi,

The Registrar of the University College tendered in his resignation in May 2017. He will officially end his service in October 2017.

CHALLENGES

The major challenges faced by the University College are:

Reduced enrolment

Inadequate financial support from the Convention (University Day Celebration)

Burdens inherent in affiliation and accreditation

Reliance on fees for infrastructural development
The lack of IT infrastructure.
Poor motivation and low morale of workers caused by static wages.
Lack of hostel facilities to encourage foreign students and Ghanaians from outside Kumasi to enrol.

Some interventions to address the above are:

Introduction of short certificate courses.
Annual public lectures
Effective use of the Media to cover GBUC programmes and activities
Setting up of Learning Centres in strategic places in the country
Introduction of trimester system

The Northern Ghana Baptist Theological Seminary (NGBTS)

To significantly improve the quality and competence of Human Resources of the Convention in relation to pastoral ministry, the Northern Ghana Theological Seminary enrolled a total of 194 students into various programmes of study and graduated a total of 105 during the reporting period. 3 full time faculty and a Bursar/Administrator were engaged during the period. 3 faculty members and one staff had admissions to pursue their Masters degrees. 2 have already started while the remaining two are yet to begin.

American Baptist Churches – International Ministries Mission Support to BVTC

The International Ministries of American Baptist Churches (ABC) continued their support to the Baptist Vocational Training Centre. The African Director of ABC International Ministries, Rev. Dr. Eleazar Ziherambere visited BVTC in February 2016. Ms. Rovaughna Richardson, Missionary from International Ministries has been assigned to BVTC for four years beginning from July 2016. Ms. Richardson who is a social worker by profession, is providing counselling for the girls during the period of her stay.

International Ministries has given a grant of US\$30,000.00 to GBC to complete the classroom block at BVTI. The grant will be accessed from September 2017.

Praying Pelican, a Mission sending organization in the USA provided funds and personnel to help complete two classroom blocks at BVTI at Frankadua in June 2017.

BAPTIST RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT- BREDA

As part of our social responsibility programmes, twenty (27) brilliant but needy girls were supported with various sums (between GHC120.00 and GHC 180.00) to pay their school fees for the last three academic years. A total of GHS20, 030.00 was committed to the project during the reporting period. This project is funded by Baptist World Aid (BWAid) through BREDA.

BREDA undertook activities that facilitated the Tamale Baptist Child Development Project (TBCDP) programmes in sponsorship intervention, education intervention, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, strengthening community organization and village savings and loans associations as part of Tamale Baptist Child Development Project (TBCDP) and Tahima Baptist Child Project collaboration with Christian Children Fund of Canada (CCFC).

Educational Interventions

- 9 communities were educated on sponsorship issues. They also received Child Designated Gifts (CDGs) from sponsors for 533 children.
- 1180 children were sensitized on sponsorship
- 1,510 children were supported with educational supplies
- 3004 children benefitted from Children party organized
- 60 children selected from all the operating communities were taken on an excursion to the Bole National Park
- 20 computers were presented to schools in the following operating communities: Gupanarigu, Cheshegu, Tolon, Gbrimani, Zali, Kasuliyili, Kunguri, Wantugu and Gundaa. This project benefitted 1132 children
- Renovated Kpachi Methodist school
- Provided furniture for 4 schools (40 dual desks, 16 ECD round desks and 80 chairs

Health and Nutrition

- 630 community members were educated on various aspect of healthy living
- 90 nursing mothers were trained in wean mix preparation
- 1180 children benefited from the health and nutrition assessment activities
- 160 children were supported with hygiene kits (shaving stick, soap, brush and toothpaste)
- Two children were supported for treatment in some hospitals
- 2 Consulting rooms and a pavilion for OPD attendees are under construction for the Kasuyili clinic
- An ambulance was provided for Kasuliyili Clinic
- Gbulahagu CHPS compound was renovated and upgraded with solar lights and solar fridges for safe storage of medicines

Water and Sanitation

- 9 clean-up campaigns were organized in the project areas.
- In October 2015, a solar powered mechanized water system with four distributing points was commissioned.
- The Wantugu community benefited from a solar powered borehole system with 6 fetching points.
- 3 bore holes were constructed in the operating communities.
- Training sessions on hygiene and environmental sanitation were held in operating communities

Strengthening Community Organization

- 63 parents were trained in participating in community projects.
- 27 Parent Teacher Association and School Management Committee members were trained in child rights and protection.
- Child rights' awareness activities influenced the release of about 100 livestock-herd boys to the classroom

Village Savings and Loans Associations

- The Project supported the formation and strengthening of village savings and loan associations. This intervention has increased the savings habit of community members.
- 56 groups have been formed in the nine operation communities with assets capital of GHC203,901.00

Buruli Ulcer Project

- With support from Child Fund of Korea through the Christian Children Fund of Canada, we assisted 10-year-old Edmund Tetteh to undergo series of facial surgeries necessitated by Buruli Ulcer infection.
- We provided support for Edmund Tetteh's father to enable him take care of Edmund.
- A canteen facility was constructed and commissioned at Obom Health Centre to serve Buruli Ulcer patients in March 2015

Water Projects

- A mechanized bore hole was constructed and commissioned for the Mpakadan community in the Asuogyaman District of the Eastern Region in June 2015.

Education Unit

- To enable the Convention to harness and consolidate education efforts by member churches, the BREDA was tasked with the establishment of the Baptist Education Unit. An interim report has been drafted to guide the establishment of the unit.

Relief Bank

- To ensure that BREDA responds quickly to disaster within the country, a Relief Bank to collect relief items like used clothing etc. was established. A lot of used cloth donations have been received from Calvary Baptist Church, Nungua, Lashibi, Teshie, Adabraka, Shiashie and Adenta, Redeemed Baptist Church, Madina, Gateway Baptist Church, Tema and some individuals.
- Some of the items have been distributed to our Mission Fields.

MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

The Ministers' Conference has begun the process of renewing the license of our Ministers to ensure that Ministers comply with Convention directives and participate in Convention activities. To this end, all Ministers were provided with the Membership Renewal Forms to be completed and returned to the Secretariat for processing during the 2017 Conference.

During the 2017 Ministers Conference, the Retired Baptist Ministers Association (REBAMA) was inaugurated.

Recognition of Ministers

Under the auspices of the office of the Vice President (Ministries), various Committees were formed by the Ministers' Conference in all Sectors to handle the interviews for licensing, recognition and ordination of candidates for ministry. The following is the summary of the outcome of the interviews for 2017:

	Candidates who applied	Successful Candidates	Failed	Others
Licensing	77	59	3	15 Disqualified
Recognition	52	47	1	4 Not Recommended
Ordination	45	39	1	5 Not Recommended
TOTAL CANDIDATES	174	145	5	24

In all, five (5) candidates were unsuccessful. This was due to their unpreparedness for the interview. Most of these candidates had no idea about the Ghana Baptist Convention and its

affiliate bodies. Some of the unsuccessful candidates who came for the ordination interviews had challenges with doctrinal issues whereas twenty-four (24) candidates were either disqualified or not recommended

Background Checks

In 2016, background security check was introduced for all Ministers seeking ordination with the Convention. This was to ensure that credible people were accepted into our ministerial fraternity.

7.0 SUPPORTING PASTORS IN RURAL AND DEPRIVED AREAS AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR MINISTERS

The need to significantly improve the level of remuneration, the retirement/end-of-service package, and general conditions of service for Convention Ministers on retirement, especially those in deprived and difficult areas of ministry were priorities during the reporting period. A programme was put in place to support some of our Ministers working in difficult areas. With support from Trinity Baptist Church, London, some individual donors and Convention staff, some Ministers in the Sefwi Mission field and Wa Association have received monthly financial support since 2015 to the present. Various intervention programmes were implemented during the year to alleviate the hardship of some of our ministers. The table below shows some of the interventions adopted during the last three and half years to support 97 ministers.

Monthly Pastoral Support

Sector/Association/Church	Number of pastors supported	
Golden Gate	1	
Kumasi North	4 pastors, 1 lay leader	
Kumasi South-West	3 pastors	
Kumasi South-East	9 pastors	
Adansi	8 pastors	

Tamale First Baptist	12 pastors	
Northern Sector Head	16 persons	Supplied goats to breed
WMU	10 pastors	Nzema Mission Field
Triumphant Obuasi	1 pastor	
Trinity Baptist, London	16 pastors	Sefwi Mission field
Head Office Staff	9	Wa Association Pastors
South East Sector	9 Pastors	
	Widows of Pastors	
Total	99+	

Some Ministers in Dangme Association and the WA zone received donations of Motor Bikes to support their work during the period. Some churches in various Mission fields were supplied with plastic chairs, PA systems and other logistics to enhance their work. The WMU/BYL members from Tema Central Association donated variety of goods and food items to the North Volta Mission field during the period.

The Dangme Association supported five Ministers every month with allowances ranging from GHC300 to GHC1000 from the 5% contribution from member churches.

The leadership of the National Men's Ministry visited some Sectors and Association Fellowships during the reporting period. They familiarized themselves with the churches and in some cases, distributed used clothing and footwear to members to enhance their living standards. They also assisted in church building projects and donated signboards to the North Volta Mission Field.

The WMU (national) supported the payment of fees of Rev. Anthony Duah, an MPhil student in K.N.U.S.T. with GHC 4,000 in 2016. This was in response to an appeal by the University President, Rev. Yaw Adu-Gyamfi during the WMU annual conference. The WMU on regular basis presented food items, clothing and toiletries etc. to needy pastors in various places.

To ensure sustainable livelihood for our Pastors in the rural areas, the Northern Ghana Sector Head supplied 20 people with a goat each for breeding purposes. Each of the beneficiaries is to give one ewe to another person from their goat. This is to be a revolving system. The Northern Sector Head has procured 5 bags of groundnuts to be given to 52 church member groups to do oil extraction and groundnut butter to provide employment for themselves.

The Ministers' Conference also formed a three-member committee comprising Rev. W. Komla Darke, Vice President (Administration), Rev. Asiedu Appiah of Redeemed Baptist Church, and Rev. Victor Brew of the First Baptist Church, Tema to assist in developing a ministers' retirement fund for consideration at the next Conference.

Ministers' Salary Structure

To ensure that Pastors are adequately remunerated to commensurate with their qualification and Ministry location, the Ministers' Conference was tasked to bring a proposal for the improvement of the general conditions of service and retirement package for Convention Ministers. The said proposal was laid before the 2017 Ministers Conference and was agreed to in principle. The proposal however, will require a little fine tuning before it can come into operation.

8.0 DEEPENING THE SPIRITUAL BASE OF THE CONVENTION

To strengthen and uplift the prayer and spiritual foundations of the Convention, its Associations and member churches, several programmes were put in place to ensure the success of this endeavour. Priority was given to the production of quality Sunday School materials, increased participation in prayer within the Convention, Worker's Conference and quality Christian education.

Christian Education

The Christian Education and Auxiliaries' Department (CEAD) continued to produce quality Sunday School material for adults in both English and Twi. The Department also produced material to run the National Church Worker's Conference held in the Sectors. The Department increased the distribution and sale of Sunday School materials, especially to Churches who previously did not use the materials. The sale of Christian literature at the Bookstore increased by 22% during the reporting period.

The CEAD published 5,000 copies of the Youth version of *Christian Lifestyle* and 2,500 copies of the *Church Workers' Conference Manual* in 2017.

Aside the payment of salaries, the Baptist Bookstore is now financially independent. For the first time since coming into office, the Bookstore contributed a sum of GHS60, 000.00 in June this year to the general operations of the Convention. Within the first half of 2016, the Bookstore invested GH¢ 50,000.00 of its internally generated income in a 28% fixed deposit to be compounded quarterly.

Discipleship Movement

To consolidate our evangelism and church planting efforts, the need for a discipleship programme that can ground new converts in the faith became paramount. When churches are planted without a clear provision for nurture in the faith, converts easily become stunted and churches are not able to grow in quality and quantity.

The Vice President (Ministries) was charged to lead the formation of a discipleship movement within the Convention. He participated in the African Strategic Discipleship Movement Conference which is a continental think tank on discipleship on behalf of the President. He is currently working with some Sector and Association leaders to implement a strategy to that end. A training of trainers' programme for 12 ministers in Kumasi and 9 in Accra was held as a component of this project. Another pilot project is being undertaken at Redeemed Baptist Church, Oyarifa by the Vice President (Ministries) to train some Church leaders under the same project.

National Week of Prayer and Fasting

The Convention's national week of prayer and fasting programme was observed nationwide each year during the period. Some churches extended the duration of the fasting and prayers from one week to 14 and 21 days.

Prayer Conference

To build a solid foundation for prayer to support the ministries of the Ghana Baptist Convention, the National Prayer Conference was instituted and held twice every year (May and October) at the Baptist Women's Retreat and Resource Centre to pray for the needs of the Convention. These prayer sessions were attended by between 350 and 600 delegates during each session. Through fund raising efforts using envelopes, letters, and special appeals to individuals as well as offerings from the Conference itself, the national prayer conferences have always funded itself except for the first two conferences. So far 7 National Prayer Conferences have been held since our administration.

Beside the National Prayer Conferences, standing prayer teams have been established in eleven (11) Associations who meet regularly monthly to pray for the Convention, the Presidency, staff of the Convention as well as their programmes and activities. Some auxiliaries organized other prayer sessions at their local levels to pray for the Convention.

We give glory to God for the great testimonies and breakthrough that have come out of these prayer sessions from individuals and the Convention as a denomination.

Regular daily devotions and a mid-week midday prayer session were sustained at the Baptist House by staff.

Children's Ministry

Mrs. Esther Nyarko, the former National Children's Coordinator retired in 2016. We are grateful to God for the meritorious and selfless dedication with which she served the Convention. The Lord provided an equally capable hand in replacement of her, in the person of Rev. Charles Asante in July 2016. Since taking office in 2016, the Children's Ministry Coordinator has visited 45 churches within the South-East Sector. He has provided training for some Children's teachers within the period. The Coordinator has also attended 5 Ministers' Fellowship and 14 Association meetings since coming into office.

For the first time in several years, a National Children's Sunday School Teachers' Conference was held at Ejura in 2017 to prepare the teachers to teach effectively. This was attended by over 200 participants.

To address the perennial problem of lack of reliable supply of material for Children's Sunday School programme of the Convention, the CEAD adopted the *Christian Learning Materials Centre* (CLMC) Sunday School literature for the children's ministry of the Convention in 2017. CLMC has, in principle, agreed that we purchase our first-year lesson consignment from Kenya and then we will have permission to print subsequent issues locally.

Work has started towards the development of a *Ghana Baptist Handbook for Children's Ministry* to meet current developmental needs of the ministry.

Students and Youth Ministries

To enhance the visibility of the ministry of the National Union of Baptist Students on our University campuses, the Convention presented a new lectern to NUBS-Legon. A new prefabricated building was constructed for NUBS - UCC in early 2017.

Two NUBS Locals have been established at Oda College of Education and Methodist College of Education and Nursing, Oda.

Three JNUBS Locals have been established at Bolgatanga Senior Technical School, Bawku Senior Technical School and Cape Coast Technical School. A website sponsored by an Alumnus has been created for the NUBS/Youth Ministry (www.nubsghana.org). NUBS Crests were produced and sold on all campuses, in churches and at their Congresses.

To enhance our visibility and cooperation with other Conventions and Unions in Africa, NUBS delegates from Ghana attended all the Nigerian Baptist Students' Fellowship/All African Baptist Students' Fellowship (AABSF) Conference from 2014 to 2017.

9.0 EVANGELISM AND MISSION

To ensure that Convention churches steadily increase the numbers of new souls won for Christ, and the planting of new churches all over the country, especially in un-reached areas and mission fields, some policy direction and activities were undertaken during the period.

Evangelism and Missions Consultation

Evangelism and Missions' Consultation was held each year at Ejura to strategize our evangelism programmes and to determine how many churches are to be planted each year.

Cinema Van Ministry

To ensure that evangelism and mission programmes run effectively, the Cinema Van Ministry received a boost during the reporting period. We received donations of six (6) vehicles from one brother as well as money to equip all the vans for evangelistic activities. The arrival of the vehicles and other logistics boosted our evangelism drive.

Every Sector of the Convention has been given a fully equipped Cinema Van and a full-time evangelist to operate the Van within the Sector. In all, eighteen thousand, one hundred and thirty (18,130) people have been exposed to the Gospel and five thousand, three hundred and seven (5,307) people prayed to receive Christ (representing 29.2% of the number of people exposed to the Gospel). Through the activities of the Cinevans, ten (10) new churches have been planted.

Baptist International Worship Centre

On 26th March 2017, the Baptist International Worship Centre was inaugurated at the Baptist House, Accra. The Church was established by the Presidency to reach out to the International community in Accra and Tema and to provide the retired pastors a place to put their preaching skills to work. The current average church attendance is about 70 people.

Missions Week

To ensure that financial resources are available to execute the core mandate of the Convention which is evangelism, the Mission Week programme was instituted to raise money for the Convention's mission projects. Publicity for Mission's Week has improved over the years with the introduction of a video documentary for 2017 Mission Week. Publicity of our mission week video for this year alone on Facebook reached over 81, 000 viewers. Despite the improved publicity, revenue has not improved as expected. The proceeds for Mission over the last four years is as follows:

- 2014: GHS10,547.50
- 2015: GHS68.805.00

- 2016: GHS83,000.00
- 2017: GHS88,204.40

I will like to appeal to all our pastors and church leaders to take seriously the mobilization of funds during Missions Week so we can provide resources for Missions. Currently, none of our Home Missionaries has an official vehicle for their work.

STUDENTS HOLIDAY OUTREACH PROGRAMME (SHOP)

To help expose Baptist students to ministry, the Ghana Baptist Convention over the last twenty years has provided a Mission immersion experience (Students Holiday Outreach Programme-SHOP) for Baptist students during the end of year academic break. Over the last three and a half years, the Convention has engaged one thousand, five hundred and fifty-five (1,555) students for the SHOP programme. In 2014, three hundred and seventy (370) students were engaged. For the year 2015 and 2016, four hundred (400) and four hundred and fifty (450) students were engaged respectively. This year, three hundred and thirty-five (335) students have been engaged in SHOP so far. We are awaiting students from University for Development Studies to vacate to engage them in the programme. The said university runs on a trimester basis.

We are grateful to the Association of Baptist Business Executives (ABBEX) which over the given period has provided the needed funds to run the programme. ABBEX has supported the programme with an amount of three hundred thousand Cedis (GH¢ 300,000.00) over the period; Sixty Thousand Cedis (60,000.00) in the year 2014, Eighty Thousand Cedis for the year 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively.

Sector Church Planting

The following church planting activities took place in the various Sectors, Associations and Churches during the period under review.

Name of Sector, Association or Church	Number of churches Planted
Adom Baptist Association	2
Golden Gate Baptist Association/Christ Baptist church	1
Kumasi North Association	4
Kumasi South-East/Grace Baptist church	3
Adansi Baptist Association	4
Kumasi South-West	16
Sunyani Association	2
Bethel Association	2
Northern Ghana Sector	3
Hope Association Men's Ministry	1
Yendi	100

Navorongo Missions	13
Nzema Mission	4
Sefwi Mission	10
North Volta Mission	5
Swedru Baptist Association	3
Accra North Association	3
Tema Central Association	1

Accra South Association	2
Dangme East Association	1
Total	179

Yendi Mission Field

The Home Missionary Rev Emmanuel Mustapha resigned on 31st December 2016. As at the time of the resignation of Rev. Emmanuel Mustapha, 100 churches had been planted in 2016 and 71,000 mosquito nets distributed. The Yendi Mission Field's goal of reaching out to the Kokombas in the Southern parts of Ghana resulted in the planting of two churches; Victory Baptist Church, Agbobloshie, Accra and the Bethel Baptist Church, Kasoa, Central Region. Efforts are being made to plant an additional church at Ashiaman. A total of 2,050 souls were baptized over the period.

Navrongo Mission Field

Two churches were successfully planted at Zondema and Kpalugu, a suburb of Bolgatanga following outreaches from the 9th to the 12th of March 2017 and 4th and 5th April. About 230 people were exposed to the gospel and 50 persons prayed to receive Christ and 17 persons made decision to join the Church. This brings us to a total of thirteen (13) churches planted over the period.

Nzema Mission Field

One church was planted in the mission field this year in addition to three (3) churches that were planted three (3) years ago. The Church was planted successfully at Ankobra on March 3, 2017. The newly planted churches at Mdem and Ankobra were supported with fifty (50) plastic chairs, a set of local drums and two tambourines.

Sefwi Mission Field

Two churches were planted in 2017 with support from the Cinema Ministry and SHOP. This brings us to a total of ten (10) churches planted during the four (4) year period.

North Volta Mission Field

To enhance the work of the Home Missionary serving the area, the following support was provided for the work in the area: Two (2) pavilions were constructed in the Nkonya area, three (3) set of local drums and three (3) bicycles were given to the mission field. In addition, one hundred and eighty (180) plastic chairs were supplied to the mission field. The Convention also supported the purchase of five (5) pieces of land for the newly planted churches in the mission field.

The house of the Home Missionary has been fully paid for and so that building has become the property of the Ghana Baptist Convention.

Medical Outreach

Two medical outreaches were organized in Bunso and Ayetepah in June and November 2016 with support of medical teams from First Baptist Church, Tema and the National Union of Baptist Students, Korle Bu. About 600 people benefited from the outreach.

New Creation Baptist Church, Koforidua organized a one-week free medical screening for the community and to educate them on healthy living.

Medical Services Council (MSC)

The Medical Services Council was reconstituted in 2015 after a successful turn-over of the operations (financial and administrative) of Baptist Medical Centre, Nalerigu to the Convention from our partners (International Mission Board and George Faile Foundation). The Council's mandate was broadened to cover the supervision and management of all other medical facilities owned by, and or affiliated with, the Convention. Among other duties, the Council was tasked to ensure the smooth administration of the facilities and to formulate policies that will help to facilitate its sustainability.

Ghana Baptist Health Services Secretariat

The Ghana Baptist Health Services (GBHS) is the main administrative and implementing body for the policies of MSC. It coordinates the activities of the medical facilities under the Convention and maintains a strong Baptist presence within the Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG).

NEW AND EMERGING BAPTIST HEALTH FACILITIES

We are pleased to announce that about 8 new medical facilities are likely to be added to the health facilities operated by the Convention soon. These facilities are at various stages of readiness and we are hopeful that all will be fully functional by the close of next year. The facilities are:

1. Baptist Medical Centre, ABUAKWA (GBUC)

This is the newest addition to Baptist Health Facilities. It started operation in July 2016. The facility was built and equipped by the Ghana Baptist University College. An additional maternity and theatre block is under construction.

2. Nzema Baptist Hospital, NVELLENU:

This is the fourth hospital of the Convention currently under construction. Cuyahoga Valley Church, Ohio USA is funding this project. It is expected to commence operations in September 2017.

3. Opuniase

This is a partnership facility. An MOU has been signed between GBC and the Chief of Opuniase who built this facility for the village. With support from the Lions Club International, additional buildings are being developed. Some hospital equipment has been supplied as well. GBC/MSC through BHS is to provide staff and some logistics to run the facility.

4. Atiaba Memorial Baptist Medical Centre, SANDEMA

A building donated to the Convention by Dr. Azantilow is yet to be renovated and equipped to function as a clinic.

5. Baptist Hospital, GYINYASE KUMASI:

In August 2016, a sod-cutting ceremony was done by the President for the commencement of a hospital project by CCBC. When completed, this will become one of the health facilities under the Convention.

6. Baptist Medical Centre, PARKOSO

This project was embarked upon by the Kumasi South East Baptist Association. The first phase of the building has been completed. What is yet to be done are the fixtures and fittings plus installation of medical equipment for the hospital to commence operations.

7. Living Spring Baptist Medical Centre, ATASOMANSO, KUMASI

The Living Spring Baptist Church, Atasomanso, Kumasi has indicated turning its first Church building which was constructed as a three-storey, 8-Unit classroom block with a strong foundation, into a Medical facility. Feasibility studies have been made on the premises to ascertain what further requirements are needed to bring it to full operation.

8. BAPTIST MATERNITY CLINIC, WA (proposed)

During the Convention President's recent visit to the Wa Association in June 2016, a proposal was mooted for the Convention to help build a Maternity Clinic on a plot of land acquired by the God's Glory Baptist Church, Wa. Initial Floor Plan for a single storey, Maternity Clinic has been drawn and construction materials are being prepared.

SPIRITUAL HEALING

While the goal of the medical facilities is to provide physical health care, some spiritual care is also given to patients who come to our facilities. This is handled by the chaplains who make the requisite arrangement for some ministers drawn from the local council of churches to deliver sermons during the usual morning devotion sessions. Periodically, some souls are won through this ministry. Apart from preaching, the chaplains provide counseling to patients who have been diagnosed with terminal diseases.

THE BAPTIST MEDICAL CENTER, NALERIGU

In October 2014, the IMB of the Southern Baptist Convention handed over to the Convention, the Baptist Medical Centre at Nalerigu. BMC is now a facility under the Convention. In 2016/2017, despite the shortage of certain key staff especially midwives during the period, average birth deliveries over the period was 2,527. Minor surgeries increased from 875 to 3,401 for the period under consideration. OPD attendance averaged about 78,489 while admissions average for the period was 12,559.

The bed capacity of BMC, Nalerigu increased from 123 in 2014 to 175 in 2016. The increment occurred in the pediatrics, Maternity and NRU. In 2016, a Mental Health unit/department was created to cater for the growing need in this aspect of health care. The activities of the unit over the past year include; community durbars, school health, home visits, health talks and outreach services.

Efforts were made to improve BMC Nalerigu's infrastructure during the period under review. This included:

- securing the boundaries of BMC property from encroachment
- Expanding the Central Septic tank for the hospital
- Ongoing Renovation work of some bungalows at BMC

The following developmental projects have been completed or are on-going:

- Acquisition of oxygen cylinders, flow meters add carriers for the wards to enhance service delivery completed
- Intensive care unit under construction
- Construction of drainage system to facilitate management of waste from the wards.
- Running of overhead VRA electricity to all houses which is about 90% completed.

In March 2017, The Helmsey Charitable Trust approved a grant facility of USD1, 203,076 to BMC for the construction of In-Patient Wards (Female Medical, Male Medical, Children's

Ward with Neonatal Intensive Care Unit), Mechanized Bore Hole with Overhead Steel Tank, Ambulance, Medical Equipment, Medical Gas Plant and Piping, Office Equipment and Internet service. The projects are on-going and are at different stages of works.

DOCUMENTATION ON LANDED PROPERTIES OF CHURCHES

The need to have a reliable and up-to-date record of the landed properties of our churches remains unmet. The Estates and Legal Department is building a database to capture all Convention assets nationwide. While some churches have submitted their documents, others have not. We will like to appeal to all our pastors and church leaders to help with this process.

STRATEGIC DOCUMENT

A strategic planning process began at the close of 2016 for a new strategy document to guide the Convention in the next 5-10 years. A draft document coming out of this process will be placed before this house for consideration and input by the lead consultant.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After operating the new constitution for the last three and half years, I believe it is time to re-look at some portions of the constitution that require amendment. Some members of the Denominational Board tried to initiate possible amendment of some portions by following the constitutional requirements. However, because there was lack of education, their effort did not yield the needed results. I would like to propose that this Session considers the following:

1. The need for a Constitutional Review Committee to review the gray areas of our Constitution for the necessary action.
2. The need to provide official vehicles for Home Missionaries and Sector Heads to facilitate their work
3. To examine why some churches have not paid any contribution to the Convention to date and why some churches are not paying the correct amounts to the Convention and Associations

I would like to urge you to read the appendices to this report for more detailed information on the report presented. May the Lord bless every one of our churches. May the Lord be gracious to each family. May God bless every individual Baptist within and outside this country. May God bless our dear nation Ghana.

Submitted by
Rev. Dr. Ernest Adu-Gyamfi
President.