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The Church ⇒ **Beginning of Methodism**

The Methodist Church was founded through the activities of the Rev'd John Wesley. John Wesley was an ordained Anglican Clergyman. He had a conversion experience on the 24th of May 1738 at a revival meeting at Aldersgate Street in London, after which he began to form societies out of the people who responded to the gospel call to holy living. It was in Bristol that a suggestion to divide the followers into classes was adopted to:

1. Pave the way for effective teaching.
2. Ensure that members are given adequate pastoral care.
3. Enable members to contribute financially to support the evangelistic activities of the society.

With the assistance of other preachers, both ordained and lay, the Methodist Societies spread throughout England with the aim of advancing Christian perfection. By 1748, the Methodist Societies had been organized into circuits, which met once in every three months and this gathering was called Quarterly Meeting. The circuits were also organized into districts. In 1745, John Wesley began the practice of calling together his clerical supporters and his preachers to a Conference. This became an annual affair and became the forum for settling the main affairs of the connexion (as it came to be called).

By the time of the death of John Wesley in 1791, the Methodist Societies had extended as far as the Americas. Partly due to conflicts with the Church of England and partly to misunderstandings among the Methodists, sharp divisions emerged. Before these divisions, the Methodists were organized as societies associated with the Anglican Church though under an independent government. There was a Plan of Pacification in 1795, aimed at reinforcing the unity of the Methodists. Divisions emerged, but in 1932, the three main factions, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, The Primitive Methodist Church, and the United Methodist Church came together as the Methodist Church.

METHODIST CHURCH GHANA

The Methodist Church Ghana, came into existence as a result of the missionary activities of the Wesleyan Methodist Church which was inaugurated with the arrival of the Rev'd Joseph Rhodes Dunwell in January, 1835, in the Gold Coast (Ghana). Like the mother Church, the Methodist Church in Ghana was established from a core of persons with Anglican background. Missionaries, notably Roman Catholics and Anglicans, had come to the Gold Coast from the 15th Century. Their activities did not see much success. What was left was a school established in Cape Coast by the Anglicans during the time of Rev'd Philip Quaque, a Ghanaian priest. Those who came out of this school had scriptural knowledge. They also had scriptural materials, which were supplied by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. It was not surprising that one of the local Bible study groups was known by this name in addition to other names. It was a member of one of such Bible study groups, William De-Graft, who requested for Bibles through one Captain Potter of the ship called 'Congo'. Through Captain Potter's instrumentality, not only were Bibles sent, but also a Methodist missionary. In the first eight years of the Church's life, 11 out of 21 Missionaries who worked in the Gold Coast died. Thomas Birch Freeman, who arrived at the Gold Coast in 1838 was a great pioneer of Missionary expansion. Between 1838 and 1857 he carried Methodism from the Coastal areas to Kumasi in the Asante hinterland of the Gold Coast. He also established Methodist Societies in Badagry and Abeokuta in Nigeria with the assistance of William De-Graft.

By 1854, the Church had been organized into circuits constituting a District with Rev'd T.B. Freeman as Chairman. However, Rev'd Freeman was replaced in 1856 by Rev'd William West. On 6th February, 1878, Synod took steps that were confirmed at the British Conference in July, 1878, that the District should be divided into two for effective ministry. The District had then extended to include areas in the then Gold Coast and Nigeria. The two districts were:

1. Gold Coast (Ghana) District, with Rev'd T.R. Picot as Chairman.
2. Yoruba and Popo, District with Rev'd John Milum as Chairman.

Methodist evangelization of Northern Ghana began in 1910. After a long period of conflict with the Colonial Government, Missionary work was finally established in 1955, the late Rev. Paul Adu being the first indigenous missionary to Northern Ghana.

In July 1961, the Methodist Church in Ghana became autonomous, and was called the Methodist Church Ghana, based on a Deed of Foundation. This deed of Foundation is enshrined in the Constitution and Standing Orders of our Church.

Currently, the Methodist Church Ghana, is one of the leading Churches in our country, with a total membership of close to 600,000. The Church has 15 dioceses, 3,814 societies, 1,066 pastors, 15,920 local preachers, 24,100 Lay Leaders, many schools, an orphanage, hospitals and clinics.