



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
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Columbus Ghanaian Church Dissociates Itself From Ohio Conference's Statement On Pipim's Disfellowship & Cautions Against Giving Credence To The Ohio Conference Statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Columbus Ohio, United States | Columbus Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Columbus Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist Church (CGSDAC) has been made aware of a January 18, 2021 press release by the Ohio Conference (OHC), under the caption "*Seventh-day Adventist Church Removes Samuel Koranteng-Pipim from Membership in Ohio.*" After allowing some 3 weeks for events to unfold, we feel the need to respond to some misleading information in the press release, and to caution anyone giving credence to the contents of the widely publicized Statement by the Ohio Conference.

1. The Ohio Conference Statement saying Dr. Pipim had been voted out of the Columbus Ghanaian SDA Church "for alleged sexual offenses" is false. (CGSDAC has no evidence of the claims of sexual violence such as rape and harassment against at least 10 women as outlined in their statement). The CGSDAC has not communicated to the Ohio Conference of such a decision, nor authorized the Conference to take that action on its behalf. In fact, CGSDAC never publicly publishes any of their church discipline proceedings let alone the reasons for doing so.

2. While CGSDAC does not tolerate inappropriate behaviors of its church members, erring members are disciplined and redeemed as outlined in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* and in biblical principles. Reflecting on the Ohio Conference press release, and particularly their reason for their actions, we are shocked and saddened.

3. We caution the general public on disseminating and relying on the January 18, 2021 Ohio Conference press release statement on the grounds that: The *basis* of the Ohio Conference Statement is questionable. The *argument* is flawed, and without precedence, which is alarming. The *contents* of the press release are factually defective and misleading. The *potential damages ramifications, and/or consequences* of the Statement are incalculable.



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4. The news release by the Ohio Conference poses many disturbing concerns and questions of reasonable doubt in the minds of our church members and non-members. We wish the Columbus Ghanaian Church had been spared the humiliation of being asked about the spiritual maturity or integrity of the Ohio Conference press release, and the task of saving lost sinners.

5. The Ohio Conference's widely-circulated news release contains some misleading information, if not outright untruths. Wittingly or unwittingly, the press release presents some factual inaccuracies and/or misrepresentations of some facts as we know them. For example:

- Old accusations are recycled as new to give impressions that are completely false.
- Equally false is the claim that the Ohio Conference executive leadership "offered counsel to the local [Ghanaian] church." The OHC leadership did not even meet with the church nor counsel the church.
- There were two instances (August 8th and October 28th 2020) where the Conference executive leadership inappropriately, without formal invitation showed up in the meeting with our church board of elders to force the church to do the bidding of the Conference, i.e. remove Pipim from membership.
- The last interaction of the Conference with the Church was through a letter dated December 12, 2020, threatening "*to recommend to the constituency the expulsion of the Columbus Ghanaian SDA Church from the sisterhood of churches of the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*"
- At no time has the Church been allowed to see any of the accusations; Contrary to the claim "the [Columbus] church and Ohio Conference reexamined the entire case."

6. Besides falsehoods or a lack of knowledge of the facts, the *basis* of the Ohio Conference Statement warning is a series of "allegations" or "accusations." (Their document contains at least some 10 instances of the use of these words and their variants.)

- On what basis did the Conference feel that it could publicize as fact allegations peddled by unknown individuals?
- Was Dr. Pipim ever contacted on the allegations of 10 women?
- Are the 2020 allegations really "new," or they are the same decade old allegations recycled as new?
- If the Conference knew about 10 women why did they withhold that information from the church?
- When the leaders of the Ohio Conference met the elders, they said they wanted to protect Dr. Pipim's privacy and the women involved. Following on from this, why did they later publish it in a way that went viral?



- In short, what due diligence did Ohio Conference leadership do in verifying any information or allegations given to them?

7. The hasty judgement of the Ohio Conference leadership in basing their widely publicized Statement on unverified accusations, has legitimized or encouraged hearsay, gossip, and talebearing among undiscerning readers (both members and non-members) - as borne out by many comments on social media and other outlets.

- Believing that Church Administrators are incapable of being misled or misleading others, many undiscerning readers and news outlets have uncritically accepted as gospel the Conference Statement issued on its letterhead.
- Should leaders succumb to the pressures of its overzealous, sometimes misguided and mean-spirited members - whether or not those individuals are well-meaning?
- How should we deal with gossip, rumor-mongering, and tale-bearing? What steps should church leaders (and members) follow to avoid encouraging evil-surmising, heartless treatment of the erring, and critical, fault-finding attitude and behaviors?

8. We are sad because it appears to us that the press release by the Ohio Conference is a calculated-attempt to use the Conference Administrators' disagreement with the CGSDAC on a matter of local church discipline as the PRETEXT for the Conference leadership TO PURSUE AN AGENDA - namely,

- the Agenda of the Conference Administrators who have put themselves on record before us that they are pursuing an agenda (Aug 28, October 28, and December 12 letter)
- the Agenda of certain individuals whom the Conference President claims had been pressuring them to do so (the Ohio Conference President specifically mentioned the name of one of them, an avowed personal adversary of Dr. Pipim during the past decade)
- the Agenda of folks who are pursuing certain theological views that differ from Dr. Pipim's (evidenced by their activities on social media).

That ONE AGENDA shared by the above entities is to see Dr. Pipim severed completely from having any connection whatsoever with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is expressed very clearly in the very last sentence of their statement:

"... After new accusations arose, the church and Ohio Conference reexamined the entire case. The church then acted under a unanimous recommendation of the Board to remove Pipim's membership. As such, he no longer holds any connection with, or endorsement of any entity within the Seventh-day Adventist Church."



9. We are troubled by what discerning readers of the news release can easily see as THE REAL INTENT of the Ohio Conference leadership and the people whose agenda they're pursuing. The agenda is captured in this telling warning:

“The Ohio Conference unequivocally warns the public against inviting Pipim as a speaker, using his books or materials, or placing him in a position of spiritual authority, leadership, or influence over others.”

What is the basis for the Conference to “unequivocally warn the public” not to read Dr. Pipim’s books and materials? What do they find disturbing about his published works that they don’t want anyone to read them? Do the Conference Administrators who issued the press release fully understand the biblical and legal implications of their sweeping and unqualified warning?

10. Because the action of the Ohio Conference sets a dangerous precedence for the authority, life, and mission of any local Seventh-day Adventist congregation, the Columbus Ghanaian SDA Church feels the need to completely dissociate itself from the Ohio Conference’s January 18, 2021 news release and to send a formal letter of disagreement to the Ohio Conference and its parent organization (the Columbia Union).

11. Meanwhile the Columbus Ghanaian SDA Church wants to assure everyone that, in our opinion, the actions of the Ohio Conference in their news release does not represent the best in the Seventh-day Adventist church on how to treat its erring members. We shall continue to make the Church A WELCOMING HOME for REDEEMING the erring ones.

We pray that the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be redemptive in Church discipline and seek the offender so as to restore the individual spiritually instead of rushing to publish articles on offenders.

12. The Ohio Conference and our Columbus Ghanaian SDA Church have worked well together in the past and we will continue with our mission of spreading the gospel.

