

## **Biographical summary of Reverend Godson Dogbéda Tési LAWSON KPAVUVU**

Reverend Godson Dogbéda Tési LAWSON KPAVUVU is the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Togo. He was born on May 26, 1965 in Lomé Togo. He holds a Postgraduate Diploma (DEA) in Sociology at the University of Lomé, a Master's degree in Theology from the Faculty of Protestant Theology of Yaoundé in Cameroon.



Apart from sociology and theology, Reverend Godson Dogbéda Tési LAWSON KPAVUVU has also done rich and varied training such as :

- The Timeless message for the new Millennium" at Candler School of Theology of Emory University - Atlanta (USA);
- Fight against the proliferation of small arms in West Africa with the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Trade - Oslo- Norway;
- Design and management of development projects with OIC International Abidjan - R.C.I ;
- Conflict Management and Peacekeeping with the South African Council of Churches (SACC), Khotso House, Johannesburg, South Africa.

These various qualifications have enabled him to practice church diplomacy in conflict situations in the world and particularly in Africa and to hold high positions within the Methodist Church of Togo : President of the EMT, General Secretary, Chairman of District, Director of the Youth Department, Director of Methodist Education, Executive Director of the Methodist Community Development Program.

Driven by a strong desire to serve in an ecumenical and multicultural environment, he has been asked to assume leading responsibilities in important national and international groups such as :

- ❖ Secretary General of the Council of Churches in Togo ;
- ❖ Member of the Board of Directors of the Alliance Biblique du Togo ;
- ❖ West Africa Coordinator of the Youth Department of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Nairobi ;
- ❖ Member of the Board of Directors of the Réseau Ecole Développement (RED) Project, Abidjan-Côte d'Ivoire ;
- ❖ Acting General Secretary of Fellowship of Councils and Churches in West Africa (FECCIWA), Accra – Ghana ;
- ❖ Vice President of West African Network of Peace Building (WANEP International) Accra – Ghana ;
- ❖ Assistant to the Southern Africa Office of the American Friends Service Committee of the Quaker International Affairs Program in Johannesburg, Kotsso House - South Africa ;
- ❖ Secretary of the National Advisory Council of PLAN INTERNATIONAL Togo ;
- ❖ Monitoring and Evaluation Programs Officer at the Ecumenical Accompaniment Project of the Churches of Togo (PAOET) ;

- ❖ Member of the working group on Peace in Africa of the World Council of Churches Geneva – Switzerland ;
- ❖ Chair of the International Reference Group of the World Council of Churches Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiatives and Advocacy Programme, WCC-EHAIA, Geneva - Switzerland.

Two important acts and commitments have characterised the life of Godson LAWSON KPAVUVU.

1- The fight against social conflicts by building a culture of Peace.

To this end, in his capacity of AACC's West African Youth coordinator, he led the programme on « Building a Culture of Peace » designs by the Archbishop Desmond MPIOLO TUTU, President of AACC.



This programme enabled him to get involved in conflict resolution in West Africa, particularly in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

2- The second field in which Rev Godson Dogbéda Tési LAWSON KPAVUVU has been very active remains the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Thus, in the 1990s, he was one of the few clergymen to draw the attention of his colleagues to the urgency for the churches to engage in the fight against HIV infection and to adopt a more understanding and inclusive attitude towards the infected and the sick.

He always takes advantage of worship times to sensitize his church members and advocate compassion as an approach in supporting infected and affected people. To this end, he has joined "ESPOIR VIE TOGO" the largest association of people living with HIV to help them in advocacy and in the global access to care and treatment. His message to the religious communities can be summed up as follows: **"HIV is a virus and must be fought as such. HIV is not a sin.** On stigma and discrimination, **he always urges his colleagues to « observe hygiene in their language ».**

On the ecumenical and international level, Rev Godson LAWSON KPAVUVU has always used his position as a pastor and church leader to mobilize his peers to systematically integrate the issue of HIV in their concerns. His commitment to social justice has led him to advocate on behalf of key populations in order to allow the reversal of the rate of contamination within this category of the population.

For the past 4 years, with the World Council of Churches, he has worked on gender-based violence and masculinities as well as theological controversies related to adherence to antiretroviral treatment and Faith Healing "**Only**" in the context of HIV infection. This research has explored areas of analysis on social constructs in Rwanda, DRC, and Nigeria, including Kaduna, Jos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt and Calabar. This work has led to the publication of 5 important manuals and studies for use by teenagers, pastors, chaplains and leaders of youth and women's movements, namely :

- ✚ ***La guérison par la foi seule face à l'infection à VIH***", Kigali Rwanda, WCC-EHAIA Kigali Rwanda ;
- ✚ **"Positive Masculinities and Femininities, Handbook for Adolescents and Young people in faith Communities in Nigeria"** WCC-EHAIA ;
- ✚ ***Féminités et Masculinités: Guide sur Perceptions, Significations et Répercussions en Milieu Congolais RDC à l'Ere du VIH et Sida***", WCC-EHAIA ;
- ✚ **Reinforcement of HIV Prevention Action for Youth, Sunday school Teachers and Young pastors to achieve the 3 Zero Objectives** in Plateau State and Cross Rivers State - Nigeria, WCC-EHAIA ;
- ✚ **"Effective Methods For Comprehensive Sexual Education In Rural Areas In West African Context Focusing on Benin And Togo"**, PMU Stockholm, Sweden February 2022.



Today, with his position as a very high level religious leader and with his commitment to **Africa Reach**, Reverend Godson LAWSON KPAVUVU is resolutely involved in advocating and raising the awareness of his fellow religious leaders in order to integrate into their activities the issue of paediatric HIV in relation to the sexuality of adolescents and their vulnerability to HIV.

This will help to drive forward the commitment to Global Access to prevention, care and treatment for all by 2025

