

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry
Emphasis in Leadership

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: EQUIPPING AND EMPOWERING CHURCH ELDERS FOR
EFFECTIVE MINISTRY AT NYAMIRAMBO SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH, EAST CENTRAL RWANDA CONFERENCE**

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Date completed: August 2016

In the Nyamirambo Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, a very few number of church elders are involved in leadership activities of the church, and a few number are involved in the Bible teaching and evangelism ministries. In fact, it was observed that none of the church elders led an evangelistic campaign from 2011-2015. After reviewing the literature on church eldership and the responsibilities of the church elders in the OT and the NT, as well as in other Christian writings, the researcher developed an intervention strategy based on theological and literature review of this subject. The purpose was to equip and empower the Nyamirambo church elders for effective ministry.

The participants of this study were made up of 20 church elders elected for the year 2015, with eighteen (90%) who completed and returned the questionnaire. Data was gathered using both questionnaire and interview prepared by the researcher. It

was analyzed by the use of Excel program. The findings revealed the need for a training program. Hence, the researcher embarked on an intensive training program to impart knowledge, skills, and practices to church elders. The development, implementation, and evaluation of this program were done in the period starting from September 2015 to June 2016. Eleven lessons were given in training seminars: leadership and spirituality, servant leadership, team working ministry, church committees, Holy Communion, prayer meetings, teaching the Bible lessons, preaching, personal evangelism, public evangelism, and spiritual gifts.

The evaluation of this program has shown the following results: an overall positive change of church elders in devotional life; about 67% had an increment of change in the practice of servant leadership; increase of knowledge and skills in chairing church committees, conducting the Holy Communion, and prayer meetings; Twenty-two percent of the church elders reported being involved in evangelism as the preacher/presenter.

In view of the results obtained from this study, it was recommended that the SDA Church at all levels prepare and organize ongoing educational programs to equip and empower the local church leaders, so as to enable them to perform the church ministries efficiently.

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A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

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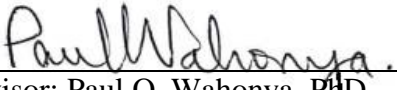
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This dissertation is dedicated to my family and the spiritual leaders of the SDA
Church worldwide. To God be the Glory.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUA	Adventist University of Africa
CEV	Contemporary English Version
ECD	East Central Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
ECRC	East Central Rwanda Conference
ESV	English Standard Version
GC	General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
GNT	Good News Translation
KJV	King James Version
MRND	Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
RUM	Rwanda Union Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
SDABC	Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary
TEV	Today English Version
TMI	Total Member Involvement

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Mission in Rwanda coincides with the end of the First World War in 1919. It was begun by a Belgian missionary named David Elie Delhove, who was soon joined by a young Swiss man called Henri Monnier. The first Adventist mission started by Delhove was Gitwe, in the Central part of Rwanda, in 1919. The second mission was opened in 1921 at Rwankeri in the Northern part of the country, by Henri Monnier who was moved from Buganza mission. The third mission to be opened was Ngoma, in the Western part of Rwanda, bordering Lake Kivu. It was started by two missionaries, Alfred A. Matter and Dr. Stanley Sturges, in 1931. Later on, in 1965 the Adventist message reached Kigali.¹

The Seventh-day Adventist Mission in Kigali City

It is interesting to note that the city of Kigali was like a small village in 1962 when Rwanda got its independence. Its population was only about 5,500 people, with an urban area of approximately three square kilometers.² According to various oral sources, it was around 1963 that the first Adventist pioneers explored Kigali, and started to teach the Bible doctrines as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

¹ The General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia: Commentary, Reference Series*, vol. 10 (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1966), 1101, 1102.

² Colonial History of Kigali, accessed 21 March 2014, <http://www.kigalicity.gov.rw/spip.php?article4>.

The first targeted place was, therefore, Nyamirambo because it was by then the center of Kigali city and more populated than any other part of the city. However, the teaching of the Adventist message in Nyamirambo town was not easy because of two main hindrances: the presence of the Catholic Church and the presence of Islam.

In addition, the Adventist Church was considered as a new church in the town, and therefore, was not well understood by the people. However, there were some opportunities to evangelize Nyamirambo (Kigali city). Apparently, Nyamirambo was by then the center of the city where the population gathered for various meetings. Nyamirambo was the headquarters of the administrative office of the mayor. The presence of a primary school called “Intwari,” constructed through the funds given by king Mutara III Rudahigwa is another opportunity. This school, which is run by Muslims, is very close to the Nyamirambo Adventist Church.

In 1963, the first evangelistic campaign for Nyamirambo town was led by Pastor Evert, while Pastor Rutwa Zephaniah was the first Rwandan pastor to evangelize the place, and to be the first leader of the Nyamirambo Church in 1964. According to various oral sources, those who attended the meetings were few, gathering in a tent, near the previous headquarters of the East Central Rwanda Conference (ECRC).

The Nyamirambo Seventh-day Adventist Church

The beginning of the Nyamirambo SDA Church coincides with the establishment of the East Central Rwanda Field, known by then as the East Rwanda Field.³ The so-called East Rwanda Field (ERF) known today as the East Central

³ The General Conference of Seventh day Adventists Church, *SDA Church Yearbook 2013* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 56.

Rwanda Conference (ECRC) was established in 1965, in the Nyamirambo town, in Kigali city.⁴

The president of this new field was Pastor Baraburiye Stephen, while Pastor Rutwa Zephaniah, who was the first Rwandan to evangelize Nyamirambo town, was also one of the leaders in the new field. According to oral sources, the first church members of the Nyamirambo church were about 12 members: eight men and four women. The church was organized in 1964, and later on, the building of a beautiful chapel was inaugurated in 1970 by the president of the Republic of Rwanda, late Kayibanda Gregoire.⁵ This chapel is now used temporarily by the “Francophone” church, while the church members of the Nyamirambo Adventist Church gather in a big worship platform next to the “Francophone” Church.

Nowadays, the Nyamirambo Adventist Church is one of the largest churches in Rwanda. It is located in the center of the capital City of Kigali, at about five kilometers from the headquarters of the province of Kigali City. The Nyamirambo SDA Church is one of the 214 churches of the East Central Rwanda Conference. It has a total membership of 4,156 out of 6,311 members (66%) of the Nyamirambo district⁶. The number of elected church elders for the year 2015 was 20, comprising 17 men and three women. These elders hail from the seven areas forming the church⁷. Their responsibility is to coordinate the ministry in that big church of Nyamirambo.

⁴ The General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia: Commentary, Reference Series*, Vol. 10 (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1966), 1101.

⁵ Source: Ntigurirwa Ernest, one of the Nyamirambo church members by then.

⁶ Statistical Reports as of December 2013, from the secretariat office of the ECRC.

⁷ Report from the office of Nyamirambo Church clerk. The seven areas forming the Nyamirambo Church are Cyahafi, Gitega, Kivugiza, Nyakabanda I, Nyakabanda II, Nyamirambo and Nyarugenge. These areas help the church elders and the church pastor to be able to coordinate all church ministries.

In addition, the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders combine the responsibilities of leading the church and teaching the Word of God. They ought to nurture the church members and the new converts. It is also important to note that most of the Nyamirambo church members have joined this church from all over Rwanda, with different educational backgrounds. This is also true for the Nyamirambo church elders who are elected every year among those church members. Therefore, the ministry of these church elders is to teach and nurture the church members with diversity background. Furthermore, with the post-genocide era in Rwanda, the ministry of teaching the Word of God has been remarked as very challenging to the Adventist Church and the Christian churches in general.

As one of the competencies of a church elder, teaching the Gospel helps people become true disciples of Jesus Christ and thus faithful citizens. As a matter of fact, David Sills stressed the crucial role of church elders, which consists of teaching people the Word of God, so as to “fulfill Jesus’ Great Commission instruction, ‘teaching them to obey,’⁸ as found in Matthew 28:18-20. This is in line with the counsel of the apostle Paul to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, whereby the apostle underlines the necessity of “training trainers, teaching teachers, and disciple disciplers.”⁹ In fact, this was the best method of Jesus with His disciples, when He was preparing them for an effective discipleship ministry. He always trained them for ministry. This is also a call to “to prevent the church against the influence of false teachers who are increasing daily.”¹⁰

⁸ M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2010), 19.

⁹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰ Itorero ry’Abadiventisti b’Umunsi wa Karindwi mu Rwanda, *Ibyo Abadiventisiti b’Umunsi wa Karindwi Bizera... Amahame Shingiro 28 y’Ukuri kwa Bibiliya* (Seoul, South Korea: Korean House, 2010), 5.

Furthermore, Delbert concurs with this by saying that the church elders should “control the church’s teaching,” because there are “many” who teach things that contradict the “sound doctrines.”¹¹ In addition to this, Sills underlined that if the church elders and members are not trained to believe the Bible doctrine biblically and to interpret the Word of God correctly, “the day will soon come when those who represent Christ in this world will be preaching a gospel that Jesus never gave.”¹²

Statement of the Problem

In the Nyamirambo Church, which has a total of about 4,156 members, only about 10 percent of church elders are involved in leadership activities of the church, such as conducting church meetings, holy communion service, prayer meetings, while only about 15 percent of these elders are involved in the Bible teaching and studies.¹³ Furthermore, it was noted that none of the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders had led an evangelistic campaign from 2011-2015.¹⁴

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop, implement and evaluate a program aimed at equipping and empowering church elders in the Nyamirambo SDA Church for effective ministry. The program intended to assist all the church elders of the Nyamirambo church to become proactive and dynamic in leading, teaching and/or preaching the Bible so as to help church members and themselves become true disciples of Christ.

¹¹ Derbert Burkett, *An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 442.

¹² M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2010), 29.

¹³ The report from the office of the Nyamirambo church clerk, for the year 2015.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Justification for the Dissertation

Church elders in the Nyamirambo SDA Church have an important role to play, not only in the leadership responsibilities but also in the discipleship and the growth of the church. One of the major objectives of this study is to help the SDA Church in Rwanda to empower local church elders with leadership and teaching skills to nurture the people of God. To my knowledge, there is no study done so far in Rwanda on this subject. In addition, equipping church elders for effective ministry is crucial to the growth of the local churches, and the fulfillment of the command given by Jesus.

In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples. Making disciples is the end result of a long process that includes going, teaching, and baptizing. Unfortunately, more emphasis has been placed on the end result of the process. Many authors such as Spooner¹⁵, Stott¹⁶, and Escobar¹⁷ have addressed the issue of discipleship in the area of ‘making disciples’. However, a gap exists on the issues of ‘teaching’ disciples¹⁸ and preparing leaders. It is, therefore, important to balance end result with the process to avoid creating any gap in discipling new converts. That is why this project seeks to address the need for empowering church

¹⁵ Bernard M. Spooner, *Christian Education Leadership: Making Disciples in the 21st Century Church* (Coppell, TX: Christian Leadership, 2012), Xiv.

¹⁶ John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1975), 22.

¹⁷ Samuel Escobar, *A Time for Mission: The Challenge for Global Christianity* (Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), 84.

¹⁸ Making disciples, in Greek, ‘making *mathetai*’ is used in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19, 20 as a command given to the Church. A disciple (*mathetes*) is a learner, a true Christ-follower. Thus, making disciple involves teaching (not just preaching). It is interesting to note that the Greek word, ‘*matheteuo*’ occurs four times and the Greek noun occurs 262 times in the New Testament. Almost all modern versions of the Bible translated it as ‘make disciples’ in Matthew 28:19. However, many ancient versions translate it as ‘teach.’ (KJV; Wycliffe, 1395; Tyndale, 1534; Coverdale’s Bible, 1535; the Great Bible, 1540; the Bishop’s Bible, 1568; the Geneva Bible, 1587; Worsley Translation, 1770; Webster’s Translation, 1833; KJV 21st Century Version, 1994; Third Millennium Bible, 1998 and the Jubilee Bible, 2000-2010 – “Teach all nations”).

elders on the aspect of teaching in the process of making disciples, and nurturing church members through leadership ministry.

Furthermore, the apostle Paul exhorts the church elders to shepherd and guard the flock of God (Acts 20:28). Shepherding implies feeding through teaching and preaching; protecting through servanthood, leading and praying for, and involving church members in ministry, by helping them discover and use their spiritual gifts (Eph 4:11-13). Addressing Timothy, the apostle Paul reminded him that church elders should be men who are “able to teach”¹⁹ the Word of God (1 Tim 3:2). Thus, since a pastor cannot effectively give pastoral care to every church member, church elders need to be trained and equipped with leadership and teaching skills if they are to be effective in nurturing church members.

Finally, as leaders, church elders are also responsible for inspiring and influencing others to follow the direction they lead them to, and this is the reason they are effective guides. That is if they are well trained in the Word of God, they will lead others in the same Word of God and protect the flock of God. Equipping and empowering church elders with Bible teaching and leadership skills contributes to their spiritual growth and the alleviation of the work of a church pastor who is always overloaded by taking care of many churches through various ministries. This project highly contributes to the development of the work in the ECRC, and in the Rwanda Union Mission of the SDA Church.

¹⁹ All biblical texts quoted in this dissertation are from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.

Delimitations of the Dissertation

This dissertation addresses only the church elders' ministry from the SDA Church perspective, since they perform their ministries in the Adventist church. However, other denominations' perspectives on the role of elders are reviewed for more insights. The implementation of this project is limited to the Nyamirambo SDA Church. The choice of the Nyamirambo church being that it is the researcher's local church, and it is considered as 'a model church' by many Adventist church members in Rwanda.²⁰

The concepts of eldership, teaching, ministry and servant leadership model are reviewed from selected passages of the Old and the New Testaments. Ellen G. White writings also served the researcher to clarify the methods used by Jesus to equip and empower His disciples. Only the church elders elected during the year of the program implementation are used in this study. This is for the sake of church leadership responsibilities which allow the elected church elders primarily to exercise the teaching responsibility.

Methodology and Procedure

This study used a descriptive survey design which involves quantitative and qualitative methods. Creswell, as cited by Sukamolson, defines quantitative research as a type of research that involves the description and explanation of phenomena by collecting numerical data and analyze them by the use of mathematical methods.²¹ On

²⁰ It is said and believed by many Adventists church members and even many church leaders that the Nyamirambo SDA Church is a "model church" for other churches in Rwanda Union Mission. By the time the researcher is conducting this study, the Nyamirambo SDA Church has launched a project of building a big church which will be, according to the church leaders, the biggest and the best Adventist church in Rwanda.

²¹ Suphat Sukamolson, Fundamentals of Quantitative Research, accessed 6 August 2016, <http://www.culi.chula.ac.th/Research/e-Journal/bod/Suphat%20Sukamolson.pdf>.

the other side, the “qualitative approach ... focuses on people’s experience from their perspective.”²²

This dissertation has six chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study. It includes a description of the ministry context, statement of the problem, statement of the purpose, justification for the dissertation, delimitations of the dissertation, methodology, expectations, and definitions of terms.

Chapter two provides the biblical and theological foundations for this study. In this chapter, the researcher exegetically selects passages from the Old and the New Testaments related to eldership and discipleship (in terms of teaching) and the empowerment and roles of church elders in the biblical times. The passages of Matthew 28:19-20; John 13:12-15; Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 4:11-15 are carefully examined.

The third chapter focuses on the review of the literature. Reference is made to the Ellen G. White writings, as well as non-Adventists authors’ perspectives on the role of church elders and how to equip and empower them for effective ministry. The writings of non-Adventist authors such as Strauch²³, Sue and Smith,²⁴ Trull & Carter²⁵ and Van Dam²⁶ are studied to add more clarity to the concepts under study.

²² Carol M. Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2012), 143.

²³ Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, Revised and Expanded (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1995).

²⁴ Malloy Sue and Brad Smith, *The Equipping Church: Guidebook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001).

²⁵ Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004).

²⁶ Cornelis Van Dam, *The Elder: Today’s Ministry Rooted in All of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009).

Chapter four deals with the development of a strategy to train, equip, and empower church elders for effective ministry. After the description of ministry context, useful data are collected through interviews and questionnaires administered to church elders. The data collected are analyzed, the training manual developed.

The focus of chapter five is on the implementation of the program or strategy. It addresses the need to train, equip, and involve the Nyamirambo church elders in the ministry of leading and teaching church members and new converts. The following action plans leading to the implementation of this research project are carried. The researcher introduces himself to the leadership of the ECRC as well as the church leaders of the Nyamirambo SDA Church and explains to them this initiative. After this, he conducts interviews and questionnaires among the Nyamirambo church elders and the previous pastors of the Nyamirambo church and then analyzes them.

A training seminar is carried out on how to prepare and teach Bible studies, sermons, evangelistic campaigns, and seminars on leadership lessons, spiritual gifts, all in line with discipling, equipping and empowering church elders and other church leaders. Different teaching methodologies and power point presentations are developed and used to help participants to grasp the lessons. At the end of the seminars, all church elders are ready to implement what they have learned, until the lessons reach the small group leaders in the church. The outcome of the results shows the success of the program. The data collected and analyzed before and after the intervention are treated and included in the dissertation.

Chapter six finally comes up with an evaluation of the whole program effectiveness, to end up with formulating summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the project.

Expectations

Training, equipping, empowering, and involving church elders in ministry contribute to their spiritual growth. The trained elders on one side train and equip small group leaders, who train on the other side the church members. The ministry of the Nyamirambo Church will thus be enhanced as more people become involved in ministry. This is, therefore, a good opportunity to put members' gifts and abilities to use. When church elders and members are effectively involved in ministry, the church pastor is now able to focus on some of the most important aspects of his job descriptions, namely training and equipping members. This can also create interest in pastoral ministry because less and fewer members want to go to a seminary and be trained as pastors.

At the same time, this dissertation contributes to enhancing the researcher's knowledge and skills in ministry. As a matter of fact, as Estep Jr. et al. underline, a teacher is a student of the Word and a servant in the Church.²⁷ As the trainer is training and empowering others for ministry, he is also more equipped for ministry. It is also hoped that this study would assist other scholars in their researches. The duplication of the same project can also help other churches in Rwanda Union Mission.

Definition of Terms

This dissertation uses the following specific terms: Bible teaching ministry: This term refers to the work of the church elder of ministering the Word of God to church members and non-church members so that all can come to understand God's

²⁷ James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: B&H Group, 2008), 270-71.

Word and apply its truth in their lives. This work is done in the local church in every prayer meeting on Sabbath days and other days of prayer meetings.

Church elder: A 'church elder' in the context of SDA Church is a man or a woman elected by the church members to be the leader of their local church for a period of one year renewable. The church elder is an assistant to the church pastor.

Effective church ministry: The term 'effective church ministry' entails an activity performed in the church by church elder with skills to lead and teach the church members for their qualitative and quantitative growth. Some church ministries entail, teaching the Bible studies, preaching, evangelizing, and so on.

Effective Bible teaching ministry: This term refers to serving God and people effectively, being equipped with various tools for teaching , communicating, preaching, and making a follow-up of the Word of God in the church, so that all people can accept the Word of God and be good disciples of Christ. Effective Bible teaching ministry is manifested in the work of a church elder as a teacher, a preacher, and an evangelist capable of preparing and conducting evangelistic meetings and weeks of spiritual emphasis.

Eldership: This term refers to a wise, influential and spiritual person elected to lead a local church made of a community of Christ's believers. Eldership is also a position of a church leader in the local church, who performs leadership duties in the absence of a church pastor, or under his delegation. It is used interchangeably with the term 'church elder.'

Empowering (for ministry): The term 'empowering' in this study means giving power and confidence to church elders to perform their roles of leading, feeding, and nurturing church members and new converts so that they become true disciples of Christ. Empowered church elders with skills and techniques of teaching

and leading the church will be able to prepare and teach Bible studies, leading church committees, conducting spiritual revivals, prayer meetings, and protecting church members against false teachings.

Equipping (for ministry): In this study, the term ‘equipping’ means providing skills and lessons to train church elders to be effective in their ministry. It is used interchangeably with the terms ‘training’ and ‘empowering.’

Ministry: The term ‘ministry’ refers to any church service done by the church elder for the growth of the church, its members, and the community. One may identify for instance the ministry of worship, the ministry of prayer, the ministry of teaching the Bible, the ministry of visitation, and the ministry of leading the church.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

This chapter discusses the biblical and theological foundation of the subject under study. It intends to give more light based on biblical and theological reflection on church eldership and the church elder's ministry in the Old and New Testaments. The study examines the significance of the term 'elder' and the role of elders throughout the Scriptures. However, it does not discuss the concept of elder in the apocalyptic writings. Church eldership is an office and at the same time an important responsibility established by God Himself to accomplish God's given direction. Its function entails church leadership.

Jesus Christ gives a clear direction of church leadership by defining it as servant leadership. He calls his disciples to the humble service to others (Matt 20:25-28), and give them the command found in Matthew 28:19, to go and "teach others to observe all that I have commanded you." In addition to that, the apostle Paul affirms that the "person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed." (2 Tim 3:17, GNT).¹ This chapter discusses respectively, the elder in the Old Testament, the elder in the New Testament, and Jesus equipping his disciple for ministry.

¹ All biblical quotations in this dissertation are taken from the New King James Version NKJV), unless otherwise noted. It is interesting to note here the term "fully qualified" used by this version. Another version known as English Standard Version Anglicised uses the term "competent" in the same passage as follows, "that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:17, ESVUK). An elder in the church should be a person qualified to accomplish the responsibilities of his office, otherwise the churches must constantly organize more seminars to equip and empower church elders to accomplish competently their duties.

The Elder in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the term ‘elder’ is represented by the Hebrew word ‘*zaqen*,’ which is derived from the Hebrew word ‘*zaqan*,’ meaning ‘beard.’ An elder has, therefore, the sense of a male old enough to have a beard. He is no longer a young man; neither could he be a woman in the Hebrew culture. The Aramaic term used for elder ‘*sib*,’ has the meaning of ‘someone with gray hair.’ The Septuagint, ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, uses the Greek term ‘*presbyteros*,’ that means ‘old (er) man.’²

Many passages from the Old Testament have used those terms (Gen 50:7; Exod 3:16, 18; 4:26; 12:21; 17:5, 6; 18:12, 21-25; 19:7; 24:1, 9, 14; Lev 19:32; Num 11:16-30; Deut 1:13-15; 22:15-18; 31:9-13; Ruth 4:2, 4, 9, 11; 1 Kgs 12:8; Job 32:6-9; Ps 148:12; Prov 17:6; Jer 31:13; Ezek 9:6). These terms used suggest that originally elders were men of advancing age, respected, full of wisdom, and ready to assume important responsibilities.³

On the contrary, though the etymology of the term ‘elder’ refers to a person [a man] of advanced age, the Bible shows that God has often chosen the young people for His mission. There a lot of examples in the OT and the NT. In the OT, the Bible shows young leaders such as Samuel (1 Sam 2:18); Joshua (Num 11:28); David (1 Sam 17); the “young leaders of the provinces” (1 Kgs 20:14-20), Josias (2 Kgs 22:1), Daniel and his friends (Dan 1:17). In the NT, one may cite for example Timothy and

² It is clear that the terms used for the elder imply that reaching a certain age was a basic criterion for this office. As a matter of fact, aging goes together with experience and wisdom. As Cornelis says, old age and office must be kept distinguished; they are not the same. On the contrary, the gift of wisdom “was not necessarily found with those oldest in years.” The book of Job shows that wisdom could be found even in the young rather than the old people, and the qualification for the office came only from God (Job 32:7-9). See also Job 42:7; Eccl. 4:13. Cornelis Van Dam, *The Elder: Today’s Ministry Rooted in All of Scripture*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), 27-28.

³ There are indications that the age of thirty was the minimum required for positions involving leadership and authority in the Old Testament and Judaism. See Cornelis Van Dam, *The Elder: Today’s Ministry Rooted in All of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), 29.

Titus as young leaders in the early church (1 Tim 4:12; Titus 1:4; 2:15). Similarly, the Bible shows also that God has chosen women as leaders, to accomplish His mission. To give some examples, one may say Deborah (Judg 4:4); Miriam (Micah 6:4); Huldah (2 Kgs 22); Women disciples of Jesus (Gospels); Phoebe and Priscilla (Rom 16:1-4). Though these women could not be elected as elders because of the Hebrew's culture, they assumed some leadership responsibilities in the church.

Nonetheless, the term 'elder' in the OT is generally used in the worldview and cultural context of the Hebrews. In the Hebrew context, an elder was always a man of advanced age, ready to assume leadership responsibilities. According to Taylor, the elders in Israel were "men of position and influence," men who represented the community in religious and civil affairs.⁴ However, the SDABC reveals that elders "were usually, though not necessarily, older men." It shows that the term 'elder' designates leaders of a certain position among the people, the "heads of houses."⁵ Their historical background starts especially in the time of Moses throughout the apostolic period in the New Testament.

The Elders in the Patriarchal and Mosaic Eras

During the patriarchal era, there was no mention of elders in the Scriptures. However, the concept of headship in the houses of God's chosen people let one affirm that men such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and others were men of influence and spokesmen of God. The concept of headship from which the word 'head' (Hebrew, *ro'sh*; Greek, *kephalē*) comes from, is figuratively used to mean, 'authority' and 'leadership' (Gen 2:20-23, 6:18; 18:19). It denotes leaders of families, tribes, or

⁴ Taylor, J., "Elder," *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings, D.D. (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), 211.

⁵ "Seventy of the Elders" [Exodus 24:1], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerston, MD: Review & Herald, 1976-1978), 1:631.

community (Exod 6:14, 25; Numb 25:4; Deut 29:10; 33:5; Josh 23:2).⁶ Its use in the OT refers to the leading person of a community.⁷ Thus, these were men of authority, leaders of their households and their communities. They were respected men, advanced in age, full of wisdom, and ready to accomplish God's mission to other people. They were called to be a blessing to others, "so that all the peoples on earth may be blessed through" them (Genesis 12:3).⁸ Therefore, it would seem fair to say that these men were 'elders' of their communities.

However, it was during the time of Moses that we first see the term 'elder' being used in the Bible. The elders of the people of Israel have been chosen for the leadership purpose when the twelve tribes of Israel were developing. When Moses was chosen to be the leader and the deliverer of the people of Israel, God commanded him to work with the elders of Israel. According to Exodus 3:16-18, Moses was commanded by God to go and gather all the elders of Israel, and they would go together to Pharaoh of Egypt, with the mission of God to demand king Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go and serve their God. The Bible says,

Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt; and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey." '

Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The Lord God of the

⁶ Andreas J. Kostenberger, "Head, Headship," *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Gen. Ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 2:754.

⁷ R. C. Dentan, "Head," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962), 2:541

⁸ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 10.

Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.'⁹

This passage clearly shows that the elders in Israel played an important role of leadership within the people of God. They were clearly Israel's leaders. They were assistants of Moses, obeyed him, and played crucial roles in the salvation of the people of Israel. In addition, the elders were also representing the people, and they were the spokesmen of the people of Israel.

The Elders as a Team of Leaders Who Represent the People

The leadership position of the elders of Israel and their representative role are shown in different places in the book of Exodus particularly. Here, we see elders who represent the people of Israel, working as a team with Moses and Aaron, in the work of salvation of Israel. For instance, Exodus 4:29, 30 shows God ordering Moses and Aaron to gather all the elders of the children of Israel, to perform the “signs in the sight of the people.”

In Exodus 12:21, Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and commanded them, “Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb.” As we see here, the elders were primarily instructed on how to accomplish required action to spare the lives of the people of Israel. Whatever action and wonder Moses [and Aaron] accomplished for the children of Israel, he did it in the presence and with the support of the elders of the people of Israel (Exod 17:5-6).

Furthermore, we find that there is a close relationship between the elders and the people of Israel, in relation to the mission and ministry God has called them to accomplish together. God wanted to consecrate the elders and the people of Israel to

⁹ It is interesting to note that even heathen nations had their own elders. Pharaoh had his elders (Gen. 50:7); the Moabites and the Midianites had elders (Num. 22:7); and the Gibeonites had their own elders (Josh. 9:11).

be able to stand in His presence and receive His words and His Commandments. When they were at Mount of Sinai, God ordered his servant Moses who “called for the elders of the people” at that Mount of Sinai. Moses told them the words of the Lord, and “then all the people answered together and said, ‘All that the LORD has spoken we will do”’ (Exod 19:7-8). They came in the persons of the heads of the tribes and the elders (Exod 20:18-20; Deut 5:23). This shows how the role of the leaders is crucial in the unity of the people and their God, as well as the leaders’ intercession to the people and their God. They were all to act together as a team, to fulfill the mission assigned to them by the Lord.

The leadership function of elders as a team of leaders of the people of Israel is also apparent at the sacrificial time of Aaron and his sons. The Lord asked Moses and Aaron with Aaron’s sons to come up to the Mount Sinai, together with seventy elders who represented the people of Israel, for the covenant function (Exod 24:1). This function is also obvious in the provision when the people sinned against God. A team of elders was to lay their hands on the sacrifice of the sin offering before it was slaughtered (Lev 4:15). In addition, we find elders called for the sacrificial service of the priests (Lev 9:1).

Sharing the leadership role with Moses: delegating leadership responsibilities. When the people of Israel left Egypt to Canaan, the elders had various leadership responsibilities to accomplish. They served as assistants to Moses in leadership roles during the journey of Israelites to Canaan. Moses was to delegate leadership responsibilities with the elders of Israel. In addition, elders served as judges who solved some problems which arose among the people. In response to the complaints of Israelites in the wilderness, God commanded Moses to appoint special

elders who would work with him in solving some matters. Moses accepted to share and delegates those matters with the elders. God said to Moses,

So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone (Num 11:16-17).

Moses was called to share the same Spirit who worked in him with the elders of Israel. This Spirit is none other than the Holy Spirit. As a matter of fact, the church elders can never be able to serve God without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They are to share the same Spirit [*ruah/pneuma*] with the pastor. As a result, both leaders would bear the burden of the people. The burden [Heb. *massā*] should not be upon one person only. This implies that the responsibility of leading church members should be shared among church elders and church pastor. None should carry alone this burden. There should be a delegation of leadership responsibilities.

With the counsel of his father-in-law who was inspired by the Spirit of God, Jethro advised Moses to use these elders in the leadership responsibilities, especially in the solving some issues and conflicts between the people of Israel. The Bible says,

So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. Moreover, you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you" (Exod 18:17-22).

When Jethro saw how busy Moses was from morning to evening with judging cases of the people of Israel, he asked Moses why he was doing such work. Moses

answered him: “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws” (Exod 18:15, 16). Jethro advised Moses that this course of action had to change lest he wore himself out. He suggested that Moses select men to serve as judges for “the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you” (Exod 18:22). According to Kroll, this advice pleased Moses, and set him free to pursue “his primary purpose as God’s leader for Israel.”¹⁰

In the above passage of Exodus 18:17-22, we find that Jethro was a true mentor of Moses. He helped Moses realize that he could not alone finish the work he was assigned by God. As Kroll stresses, “Jethro helped Moses realize that his main task was to represent God to the nation and the nation to God, not to deal at the individual level with countless personal situations.”¹¹ On his side, Moses who obeyed to the counsel of his father-in-law, started by training his elders, so as to equip and empower them to be able to perform their duties. Later, we are said in Deuteronomy 1:9-18 that these men were charged with the responsibilities of team leadership, judging the people/resolving their conflicts, giving direction, as it is said in the following:

So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes. Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases* between your brethren and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment *is*

¹⁰ Woodrow Kroll, *Exodus: God's Plan, God's People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 65.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

God's. The case that is too hard for you bring to me, and I will hear it.' And I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do (Deut 1:9-18).

A similar mentorship experience such as Jethro-Moses should characterize the work of many pastors who encounter many problems in their responsibilities. One approach to address the problem is to equip and empower the church elders with leadership skills that will enable them to perform their duties effectively for the growth of the church. As God requested Moses to select capable men, elected men for the eldership in the church must be men full of wisdom, fearing God, men of truth, hating covetousness, skilled men, able to lead the people and teach the Word of God. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the church pastor to train, equip, and empower church elders to be able to perform those duties.

Furthermore, as the Old Testament shows later, elders had also to administer the law of God, to perform the worship services, to be involved in the leadership of cities, and to oversee the details of an orderly society of God's people (1 Sam 11; 16; 30). In short, the elders had many responsibilities during the time of Moses, and even later in other periods of the people of Israel. As a matter of fact, Tenney states that "the elders seemed to occupy a continuing place of importance throughout the history of Israel, from their sojourn in Egypt to the post-exilic period ..." ¹² They were to work as a team of leaders, sharing leadership responsibilities, and bear the burden with Moses.

Elders as teachers of the people of Israel. In addition to the leadership responsibilities of Moses, he was also in charge of teaching the Word of God to the people "and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do" (Exod 18:20). In those two functions, the leadership and the teaching responsibilities,

¹² Merrill C. Tenney, "Elders in the Old Testament," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 268.

there is no doubt that Moses was assisted by the elders. These were not only in charge of leading and judging cases, but also teaching the Word of God as assistants to Moses.

When Moses on the advice of Jethro chose from all the people of Israel able men, men who fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, he selected them from the elders, heads of the tribes (Exod 18:21, 25; Deut 1:15). As Van Dam puts it, these elders would be “men of ability, experienced and seasoned leaders who would stand in the midst of life.”¹³ In addition, these elders would be conscious that they were representatives of God. As such, they were charged by Moses to judge fairly, not to show partiality, to hear everyone, and not to be afraid of any man, “for the judgment *is* God's” (Deut 1:17).

Furthermore, if the elders were to be able men, men who fear God and practice the truth, this shows that they must know the Word of God and be men of wisdom in the Lord. For this reason, they were constantly to be taught the law of God and consequently be able to teach it to the people (Deut 31:12; 32:7). In other words, Moses was the teacher of the elders, and the elders were also the teachers of the people of Israel. In relation to this study, the church pastor who represents Moses in this case should be able to teach, train, and equip the church elders to be able also to teach and train other leaders, such as small group leaders, and all church members.

The Israelites were God’s covenant people. As such, they were to observe and live by God’s law. It was the responsibility of the leaders of Israel to teach the law and the precepts of God to His people.

¹³ Cornelis Van Dam, *The Elder: Today’s Ministry Rooted in All of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), 66.

The elders, as leaders under the direction of Moses, also had the responsibility of teaching the people the Word of God, to keep it and live by it daily. The Word of God was the daily living bread for the leaders and the people of Israel, and it must be so for today's leaders of the church. This is the lesson we find in all the services of the sanctuary in Israel. As the text of Deuteronomy 27:1 says, God commanded Moses and the elders of Israel to teach the law of God: "Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today." As Van Dam remarked, this was the exhortation to the elders that they have the responsibility to ensure that the Word of God and His covenant are observed by the people.¹⁴

Furthermore, it is important to note that the responsibility of teaching the law of God to the people of Israel was shared by the priests and the elders under the direction of Moses. Together with the priests, the elders too received the command from Moses that they should read the Word of God in the hearing of the people so that "they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law" (Deut 31:12). Furthermore, Moses called the elders first when he recited the words of his final song (Deut 32:7). The elders had an obligation to make sure that Israel would be taught and know the contents of the law and the covenant of God.

The elders of Israel, as well as the parents in Israel, had also the duty to teach the precepts of the Lord to their children (Deut 4:9; 6:9; 11:19; 32:46). Generally, in the Hebrew society, the function of eldership was also intertwined with the function of headship in the family. The elder of the family was also its head (Exod 12:21). He assumed the eldership or headship role of that family for which he was the responsible

¹⁴ Van Dam, 47.

person in the whole community and before God. In this sense, the elder or the head of the family has the responsibility of teaching his household the word of God among many other responsibilities.

In the patriarchal time, Abraham, the head and the elder of his household, assumed the responsibility of teaching his family, as the Scriptures affirms: “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Gen 18:19, NKJ). The CEV says, “I have chosen him to teach his family to obey me forever and to do what is right and fair.” (Gen 18:19, CEV). The SDABC affirms that,

The intelligent discharge of his divinely appointed task required that he share in a knowledge of God’s purposes. ... It was to be his duty to pass on to future generations what he knew of God’s dealings with the human race. God’s moral and ceremonial laws were also part of the sacred heritage he was to transmit to future generations. As a prophet, he instructed his family in both the theory and the practice of religion, with emphasis on the practical virtues. He taught his family not only to know these things but to do them as well.”¹⁵

In the book *Education*, Ellen G. White stresses that Abraham was called to be the teacher of God’s word, for the purpose of bringing his household church into the true knowledge of God, and the true conversion from paganism to faithful God’s people

God called Abraham to be a teacher of His word, He chose him to be the father of a great nation because He saw that Abraham would instruct his children and his household in the principles of God's law. And that which gave power to Abraham's teaching was the influence of his own life. His great household consisted of more than a thousand souls, many of them heads of families, and not a few but newly converted from heathenism. Such a household required a firm hand at the helm. No weak, vacillating methods would suffice. Of Abraham God said, "I know him, that he will command his

¹⁵“For I know him” [Genesis 18:19], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerston, MD: Review & Herald, 1976-1978), 1:329.

children and his household after him." Genesis 18:19. Yet his authority was exercised with such wisdom and tenderness that hearts were won.¹⁶

As seen previously, God entrusted to Moses double responsibilities which are leadership and teaching ministries, which he should fulfill to prepare the church of God in the Old Testament. Moses was commanded by God to teach His word (His commandments, precepts, statutes, and all the words of the law), and to lead the people of Israel in the way of God. God gave him clear instructions on how to do that sacred teaching ministry to the people of Israel, and the passing on of this responsibility to the elders of the people, as well as the parents of the families. The following biblical texts say a lot.

Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart (Deut 6:1-6).

To the people of Israel, God commanded them through Moses, the following instructions to accomplish in teaching the word of God to their children: "Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children" (Deut 4:9).

Henry argues that these are "means for maintaining and keeping up religion" in the hearts of the children of Israel and in their houses. "God's words must be laid up" in the hearts of His children, that their thoughts "may be daily employed about

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952), 92, 93.

them.” The religious education of children in Israel was a holy obligation, and the truths from the Holy Scriptures must be taught with diligence, patience, and careful by the parents to their children, by the spiritual leaders of Israel to the people of Israel.¹⁷

Deuteronomy 11:19 says, “You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

Psalms 78:5, 6 declares, “For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know *them*, the children *who* would be born, *that* they may arise and declare *them* to their children.”

These passages clearly show that God has commanded Moses and the leaders of Israel to transmit through the teaching ministry, the word of God and all His commands, laws, precepts and statutes to their children, to those who do not know them, so that they may also teach those who will follow them. In other words, the Bible clearly shows here that those who are leaders of others should teach them the truth of the word of God, as He has commanded it since the ancient times.

According to David Silly, two truths stand out from the teaching ministry that God commanded Moses, parents and the leaders of Israel to use in teaching the word of God to the children of Israel. The first truth is that parents must know the truth of God’s word profoundly themselves so that they could teach or transmit the knowledge of the word of God to their children correctly; the second truth implies that Moses, parents and the leaders of Israel must never forget to transmit the knowledge of the

¹⁷ Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, accessed May 4, 2014, http://Biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/3-2.htm.

word of God to the future generations who were their spiritual children in faith.¹⁸

Obviously, those who lead the church of God must possess the knowledge of teaching His word to the church members. They should be zealous and proactive in the ministry of teaching the Holy Scriptures, working hand in hand with the parents in their households

During the history of the people of Israel in the desert, God never ceased to lead and instruct them through the teaching ministry. God taught them in every step of their pilgrimage, on the mount of Sinai, through different miracles, and in the tabernacle system. The servant of the Lord underlined that through the laws committed to Israel, God gave them many teachings and instructions. At Sinai, God had revealed Himself to Moses in Exodus 34:6 as "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." These principles, "embodied in His law, the fathers and mothers in Israel were also to teach their children."¹⁹ Ellen White declares that God dealt with Israel during forty years of wilderness by giving Moses teachings and instructions necessary to lead the people of Israel so as "to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no" (Deut 8:5, 2).²⁰

Commenting on the impact of the methods of the instructions and teachings God gave Israel, Ellen White affirms:

True education is not the forcing of instruction on an unready and unreceptive mind. The mental powers must be awakened, the interest aroused. For this, God's method of teaching provided. He who created the mind and ordained its laws provided for its development in accordance with them. In the home and the sanctuary, through the things of nature and of art, in labor and in festivity,

¹⁸ David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2010), 76.

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Education*, 40.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

in sacred building and memorial stone, by methods and rites and symbols unnumbered, God gave to Israel lessons illustrating His principles and preserving the memory of His wonderful works. Then, as inquiry was made, the instruction given impressed mind and heart.²¹

Later on, the Old Testament shows Moses transferring the mantle of leadership and teaching ministry to the man called Joshua. Moses prepared, trained, and invested Joshua to be the teacher and the leader of the people of Israel, as the Lord has commanded it to Moses in the following: “Just as the LORD had commanded Moses, his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses” (Josh 11:15, ESV; see also Exod 24:12, 13). God affirmed the successor of Moses, Joshua, in his ministry of teaching and leading the people of Israel, by the use of the book of the law transferred from Moses to Joshua:

Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Josh 1:7-9).

Moses admonished Joshua to teach the commandment, the statutes and the rules as God has commanded it: “But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you the whole commandment and the statutes and the rules that you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land that I am giving them to possess.’ You shall be careful therefore to do as the LORD your God has commanded you” (Deut 5:31, 32).²²

²¹ Ibid., 41.

²² Wherever Moses went and whatever he was doing, he was assisted by Joshua his successor. Moses was the true mentor of Joshua in the leadership of the people of Israel (Exod 24:12, 13).

The Elders of Israel during the Monarch

With the monarchy era of Israel, the elders maintained their place of importance in the leadership of the people, though certain changes in the status of the elder occurred, and their leadership position was often threatened. However, the elders continued to be the undisputed leaders of the nation before there was a king. This is in line with what Taylor says that the elders were men of position in Israel, men who exercised influence over the community of people of Israel.²³

During the reign of Saul, the first king of Israel, the elders were the legitimate representatives of the people. When Israel consents to make a choice of a king “like all the nations”, it was “all the elders of Israel” who came to the prophet Samuel on behalf of the people of Israel and demanded that he appoints a king over the people of Israel (1 Sam 8:4, 5, 19, 20). It was all the elders who went to Hebron to anoint David as king over Israel. At the kingdom of Saul, the king was eager to work with the elders who supported him in the leadership of Israel. He wanted to be honored in their presence, even when he was guilty of not punishing the Amalekites as God has commanded him to do so (1 Sam 15:30). This action shows that the elders were respected men, with leadership authority recognized by the king.

During the reign of David, the second king of Israel, the elders played an important role in putting David on the throne as king over Israel. The Bible says that “all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel” (2 Sam 5:3). This confirms what Meyers stresses about the influence of elders as leaders

²³ Taylor, J., “Elder,” *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings, D.D. (New York, DC: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1989), 211.

who exercised the “administrative roles, including ruling” over Israel.²⁴ Furthermore, the elders of Israel worked together with the king to reinforce his kingdom. The Scriptures accounts that they were with David and the Levites in the act of bringing up the ark of the Lord from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem (1 Chr 15:25).

During the reign of Solomon, the elders were summoned by king Solomon to continue exercising their role as representatives of the people. This was done when they brought the ark into the temple of Jerusalem as it was during the reign of his father David (1 Kgs 8:1-5; 2 Chr 2:2-4). However, nothing further was said of them during the reign of Solomon.²⁵

When Rehoboam came to the throne, “he consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived” searching their advice on how to lead the people of Israel (1 Kgs 12:6; 2 Chr 10:6). Unfortunately, the king Rehoboam “rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him” (1 Kgs 12:8; 2 Chr 10:8). Refusing to act according to the advice of the elders has led to the schism of the great kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms: the Kingdom of Israel in the North, and the Kingdom of Judah in the South

With some good examples of the kings of Judah who worked hand in hand with the elders of the people, the kingdom of the North, on the contrary, acted differently. The elders were rarely consulted when needed. On the contrary, with king Josias of Judah, elders were respected and consulted in different activities. The Scriptures says that when Josias was crowned king, the “chief fathers of Israel’

²⁴ Carol Meyers, *Exodus* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 138.

²⁵ This does not imply that the elders of Israel were discarded after a certain period of the reign of Solomon. On the contrary, they continued their role as representatives of the people, and the counsellors of the king as seen later during Rehoboam’s reign (1 Kgs 12:6).

houses,” that is the elders, worked together with the Levites in making the covenant with the king (2 Chr 23:2-3). In addition, the elders worked together with king Josias to bring reformation in Israel

In summary, one may affirm that the involvement of the elders in the leadership and the religious activities of the people of Israel could lead the people to prosperity and obedience to God. On the contrary, when the elders were discarded from the leadership and religious activities, all the people and all the country generally collapsed into poverty and paganism.

The Elders of Israel during the Exile and in the Post-Exilic Period

When the people of Israel were deported to the captivity in Babylon, their elders were as well deported. During the exilic period, the elders were among the authoritative leaders of the people, since the monarchy power of Israel was completely ended. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel refer to the elders of the people as “elders of the exile” (Jer 29:1, NASB; Ezek 7:26). These elders provided guidance and counsel to the people of Israel, and they were also under the direction and the guidance of the prophets (Jer 18:18; Ezek 8:1; 14:1; 20:1). Generally, the responsibility of the elders for the well-being of the people of Israel and Judah during the exile period was underlined.

After the people had returned from the captivity, elders continued to be recognized as leaders. They were involved in the activities of rebuilding the temple and all its work. According to the book of Ezra, the elders were requested by the officials in the work of rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem (Ezra 5:9).²⁶ According to the commandment of the God of Israel, and the decrees of the emperors Cyrus,

²⁶ The Hebrew term used here for elder is ‘sab’. It is used only five times in the book of Ezra, to refer to the group of Jewish leaders in charge of rebuilding the Temple after the Exile.

Darius, and Artaxerxes, the elders were mentioned to be in command of the activities of reconstruction of the house of God (Ezra 6:14)

To sum up, it is important to note that the elders in the Old Testament had two important roles to accomplish, as far as the leadership function is concerned: the political and spiritual roles. In all these roles, the elders were representatives of the people of Israel, and they worked as a team. They assisted Moses, Joshua, the prophets, the kings, and the people of Israel in leadership, counseling, and teaching activities as directed by God. Elders served in the teaching role; they were expected to know the Word of God and to speak according to it. The “counsel of the elders” gave leadership and direction to the people of Israel in general.

Following the example of the elders of Israel in the Old Testament, the church elders today have the duty of helping the church pastor to “bear the burden of the people” (Num 11:17). They are all to work as a team to accomplish God’s mission and the church ministries. As leaders and representatives of the church members, the church elders should directly and closely work with the church members. In addition, their leadership influence should go hand in hand with the role of teaching the Word of God to the church members.

The Elders in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the Greek word for ‘elder,’ *presbyteros*, is used about seventy times. Another Greek word sometimes used for elder in the New Testament is *episkopos*, “bishop” or “overseer.” It appears to be synonymous with *presbyteros*, with the meaning of an older man, or with reference to maturity. The apostle Paul used both terms in the book of Acts. First, in Acts 20:17, he called the elders of Ephesus for an important meeting with him, to urge them for their responsibility as

overseers. Furthermore, the apostle Peter used also the term *presbyteros* in his first letter, whereby he called the elders to fulfill the office of *bishops* (1 Pet 5:1, 2).

The term *presbyteros* as seen earlier indicates an older man, the one who does not belong to the category of youth.²⁷ It is the translation of the Hebrew term for elder used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint (LXX). Its use in the New Testament proves, therefore, the continuity of the office of the elder as used in the Old Testament. For instance, in the time of Jesus, one may find that the elders of Israel were dominant. They had religious power and authority.

Unfortunately, the four Gospels show that Jewish elders opposed the work of Jesus. Furthermore, the book of Acts shows the elders working closely with Jewish priests. On the other hand, as noted earlier, the term *episkopos* comes from the Greek sphere whereby it means someone who watches over, an inspector or an overseer as it was used in the Greeks time.²⁸ One should therefore not assume that the concept of ‘elder’ used by Jewish was taken over with no modifications. The epistles of the NT show it clearly in the Christian church.

The Elders as Leaders, Managers, and Protectors of the Congregations

In the New Testament, especially in the epistles of Paul, it is interesting to see that the apostle Paul refers to the elders as overseers [leaders, those who take care of] as the criteria for the eldership in the church. He wrote to Timothy the following:

²⁷ The Greek word, *presbyteros* is derived from the adjective *presbys*, which means “old”. It has a twofold sense as a designation for age and a title for office. Depending on the meaning, the term *presbyteros* can mean: (1) “older man” or “old man”, as in 1 Timothy 5:1, “Do not rebuke an older man [*presbyteros*].” (2) a title for a community official, an elder, as in 1 Timothy 5:17: “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”

²⁸ In the Culture of the Hellenistic and New Testament world, those aged less than forty years were still considered young. The boundary of old age was considered to be either forty or fifty years. However, some could hold the office as “young men” like Paul and Timothy for instance (Acts 7:58; 1 Tim. 4:12). See Van Dam, 29.

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil (1 Tim 3:1-7, ESV).

Note the word used in this translation for the term 'elder,' an overseer. Another Version, Today English Version (TEV) uses a group of words, 'church leader' as another term standing for 'elder.' This means that an elder is a church leader, an overseer, someone who is in charge of overseeing the church members and the church activities. He has to accomplish leadership responsibilities in the church.

According to the apostle Paul, the church elders in the NT are called to lead the church and to teach the Word of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 5:17; 3:2, 4-5; 2 Tim 2:2). Malphurs underlines that a Christian leader, such as a church elder, is a servant who is able to use his capabilities to influence people to pursue God-given direction. He continues by saying that "leadership is not all about us. It is all about other people."²⁹

The youth elders in the NT. In the NT, God has chosen the youth for the ministry in His church. One may say, for example, Timothy and Titus (1 Tim 4:12; Titus 1:4; 2:15). Timothy was a teenager when he joined Paul in the ministry, especially in Paul's missionary journey and in church planting.³⁰ Titus, who was a Greek native, was also a mentee of the apostle Paul. These young men were trained in

²⁹ Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 20-22.

³⁰ Rob, Laughter, "Young Leaders of the Bible: Part 2," accessed 30 September 2016, <http://roblaughter.com/post/young-leaders-2>.

leadership by the apostle Paul; they assumed leadership responsibilities in the NT times. However, the question here is to know whether they were church elders in the NT period.

As it was seen before, the Scriptures show the qualification of the elders as overseers, leaders, those who take care of, those who watch over. The term ‘elders’ is undoubtedly equivalent to the word “leaders” or “leading men.” Timothy and Titus were appointed by the apostle Paul as overseers in the churches of Asia Minor and in Crete. Obviously, they have been given authority over elders of those local churches. Both had authority to appoint the church elders of local churches (1 Tim 3) and the authority to teach and preach the Word of God, although they were physically younger than others in the churches they were called to oversee (1 Tim 4:12; 5:1-2; Titus 1:4-5). As Huston puts it, the term ‘elder’ in the Greek time implied the “connotation of experience, dignity, influence, and honor.”³¹ Therefore, some church elders in the NT were not chosen because of their advanced age, rather for their spiritual maturity, influence, and dignity, as it was in the case of Timothy and Titus (1 Tim 4:12). Hence, their functions were also the ones of eldership in those churches, though they were still young. Therefore, Timothy and Titus were certainly church elders.

The Elder as a Leader of His House and the House Of God

The apostle Paul shows a strong relationship between the function of a church elder and headship in the family. This is to show that the family was the matrix of the early Christian Church. The apostle says that an elder is a married person, but he does not make the marriage state a necessary qualification for being a church elder. In

³¹ David A. Huston, “The New Testament Elders,” accessed 30 September 2016, www.gloriouschurch.com/pdf/New-Testament-Elders.pdf.

other words, single men also can qualify for the eldership in the church (cf. 1 Cor. 7:27-35).³² Before being a church elder, he must be capable of leading his “own church,” that is his own family. He should be capable of managing his family so that he can qualify to lead the church of God.

In the same manner, the apostle Paul wrote to Titus the following:

An elder must be without fault; he must have only one wife, and his children must be believers and not have the reputation of being wild or disobedient. For since a church leader is in charge of God's work, he should be without fault. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered, or a drunkard or violent or greedy for money. He must be hospitable and love what is good. He must be self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the message which can be trusted and which agrees with the doctrine. In this way, he will be able to encourage others with the true teaching and also to show the error of those who are opposed to it (Titus 1:6-9, TEV).

In those texts, the apostle Paul establishes a relationship between church leadership and family headship. He describes an elder as a good manager of his family, the one who has the charge over, the control, the management of his own household. The Greek term used here is *prohistemi*, which has the meanings of “to lead,” “to preside,” “to govern,” and “to manage,” “to support” and “to care for,” or “can combine the ideas of caring for and leading.”³³ This implies that caring is the obligation of leading members of the church. The apostle Paul uses this word in other places “to describe a father’s management of the home, a spiritual gift, and the work of the elders.”³⁴

³² The qualifications regarding marriage and children should not be understood as commands to marry and have children. Rather, because most men are married and have children, the Scripture sets forth God’s standard for church leaders who are husbands and fathers. Setting standards for married men who have children is quite a different issue from commanding marriage and fatherhood, which is not always a matter of choice.

³³ Reicke, “Prohistemi,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968-1971), 6:700-703.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

The term *prohistemi* can be understood in the text of 1 Timothy 3:4, 5 as follows: “He [the elder] must be one who manages [*prohistemi*] his own household well keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage [*prohistemi*] his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)” (1 Tim 3:4, 5, NASB). In this context, the term *prohistemi* combines both the ideas of ruling and providing care. In 1 Timothy 5:17, the apostle Paul uses the same term to describe the elder’s work as follows: “Let the elders who rule well [*prohistemi*] be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.” According to Paul, church elders are to labor at providing leadership, care, and instruction or teaching to church members.³⁵ The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary specifies here that the elders are the leaders of the local congregation.³⁶ For the SDA Church, men, as well as women, can serve as church elders in the local church.

Women and eldership in the church. Although the Bible shows that the function of eldership was exercised mainly by men, it is also important to note that the Scriptures reveal that women occupied the leadership role in the OT and in the NT. As noted previously, the OT gives cases of some women who served in different positions of leadership in Israel. One may say Deborah (Judg 4:4); Miriam (Micah 6:4); and Huldah (2 Kgs 22). In the NT, one may see the example of women disciples of Jesus (Gospels); Phoebe and Priscilla (Rom 16:1-4); Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3); and others. Though these women were not chosen as “church elders” because

³⁵ Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, Rev. (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 2006), 168.

³⁶ “1 Timothy,” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976-1980), 7:312.

of the Hebrew and Hellenistic's cultures, they assumed some leadership responsibilities in the church.

Additionally, the NT reveals a list of passages where women occupied different ministries in the church. Some were referred to as apostles such as Junia³⁷ (Rom 16:7); others were prophets such as Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:9); others evangelists like Euodia and Syntyche who worked with Paul (Phil 4:2-3); others were ministering as teachers such as Priscilla (Acts 18:24-26). This list shows that even women could work as church elders since they were in the functions of other church ministries.

According to the Egalitarian views, they argued that since women like Euodia and Suntyche, Phoebe and Priscilla were "co-workers" with Paul, and other women in positions of leadership, women should be considered as candidates for the office of eldership in the church.³⁸

Ellen G. White suggests that women should be encouraged to use their talents in church ministries. Based on the text of Joel 2, she stresses that the "influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth."³⁹ She further says that women could do more in the ministry.⁴⁰ This means that women are not limited to any kind of ministry in the church. Like their brothers, women can be

³⁷ The apostle Paul says that Andronicus and Junia were "outstanding among the apostles" (Rom 16:7, NIV). Junia's name was mentioned by many early church theologians such as Chrysostom, Origen, and Jerome, referred to her as a female and an apostle. Margaret Mowczko, "Women Church Leaders in the New Testament," accessed 30 September 2016, <http://newlife.id.au/equality-and-gender-issues/new-testament-women-church-leaders/>.

³⁸ Sam Storms, "Men and Women in Ministry: Should Women Serve as Elders in the Local Church?" accessed 1 September 2016, <http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/men-and-women-in-ministry:-should-women-serve-as-elders-in-the-local-church>.

³⁹ Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), 146.

⁴⁰ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 472.

teachers of the Word of God, preachers, evangelists, and even leaders of the churches in terms of church elders.

The Elder as a Protector of the Flock

Another criterion of an elder in the NT is to protect the folk from false teachers. When Paul was about to leave the church of Ephesus, he charged the elders of the church of Ephesus to “be on guard for the flock against the savage wolves” (Acts 20:28, 29, NASB).

For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them (Acts 20:27-30, NASB).

The apostle Paul starts his exhortation to the elders of the church of Ephesus with the following warning: “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock.” The verb rendered “be on guard” [*prosekhō*] means “to keep watch” or “to pay strict attention.” It is often used in the context of false teachers (Deut 12:30; Matt 7:15; 16:6, 12; Luke 20:46). It is an imperative verb and is used in the continuous form. This can be understood as follows, “keep a constant watch [pay strict attention] over yourself and all the flock.”

According to Paul, the elders must first protect their own spiritual condition. They cannot guard the spiritual lives of others if they are not able to guard their own lives (1 Tim 4:16; 1 Cor 9:27). According to Richard, the church elders must constantly remember that the devil “has a special eye” on them, and is a great scholar of the Bible than them.⁴¹ Therefore, the elders must do whatever they can to guard their spiritual condition, their relationship with God. They must constantly pray and

⁴¹ Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Sovereign Grace, 1971), 7.

study the Scripture for their spiritual growth and the growth of the church members. They must guard the church members through the ministries of prayer meetings and minister the Word of God to the flock.

The Elder as an Instructor and a Teacher of the Church

In addition to the responsibilities of overseeing and/or leading the congregation, the NT shows that the elders have the responsibilities of instructing and teaching the church. To instruct means to admonish, to warn or correct a bad behavior or attitude through sound teaching. According to Alexander, church elders deal with bad behavior; they reprove and discipline those who have done wrong. But this kind of discipline should be done in a loving attitude, as Jesus taught it in the Gospel (Mat. 18:15-18). Strauch continues and says that the church leaders “who fail to admonish God’s people” because they fear the people [or even their top leaders] or they think the church members will stop to give financially are dishonoring God and His word.⁴²

They are not qualified to lead the church of God. In the Adventist church, the local church board is the organ in charge of exercising discipline against improper behavior. This committee must be presided over by the ordained church pastor of this church, or a “licensed pastor who is ordained as a local elder of the church concerned, or in the pastor’s absence and in his counsel, an elder of the local church can preside such committee.”⁴³ This implies that every church elder must be trained to lead the church committee and other church businesses necessary to improve the church’s life.

⁴² Alexander Strauch, 169.

⁴³ General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, rev. 2010, 18th ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald ®, 2010), 64.

The Elder as a Shepherd of the Flock

When the apostles Paul and Peter exhorted the elders to their responsibilities, they used the imagery of shepherding. The image of shepherd is so common in the Old and the New Testaments that the Bible uses it to describe God's care and love for His people. The purpose for which the Holy Ghost called and assigned the elders in the church as overseers was "to shepherd the church of God."

The verb "shepherd" is used in the Greek as *poimainō*, which means to tend/to feed/to guide as a shepherd. This term encompasses three shepherding tasks: leading, feeding, and protecting. As Alexander puts it, the task of a shepherd goes with "self-sacrifice, tenderness, wisdom, hard work, loving care, and constant watchfulness." He adds on that shepherding demands "knowledge of the sheep, good management skills, and courage in the face of danger." Thus, as Strauch underlines, to shepherd means to lead the church, to give it correct guidance, to teach and correct church members from the Word of God, and to protect it from all harm and dangers.⁴⁴

Therefore, this is the reason for equipping local church elders for the task of shepherding the church. It is interesting to note here that these apostles assign the responsibilities of shepherding to the local church elders. Talking to the elders in Ephesus the apostle Paul admonished them the following:

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd [*poimainō*] the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears (Acts 20:28-31).

On his side, the apostle Peter also exhorts the elders to shepherd the flock of God, in the following text:

⁴⁴ Alexander Strauch, 149.

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd [*poimainō*] the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away (1 Pet 5:1-4).

It is important to note that in the New Testament, the verb shepherd is used respectively by Jesus, Paul, and Peter in the context of Christian leaders. First, Jesus exhorts the apostle Peter to shepherd His sheep, in the following words: “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” “Yes, Master, you know I love you. Jesus said, “Shepherd [*poimainō*] my sheep.” (John 21:16, The Message). Secondly, the apostle Paul reminds the elders in Ephesus church that the Holy Spirit has made them overseers to shepherd [*poimainō*] “the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). Thirdly, the apostle Peter charges the elders to shepherd [*poimainō*] the flock of God (1 Pet 5:1, 2).

In addition to that, the apostle Paul uses in Ephesians 4:11 the term shepherd as one of the spiritual gifts that God has entrusted to His church. He lists five spiritual gifts among them the gift of shepherding. The Bible says, “He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors [*poimainō*] and teachers.” It is also important to discover that the term shepherd is never used in the New Testament as a title for a church leader, except for the case of Jesus Christ alone who is given the title of Shepherd (John 10:14; 1 Pet 5:4).

The Elder as a Teacher of the Flock

Writing to his spiritual son Timothy, the apostle Paul stresses that “an elder must be able to teach and defend the faith” (1 Tim 3:2). The Greek term used for “teach” is *didaktikos*, related to didactic, instruction, and doctrine. This lets us understand that a church elder is someone who has the spiritual gift of teaching,

instructing in a sound doctrine. According to Burkett, the term “teaching” or “doctrine” is used fifteen times in the Pauline epistles, completed by the terms “sound doctrine” or “sound words,” or “sound in faith.” The same author stresses that church elders “have the responsibility to teach ‘sound doctrine’ and refute those who contradict the ‘sound doctrine.’”⁴⁵

The New Testament firmly underlines that a church elder must be grounded in the Scriptures. He must be, not only a teacher of the “sound doctrine,” but also a student of the Scriptures. It is important for an elder to be fully committed to the sound biblical doctrine, “holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict” (Titus 1:9).

This requires an elder to apply to read and study the Scriptures daily, so that he can be able to teach correctly the Word of God, discuss biblical issues, doctrinal beliefs, and be able to interpret it while he is preaching the congregation. His duty is to teach and exhort the church in sound doctrine; He should be able to “defend the truth from false teachers.” This is why the Scriptures affirm that an elder who is not “able to instruct people in biblical doctrine does not qualify as a biblical elder” (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:9). According to Strauch, “an elder must be characterized by doctrinal integrity,” someone who knows the Word of God.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Delbert Burkett, *An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 437, 442.

⁴⁶ Alexander Strauch, 79, 129.

The Elders' Duties and Responsibilities

As it has been seen earlier, the apostle Paul uses the verb 'to shepherd' to remind the elders in Ephesus of their responsibility. This is the task the Holy Spirit charged them to do (Acts 20:28). The term shepherd [*poimainō*] encompasses three shepherding tasks: leading, feeding, and protecting. The study reviews some of these terms in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

Leading the flock. According to Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2, the elders are responsible for shepherding the church of God. Shepherding means leading the church. In 1 Timothy 5:17, the apostle Paul writes to the elders of Ephesus the following: "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor." The word 'rule' translates the Greek word *proistemi/prohistemi*. This term means to lead, to preside, to manage, to direct, to motivate, to care for. The idea conveyed here is that the church elders are the persons responsible for effective ministry leadership within their [local] churches. They are characterized by the spirit of vision, giving direction, teaching, and exhorting, and taking care of members.

In 1 Peter 5:1, 2, Peter calls elders "overseers," which means that they are supervisors and managers of the church. He uses the term "overseer" when he exhorts the elders in the following: "The elders who are among you I exhort ... Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers." In this passage, the apostle Peter uses terms, shepherd, and overseer that he applies as the elders' duty. By this, one may affirm that the church elder is at the same time a shepherd and an overseer of the local church. Church shepherds must be able to know when and where to lead their flock. They must avoid selfishness in their leadership; they must be accountable for whatever they are doing to their flock.

Ellen G. White establishes a strong relationship between the shepherd and the flock he is leading. She stresses on the tenderness, care, love, and attachment that must characterize a good shepherd with the flock he leads. She writes:

As the shepherd leads his flock over the rocky hills, through forest and wild ravines, to grassy nooks by the riverside; as he watches them on the mountains through the lonely night, shielding from robbers, caring tenderly for the sickly and feeble, his life comes to be one with theirs. A strong and tender attachment unites him to the objects of his care. However large the flock, the shepherd knows every sheep. Every one has its name, and responds to the name at the shepherd's call.⁴⁷

According to Clouzet, the apostle Paul focused on two functions of the elder:

1. To teach the Word (1 Tim 1:5, 9), so that the flock can grow spiritually and will not go astray;
2. To rule (Acts 20:28), to “shepherd the flock with wisdom and skill.”⁴⁸ These apply to the ministry of pastors and church elders.

Feeding the flock. In his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul reminds the duty of a church elder. A church elder must “be able to teach” and defend the faith (1 Tim 3:2). Throughout the New Testament, the teaching of the Word of God is of paramount importance. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) and the “Master Teacher sent from Heaven,”⁴⁹ commissioned His disciples to “teach all things that He has commanded them” (Matt 28:20). He gave the charge to Peter to “feed [teach] my sheep” (John 21:17, NIV). The apostles were teachers of the Word of God. The early disciples and Christians were steadfastly devoted to teaching God’s Word, fellowship, and prayers (Acts 2:42). Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Aquila, and Priscilla were devoted teachers of the early church of God (Acts 11:26; 15:35; 18:24-26). Paul admonished

⁴⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages: The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Life of Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 479.

⁴⁸ Ron E. M. Clouzet, (NAD Evangelism Institute Director; Professor of Ministry and Theology; Seminary, Andrews University, accessed February 18, 2015), <http://revivedbyhisword.org/en/Bible/act/20/>.

⁴⁹ Ellen G. White, *Education*, 73.

Timothy to give attention to “reading, to exhortation, to doctrine [teaching]” (1 Tim 4:13).

Among many gifts that the apostle Paul listed in his letters, the gift of teaching is of paramount importance (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11). He ranked this gift thirdly in the epistle to the Corinthians: “And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers.” In addition, the apostle Paul says that the elders who rule well must be “worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.” (1 Tim 5:17).

In Acts 20:27, the apostle Paul reminds the elders in Ephesus that he had taught them the whole purpose *and* plan *and* counsel of God (The Amplified Bible). And therefore it was time for the elders in Ephesus to continue the work of teaching the “purpose and plan” of God to His church. Since one of their duty is to shepherd the flock of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2), the elders must make sure the church members are fed with the Word of God.

On their side, Driscoll and Breshears enumerate various duties of an elder in a local church. These include, praying and studying the Scriptures (Acts 6:4); “ruling/leading the church (1 Tim. 5:17); managing the church (1 Tim 3:4, 5); caring for people in the church (1 Pet 5:2-5); living exemplary lives (Heb 13:7); rightly using the authority God has given them” (Acts 20:28); giving account to God for the church (Heb 13:7); “teaching the Bible correctly” (Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 3:2); preaching (1 Tim 5:17); praying for the sick (Jas 5:13-15); “teaching sound doctrine and refuting false teachings” (Titus 1:9); “rightly using money and power” (1 Pet 5:1-3); disciplining unrepentant Christians (Matt 18:15-17); protecting the church from false teachers (Acts 20:17-31); “obeying local, state, and federal laws” (Rom 13:1-7); and

“developing other leaders and teachers (Eph 4:11-16; 2 Tim 2:1, 2).”⁵⁰ To be able to perform these duties, every church elder needs to develop the spiritual gifts he received from God and be trained and equipped for the duty.

In addition to that, the apostle Paul reminds the elders their responsibility to study the Word of God, to gain the knowledge of the Scriptures, in order to be able to refute false teachers. He reminds them the most danger of the flock, the savage wolves that would come after his departure, teaching false doctrines, to “draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:30, NASB). Writing to his spiritual son Titus, the apostle Paul exhorted him to set in order the church of Crete, and “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance” with the sound doctrine. He exhorted Titus “to correct and convict those who contradict ... idle talkers and deceivers ... whose mouths must be stopped” (Titus 1:5, 9-11).

The elders must work together with pastors to teach sound doctrine, as well as judging doctrinal error, at the example of the early church of Jerusalem. “And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this [doctrinal] matter” (Acts 15:6). Pastors and church elders must be knowledgeable in the Word so that they could protect the church from false teachers. Protecting the church also involves seeking lost, correcting sinful behavior, and admonishing improper attitudes. For this reason, the church elders are called to be watchful and prayerful. They “must be aware of changing issues in society and in the church.”⁵¹ They should constantly be learners of the Holy Scriptures.

⁵⁰ Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *What is a Church Elder?* (Wheaton, IL: Good News, 2008), 18.

⁵¹ Alexander Strauch, 19.

Jesus Empowers His Disciples for Ministry

Like in the Old Testament, one remarks that the leadership and teaching ministries are more emphasized in the New Testament, for the formation and the growth of the church, through the training of church leaders. Though the leadership and the teaching ministries in the New Testament seemed to have been the sole monopoly of a certain group of teachers called Pharisees, their negative influence on not practicing what they teach led people to abandon their teachings.

God's wonderful plan was fulfilled in sending the best and greatest leader and teacher ever been on this planet earth. No one has ever more effectively trained people for ministry than the Master, Jesus Christ. The mission of Jesus, preceded by the mission of John Baptist the forerunner, was to be a servant leader, to teach the truth from God, empower and equip the first disciples to the teaching ministry before they were sent [by Jesus] to make [to teach] other disciples. The order given by Jesus Himself is known as the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20; John 29:21).

Modeling a Servant Leadership

The whole Bible shows that the perfect model of leadership was displayed in the life of Jesus Christ. He is the highest elder of the church. His leadership style was characterized by a spirit of a servant leader. Jesus made it clear that good leadership must be marked by a humble service. The Gospels record a repeated emphasis on servanthood and humility. After washing His disciples' feet, Jesus asked His disciples, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:12-15).

After the arguments among the disciples regarding their greatness, Jesus reminded them,

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (Matt 20:25-28).

Jesus sought to impart to His disciples both the interpersonal skills and character qualities that would enable them to perform the servanthood leadership and the teaching ministries. Jesus was deeply concerned with the ministry of His disciples in the church. He taught them spiritual practices that would enable them to grow as church leaders, and fulfill their ministries (Matt 11:29; 16:13-20, 24-28; 23:1-12; Mark 33-35; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:3-17; 15:1-11). The same way Jesus was concerned with the ministry of His disciples, He is still concerned with the ministry and the qualities of the elders of His church today. He desires to see the church elders leading His church with all the qualities of servanthood leadership, and not the dictatorship or the *laissez-faire* leadership qualities. All church elders, men, and women (Gal 3:28) are called to follow the example of Jesus Christ as servant leaders of the church.

Empowering for a Teaching Ministry

“In the Teacher sent from God, heaven gave to men its best and greatest.”⁵² Jesus Christ took enough time to teach His disciples, train and equip them for ministry. At the end of His mission, Jesus commissioned them to go and be also teachers of others.

⁵² Ellen G. White, *Education*, 73.

In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus commanded his followers to make disciples [teach disciples]. The text says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” The KJV translates the first words as follows, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.” In Greek, the verb used for teach is *μαθητευσατε*, disciple, or make disciples. Making disciples is the end result of a long process that includes going, teaching, and baptizing. According to Ellen G. White, “the disciples were to go forth as Christ’s witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. ... Thus Christ sought to teach the disciples the truth that in God’s kingdom there are no territorial lines, no caste, no aristocracy; that they must go to all nations, bearing to them the message of a Saviour’s love.”⁵³

The Bible shows that Jesus imparted to His disciples skills by training them, equipping, empowering and educating them through various teachings. Thus, He sent them to go and teach others to observe what He has taught them. Jesus empowered them and gave them this order: “As the Father has sent me, I also send you. ... As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (John 20:21; 17:18).

Jesus sent His disciples as they were, in their weaknesses, and empowered them to accomplish the mission. Ellen White says, “God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image.”⁵⁴ As

⁵³ Ellen G. White, *Education*, 19, 20.

⁵⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 294.

Jesus did to His disciples, the church elders also need to be trained and equipped for the effectiveness and efficiency of their ministry in local churches.

Empowering for a Team Leadership Ministry

Jesus Christ empowered His disciples for a team leadership ministry. A team leadership ministry is a powerful means which calls leaders to work together with the same vision, same spirit, toward the achievement of the mission of goal. It is the “model for the NT church, and it is a model that is needed today.”⁵⁵ It is Jesus who initiated it and modeled it for His disciples (Matt 20:25-28). According to Gangel, building a team leadership ministry requires, first of all, becoming “committed followers” of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not only teach this model; He modeled it as well. How would it be excellent for church elders today if they could follow the example of team leadership ministry! Teaching is good, but modeling is better.

The Role of Elders in the Writings of Ellen G. White

As an inspired prophet, Ellen G. White wrote a lot on the concept of eldership. Her writings address especially the election of church elders, their roles, and responsibilities in the church. As seen in the Holy Scriptures, the roles and responsibilities of the church elders are summed up in two functions: overseers or leaders and teachers of the Word of God. Ellen G. White underlines the following responsibilities of church elders as leaders of the church.

First of all, she stresses that the role of the church elders is to “feed the flock.” They are given this authority by the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:2, 3). However, they are not “to drive the flock” but to nurture and be examples to the flock. Ellen G. White

⁵⁵ Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 8, accessed June 14, 2016, <https://books.google.co.ke/books?hl>.

cautions elders to “act wisely and feed the flock of God with pure food; for its prosperity much depends upon the quality of this food.”⁵⁶ Because they occupy “the position of under-shepherds,” the church elders “are to exercise a watchful diligence over the Lord's flock. This is not to be a dictatorial vigilance, but to encourage, strengthen, and uplift.”⁵⁷

Secondly, Ellen G. White says that the church elders have the responsibility of training or educating church members on how they can use their talents and spiritual gifts. She underlines that elders “may plan wisely, and educate the individual members of the church to act their part in trading with their Lord’s talents. By a right use of their talents, they may increase their efficiency in the cause of God. The church may be visited only occasionally by a minister, and yet be a growing church; for Jesus is our minister.”⁵⁸

Another responsibility of church elders is to enhance the spirituality of church members, by making sure all members are faithful stewards. The church elders ought to encourage the church members to return tithes and giving offerings. However, they should not neglect to visit those who do not return tithe, and those who are poor and misfortune. Ellen G. White admonishes the church by saying that, “it is the neglect of these plainly revealed duties that brings darkness upon the church. Let the elders and officers of the church follow the direction of the Sacred Word, and urge upon their members the necessity of faithfulness in the payment of pledges, tithes, and

⁵⁶ Ellen G. White, *Manuscripts Releases*, 21 vols. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993), 316.

⁵⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 526.

⁵⁸ Ellen G. White, “The Church Must Be Quickened,” *Review and Herald*, Jan. 17, 1893.

offerings.”⁵⁹ She stresses the importance of this role by urging the church elders to visit members so that the work of God can move. She tells them: “Elders of churches, do your duty. Labor from home to home that the flock of God shall not be remiss in this great matter, which involves such a blessing or such a curse.”⁶⁰ By applying these counsels, the church elders will bring more blessings to their local churches. But this is possible when the church elders are equipped and empowered to perform effectively the church ministries and the sacred mission given by Jesus to His church.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the biblical and theological foundations of the subject of church eldership. It threw more light on the etymology of the term ‘elder’ and its significance throughout the Holy Scriptures and the writings of Christian authors, especially the writings of Ellen G. White. The term ‘elder’ or ‘eldership’ as reviewed biblically and theologically in the Old and the New Testament, suggests that elders were men of advanced age, respected, full of wisdom, men of position and influence, who represent the community in religious and civil affairs. Their influence was even beyond the church of Israel. It was known politically and socially, even among pagan nations.

The elders in Israel as well as in the times of Jesus played a crucial role of leadership and teachers within the people of God. As such, they were representatives of the people and played an important role in the salvation of the people. According to the apostle Paul, church elders are called to such responsibilities of leaders in the church and teachers of the Word of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 5:17; 3:2, 4-5; 2 Tim

⁵⁹ Ellen G. White, “The Duty of Paying Tithes and Offerings,” *Review and Herald*, Dec. 17, 1889.

⁶⁰ Ellen G. White, *Testimony to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1962), 306.

2:2). They are called to serve God and thus, be fully qualified and equipped to exercise their spiritual gifts for the growth of the church.

This study project seeks to train and equip the church elders to be able to fulfill their leadership and teaching responsibilities, thus, be empowered by the Holy Spirit for the ministry of the church. The following chapter reviews the literature from different authors on the subject of the church eldership. It studies the subject of church eldership in the SDA Church. It analyzes different methods and models of teaching the Bible as one of the spiritual gifts and competencies of a church elder.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is a review of literature related to this study. Sources of the reviewed literature include articles, abstracts, books, dissertations, encyclopedia, newspapers, other research reports, and the internet. The chapter intends to throw more light based on the church elder's ministries in terms of leadership and teaching, during the history of Christian era. The researcher tries to discuss the importance of the leadership of the church elders in the history of Christianity. The discussion will focus on eldership in the apostolic church, the eldership as discussed by other Christian writers during the Christian era, the eldership in the SDA Church, and the equipping of church elders for a successful ministry.

Church Elders in the Apostolic Church

As the study revealed in chapter two, the church elders seemed to occupy a continuing place of importance throughout the history of Israel, as it was revealed in the Old and the New Testaments. In the Apostolic church, the elders played an important role in the leadership and the growth of the church, through evangelizing, teaching new converts, and maintaining church discipline and sound doctrine. The churches of Jerusalem and Antioch recognized their authority.¹ In fact, the apostle

¹ After Jerusalem, it was Antioch to be organized as another Christian church during the apostolic time. As a matter of fact, Chapter 11 of the book of Acts reveals that Christianity was born in Antioch (11:26) after a long period of time when people were taught the Word of God. The same chapter show Barnabas and Paul as gifted men in the church. Both were the leading teachers in the church and were labourers for Christ.

Paul functioned as an elder before he stepped out in the role of an apostle.²

Throughout the New Testament, as the Apostolic church was developed, leaders were called elders; they were very influential in the foundational life of the early church (Acts 14:23; 15). During those times, the elders were charged with leadership and teaching responsibilities within a community of believers.

The Concept of Elder in the Apostolic Church

The term “elder” is used in the Apostolic Church, as it was also used in the other places of the New Testament. When used in the New Testament, the term “elder”³ provides a clear continuity with the Old Testament office. According to Roger Beckwith, the concept ‘elder’ or ‘eldership’ is “an old Jewish institution to which Jesus and his apostles could claim to belong.” He goes on to say that the elders were translated from the Pentateuch (OT) into Greek (NT), characterized not only by age but also by virtuous life and by knowledge and understanding of the Holy Scriptures. They include both laymen and priests.⁴

On his side, Stearns concurs with Beckwith on the aspect of age that characterizes church eldership, especially in the primitive times. However, he asserts

² The Biblical Role of Elders, accessed 18 March, 2015, www.forGodsfame.org .

³ As seen in chapter two, there are two words that are generally used in the Greek New Testament to signify the term “elder”, *presbyteros*, and *episkopos*. Another term is also used, *poiwmn*, for shepherd, but its function goes together with the function of *presbyteros*.

⁴ According to this author, the term ‘elder’ was commonly used in the Rabbinic Literature, such as the Talmud (see the Encyclopaedia Judaica by L.I. Rabinovitz), the Mishnah, the Sanhedrin; and later in the Christian Literature by prominent writers and by the Fathers of the Church, such as Josephus, Philon of Alexandria, Eusebius, Papias, Irenaeus, and others during the ecclesiastical history. The term ‘elder’ was as well used in the Deuterocanonical books, such as 1 & 2 Maccabee; Judith; Suzanna, and Wisdom. All these literatures link the meaning of ‘elders’ as ‘wise men’, ‘rulers’, ‘judges’, ‘teachers’, ‘wise scribes’, ‘sages’, ‘Jewish teachers’, ‘rabbis’, ‘elder brethren’, ‘senior believers’, and ‘teaching elders.’ Roger Beckwith, *Elders in Every City: The Origin and Role of the Ordained Ministry* (Tottenham, London, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003), 45, 30.

that the idea of age was merged in the one of dignity, in Christian and modern times.⁵ In addition to that, Grant reveals that ‘elders’ are certain persons who were appointed to hold office in the Christian church, by exercising spiritual and leadership functions in the churches.⁶ It is, therefore, to be noted that the concept ‘elder’ always goes with the function of leadership of an elder as one of the important ecclesiastical responsibility. In this sense, one may affirm that the apostles were also elders, as they would call themselves (1 Pet 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1).

However, as Van Dam puts it, the distinction between both offices, elder, and apostle, is evident.⁷ This shows that in the apostolic church, an apostle could be an elder, but every elder could not necessarily be an apostle.⁸ From these comments, it would be fair to affirm that an elder is a person of dignity and wisdom, chosen for his ability and talent to exercise leadership and spiritual functions in his church. He might be a layman or a clergy.

Elder as Leader and Teacher

In the apostolic church, an elder was generally recognized as someone who accomplishes two offices, the ruling, and the teaching functions. The ruling function implies the leadership office, with its duties of taking care of the church through managing the affairs of the church, protecting and leading the flock. The teaching ministry goes along with preaching the Gospel, shepherding the flock, evangelizing,

⁵ W. N. Stearns, “Elder in OT,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Chicago, IL: The Howard-Severance Company, 1925), II: 923-24.

⁶ A. C. Grant, “Elder in NT,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Chicago, IL: The Howard-Severance Company, 1925), II: 924.

⁷ Cornelis Van Dam, *The Elder: Today’s Ministry Rooted in All of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), 104.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

and discipling new converts.⁹ However, Philip Schaff as cited by Boubakar Sanou affirms that teaching and preaching in “the apostolic church was not confined to a particular class,”¹⁰ but this was one of the spiritual gifts that could be used by every church member. This is clear that an elder could be selected as it is done today among all church members, to exercise his function.

In his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul uses the term “overseer” (*episkopos*) in 1 Timothy 3:1 to refer to the office of “bishop” or “superintendent.”¹¹ The same term is also used elsewhere in the New Testament to refer to the ruling position in the local church.¹² The other word used by both Luke and Paul (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7), “elder” (*presbuteros*), literally refers to one that is older, then having more experience and maturity; one who possesses a long-term perspective on life.¹³ It is interesting to note that the concept of the older generations leading the younger is as old as civilization and was common in the Greco-Roman society surrounding the birth of the Church. The elders of a given city or village would sit together in prominent places such as city gates, halls, and central meeting houses to discuss the events and concerns of their city.¹⁴

⁹ Beckwith, 45-49.

¹⁰ Boubakar Sanou, *Motivating and Training the Laity to Increase their Involvement in Ministry in the Ouaga-Center Adventist Church in Burkina Faso*, A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Ministry (Andrews University, USA, March 2010), 37.

¹¹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 347.

¹² Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 3 The Acts of the Apostles (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1930), 346.

¹³ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. BDAG, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 3rd ed., revised and edited by Frederick William Danker (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 699-700.

¹⁴ Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 2006), 121-23.

The idea of ‘elder leadership’ was also a vital part of the Jewish faith society. Under the historic tribal system of ‘elder leaders’ and under the organized Levitical Priesthood, old age was a recognized part of the honoured system.¹⁵ This idea is also shared with Burkett who says that the elders were a group of older men who served as a kind of advisory council to the Jewish community.¹⁶

The general sense of leaders and councils seems clear within the later Qumran sect and diaspora synagogue management with similar structure and purpose as the eldership of the Pastorals including a representative function, hospitality, answering for funds, a fatherly role, explanation of the Scriptures, and oversight of admission to the community.¹⁷ As Strauch puts it, all other reference to non-Christian and Jewish elders that is presented in the Gospels and Acts are associated with the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem.¹⁸ What little is known about synagogue organization and management it is

¹⁵ Ed Glasscock, “The Biblical Concept of Elder,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* (January-March 1987): 67.

¹⁶ Delbert Burkett, *An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 385. For Malphurs, the idea of selecting young people, “good old boys or girls” for church boards is a mistake because of their lack of spiritual maturity. However, this idea is not basically grounded in the Bible, since we know some young men who were good church elders, such as Timothy and Titus. In addition, the debate on the selection of women to the church eldership would be indefinite since the Bible is not openly clear on this issue. Nonetheless, selecting women to serve as church elders should not divide the church since Christ was among his disciples fervent women, and women played a crucial role in the growth of the early and apostolic church. Malphurs Aubrey, *Leading Leaders: Empowering Church Boards for Ministry Excellence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 25.

¹⁷ Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy- A New translation with Notes and Commentary, The Eerdmans Critical Commentary*, gen. ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 269.

¹⁸ Three classifications of members who formed the Jewish Sanhedrin are: priests, scribes, and elders. Their frequent appearance is due to their leading role in the rejection and death of Jesus Christ (Mark 8:31). Another group of elders was however mentioned in the Gospels, with the appearance that they were part of nonpriestly nobility, heads of important and wealthy Judean families. One of them is Joseph of Arimathea, whom Matthew identifies as a rich man of Arimathea was one such elder (Matt. 27:57). Three times in the New Testament the entire Sanhedrin is referred as the council of elders (presbyterion, Luke 22:66; Acts 22:5; and gerousia, Acts 5:21). Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 2006), 121-23.

suggested that a council of elders (*gerousia*) worked with one or more designated as the “ruler(s) of the synagogue” (e.g., Acts 13:15; 18:17).¹⁹

The Plurality of Elders in the Apostolic Church

According to Bruce, the book of Acts, after the Gospel of Luke, is the “second volume to a History of Christian Origins.”²⁰ It provides the foundational material for the study on eldership in the apostolic church. In the beginning, the twelve apostles were the “official overseers” [*presbuteros*] of the Christian church. However, during this early time of the apostolic church, a “body of elders” emerged. This was organized and recognized by the congregation as well as by the apostles as leaders of the community or the church. Some scholars think that the first Christians “borrowed the elder structure of government from the Synagogue.”²¹ In the apostolic church, nearly every church known of was led by elders.

The apostolic churches were led by a plurality of elders established by the apostles and the community. The choice of apostles was led by the Holy Spirit through prayer, and the Spirit guided them and the Jewish Christian community to establish leadership by a council of elders. Whenever the apostle Paul was going for his missionary voyage and the church planting, he appointed church elders to oversee and to take care of the new church. The principle was to appoint elders in every

¹⁹ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus, New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 243. See also Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, Rev. (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 2006), 122.

²⁰ F.F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts, The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 3.

²¹ R. Alastair Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority Within Earliest Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 119.

church (Acts 14:23). The process of appointing²² the elders in the church involved desire, qualification, selection, examination, installation,²³ and prayer. Unfortunately, as Alexander says, too many churches expend today the least amount of time and effort when selecting and examining prospective elders and deacons.²⁴ The researcher supports the view that elders should be chosen on the basis of spirituality, qualification, selection, and examination. Churches and leaders should spend much time and effort to choose their elders prayerfully.

Elders in Each Church

When the apostle James refers to the “elders of the church” (Jas 5:14), these elders would have included at the beginning the church of Jerusalem. However, with the history of the persecution of the apostolic church, the reference could also imply the elders who were scattered in different places. As Van Dam puts it, this church [of Jerusalem] in dispersion formed new congregations that were born after the persecution that followed the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1; 11:19).²⁵

It is important to note that the Jerusalem congregations, throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria would have had elders in each place. In fact, during their missionary journey, Paul, and Barnabas remarked that elders were found in every church, like in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch (Acts 14:23). In addition,

²² Luke records that Paul and Barnabas “appointed” elders for their newly founded churches: “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed” (Acts 14:23). When referring to appointment to specific tasks or positions, the New Testament writers use common words for appointment (*poieo*, *tithemi*, *kathistemi*, *cheirotoneo*). These terms simply mean a general appointment which may go in most of time with ordination.

²³ The New Testament indicates that elders were formally installed into office by the laying on of hands and prayer. When the apostle Paul addresses to Timothy about the instructions on elders in 1 Timothy 5:17-25, he refers to the laying on of hands as to mean the appointment to office: “Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22).

²⁴ Strauch, 279.

²⁵ Van Dam, 103.

the apostle Paul shows the presence of elders in the churches of Ephesus (Acts 20:17), and Philippi (Phil. 1:1). Later, Paul instructed Titus to do the same in every town on the island of Crete (Titus 1:5). In this case, elders were found wherever every church in the apostolic era was established. The presence of church elders in every church is underlined by Damsteegt in the following lines:

In harmony with the leadership model of the Jesus' church, the apostle appointed elders as spiritual leaders in every church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). This practice explains why the apostles, when they left Jerusalem to fill their places instead of leaving a vacuum in this major center of the church at that time. It also explains the presence of elders in the Jerusalem church several years later to whom Barnabas and Saul handed their relief contributions for the needy believers in Judea (Acts 11:29, 30).²⁶

The establishment of these leaders was done on the basis of their spiritual and leadership qualities. In the same line, those elders were exercising their duties or functions in those congregations in conformity with the directives from the apostles of Christ. The apostles modeled the church elders and mentored them for a leadership development of the church, at the example of servant leadership method of Christ. The apostle Paul is an example of a model leader (1 Cor. 11:1); He mentored the young leaders Timothy (1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:1, 2) and Titus (Titus 1:4, 5, 9). In the same way today, the church pastor should use this kind of mentorship that Paul used to empower church elders, with the model of Christ's leadership.

The Functions of Elders in the Apostolic Church

In the apostolic era,²⁷ the office of elders emerged as the highest level of local church leadership. The church elders were leaders in ceremonies, teachers, managers, and advisors. They also served as the head of families. Furthermore, the precise

²⁶ P. Gerard Damsteegt, "Have Adventists Abandoned the Biblical Model of Leadership of the Local Church?" in *Here We Stand: Evaluating New Trends in the Church*, ed. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim (Hagerstown, MA: Review and Herald Graphics, 2005), 645.

²⁷ The apostolic era is situated in the years 34AD-100AD.

functions of the elders are not presented in a formal way; however, by reviewing the Old and New Testaments, those functions indicate their general responsibilities.

By analyzing the apostolic letters, one may conclude that the functions of the elders involve a number of specific duties. They are part of the church leaders who determine church policy (Acts 15:22); they are overseers of the church (Acts 20:28); they are in charge of ordination services (1 Tim. 4:14). The church elders are to rule, to teach, and to preach (1 Tim. 5:17; cf. 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:2). They are to “exhort and convict those who contradict” (Titus 1:9); they are shepherds and act as “examples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:1-3). These responsibilities show that the elders follow the footprints of the apostolic church’s work.

Robert Wring sums up the functions of the elders in the early church in the following points: to administer and “ensure the proper observance of the Lord’s Supper;” to preach and teach the Bible; to lead or rule the church; to pray for the sick; to assist the apostles.²⁸ To this list, one may add the responsibilities of regulating doctrine issues for the church; dealing with members’ discipline (rebuke, exhort, and maintaining the truth of church teaching); and be able to teach.²⁹ This is in line with what Luke says in the book of Acts that Christian elders have the role to accomplish in the early church (Acts 11).

1. They receive and administer money
2. They judge doctrinal issues
3. They provide counsel and resolve conflict.³⁰

²⁸ Robert A. Wring, *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (Spring 2005): 188-212.

²⁹ The Biblical Role of Elders, accessed 18 March 2015, www.forGodsfame.org.

³⁰ Strauch, 124-132.

Therefore, it is to be noted that in an Adventist church setting, a church elder should primarily understand the necessity to have the competence of teaching the Word of God. As a teacher of the Word of God, he/she is able to direct souls, to lead people, to rebuke and refute (Titus 1:9), and give the right direction to church members, under the power of the Holy Spirit. An elder should be able to lead holy ceremonies, take care of members, and deal with discipline issues. A church elder should also have the competence in the management and protection of church finance, handle doctrinal issues, and thus provide an efficient leadership ministry.

Christian Writers and Church Eldership

From the New Testament time and throughout the Christian era, the church has continued to adopt the Jewish concept of eldership as church leaders. However, Wring affirms that the elders in the first century in the “New Testament church were different from the Old Testament elders, as well as differing from those of the synagogue times.”³¹

According to Tenney, in the inter-testament period,³² the term “elders” seem to have acquired the reference primarily to the lay members of the council rather than those from the priest side.³³ It is in this period that the early church starts using the term “elder.” The function of laymen who were known as elders was also evoked by Beckwith who underlines the function of teaching the Scripture by the elders in the early second century BC.³⁴ After the year 70 A.D., the term “elder” was limited to

³¹ Robert A. Wring, *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* (Vol. 3 No. 1 (Spring 2005): 188-212).

³² This period covers the 1st century AD.

³³ Merrill C. Tenney, “Elders in the Old Testament”, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (ZPEB) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975-1976), 268.

³⁴ Beckwith, 30.

theologians and leaders of the synagogues. However, as Tenney affirms, “this was after the development of Christianity, although later first century Christianity could have been influenced by the same concept.”³⁵ The significance of elders in societies is that they had an important role in society as they provide guidance on spiritual and community care.

In his book, *Elders and Leaders, God’s Plan for Leading the Church*,³⁶ Getz underlines the importance of the church elders in the first century. He makes a complete study of the nature of the church and a review of passages that emphasize the functions and duties of elders as leaders in the church. The study focuses on four elements of church eldership, such as titles, functions, duties, and board activities. While it includes the qualities of an elder, it does not necessarily focus on how these qualities are learned in the church. By training and equipping church elders in the local church, the present study intends to help church elders learn and understand their functions and duties. This will also help them improve their qualities of effective leaders in local churches.

The Functions of Elders in the Reformed Church

The office of eldership in the period of Reformation has provoked a lot of debates amongst Christian writers. With the reformed Church, two views were discussed in relation to the functions of elders in the church. On one side, the first view affirms a “three-fold order” of functions. These involve, bishop, priest, and deacon. On the other side, the second view a “two-fold form,” bishop (presbyter) and

³⁵ Ibid., 268.

³⁶ Gene Getz, *Elders and Leaders, God’s Plan for Leading the Church, a Biblical, Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 52.

deacon. Both views affirm that the office of eldership combines two functions, the ‘ruling elder’ and the ‘teaching elder.’³⁷

According to Torrance, the functions of the elders were considered differently in the reformed church.³⁸ He shares the same view as the reformer Calvin, who affirms that the two functions of elders should be considered separately. Calvin asserts that there is a distinction between ruling and teaching functions in the church.³⁹ On his side, Bucer, as cited by Uprichard, recognizes the unity of two kinds of functions of eldership in the church: those responsible for ruling and church discipline; and those in charge of teaching and preaching the Word of God. Bucer’s view on church eldership sums up four lists of offices:

1. Pastors for preaching the Bible and performing administrative duties.
2. Teachers or doctors in school settings.
3. Elders in charge of government and discipline of the church.
4. Deacons who take care of needy people and do other administration affairs of the church.⁴⁰

It is interesting to note that the church elders are seen as lay-leaders and persons who assist the pastor in the Protestant churches. Their functions are almost the same even in the SDA Church, with the main functions of ruling and teaching the parishioners.

³⁷ R. E. H. Uprichard, *The Eldership in Martin Bucer and John Calvin*, accessed 7 June 2016, http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/irish-biblical-studies/18-3_136.pdf

³⁸ T. F. Torrance, *The Eldership in the Reformed Church* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), 57.

³⁹ Torrance, 57

⁴⁰ R. E. H. Uprichard, *The Eldership in Martin Bucer and John Calvin*, accessed 7 June 2016, http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/irish-biblical-studies/18-3_136.pdf

Leadership Responsibility of Elders

According to Strauch, church elders must model the leadership of Jesus Christ who is the Chief Shepherd, and the Leader of the church.⁴¹ They must exercise the authority of Jesus Christ, and teach Christ's disciples to observe His word. On his side, Cornelis concurs with Alexander by saying that the elders are "servant shepherds" responsible to Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd. As such, the church elders are called to perform the task of leading, gathering, and nurturing the flock. The same author asserts that the elders must look to Christ in doing their work so that they can be able to fulfill the will of their Master.⁴²

As a matter of fact, Hybels stresses that the leadership of the local church should be the focus of the vision of leaders because "the local church is the hope of the world."⁴³ Thus the quality of its leadership should be improved. In short, the church elders are called to perform both the leadership and nurturing responsibilities in their local churches. The nurturing ministry implies feeding the flock through teaching the Word of God and discipling new members to grow spiritually. It is, therefore, evident that this discipleship ministry is crucial because it makes people true followers of Christ, rather than followers of men. By teaching and nurturing church members, church elders give them direction and leadership after Christ.

⁴¹ Strauch, 291.

⁴² Van Dam, 151.

⁴³ Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel House, 2004), 36.

Church Elders as Spiritual Influencers. Church elders are to give positive leadership. According to Van Dam, to rule is to give leadership,⁴⁴ and this spiritual gift is worthy of honor, as the apostle, Paul wrote to Timothy: “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor” (1 Tim 5:17, NASB). As leaders, church elders influence church members; if they do not, then they are not effective leaders. Maxwell has a similar view on leadership. He states that "the true measure of leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less."⁴⁵

Rush affirms that leaders are to provide an example that people want to follow.⁴⁶ Clinton, on the other hand, shows that the church elders, like other leaders, serve as mentors. As such, the church elders are the spiritual influencers in the group setting, so that the Word of God and the group dynamic serve as the prime influencers.⁴⁷ Andrade adds on by saying that the mentors serve as shepherds to the group of shepherds and so on so that the flock has qualified leaders.⁴⁸

According to Lawrence, leadership exists to serve others in the mission of God. By addressing the modern leaders, he goes on to say that: “Leadership in the

⁴⁴ Van Dam, 151.

⁴⁵ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 16.

⁴⁶ Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (Nairobi, Kenya: WorldAlive Limited, 2009), 211.

⁴⁷ Robert J. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 137-139. In this book, Clinton defines leadership as a “dynamic process in which any man or woman with God given capacity influences a specific group of God’s people toward His purposes for the group. This is contrary to the popular notion that a leader must have a formal position, a formal title, or formal training.” Robert J. Clinton, 14.

⁴⁸ Phillip G. Andrade, *Developing Leaders in a New England Small Church Context: Returning the Task of Leadership Development to the Local Church* (D Min Dissertation, St. Paul Bethel University, 2010), 59.

kingdom of God is not an end in itself. It exists to serve a greater end—the mission of God. ... It is about service, not self-development.”⁴⁹

Blackaby sees a clear distinction between leaders in the secular world and spiritual leaders. Secular leaders primarily attempt to lead people to achieve the goals of the organization. He stresses that spiritual leadership is more than meeting goals. He defines true spiritual leadership as “moving people onto God’s agenda.”⁵⁰ This agenda involves among many responsibilities, making people disciples of Jesus by teaching them to observe what Christ taught (Matt 28:19), mentoring other leaders to use their spiritual gifts for the growth of the church, and inspiring other leaders to exercise the servant leadership of Christ in their respective local churches. Maxwell believes that “leaders who mentor potential leaders multiply their effectiveness.”⁵¹ This principle should be applicable to top-bottom local church leadership, to the church members, and to the new converts and baptized members.

Furthermore, Blackaby recognizes that his definition of spiritual leadership is clearly supported by Clinton’s study when he states: “Clinton wisely observes that God’s purposes are the key to spiritual leadership, and dreams and visions of leaders are not.”⁵² In the same line with Blackaby, Clinton, and Maxwell, Malphurs and Mancini attest that a Christian leader is a servant leader “who uses his credibility and capabilities to influence people ... to pursue their God-given direction.”⁵³ They say

⁴⁹ James Lawrence, *Growing Leaders: Cultivating Discipleship for Yourself and Others* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 232.

⁵⁰ Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville, TN: B&H Group, 2001), 20.

⁵¹ John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Prabhadevi, Mumbai, India: Magna, 2001), 10.

⁵² Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 10.

⁵³ Malphurs Aubrey and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 20, 21.

that such leader is characterized by two important characters: (1) servant (Matt 20:25-28), with the emphasis on leader's humility and love, not his ego (John 13:1-17); (2) credibility, the key to a leader's ability to influence people (1 Tim 3:1-12). This includes triple cs: character, competence, and clarity of direction.⁵⁴

Models of Christian Leadership. For centuries, the church has perceived leadership into certain models. These models determine the personal characteristic and leadership style of a church leader. As Schaller puts it, many denominational traditions dictate the model to be applied by leaders.⁵⁵

According to Schaller, the first model is "leader as priest" model. It focuses on the leader's ability to learn new rituals of his belief system. The knowledge of these rituals separates the leader from the laity. Schaller notes that "this basis for leadership gained ascendancy with the rise of the sacerdotal priesthood in the second and third centuries."⁵⁶ This model is especially found in "high church" traditions.

The second model, the "leader as educator" model focuses on the leader's position as resident scholar. During the Reformation, the emphasis on preaching gained pre-eminence over the Roman Catholic focus on ritual. Today, this emphasis is seen in churches that value a high level of educational training and skilled preaching over other leadership qualities. The third model called the "leader as parish minister" model, emphasizes the pastoral role of shepherd. This model views the leader as being

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Lyle E. Schaller, *Revolution in Leadership: Training Apostles for Tomorrow's Church* (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1998), 26.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 27.

responsible for all those within a geographical boundary. With this model, in Protestant denominations, the leader's primary purpose is to take care of a flock.⁵⁷

Furthermore, Schaller shows a new model which he calls "apostolic leadership." According to him, this model of leadership resembles the leadership of the first-century church, whereby apostolic leaders seem to be visionary and missional. They tend to empower others for ministry and team-oriented. Many apostolic leaders use the entrepreneurial style of leadership: they organize, manage, and assume risk to see the mission through. The apostolic leaders are especially kingdom oriented rather than focusing on a certain church. Schaller's models all refer to leaders that are resident within their church community.⁵⁸

Horrell describes another model that was prevalent in the early church though rare today. The model of itinerant leader is clearly distinct from the resident leader models Schaller outlines. Horrell identifies two types of itinerant leaders. "Itinerant charismatics" who are those who depend upon local churches for their material support. Other itinerant church planting leaders, such as Paul and his co-workers, preferred to work to support themselves.⁵⁹

Like Schaller, Shawchuck attempts to equate leadership with the models of ministry that Jesus embodied. The first model that Shawchuck describes is that of the good shepherd. By good shepherd, Shawchuck sees the responsibility of the leader to include both the roles of a "leader" and a "priest." These roles enable the leader to know his people and to effectively "lead them out from the comfort and security of the sheepfold into the world outside." The second model he presents is servant-leader.

⁵⁷ Schaller, 28-29.

⁵⁸ Schaller, 29.

⁵⁹ David Horrell, "Leadership Patterns in the Development of Ideology in Early Christianity," *Sociology of Religion* 58, no.4 (1997): 323-341.

For him, an effective leader is the one who serves first as a servant.⁶⁰ Servanthood involves adaptation in order to serve the needs of the followers. By these models, Shawchuck describes the type of leadership used by Jesus Christ. He is teaching that sometimes one must be “priest”: accept, affirm, forgive, love the people to influence and lead. At other times one must challenge, confront, instruct, and disagree with them. On other occasions, it is necessary to be a “leader, ” and as such, it is important to set goals, make plans, find resources and create programs to change people’s lives and worlds. Therefore a good leader must give people the freedom to carry out their plans, to succeed, to fail, to learn.⁶¹

Greenleaf concurs with Shawchuck and Spears by saying that “true leadership comes from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others.” By this, Greenleaf emphasizes the application of a servant leadership model to lead the community.⁶² On his side, Spears suggests the following ten characteristics be used by leaders who desire to apply the servant leadership in churches:

1. Listening
2. Empathy
3. Healing, which implies healing oneself and others from a variety of emotional hurts
4. Awareness
5. Persuasion
6. Conceptualization, which implies having a vision
7. Foresight; which includes the ability to understand and analyze lessons from the past

⁶⁰ Norman Shawchuck, *What It Means to Be a Church Leader: A Biblical Point of View* (Leith, ND: Spiritual Growth Resources, 2004), 12-18.

⁶¹ Shawchuck, 16-18.

⁶² Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 89.

8. Stewardship, which is a commitment to the growth of people, and
9. Building community.⁶³

As leaders in their local churches, church elders also need to develop these characteristics of a good leader. They should be effective spiritual leaders; those who take initiative, apply God's methods, develop and transform people rather than dictate them, and those who rely on God's power.⁶⁴

Despite the different models to influence others, all these types of leadership models are similar to the apostolic model in how they function.⁶⁵ For the sake of the SDA local churches leadership, the researcher would propose the elders to apply both the servant leadership model of Jesus and the "apostolic leadership" model, since these models seek to empower other church leaders for ministry. They should be visionary, team-oriented, and kingdom oriented.

Teaching as Responsibility of Elders

In the book *'Making Disciples in the 21st Century Church'*, Bernard Spooner stresses that teaching is one of the gifts and callings of the Holy Spirit. It is one of the crucial competencies that every church leader needs to develop for his spiritual growth and the growth of the church. In fact, the apostle Paul was given this gift and ministry (2 Tim 1:11); the church of Antioch had prophets and teachers. The primary role of those with this gift is to equip Christians for ministry in the kingdom (Eph

⁶³ Larry C. Spears, "Practicing Servant-Leadership," *Leader to Leader* 34, vol. 2004, (2004): 7-11.

⁶⁴ Jonas Arrais, *Wanted: A Good Pastor. The Characteristics, Skills, and Attitudes Every Effective Church Leader Needs* (Silver Spring, MA: General Conference Ministerial Association, 2011), 34.

⁶⁵ David Horrell, "Leadership Patterns in the Development of Ideology in Early Christianity," *Sociology of Religion* 58, no.4 (1997): 323-341.

4:11-13).⁶⁶ Likewise, the apostle Paul advises the Corinthians by reminding them not to be ignorant about the use of spiritual gifts, so as “the body of Christ be built up” (1 Cor 12:1; Eph 4:12). Teaching, as one of the spiritual gifts recommended to church elders, is a crucial gift for the church today.

As the apostle, Paul says, a church elder must be “able to teach” the Word of God, be able to detect and refute errors, and not tolerate heresy (2 Tim 2:2; 1 Tim 3:15). In the same line, Bill and Cornelis stress that elders are to minister the Word of God and be faithful to the Word in leading the flock.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Torjesen underlines that church elders are recognized “as teachers and leaders in the church,” throughout the Christian history. Their role of teachers of the Scriptures is as important as the role of leaders and prophets.⁶⁸ On his side, Malphurs affirms that one of the important qualifications for church elders is that they are able to teach the Word of God. He adds on that the church elders must “handle the Scriptures with reasonable skills.”⁶⁹ Commenting on the passage of Matthew 28:19, Malphurs do believe that the motive [of “teaching them”] is to make mature disciples. This involves moving people from wherever you find them (lost or saved) “along a continuum toward maturity.”⁷⁰ The term ‘maturity’ refers here to complete formation of “Christ-likeness” in God’s people so that they become full-grown adult, “grown up” (Eph 4:15) and “holy” or

⁶⁶ Bernard M. Spooner, *Christian Education Leadership: Making Disciples in the 21st Century Church* (Coppell, Texas: Christian Leadership, 2012), 6, 7.

⁶⁷ Easum Bill and Bil Cornelius, *Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 154.

⁶⁸ Karen Jo Torjesen, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Suzan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter, “*Clergy and Laity*” (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 397.

⁶⁹ Malphurs Aubrey, *Leading Leaders: Empowering Church Boards for Ministry Excellence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 25.

⁷⁰ Malphurs Aubrey, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 196.

“sanctified”⁷¹ (Rom 6:19, 22). Welch concurs with Malphurs when he points out that church leaders are assigned by the Holy Spirit as teachers so that the church could be built up, become mature, and attain the fullness of the knowledge of Christ.⁷² This is the aim of discipleship ministry;⁷³ this is the duty of church elders. The discipleship ministry, as Dodson affirms, must focus on Christ as the center of the gospel; it should be the goal of ‘going,’ ‘baptizing,’ and ‘teaching.’⁷⁴

A call to fulfill the great commission. In his book, *Reaching and Teaching*, David Sills stresses the importance of teaching the Gospel as an important responsibility of church elders. It is a call to the great commission obedience, as embodied in the discipleship responsibility given by our Lord Jesus, in Matthew 28:19.⁷⁵ The same author underlines that being able to teach is an essential requirement of biblical church leadership; it requires being faithful and honest to the Scriptures and knowing the truth.⁷⁶

As Jesus called his disciples to make other disciples through teaching the Gospel, church elders are to make disciples and teach them at the example of the apostles of Jesus. As a matter of fact, the apostle Paul obeyed to this mission (Acts 19-20); the work of Apollos was to teach the Word of God to the church (Acts 18:24-

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Welch, Robert H., *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Boardman & Holman, 2005), 316.

⁷³ Discipleship is a lifelong activity of transformation that begins when a person becomes a Christian and progresses as spiritual maturity is achieved through Bible study and Christian service and experience. Furthermore, discipleship is the church’s response to the third element of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:20 that calls for the “teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you” admonition of Christ. Welch, Robert H., 316.

⁷⁴ Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 35.

⁷⁵ M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to the Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2010), 10.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 61.

28); and Timothy was charged to train others to be able to teach and preach the Scriptures, as he himself had learned from Paul (1 Tim 2:2). Furthermore, we find that the Christian church has always had the teachers of the Scriptures throughout the church history, leading the pew to the knowledge of God, refuting heresies, combating false teachers, and affirming the followers of Christ in the true faith. One may cite here Philon of Alexandria, Josephus, Waldenses of Piedmont, John Huss, Martin Luther, John Calvin, just to cite a few of them.⁷⁷ According to William Klein and others, the role of these teachers was “to educate and train the saints” from the Holy Scriptures, in the same manner as Jesus taught his disciples.⁷⁸

In the same line, one may affirm that today there is an urgent need for quality biblical discipleship that calls all church elders to be effective teachers of the Word of God. And because we are saved to save and serve others, God has prepared us with gifts to accomplish His plan, so as the body of Christ be effective.⁷⁹ On the other hand, the pastor should not neglect the importance of training and teaching the church elders how to use their spiritual gifts. He must train them and the church members at large to discover their spiritual gifts

Refuting heresies. In the apostolic church, like in the Christian church today, false teachers or false prophets are hinders of the teaching of sound doctrine. The apostle Peter has prevented the church against heresies taught by false teachers. He says that there are “many” who teach things that contradict the “sound doctrine;” he calls these teachings “destructive heresies” that need to be refuted (2 Pet 2:1). As the

⁷⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 64, 99, 104-105, 124-126, 303.

⁷⁸ William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. “*Using the Bible Today*,” in *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. and updated (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 468.

⁷⁹ Easum, *Bill and Bil Cornelius, Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 96.

apostle Paul says, these false teachings or heresies are qualified as “offenders,” “Jewish myths,” “forbidding marriage and certain foods,” “knowledge (*gnōsis*) falsely so called.” According to Burkett, these false teachings bring “quarrels and controversies,”⁸⁰ and the role of church elders is to control the church’s teaching, refute these heresies, and protect the church by giving sound doctrine from the Scripture.

According to Orr, teaching the Holy Scriptures was the pre-eminence gift observed in the early Christian Church.⁸¹ The tendency today is to see church elders neglect this important responsibility, for different reasons. This may lead the flock to doctrinal heresies and stray away from the Holy Scriptures. As Strauch puts it, “the failure of church elders to know and teach the Word of God is one of the chief reasons doctrinal error floods churches today and drowns the power and life of the church.”⁸²

Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of His church, Jesus commends the church of Ephesus for their activities, their patient perseverance, and their intolerance toward false teachers in their midst (Rev 2:2, 3, 6), a clear warning that false doctrine should not be tolerated in the church. Church elders must protect and guard the flock against wolves. As such, they ought to protect, feed, lead and care for the flock. They should continually protect the congregation from false teachers. They are to watch, pray, be able to deal with changing times and issues, and educate themselves in the Scriptures.

The ability to communicate and give vision. Neil Summerton comments on the ability of elders to know and teach the Scriptures in the following lines: Teaching

⁸⁰ Burkett, 442.

⁸¹ James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 20.

⁸² Strauch, 24.

is one of the “principles means by which the elders’ leadership and vision is communicated to the congregation, and the ability to communicate is one of the key requirements of effective leadership.” For this reason, church elders need “more practical gifts in order to ensure that their administration is smooth and efficient. ... All need a sound grasp of the Faith and the ability to teach and instruct in small groups and one-to-one in the pastoral situation.” He continues by saying that if church elders lack practical skills in feeding the flock, “let them appoint persons (perhaps as deacons if they have the high spiritual qualities) to assist them.”⁸³ This counsel may be crucial to apply in the SDA local churches, whereby church pastor is called to train and equip church elders in teaching and administration skills, and these church elders will also, in turn, be able to train other church leaders such as deacons, departmental directors, and small group leaders to perform such responsibility.

Church Elders in the Adventist Church

It is interesting to note that the history of the SDA Church shows that “the earliest Seventh-day Adventists did not elect the local church elders; the deacons appear to have been the only church officers.” Joseph Bates, one of the earliest pioneers of the Adventist church, discusses the issue of church elders in the year 1854, in the article “Church Order,” when he reveals the “two kinds of elders in the New Testament church, those who rule and those who preach [teach] the word.”⁸⁴In the year 1855, another SDA pioneer and minister in Michigan, wrote on the same issue whereby he also indicates the existence of the two kinds of elders in the church: “the traveling elders” and “the local elders” in charge of the pastoral care of one

⁸³ Neil Summerton, *A Noble Task: Eldership and Ministry in the Local Church*, 2nd ed. (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994), 26, 27.

⁸⁴ Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia*, ed. (1976), s.v. “Church Elder,” 299.

church. He distinguished elders from deacons, who are to take care of the “temporal affairs” of the local church. In the same year, James White, another prominent pioneer of the SDA Church, answers to the question by John Byington as if church elders and deacons should be appointed in every church by saying that “the New Testament church order be adopted, and every church where the numbers and talents and graces of individuals are sufficient, the officers of the church should be appointed.”⁸⁵

Similarly, the General Conference Session later took a significant decision on the same matter of church eldership, whereby the distinction of two classes of church eldership: “those who hold their office by virtue of an especial call from God, and those selected by the church.” The first group was formed by apostles and evangelists, while the second group was made of bishops, pastors, elders, and deacons.⁸⁶ It is important to note here that the two classes are to work in unity to the effectiveness of the mission of the church growth. Thus, the church pastor, for instance, should not carry himself the burden of nurturing the local church; he should be closely assisted by the church elders, seconded by the deacons and deaconesses. As Russell affirms, such system has helped the SDA Church to be quickly organized; local pastors were fully involved in the mission of the church, assisted by local church elders.⁸⁷

Church Elders as Spiritual Leaders

Local church elders play an important role in the life of the Adventist church. This is evident especially in the large districts whereby a district pastor has many

⁸⁵ John Byington was the first president of the General Conference of the SDA Church worldwide. Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia*, ed. (1976), s.v. “Church Elder,” 299.

⁸⁶ J. N. Loughborough, *The Church: Its Organization, Order, and Discipline* (Washington DC: *Review and Herald*, 1907), 127.

⁸⁷ Burrill Russell, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1998), 149-150.

charges over several local churches and companies. In such situations, the pastor is heavily dependent on the church elder's support to manage the affairs of the church and to get advice. As Butler prescribes, one of the roles of the church elder is to assist the pastor as his advisor and work together with church committee to take important decisions.⁸⁸ Furthermore, it should be noted that the early churches were at that time meeting in private homes and the elders were heads of these households.

According to the SDA Church manual, "elders must be recognized by the church as strong spiritual leaders and must have good reputations both in the church and community. In the absence of a pastor, elders are the spiritual leaders of the church and by precept and example must seek to lead the church into a deeper and fuller Christian experience."⁸⁹ In addition, the church manual reveals that the church elders are elected for a term of one year, and they can be re-elected, but "it is not advisable for them to serve indefinitely." In the same book, the SDA Church defines important responsibilities or role of church elders in the following lines:

1. "To foster Bible study, prayer, and relationship with Jesus;"
2. To foster tithing
3. To encourage church members to "develop a personal relationship with Jesus by strengthening their habits of personal Bible study and prayer;"
4. To "conduct the services of the church;"
5. To "minister in both word and doctrine."⁹⁰

Thus, need be to note that even today, the church elders are recognized as spiritual leaders. They hold important responsibilities in local churches. Like church

⁸⁸ Jonathan M. Butler, *The Rise of Adventism: A Commentary on the Social and Religious Ferment of Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (Peterson, NY: Harper & Row, 1974), 74.

⁸⁹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 18th ed. (Hagerstown, MA: Review and Herald, 2010), 71.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

pastors and administrative leaders, church elders are at the frontline of God's mission in His Church.

Church Elders as Teachers and Preachers of the Word

The church elder in the SDA Church is a teacher and/or a preacher of the doctrine from the Scriptures. For this reason, he should make sure that the flock is growing spiritually and will not go astray and turn away from the sound doctrine. Morris stresses the importance of teaching and preaching the sound doctrine as a responsibility of SDA Church leaders and church elders today as it was in the times of the apostle Paul in the following: "Paul's counsel and warning to Timothy (2 Tim 4:2-4) is just as relevant for preachers today. We [church elders and teachers] need to preach and teach the Word of God with clarity and power. The turning away from sound doctrine that began even in Paul's day seems to be accelerating in our day."⁹¹

In addition, Arrais reminds the SDA preachers and teachers to exalt Jesus Christ in their sermons and to teach a relevant message applied to every cultural context.⁹² As Jesus taught with authority, a church elder ought to teach with authority from the Word of God. On his side, Clouzet affirms that the SDA Church elders have two functions to accomplish in the local church, to teach the Word and to rule the church.⁹³ It is evident to note here that the ministry of teaching the Word of God can also empower the church elder with the competence of leading his church effectively.

⁹¹ Derek J. Morris, The Importance of Sound Doctrine, *Ministry, International Journal For Pastors*, June 2014, pp. 6-10, accessed May 12, 2014, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2014/06/>.

⁹² Jonas Arrais, *Wanted: A Good Pastor. The Characteristics, Skills, and Attitudes Every Effective Church Leader Needs* (Silver Spring, MA: General Conference Ministerial Association, 2011), 23, 31.

⁹³ Ron E. M. Clouzet, "Acts 20," accessed 18 February 2015, <http://revivedbyhisword.org/en/Bible/act/20/>.

This applies to the ministry of pastors and church elders as well. Interestingly, Clouzet's remarks concur with Ellen G. White's comments on the subject of church eldership in the SDA Church.

Ellen G. White Writings on Church Elders

The SDA Church strongly believes in the writings of Ellen G. White⁹⁴ which are considered as the revelation and inspiration from God. As a messenger of God, who published many inspirational books, Ellen G. White was not silent on the subject of church eldership. Based on the revelation from God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures on the selection of church elders, Ellen G. White notes that “when choosing seventy elders to share with him the responsibilities of leadership, Moses was careful to select, as his helpers, men possessing dignity, sound judgment, and experience. In his charge to these elders at their ordination, he outlined some of the qualifications that fit a man to be a wise ruler in the church.”⁹⁵ Thus, the selection of the elders was made carefully, and this was the responsibility of Moses to choose those who will share with him the responsibilities of leadership.

Commenting on the influence of the church elders and their character as leaders, Ellen G. White comments that, “In many places we meet men who have been hurried into responsible positions as elders of the church when they are not qualified for such position. They have not proper government over themselves. Their influence is not good. The church is in trouble continually in consequences of the defective

⁹⁴ Ellen Gould White is considered as one of the first pioneers of the SDA Church; she was given by God the gift of prophecy. She is an author of many books which have played (and continue to play) a crucial role in the establishment, the development and the growth of the SDA Church. Her publications deal with different domains, such as spirituality, leadership, education, health and temperance, evangelism, psychology, and others.

⁹⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 94.

character of the leader. Hands have been laid too suddenly upon these men.”⁹⁶ Hence, she stresses that the church should not “hurry men into office without consideration and much prayer that God would designate by His Holy Spirit whom He will accept.”⁹⁷

Ellen G. White speaks about the responsibilities of the church elders and says that church elders, as “the shepherds of the flock, should care for the sheep and their lambs, searching out the lost and straying, and bring them back to the fold. They should visit every family, not merely as a guest to enjoy their hospitality, but to enquire into the spiritual condition of every member of the household.”⁹⁸ The SDA Church manual concurs with Ellen G. White and says, “Elders ... are expected to set good leadership examples; they are to preside church boards as chairperson when a pastor has asked them to do it; they conduct church services; they conduct the communion service; ... they should lead the outreach work of the church;”⁹⁹ and so other responsibilities.

According to the North American Division of the SDA Church,¹⁰⁰ the local church elder has the following duties to which he/she is accounto his/her local church:

1. Visitation to church members
2. Spiritual mentor, through modelling Christ character into church member, teaching and discipleship to the church members and new converts

⁹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 617.

⁹⁷ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 617.

⁹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1962), 306.

⁹⁹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 18th ed. (Hagerstown, MA: Review and Herald, 2010), 75, 122, 126, 131.

¹⁰⁰ The SDA Church is administratively made of the General Conference as the headquarters of the Church worldwide; the Divisions at the level of continents or large territories or countries; the Unions at the national or country’s level; the Mission Conferences or Fields which supervise the local churches through districts; and finally the Local Churches at the community level.

3. Giving clear vision and direction to the mission of the church
4. Worship leadership that calls for skills in worship program, skills in preaching and skills in prayer
5. Church administration, by bringing positive contribution to the organization of the church and its various programs.

Ellen G. White adds on when she says that “if his/her labor appears to be without result, he/she should seek by earnest prayer to discover if his/her performances are what they should be. He/she should humble his/her soul before God in self-examination.”¹⁰¹ Thus, a church elder should always make a self-evaluation, and let the church members evaluate him/her for his/her success in ministry.

In summary, the responsibilities of the church elder include spiritual leadership, commitment to church mission, nurturing and teaching church members so as to take care of the flock. Thus, his/her success will depend on the growth of his/her church.

Training, Equipping and Empowering Church Elders for Ministry

While Jesus was on his duty of making disciples, He recognized that His work would need to be taken over and continued by His men. Hence, He invested Himself in the training of the disciples to continue His work. Jesus trained and equipped disciples with His word; He empowered them with His spirit through the use of spiritual gifts for the growth of His church. As Ellen G. White puts it, Jesus used the methods of teaching and training to empower His disciples for ministry. He trained by teaching them on how to carry out their responsibilities, and these men showed a “teachable spirit,” ready to be molded for God’s work.¹⁰² The disciples of Jesus

¹⁰¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 371.

¹⁰² Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952), 84-85.

needed preparation and training for leadership and teaching roles for the growth of the early church; the same is true for the church elders in the SDA Church today. This preparation involves the receiving of knowledge, but spiritual growth is uppermost. Boubakar concurs with this to say that the intention of Jesus in training the disciples, was to prepare them to grow in their understanding of the Word of God, in order for them to have a better relationship with him. Jesus focused more on knowledge grounded in relationship and experience with God than on head knowledge alone.¹⁰³

As Wilson says, Jesus has urged church leaders to equip members with the pure Word of God to be mature spiritually.¹⁰⁴ This is an important tool that should help church elders in their training and preparation for ministry. The failure to train and equip church elders may lead to the dying church; the church without succession legacy from Jesus.

As Beckwith puts it, the training and equipping of church elders consisted in passing on the teaching the trainers have received from Jesus.¹⁰⁵ The principle used was to follow the method used by Jesus when He trained His disciples to mission. In fact, like other Jewish teachers, Jesus had pupils; He trained and equipped twelve disciples, and sent them to perform the work as apostles. He had them as a small group to be close to Him, to live together, to work together, form deep personal relationships among themselves, and spend as much time as possible together.¹⁰⁶ As Beckwith affirms, the same principle was used by the apostles when they trained and

¹⁰³ Boubakar Sanou, *Truth, Allegiance, and Power Dimensions in Christian Discipleship: From a Language of Priority to a Balanced Approach* (Nairobi, Kenya: Adventist University of Africa, Notes of the Course AFTR/MSSN 721, July – August 2014).

¹⁰⁴ Clifford Jones, Humble Servant Leadership: An Interview with Ted Wilson, *Ministry, International Journal for Pastors*, April 2015, pp. 6-9, accessed 24 June 2015, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2015/04/humble-servant-leadership>.

¹⁰⁵ Beckwith, 44.

¹⁰⁶ David Watson, *Discipleship* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 2003), 80.

equipped the church elders of the early church, such as the first deacons. After being selected by the church of Jerusalem, these future elders such as Stephen and Philip were trained intensively and sent in ministry and mission as teachers, leaders, and evangelists. They were appointed without delay and functioned as assistants of the apostles.¹⁰⁷ Later, one sees the apostle Paul being trained and equipped by Rabbi Gamaliel; Paul training, in turn, the church elders, among them Timothy and Titus; Priscilla and Aquila training Apollos who was a leader and a teacher of the Scriptures in the early church (Acts 18:24-26).

These few examples show clearly the importance of training and equipping the church elders for ministry. According to Malphurs and Mancini, this kind of training aims at developing the “ministry of leadership multiplication” that spans several generations of leaders.¹⁰⁸ Thus, based on the order of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20 and Paul instructing Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, one can trace the multiplication of church eldership and discipleship throughout the Christianity as follow:

1. Jesus training and equipping the twelve apostles among them the apostle Paul
2. The apostle Paul training and equipping Timothy and Titus
3. Timothy and Titus training and equipping “reliable men” who are the church elders in the early church
4. Reliable men in the early church have trained and equipped the church reformers
5. Church reformers have trained and equipped the SDA Church pioneers
6. The SDA Church pioneers trained and equipped the church pastors
7. The local church pastors train and equip the local church elders
8. The local church elders train and equip small group leaders, who train and equip
9. The church members for the ministry and mission.

¹⁰⁷ Beckwith, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Malphurs and Mancini, 99.

Malphurs and Mancini stress the four essential qualities of a potential leader such a church elder: competence, trustworthiness, faithfulness, and teachable. The practice to train and equip those leaders consists in taking them as a team, along with their trainers [Jesus or the apostle Paul] on their travels.¹⁰⁹ This practice is also called on-the-job training experiences for the protégés.

According to Ellen G. White, the work of training disciples goes hand in hand with empowering them for the leadership of God’s Church. Those who were trained by Jesus were, in turn, to train others and accept to be sent with the Gospel message. Thus, their success depended on their empowering by the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁰ Lingenfelter concurs with Ellen G. White and says, one cannot train, equip, and empower leaders without creating opportunities for them to lead. In his study on empowering church leaders in Hungary, Alan Weaver, as cited by Sherwood, notes that “every leader who mobilized others did so by creating opportunities for them to lead within their congregations.”¹¹¹ According to Malphurs and Mancini, the training dynamic of leaders should be characterized by four core leadership competencies:

1. Character/being: leaders must be people of good character
2. Knowledge: “leaders must know God; they must know themselves; they must know how to study and teach the Bible; they must know and agree with the organization’s statements;” they must know how to think and plan strategically; they must “know how to preach, raise money, and perform church services;”
3. Skills

¹⁰⁹ Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul are the best models in training and equipping church leaders. Malphurs and Mancini, 100.

¹¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Education*, 17-18.

¹¹¹ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 122.

4. Emotions: leaders must cultivate their own emotions and those of people with whom they minister.¹¹²

As the people who were called by God to leadership responsibilities, church elders who are eager to be equipped and empowered for ministry can do tremendous work in God's mission. Morrison affirms that "if the pastor can train and equip his elders there will be an appreciation and loyalty that will strengthen the work of the church."¹¹³ On their side, Hanks and Shell underline that Jesus' second coming is dependent on equipping the saints:

If we learn to be with people, equipping them as Jesus did, and long to see new Christian perfected in Christ ... our generation can expect to see the greatest multiplication of converts and congregations since the early days of the Christian Church. ... Until pastors, missionaries, and other Christian leaders take seriously God's mandate to equip His people, Christ's second coming will be postponed. His return is dependent on world evangelization, and world evangelization is dependent on His saints being equipped for the ministry.¹¹⁴

Furthermore, the training and equipping of the church leaders should not be done unfairly. It should be gender-based and involve all types of laypeople such as men and women, older and young, rich and poor because they all play a crucial role in the ministry. In the same line, Ellen G. White strongly recommends that in the preparation and training of people for ministry, young people should be associated with older ministers. Those who are experienced in the ministry should take young, inexperienced workers with them into the service, teach and train them to labor for the conversion of souls.¹¹⁵ The same should be done to women who need to use their gifts in the ministry. Ellen G. White continues to say that, "the greatest help that can be

¹¹² Malphurs and Mancini, 147-150.

¹¹³ Philip E. Morrison, *The Multi-Church Pastor: A Manual for Training Leadership in a Multi-Church Setting* (Nairobi, Kenya: Gratia Veritas, 2004), 2.

¹¹⁴ Billie Hanks and William A. Shell, *Discipleship* (Milton Keynes, UK: Word, 2003), 31.

¹¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, 683-684.

given to our people is to teach [train] them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers.”¹¹⁶ In the same line, Arrais remarks that when ten members are well trained and committed to church service, they are equivalent to a full-time pastor. The lack of training and equipping of church leaders leads to “shortage of church workers, lack of production, stagnancy in personnel, understaffed departments, and decrease in volunteers.”¹¹⁷ Therefore, if church elders are efficiently trained, equipped, and empowered, they will be ready for ministry to the extent that they will not continue to depend on the pastor.

However, some leaders or/and church pastors may find it difficult to equip and empower church elders, because they argue that the last ones lack enough qualifications for ministry. Some use this argument as an excuse for keeping control and refusing to turn ministries over to others. In fact, very few people are qualified at the beginning for service in their local churches. However, as Sherwood puts it, “the most important qualification is the calling of Christ in the life of a person.”¹¹⁸ He continues to affirm that the crucial qualifications for ministry involve people’s commitment to Christ and their intention to grow continually in the “spiritual life and character, and the willingness to use the gifts that God has given to the person, gifts that can be nurtured for the particular ministry in mind. When God calls a person and provides appropriate giftedness, that person may achieve the essential skills through

¹¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 7:19.

¹¹⁷ Jonas Arrais, *Wanted: A Good Pastor. The Characteristics, Skills, and Attitudes Every Effective Church Leader Needs* (Silver Spring, MA: General Conference Ministerial Association, 2011), 38, 39.

¹¹⁸ Lingenfelter, 122.

mentoring and training.”¹¹⁹ In other words, when God calls someone for His service, He equips him/her and empowers that person for ministry.

Principles of Equipping and Empowering Church Elders

According to Sherwood, one of the most important principles of empowering is “to release people to do the work, always within a context of discipling them, and at the same time to resist the temptation to intervene to assure the correct results.”¹²⁰ In addition, the same author suggests another principle of empowering new leaders by supporting them while they are still fresh, “when they need help and to release them as soon as they can walk in the ministry by themselves.”¹²¹

Once church elders are equipped/empowered in the leadership of the church, the study and the teaching of the Word of God, they can be able to prepare themselves Bible teaching lessons, sermons, and set their own course, but they should not be left without pastor’s mentoring. In the same line, as Sherwood stresses, one should assert that church elders will not be able to be successful leaders unless they are released to play the game, to do the work for which they were equipped for.¹²² Johnson, on the other hand, affirms that the role of a pastor as an equipper and a mentor is essential and vital to maintain a healthy church.¹²³

In the book, *Ellen White on Leadership: Guidance for those who Influence Others*, Tutsch has collected a good number of principles that should lead church

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 123.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 124.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Lingenfelter, 122.

¹²³ Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups: From Theory to Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2011), 167.

ministers and church elders to equip and empower the church for ministry. One of the principles underlines that the empowerment should be Christ servant leadership based, discipleship centered, race inclusive, gender-based, and age-inclusive.¹²⁴

Methods of Equipping Church Elders for Teaching the Bible

A church elder should be ready to develop his spiritual gift of teaching the Bible. For this reason, he should be equipped with skills in teaching and/or preaching the Word of God; thus, be able to prepare Bible studies and sermons, conduct evangelistic meetings, discipling church members and new converts, and be able to mentor other church leaders such as small groups leaders to prepare and deliver Bible studies. The following methods can be applied by church elders to perform their duty as teachers and learners of the Scriptures.

Allow the Bible to interpret itself. According to George Reid, the harmony of Scriptures is seen in three points:

1. The Scripture is its own expositor: all texts dealing with one theme must be assembled and studied together in order to present correctly biblical doctrine
2. The Scripture has a fundamental unity or agreement
3. There is a clarity in Scripture: this clarity means that the Bible can be understood and its clear texts help the reader understand difficult texts (1 Pet 1:10-12).¹²⁵

Learning from the holy spirit and sharing with others. Teaching is one of the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ellen G. White advises: “Never should the Bible be studied and taught without prayer. Before opening its pages, we should ask for the

¹²⁴ Cindy Tutsch, *Ellen White on Leadership: Guidance for those who Influence Others* (Ontario, Canada: Pacific Press, 2008), 50-56; 76-79.

¹²⁵ Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, George W. Reid (Ed.), *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2006), 112-113.

enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given.”¹²⁶ She adds, “The capacity of receiving is preserved only by imparting.”¹²⁷ Learning the Bible goes hand in hand with sharing it with others; this calls church elders always to be “updated, research-based,” be teachable from the Holy Spirit, in order to fulfill the Great Commission and develop their local churches.¹²⁸

“Teach students, not the lessons!” In their book, *Creative Bible Teaching*, Richards, and Bredfeldt give an important principle of teaching the Bible, called “Teaching Students, Not Lessons.”¹²⁹ According to them, some teachers focus on the content they want to cover to the detriment of students’ needs. This method calls teachers to link the content and the student’s needs. “By knowing and caring for their students, they are able to connect the content in meaningful ways with students’ lives.”¹³⁰ Likewise, in teaching and preaching the Scriptures, church elders should be able to assess different needs¹³¹ of church members, new converts, and unreached people, and connect them with the lessons of the Bible.

Teaching the big idea. James C. Wilhoit and Leland Ryken propose the method of making an impact on students (church members or hearers of the Bible) by having a “single focus around which the lesson is built.” According to them, teachers or church elders can “improve their teaching once they realize the need to organize

¹²⁶ Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1894), 59.

¹²⁷ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1941), 143.

¹²⁸ Bernard M. Spooner, *Christian Education Leadership: Making Disciples in the 21st Century Church* (Coppell, Texas: Christian Leadership, 2012), 6-7.

¹²⁹ Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt, *Creative Bible Teaching*, Rev. and Exp. (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1998), 109.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Some needs may be physical or material, cognitive, psychosocial, and spiritual.

their understanding of a biblical passage around a central insight,” called a “big idea” of the passage. Teaching the big idea involves, selecting the topic, determining what a passage is about. The purpose of stating the topic and theme of a passage is to ensure that a Bible study will be focused and unified.¹³²

Warren’s method. According to Rick Warren, the Bible should be taught in such a way that it can bring real change in the lives of its hearers.¹³³ In presenting the Scriptures, church elders should always seek to apply its truth to the needs of church members, new converts, and unchurched people. Warren advises using the methods of “verse-by-verse” when teaching/preaching from the book (textual method); exposition of a topic by verse-with-verse method (expository method). He says that book exposition works best for church edification, while “topical exposition works best for evangelism.”¹³⁴ Furthermore, Warren proposes the following points to be applied when teaching the Bible to unreached people:

1. “Adapt your style to your audience;”
2. “Make the Bible accessible to unbelievers” (use different translations and select the “readings with the unchurched in mind”)
3. “Provide an outline with Scriptures written out;”
4. “Make your titles to appeal to the unchurched;”
5. “Preach in series;”
6. “Be consistent in your preaching style;”
7. “Choose guest speakers carefully;”

¹³² Formulating the big idea necessitates to determine the type or genre of writing in the Bible, and find out the principal focus involved in the passage. For instance, the teacher should be able to detect a didactic/doctrinal exposition (Eg. 1 Corinthians 13); a lyric poetry (Eg. Psalms 46); a narrative passage (Eg. Genesis 3). James C. Wilhoit and Leland Ryken, *Effective Bible Teaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 69-79.

¹³³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 296.

¹³⁴ Warren, 296.

8. “Preach for commitment and with enthusiasm;”¹³⁵ and it is important to add
9. Call your audience to accept Jesus as their personal Saviour, and surrender their lives to Him.

Revived by God’s word method. In a mini-handbook of the SDA Church, the following practical methods of studying and teaching the Bible were given to help teachers and readers of the Bible:

1. Read-and-Apply Method: consists of reading the whole story, writing insights gained in a notebook, meditate on their meaning, and see how to apply them in life.
2. Inductive Method: allow the Bible itself to teach you; this method follows three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. It endeavors to answer the questions, who, what, when, where, why, and how.
3. Survey Method, seeks to “study specific Bible books one by one in light of the whole, and look at the big picture, theme, words, and phrases that keep repeating.” In surveying the big picture, it is important to consider the author, historical background, period, to whom the book was written, why it was written.
4. Verse-by-Verse Method: also known as expository method, exploring treasures of verses by looking for details. Consider what the verse says on the Bible itself, on Jesus, on the Great Controversy.
5. Biographical Method: study Bible characters and ask questions such as, “where was he born, when, what kind of family/town did he grow up in; who most influenced his life; how did God use him?”¹³⁶

Models of teaching the Scriptures. Some models can be used to help church elders prepare their teachings of the Scriptures. They have been developed by some scholars, and others have been prepared by the SDA Church. Others can be found on different websites on the internet. However, they should be based on the Holy Scriptures, and their truth must be led by the Holy Spirit. The following are some of the few models that can be used by church elders to learn and teach the Bible:

¹³⁵ Warren, 293-302.

¹³⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Revived by God’s Word: A Mini-Handbook for Bible Study* (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 13-19.

The 28 fundamentals doctrines of the Bible. The SDA Church has developed a series of 28 fundamentals truth as found in the Bible. The book is called, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...A Biblical Exposition of 28 Fundamental Doctrines*. These doctrines or beliefs are made to help church leaders, members, and new converts understand the Bible, be firm in faith, teach themselves and teach others the truth as found in the Scriptures. They “constitute the church’s understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture.” However, they should not be “viewed as an unchangeable creed.”¹³⁷ Doctrines such as Trinity, Creation, Holy Scriptures, Humanity, Sin, Salvation (Soteriology), Christology, Growing in Christ, Ecclesiology, Eschatology, Death and Immortality, Second Coming of Christ, Millennium, New Creation, and others were developed.

The drama of salvation. Gregg R. Allison and his co-authors have developed a model which can help Bible teachers to teach and present this important doctrine of salvation. According to them, the “drama of salvation is an all-encompassing phenomenon. It involves God’s gracious and powerful work to rescue his created yet fallen people from sin and its penalty through the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the human response to this divine initiative.”¹³⁸ The drama of salvation includes,

1. The calling of God: this entails a “summons to forsake one’s old reality and embrace a new one”
2. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, by a “replacement of deadness with new spiritual life”

¹³⁷ This book was prepared by the Ministerial Department of the SDA Church worldwide. It is translated in Kinyarwanda for the main purpose of assisting church elders to teach biblical doctrines to church members, new convertis, and unreached people. It is known as “Ibyo Abadiventisti b’Umunsi wa Karindwi Bizera... Amahame Shingiro 28 y’Ukuri kwa Bibiliya.” General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Ibyo Abadiventisti b’Umunsi wa Karindwi Bizera... Amahame Shingiro 28 y’Ukuri kwa Bibiliya* (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 10.

¹³⁸ James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: B & H Group, 2008), 200-201.

3. Conversion: man's response to the Gospel by means of returning from sin and exercising faith in Jesus Christ;¹³⁹
4. Justification, which is a divine declaration that a sinner is no longer guilty before God
5. Adoption and union with Christ in a new family and with a new identity
6. Baptism of the Holy Spirit that involves placement into Christ's body or church
7. Sanctification, that entails forsaking sin and becoming more and more like Jesus
8. Glorification: having fullness of Christ's image.¹⁴⁰

Once this drama of salvation is well understood and well taught, it will bring positive results of change in the lives of church elders, members, and new converts. It will help unreached people as well to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and be identified with His church through baptism.

The summarized plan of salvation. This model, as prepared and developed by professor Victor Figueroa, intends to help teachers of the Scriptures to understand and expose the plan of salvation in a summarized manner that comprises three main components or doctrines of man's salvation. The three components or doctrines entail the creation, the death of Christ, and the second Coming of Christ. They include as well the sin problem that came after the creation of mankind, the doctrines that should be taught after the cross of Christ and in conformity with the mission of the Church, and the doctrine of Millennium that comes after the second coming of Jesus Christ.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ The sinner's positive response to the salvation entails three important elements: (1) affirming the truth (orthodoxy), (2) feeling the truth (orthopatheia), (3) practicing the truth (orthopraxis). Put in Christian educational terms, these three elements become, head, heart, and hand; or in other words, the positive response of man to salvation is directed toward his intellect, emotions/affections, and his will/volition; or the body, the motivation, and the purposing of man. See Gregg R. Allison, pp. 226-227.

¹⁴⁰ James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: B & H Group, 2008), 200-230.

¹⁴¹ Victor Figueroa, class notes for CHEM/LEAD 704 Seminar in Applied Theology Methods, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, September 2013.

Summary

The concept of church eldership is as old as the early church, and it is the continuation of this office from the Old Testament as the legacy of the Jewish institution and the apostolic church. This literature reviewed comments and thoughts from different authors on the subject of church elders in the Christianity Church, starting from the Apostolic Church. Functions of elders are reviewed, in terms of leadership and teaching responsibilities. The subject of church eldership in the SDA Church was also covered. The chapter reviewed different methods and models of teaching the Bible as one of the duties of a church elder.

As a leader in the local church, a church elder has a leadership influence over the church; he/she should model the servant leadership of Jesus who is the Master of the Church. Modeling the leadership ministry of Jesus embodies being a good shepherd and a good leader. In addition, a church elder should “be able to teach” the Word of God, refute heresies, so as to lead the flock in the sound doctrine. This would be possible if the church elder accepts to be empowered by the Spirit of God, and the church pastor fulfills his responsibility of equipping and mentoring every church elder.

As Ellen G. White recommends, every church should be the school for training lay leaders, and every pastor should train and equip people for the work of God.¹⁴² By training and equipping church elder with leadership and teaching skills, the growth of the local church will be a reality. This kind of training would develop the “ministry of leadership multiplication”¹⁴³ that will span several generations of the local church leadership. The church pastor will play his responsibility in this matter.

¹⁴² Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 148-149.

¹⁴³ Malphurs and Mancini, 99.

However, further research should seek to establish the relationship of church pastor and church elder, so as to help both work complementarily to fulfill their duties.

The next chapter describes the context of the ministry for this project. It develops an intervention based on theological and literature review of this project implementation in the Nyamirambo SDA Church.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The present chapter describes the ministry context for this project. It presents the research design and data analysis of the project under study. The chapter endeavors to develop an intervention strategy based on theological and literature review of this project in the Nyamirambo SDA Church, Kigali City. Understanding the context of the Nyamirambo Church with its challenges and opportunities provides the background for designing a strategy to be used to train and equip the Nyamirambo church elders in their leadership and teaching ministries.

This contributes to the qualitative and quantitative growth of the Nyamirambo church leaders and church members. The macro and micro contexts of the Nyamirambo church involve the study of the general context of the country of Rwanda and the immediate context of Kigali City. In developing a strategy for equipping church elders for an effective ministry, a tool known as the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is applied. The researcher also uses a Gantt chart to describe the strategy.

General Context of Rwanda

An analysis of the political, cultural, socio and religious context of Rwanda helps understand the context of the Nyamirambo SDA Church. As a matter of fact, this church is considered as the “mother church” of other churches in Kigali. Its membership and church elders come from almost all corners of the country. Such

analysis leads to discovering some challenges and opportunities which need to be addressed through the development of the project initiative for this study.

Generally, Rwanda has diverse historical, cultural, political, and socio-religious contexts. This section describes briefly the geography, history, political, social, cultural and religious contexts of Rwanda.

Geographical Description

Rwanda is one of the smallest countries in the world and overpopulated. Its total population is 10,515,973 people according to the 4th General Census (2012); while its land area is equal to 26,338 square kilometers (10,169 sq mi). Rwanda's landscape is made of green pastures and a 'thousand hills,' dominated to the north by volcanoes and bordered by Lake Kivu to the west.¹

Rwanda is located in East-Central Africa, in the Great Lakes region. Sharing boundaries with Uganda to the North, Tanzania to the East, Burundi to the South, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the West (see Figure 1), it stretches from latitude 1°04' to 2°50' south and from longitude 28°50' to 30°53' east. Rwanda "lays a few degrees south of the equator and is landlocked. The capital, Kigali, is located in the center of Rwanda."² Rwanda is also called the heart of Africa, due to its geographical location in Africa. It has two rainy seasons (March-May & October-November), with two dry seasons in between, the major one from June to Mid-September. Rwanda motto entails *Ubumwe* (Unity), *Umurimo* (Work) and *Gukunda igihugu* (Patriotism). The currency is the Rwandan franc; its major economic sectors

¹ Republic of Rwanda: geography, accessed 26 April 2016, <http://www.gov.rw/home/geography/>.

² Geography of Rwanda, accessed 26 April 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Rwanda.

include tourism, mining, agriculture.³ Figure 1 is a map of Rwanda, showing its four provinces and the city of Kigali, the natural, administrative and international boundaries.

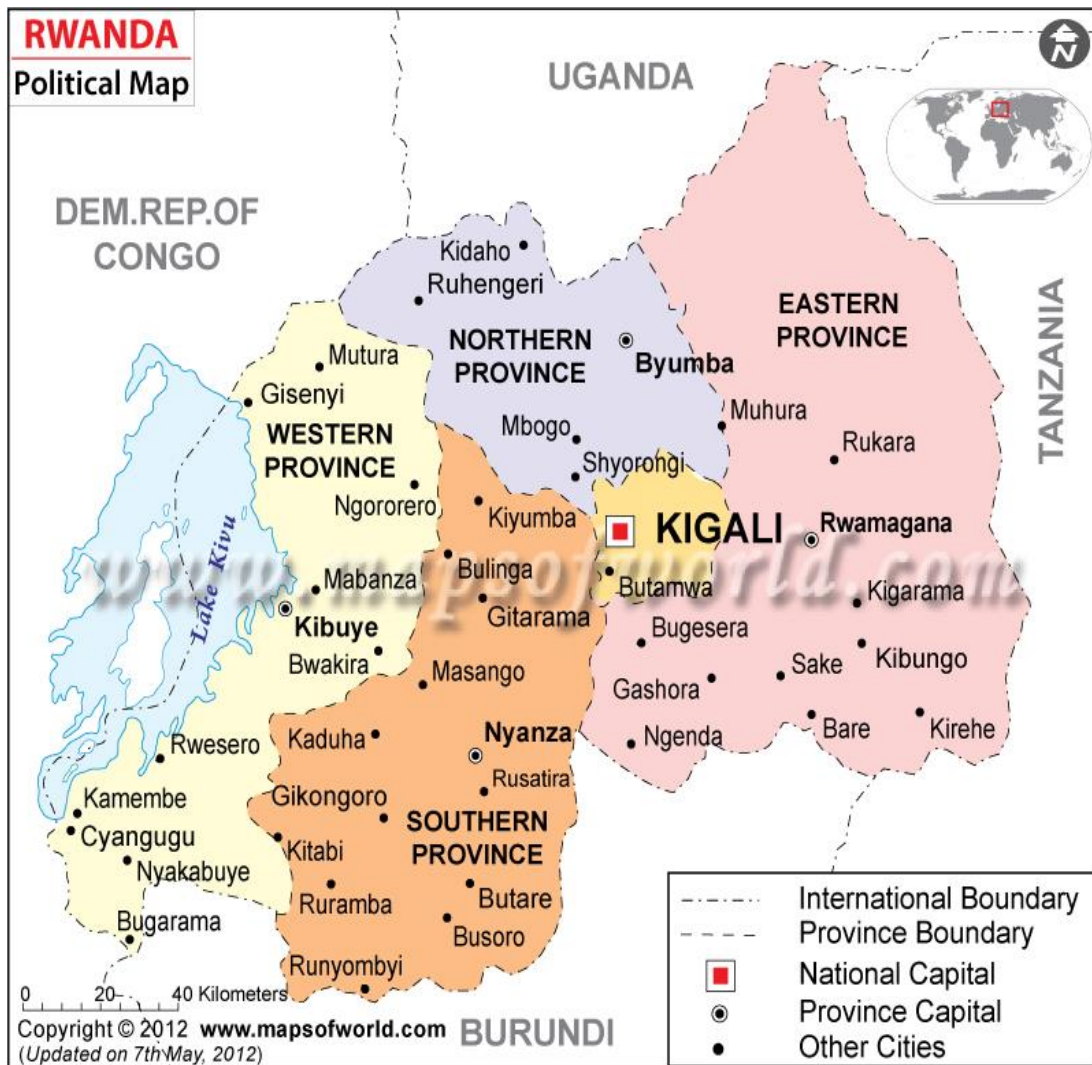


Figure 1. Map of Rwanda

³ Rwanda country profile, accessed 26 April 2016, <http://www.rwandapedia.rw/page/rwanda-country-profile>.

Historical and Political Context

The historical-political background of Rwanda can be divided into four periods. These are the pre-colonial, colonial, independent, and post-genocide periods.

Pre-colonial period. Rwanda was organized before the coming of the colonizers. Earnest and Treagust state that “the history of pre-colonial Rwanda has been passed down through oral tradition.” Toward the end of the 19th century, Rwanda was a monarchy ruled by the *mwami* (king), who “lived at the center of a large court and was treated like a divine being.”⁴ The people of Rwanda, known as “Abanyarwanda,” lived peacefully with strong unity. Since before the colonial period, there have been three ethnic groups in Rwanda: Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. These were living in “interdependent cooperation under the nominal control of the king (...) Affiliation was determined by paternal ancestors; intermarriage and multiple marriages were common.”⁵

Colonial period. When the first Europeans came, they found Rwanda inaccessible because the Rwandese authorities refused to let them enter. Briggs and Booth say: “The kingdom of Rwanda was isolationist and closed to foreigners (even to many Africans) until the 1890s. The famous American explorer, Henry Stanley, attempted to enter several times but was forced to retreat under arrow attack”⁶.

At the Berlin Conference of 1885, what is now Rwanda, under the name of Ruanda-Urundi, was under tutor of Germany as part of German East Africa, although no European had set foot there yet. The first to do so formally was the German Count

⁴ Earnest, J., and Treagust, D. F., *Education Reform in Societies in Transition: International Perspectives* (Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense, 2006), 129.

⁵ Background note: Rwanda, accessed 26 April 2016, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Background+note%3A+Rwanda.-a0252740873>.

⁶ P. Briggs and J. Booth, *Rwanda: The Bradt Travel Guide* (Bucks, England: Bradt Travel Guides, 2006), 9.

Gustav Adolf Von Götzen on May 4, 1894, although an Austrian, Oscar Baumann, had previously entered privately from Burundi in 1892 and spent several days in the south of the country⁷.

The Germans stayed in Rwanda a short time and were replaced in 1916 by Belgium colonizers. After World War I, Belgium was officially entrusted with the administration under a League of Nations mandate in 1919, later confirmed in 1923⁸.

Independence period. On 25 September 1961, a referendum took place to determine whether Rwanda should remain a kingdom or become a republic. Citizens voted for a republic, and the monarchy was abolished. Mbonyumutwa was appointed as the first president of the transitional government, with Kayibanda Gregoire as prime minister. On 1 July 1962, Rwanda gained its independence, and Kayibanda Gregoire became Rwanda's first elected president. The independence was "followed by heightened ethnic tensions between Hutus and Tutsis, causing flows of Tutsi refugees from Rwanda to Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo."⁹

On July 5, 1973, Defense Minister Maj. Gen. Juvenal Habyarimana overthrew president Kayibanda. In 1975, the former president founded the only legal party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND).¹⁰

On October 1, 1990, Rwandan exiles banded together as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and fought against Rwanda government from their base in Uganda. The team of the rebel force was formed primarily of ethnic Tutsis who were

⁷ P. Briggs and J. Booth, 9.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 130.

¹⁰ History of Rwanda, accessed 26 April 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Rwanda.

refused to return to Rwanda under the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes. The war dragged on for about two years until a cease-fire accord was signed July 12, 1992, in Arusha, Tanzania. The Rwanda government and rebel force made an agreement leading to a peace accord. They decided to share power and to authorize a “neutral military observer group under the Organization for African Unity. A cease-fire took effect July 31, 1992, and political talks began August 10, 1992. The talks concluded in a peace accord that was not implemented.”¹¹

Genocide and aftermath. On April 6, 1994, when the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were coming from Arusha for negotiation with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the airplane which carried them was shot down; both presidents were killed. After that, military and militia groups began to kill all Tutsis and political moderates, regardless of their ethnic background. The Rwandan prime minister and her ten Belgian bodyguards were among the first victims. The killing which was undergone has the primary objective of exterminating the tribe of Tutsi. It was then the Genocide against Tutsi people, prepared long ago by the previous Hutu regimes.¹²

According to Vulpian, about one million of people were killed in a period of one hundred days during the Genocide of 1994 in Rwanda. This has been the result of ideology “taught to children, adults, and celebrated in songs.” Rwanda had a loss of 23% population in 1994-95 through the massacres of the genocide, and flight of refugees (over 1 million).¹³

¹¹ Background note: Rwanda, accessed 26 April 2016, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Background+note%3A+Rwanda.-a0252740873>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Laure de Vulpian, *Rwanda, Un Génocide Oublié ? Un Procès pour Mémoire* (France: Editions Complexe, 2004), 25.

Rwanda after genocide. Twenty years after the genocide ended, Rwanda has undergone remarkable changes, emerging from the holocaust of genocide. The population in the capital city, Kigali, has more than tripled from around 258,000 in 1994 to over 908,000 in 2009; shining new skyscrapers are emerging on the skyline of the downtown.¹⁴

After the genocide in 1994, Rwanda had several political parties, and Paul Kagame won the presidential elections. What he did to reduce ethnic tensions was to remove ethnic information on people's identity card. On May 26, 2003, the new constitution was adopted with the elimination of the reference to '*ubwoko*' [ethnic]. The constitution set the stage for legislative and presidential elections, while elections for the Chamber of Deputies took place in September 2008. The RPF won an easy victory of 42 out of 53 directly-elected seats in coalition with six small parties. According to this constitution, 24 seats were given to women candidates in indirect elections.¹⁵ Today, women hold 64 percent of seats in the Chamber of the Rwandan parliament.¹⁶

Social and Cultural Contexts

In Rwanda, the ethnic groups as formally introduced by Belgian colonizers are represented as follow: "the Hutus (about 75% of the population), the Tutsis (24%), and the Twa (1%). It was not until Belgian colonization that the tensions between the Hutus and Tutsis became focused on race, the Belgians propagating the myth that

¹⁴ Burnet, J. E., *Genocide Lives in Us: Women, Memory, and Silence in Rwanda* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 37.

¹⁵ Background note: Rwanda, accessed 26 April 2016, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Background+note%3A+Rwanda.-a0252740873>.

¹⁶ Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (%), accessed 26 April 2006, data.worldbank.org/indicator/SGGEN.PARL.ZS.

Tutsis were the superior ethnicity.”¹⁷ The consequences of the tensions resulted in the slaughtering of Tutsis in the genocide of 1994. Since then, the government of Rwanda has changed the policy to recognize one main ethnicity: “Rwandan.”¹⁸

Leadership patterns. Leadership patterns in Rwanda include authority and power. Authority is to exercise power. Power is the influence that controls the behavior of others.¹⁹ According to Munyandamutsa, Rwandans have a cultural element called, ‘culture of a chief.’ This culture is very old even during the pre-colonial era.

To Rwandans, the *mwami* (king) was considered as an inspired of God. Therefore, his word was taken as a full truth and followed by all people. This culture was imitated by all leaders during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Whatever said or taught by a leader was then obeyed to and followed by all persons.²⁰ This has also been the case when a leader used the media to transmit a message to the people. It is this ‘culture of a chief’ which has facilitated the ideology of genocide and the killing of Tutsi in 1994 because it was ‘said and authorized by leaders.

The role of the leaders of Rwanda after the genocide was, therefore, to teach Rwandans to change their minds, to follow the leaders who lead them in a good way. The leaders of Rwanda today have decided to use a traditional culture of teaching the population to act with dignity and respect to one another in the system of teaching called ‘*itorero ry’igihugu.*’ In addition, the Rwandese Republic revised its

¹⁷ Ethnic groups in Rwanda, accessed 26 April 2016, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_Rwanda.

¹⁸ Ethnic groups in Rwanda, accessed 26 April 2016, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_Rwanda.

¹⁹ Howell, B. M., & Paris, J. W., *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2011), 150.

²⁰ Laure de Vulpian, 84.

constitution in May 2003, to do away with the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations. Rwanda decided to eradicate every form of divisions, being ethnic or regional, and promote national unity. It established “equisharing of power and equality of all Rwandans, clearly, between women and men, etc.”²¹

The family. In the Rwandese culture, the family, which is the basic unit of society, is composed of husband, wife, and children. However, due to the 1994 genocide against Tutsi, many families are headed today by either women (widows) or children themselves (orphans). Adekunle says that because the husband and father is generally regarded as the head of the family and exercises certain powers, he controls many of the affairs of the family: economic, religious, and social.²² His responsibilities also include taking care of and protecting the household. Besides the social differences caused by tribal issues, there are major differences caused by family and marriage. Also, the position of women is an important difference.

The position of women in leadership. From long ago the female gender was neglected in the Rwandese society and in leadership. After the genocide against Tutsi, President Kagame promulgated equality between females and male, in that way women have been appointed to positions of leadership. Other initiatives to increase the representation of women in governance include the presence of a ministry of Gender, organizing women councils at all levels, and an electoral system which reserve seats for women in parliament.²³

²¹ Implementation of the Beijing Declaration, accessed 26 April 2016, from http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/59/National_reviews/Rwanda_review_Beijing20.pdf.

²² Adekunle, J., *Culture and Customs of Rwanda* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2007), 98.

²³ Jennie E. Burnet, “Gender Balance and the Meanings of Women in Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda,” *Oxford Journals* 107 (2008):361-386, accessed 24 July 2016, <http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/107/428/361.short>.

The population of Rwanda. Rwanda population growth rate fluctuates between 3 and 4%.²⁴ Though Rwanda had a massive 23% population loss in 1994-95, the density of the population remains the highest in sub-Saharan Africa with 416 people per square kilometer in 2012.²⁵ This places Rwanda among the most densely populated countries in the world. It is important also to note that most of Rwandans refugees have returned home. The capital city of Kigali has 1,135,428 people (2012 General Census).²⁶ Urbanites are 19.1% of total population (2011); the population under 24 years is 60.10%. Life expectancy is 59.26 years: male 57.73 years, female 60.83 years (2014 est.).²⁷

The languages used in Rwanda. Rwanda has only one vernacular language called ‘*Ikinyarwanda*’ (or Kinyarwanda). Three other languages were introduced in the 20th century: French and English, European languages, and Kiswahili (or Swahili), a Bantu language originated from the East Coast of Africa. Kinyarwanda (93.2%), French (0.1%) and English (0.1%) have the status of official languages, while Kiswahili (0.02%) is spoken in commercial centers.²⁸ The language of Kinyarwanda is spoken throughout the Great Lakes region, in Western Uganda, in Eastern DRC and Tanzania. Kinyarwanda is very close to the language of Kirundi, spoken in Burundi. The total number of Kinyarwanda speakers is estimated at 20 million people.²⁹

²⁴ Kanimba Misago Celestin, *Rwanda : Its Cultural Heritage, Past and Present* (Kigali, Rwanda: Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, 2008), 33.

²⁵ Jason Mandryk, *Operation World* (Colorado Springs, CO: Biblica, 2010), 719.

²⁶ Republic of Rwanda: Geography, accessed 26 April 2016, <http://www.gov.rw/home/geography/>.

²⁷ Rwanda Demographics Profile, accessed 28 April 2016, http://www.indexmundi.com/rwanda/demographics_profile.html.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

The Foundation of Kigali City

In the year 1907, the German imperial resident Kandt had to determine his place of residence, as the German governor of Rwanda. He came to discover a small town which was then a center of commerce, called Kigali. Situated at an altitude of 1770 m, the future capital city of Kigali was by then constituted by two historic places: Muhima and the plateau of Nyarugenge, which included the Nyamirambo place.³⁰

The choice of Kigali as a capital city of Rwanda was especially due to its strategic place which served as a link to the neighboring countries. It is at the center of the country, and the rivers of Nyabugogo and Nyabarongo met in the city, to form later Akanyaru and Akagera rivers bordering Burundi and Tanzania.

The German imperial resident built the administration headquarters of his offices in Kigali, as well as his residency, and a school house. The White Fathers had already started a mission station and built a temple. Kigali became a commercial center which received commercial products from Bukoba, brought by Arabs and Indians merchants. An Austria firm, the Old East Africa Trading also installed a commercial center. The school built by Resident Kandt was frequented by children from noble class, especially the chiefs. This school was not affiliated to any religious organization; rather it was a government school. Two teachers were chosen to teach in that school, one catholic and another of protestant belief.³¹ Later, the city of Kigali was left by Germans who were replaced by Belgians.

³⁰ Louis de Lacger, *Ruanda* (Kigali, Rwanda: du Clerge d'Albi, n.d.), 421. Kigali literally means, large, expanded.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 421-422.

Today, the city of Kigali comprises three districts, 35 sectors, 161 cells, and 1061 villages.³² Figure 2 shows the map of Kigali city today, with three districts: Nyarugenge, Kicukiro, and Gasabo. The Nyamirambo SDA Church is found in the Nyamirambo sector of Nyarugenge district.

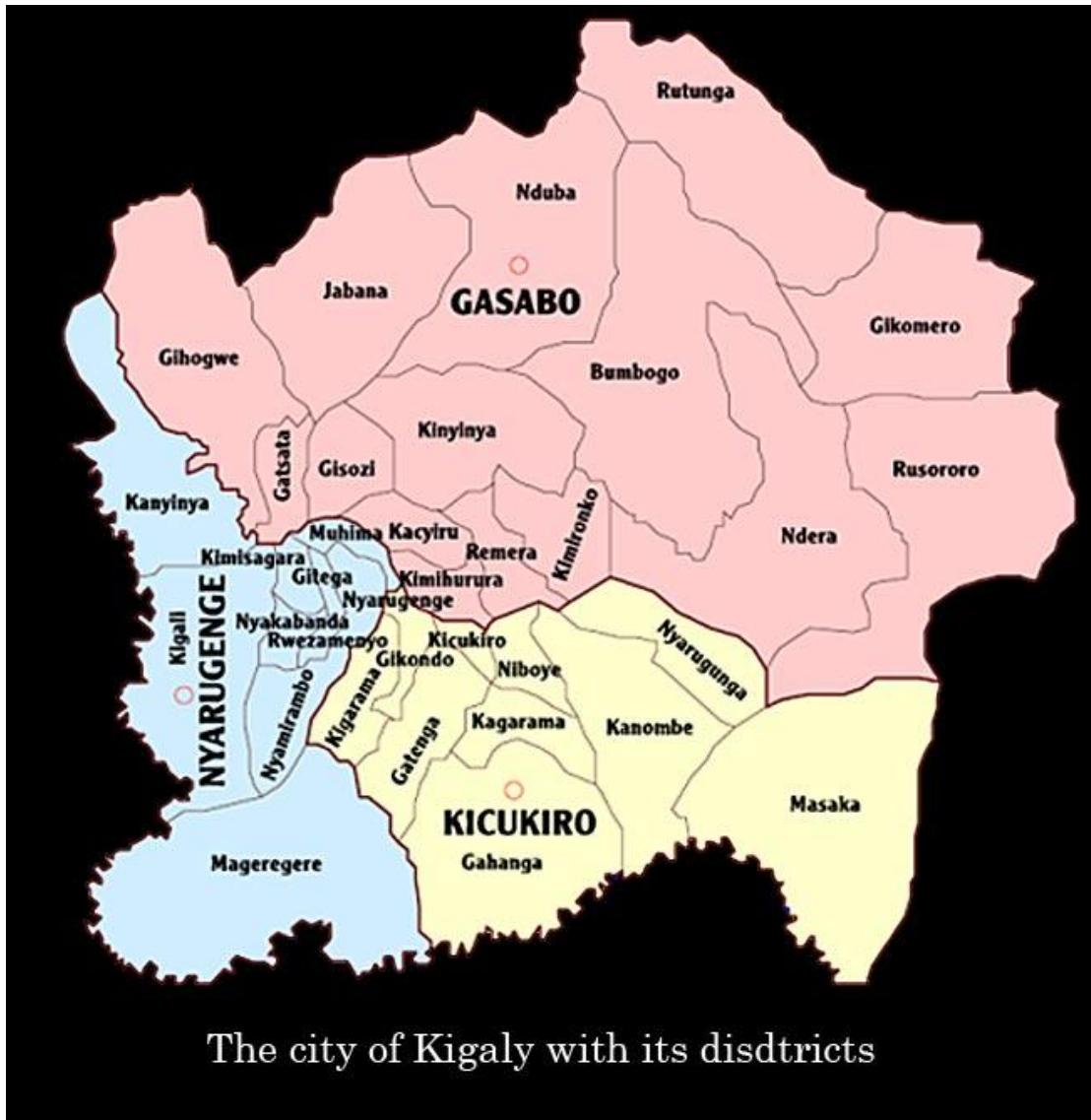


Figure 2. The City of Kigali

³² Kigali City Official Website, accessed 28 April 2016, <http://www.kigalicity.gov.rw/?rubrique4>.

Before the implantation of Christianity and Islam in Rwanda, all Rwandese population, called Abanyarwanda, practiced the traditional religion. This was before the colonization era by Germany (1870s) and by Belgium in 1917. As Rudakemwa puts it, Abanyarwanda believed in one, and unique God called “*Imana*.”³³ Their daily life was characterized by prayers, veneration of spirit beings, and offering sacrifices to the deities called “*imandwa*.” The two important deities were known as Ryangombe and Nyabingi. The followers of these deities (Abanyarwanda) formed a powerful movement which was opposed to the colonization invasion and its new religion.

Rwandan traditional religion generally had two forms of cults: the cult of ancestors which was the familial religion, called ‘guterekera.’ (invocation of ancestors); and the cult of Ryangombe which was honored by an exclusive cult, called ‘*kubandwa*.’ The initiates desired protection against illness, sterility, and the harmful influences of the dead.³⁴ Only the *mwami* (king) was not under such cult because he was considered as a ‘representative’ of God. The God of Rwanda was called, ‘*Imana*.’³⁵ Rwandans believed that *Imana* was outside during day time to come back to pass the night in Rwanda. In this belief, Rwandans were strongly convinced that the home of *Imana* is found in Rwanda.

The Christianity religion was introduced in Rwanda in 1900 by the Roman Catholic Church, through the White Fathers. They started the first mission in Save, in the Southern Province of Rwanda. Since 1920, The Catholic Church had converted the first black man. In 1946, the *Mwami* (king) of Rwanda, recently baptized,

³³ Fortunatus Rudakemwa, *L’Evangélisation du Rwanda (1900-1959)*, (Paris : L’Harmattan, 2005), 38. The name ‘Imana’ literally means, God.

³⁴ Ibid., 80.

³⁵ See the meaning of ‘*Imana*’ in the previous footnote.

consecrated Rwanda symbolically to Christ the King.³⁶ By 1948, Rwanda had 88 White Fathers, 81 Rwandan priests, 58 teaching brothers, and 155 indigenous nuns.³⁷ Since then, Rwandans were Catholics at 90%.

Considering that the vast majority of Rwandans (more than 90%) were Christians (Roman Catholics by majority), and the fact that Christianity was rooted in the Rwandan society, the most frequent question was to know why those Christians have not applied the Gospel's principles and doctrines taught by their priests, pastors, church elders, catechists, and other teachers of the Bible?³⁸

However, one should remember that the two religions, Traditional and Christianity, including even Islam which was also in place, have never been integrated one another, and thus, the idea of syncretism. This is, therefore, the failure of White missionaries in their evangelization to Rwanda. They failed to practice the love of God they preached; they also rejected Rwandan's values and beliefs by practicing the 'tabula rasa' principle. In that case, people were Roman Catholics Christians daytime, to become traditional religious tonight. The same phenomenon was also observed in the teaching of the Gospel when a priest was teaching the Bible, nobody was authorized to pose questions. Nobody has to use his/her conscience to make a choice, there were no critics, the word was taken as unchangeable.³⁹

This has led to the rise of other Christian religions, especially the Protestants and Adventists missions, toward the year 1920. These were sometimes called by

³⁶ Louis de Lacger, 693.

³⁷ Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Co., 1995), 247.

³⁸ Tharcisse Gatwa and Laurent Rutinduka (sous la dir.), *Histoire du Christianisme au Rwanda, Des Origines à Nos Jours* (Yaoundé, Cameroun : Editions CLE), 11.

³⁹ Laure de Vulpian, 193.

Catholics, dissidents confessions.⁴⁰ They were growing fast, evangelizing, teaching and baptizing new adepts. As Gatwa and Rutinduka put it, the new converts of those “new” denominations⁴¹ were taken care by church elders through Bible teaching, Christ life modeling, visitations, small group ministry, and other follow-ups strategies.⁴² Soon those “new” denominations have gained many followers to the detriment of Catholic and Traditional religions. Unfortunately, these strategies have lost their value on many Christian Churches.

Today, religious statistics in Rwanda are as follow: Roman Catholic 49.5%, Protestant 39.4% (includes Adventists 12.2% and other Protestants 27.2%), other Christians 4.5%, Muslim 1.8%, Animist 0.1%, other 0.6%, none 3.6% (2001), unspecified 0.5% (2002 est.).⁴³ However, as time goes on, Protestant denominations abandoned their strategy of taking care of their followers, which has led to the rise of Pentecostals, Evangelicals, and other new Christian movements which are attracting many people trough their spiritual movements. Rwanda provides freedom of religion, and the “constitution prohibits religious discrimination.”⁴⁴

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rwanda. According to the National Census of 2002, the so-called SDA Christians were about one million of members. This church has known a considerable rapid growth since its presence in Rwanda, in the year 1919, with the first mission of Gitwe, in the Central part of Rwanda. Two

⁴⁰ Louis de Lacger, 425-27.

⁴¹ The “new” denominations here refer to as the Protestant and Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Protestants denominations mainly include Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists.

⁴² Tharcisse Gatwa et Laurent Rutinduka,110.

⁴³ Rwanda Demographics Profiles, accessed 28 April 2016, http://www.indexmundi.com/rwanda/demographics_profile.html.

⁴⁴ United States Department of State, *Rwanda 2014 International Religion Freedom Report*, accessed 24 July 2016, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238462.pdf>.

Europeans missionaries were the pioneers of the Adventist message, the Belgium David Elie Delhove, and the Swiss Henri Monnier. They started the Adventist mission in the Protestant missions left by Germans missionaries in the Western part of Rwanda, just after the first World War. While Delhove starts the first Adventist mission of Gitwe in the Southern province of Rwanda, Monnier went to open the second mission station in Rwankeri, in the Northern province of Rwanda.

The doctrines of salvation by faith, Sabbath keeping, the law of God, baptism, Temperance, heavenly Sanctuary and others were emphasized. According to Mose Segatwa, these Bible doctrines which have been ignored by other religions or qualified as “strange message” have led many Rwandans to accept the Adventist faith.⁴⁵ The first baptism took place in 1922 at Gitwe, with five Rwandan Adventists, while the first SDA local church was born in 1923, with 22 members.⁴⁶ The first baptism in Rwankeri took place in 1924 with two new converts men.⁴⁷

In 1931, C. W. Bozarth and R. L. Jones, the leaders of the Union Rwanda-Burundi-Congo realized that pastors could not alone continue the mission without the involvement of lay members. They started training lay people to evangelize and conduct evangelism efforts and to teach the Bible.⁴⁸ According to Birikunzira, the lay people were trained on preaching, home visitations, church doctrines, health and

⁴⁵ Mose Segatwa, *Huguka Ibihe Bih'Ibindi*, (Kenilworth, Cape, South Africa: Sentinel Company, 1958), 3.

⁴⁶ Lydie Delhove, *A Daughter Remembers* (Denver: Master Printers), 28.

⁴⁷ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (SDAE)*, rev. ed., (1996), s.v. “Rwanda.”

⁴⁸ Jerome Birikunzira, “L’Eglise Adventiste du 7e Jour au Rwanda,” dans *Histoire du Christianisme au Rwanda, Des Origines a Nos Jours*, (sous la dir.) Tharcisse Gatwa et Laurent Rutinduka (Yaoundé, Cameroun : Editions CLE, 2014), 106.

temperance skills.⁴⁹ The pastors and the lay people would cooperate in the work of winning souls.

Today, the SDA Church is one of the Christian churches with rapid growth in Rwanda, due to its evangelism and doctrinal teachings based on the Bible. Its membership reaches 625,510 members.⁵⁰ This growth is a result of the combined effort from pastors and lay members involved in the mission. By the time the researcher was writing this chapter, the Adventist Church in Rwanda was conducting an important evangelism effort known as the Total Member Involvement (TMI) Evangelism, under the direction of the president of the General Conference of the SDA Church, Pastor Ted Wilson. As a result of these evangelistic meetings, a total number of 95,890 new converts have accepted to be baptized in the SDA Church.⁵¹

This result is a challenge to the SDA Church in Rwanda, which has known a decrease in members during the last ten years, as the Magazine “Umuseke” shows. According to “Umuseke” Magazine, the Adventist members have started to decrease from 2002 to 2012. The National Census reveals that the statistics of the SDA Church members in Rwanda were 12.2%, while the National Census of 2012 shows that the SDA Church members have decreased and reached to 11.9%.⁵² Therefore, the result

⁴⁹ Jerome Birikunzira, “Itangizwa ry’Amavuna mu Itorero ry’Abadiventisti b’Umunsi wa Karindwi mu Rwanda (1931),” *Igazeti y’Itorero ry’Abadiventisti b’Umunsi wa Karindwi mu Rwanda* (No 11 (Mutarama-Mata 2016): 4-5), Kigali, Rwanda.

⁵⁰ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook 2015 (SDA Yearbook 2015)* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2015), 58.

⁵¹ Andrew Mc Chesney, “Record 95,890 Baptized as Evangelistic Meetings End in Rwanda,” *Adventist Review*, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story4044-record-95890-baptized-as-evangelistic-meetings-end-in-rwanda>. We are expecting that the statistics of new baptized members after the TMI evangelism effort in Rwanda will reach a hundred thousand of SDA Church members at the end of June 2016. At the end of the TMI evangelistic meetings, the SDA local church membership has topped 815,000 registered church members in RUM.

⁵² Venuste Kamanzi, “Mu mavuna yari amaze ibyumweru 2, Abadivantisiti bagera ku 90.000 barabatijwe,” *Umuseke*, (29 May 2016), accessed 29 May 2019, <http://www.umuseke.rw/mu-mavuna-yari-amaze-ibyumweru-2-abadivantisiti-ngo-bagera-ku-90-000-barabatijwe.html>.

from the TMI evangelism effort brings a spectacular growth of the SDA Church in Rwanda. This growth calls for the crucial role of leadership, evangelism, Bible teaching, visitations, and small group ministries strategies to keep new members in the church.

In 1984, Rwanda Union Mission (RUM) was opened under the leadership of Pastor Peck (see Figure 1). Its headquarters are in Kigali City, in the Nyarugenge district, avenue de la paix. RUM is formed today by five Fields/missions and two Conferences (see Figure 2). The Nyamirambo SDA Church is part of the East Central Rwanda Conference (ECRC). The ECRC was opened in 1965 (see Table 3).

Rwanda Union Mission has many educational and health institutions. These include mainly the Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA), the Gitwe and Rwankeri Secondary Schools, the Mugonero Adventist Hospital, the Kigali Adventist Medical Clinic (KAMC) situated at Remera, and the Kigali Adventist Dental Clinic (KADC) found in Kacyiru. ADRA Rwanda is another important Adventist agency for the social and economic development of Rwanda. It is located in Kacyiru, next to KADC. In addition, it is important to note the soon coming ECD Medical School which will be hosted by Rwanda Union Mission in the country of Rwanda.⁵³

The Nyamirambo SDA Church context. The Nyamirambo SDA Church is one of the SDA mega-churches in Rwanda. It was implanted in 1964 in a milieu surrounded by Muslims and Catholics as predominant religions in Kigali City by then. In addition, the socio-geographical and cultural context of the quarter where the Nyamirambo Church is found gives opportunity to many people in Kigali City to find an easy accommodation in the Nyamirambo town. The Nyamirambo SDA Church has

⁵³ Proposed to start in the year 2017, in Kigali city. ECD stands for East Central Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It includes eleven countries found in East and Central Africa, with its headquarters in Nairobi, Private Bag Mbagathi, Kenya.

4,156 members who keep on increasing every trimester.⁵⁴ Each trimester, an evangelistic effort brings in at least 90 new converts with a baptism of around 60 members. This brings in a total of 240 new baptized members who are added to the existing number of the Nyamirambo church members every year.⁵⁵

The Nyamirambo SDA Church (and the Nyamirambo district) is led (has been) by one pastor (see Figure 1), assisted by 20 church elders among them three women and one first church elder (see Figure 1). The evangelistic campaigns in the Nyamirambo church are most of the time led by invited people (visitors), as well as the preachers on Sabbath days. One may observe on Sabbath days that church elders are observers as far as evangelizing and preaching are concerned. In addition to that, performing leadership responsibilities is another challenge to the Nyamirambo church elders. You may remark that conducting church boards, Holy Communion, child dedication, and other duties are mainly performed by pastors.

Interestingly, the church elders are considered as spiritual leaders of the church, in the SDA Church. They are elected every year to assist the church pastor in the leadership of the church, and the nurture of its members through teaching Bible doctrines. These leaders are also of high esteem among Rwandan society. Many expectations are found in the hearts of the Rwandan community for such church leaders and the Christian Church in general. They are called to give positive direction, unite people, modeling Christian life through discipleship ministry. They also have the role to play in transforming the Rwandan society into a new image of new leaders and ‘new’ Christianity. This concurs with the expectations of the President Kagame who was disappointed by the betrayal of every church to its divine mission during the

⁵⁴ Statistical Reports as of December 2013, from the secretariat office of the ECRC.

⁵⁵ Celse Mwangaza, Nyamirambo Church pastor, Nyamirambo SDA Church, ECRC, interview by the author, Nairobi, August 23, 2015.

1994 genocide against Tutsi. However, the President of Rwanda hopes that “faith in God is once again a sense of comfort for many Rwandans.”⁵⁶ This faith will be rebuilt through the work of church elders, among which the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders are part of. Thus, the work of equipping church leaders such as church elders to be effective leaders and teachers of the Rwandan community is of paramount value.

Table 1. The Nyamirambo SDA Church Leadership 1965-2015

Period	Church/District Leader	1 st Church leader
1965-1970	Pst. Zephaniah Rutwa	Andre Ndemeye
1970-1978	Pst. Jonas Barame	Eliab Ndamage
1979-1986	Pst. Hesron Bviringo	Uzziel Rubangura;
1987-6/1994-	Pst. Jonas Barame	Jonathan Nsabimana
7/1994-2000	Pst. Assinapol Mboniyabashotsi	Justin Gashayija
2001-2005	Pst Jonathan Bizirema	Abias Musonera
2006-2008	Pst. Ephron Nyamaswa	Alloys Mpagazehe
2009-2010	Pst. Gad Sebera	Alexis Sibomana
2011—8/2013	Pst. Ami-Fidele Ngerero	Jerome Kerera
9/2013	Pst Celse Mwagaza	Jerome Karera

Sources: Phaniel; Pst Byiringiro; Damaris Mushimiyimana; Justin Gashayija

Research Design

The purpose of this project is to equip and empower church elders for leadership and teaching ministries in the ECRC, Kigali, Rwanda. The overall goal is to have an increase from 10% to 70% of church elders being equipped and involved in ministry in the Nyamirambo Church. Therefore, this study uses the descriptive survey design because of its objectives. It uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Carol Roberts, the “qualitative approach focuses on people’s experience

⁵⁶ Paul Kagame, Rwandan President Speaks at Saddleback Church on 20th Anniversary of Genocide, accessed 24 August 2015, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/rwandan-president-speaks-at-saddleback-church-on-20th-anniversary-of-genocide-118672/>.

from their perspective.”⁵⁷ The qualitative method is used in this study to provide in detail description of trainees’ action, behaviors, activities and interpersonal interactions. In addition, qualitative method reveals church elders’ knowledge, opinions, perceptions, and feelings. Their weaknesses and strengths are revealed and addressed to. The responses from respondents and other information are presented in tables, statements, frequency and percentages for analysis.

Appropriateness of Study

The purpose of this study is to develop and implement a strategy aimed at equipping and empowering the Nyamirambo Church elders for effective ministry in terms of leadership and teaching. Leadership and teaching are key elements in transforming Rwandan society and bring positive growth of the SDA Church. Since politics, social, and religious influences play crucial roles in the life of the Rwandan people, the development of the project takes those variables into consideration while designing and implementing the manual to equip the Nyamirambo church elders for leadership and teaching ministries.

In order to achieve the purpose of this project, the researcher uses a strategy that outlines the design and specific procedures to conduct this project. For this reason, a Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) methodology is selected for this study. It helps the researcher to summarize the key features of the project that are important for its completion.

⁵⁷ Carol M. Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2012), 143.

Logical Framework Analysis

The logical framework or log frame (LFM) is “a concise document that outlines the key features that lead to a project achieving its goal. It is an analytical tool used to plan, monitor, and evaluate projects.”⁵⁸ It shows the strategic plan of a project, its implementation, and its evaluation process. LFM is a model which has been developed in the United States of America and has since been adapted and adopted for use by others.⁵⁹

According to Norad, “the logical framework approach (LFA) is a way of structuring the main elements in a project, highlighting logical linkages between intended inputs, planned activities, and expected results.”⁶⁰ He adds on by saying that LFA helps in clarifying the purpose and the justification of a project by identifying information requirements clearly, define key elements of a project, “analyze the project setting at an early stage, facilitate communication between all parties involved in the project, and determine how success or failure of the project should be measured.”⁶¹

The LFM gets its name from the 4*4 matrix employed in its mapping: the columns and rows. It consists of four columns of five rows. The first column displays the activities done and their outputs in achieving the goal of the project from bottom to top. The second deals with indicators that measure whether the activities and

⁵⁸ “Logframe Matrix,” accessed 24 August 2015, http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29:logframe-matrix&catid=19:formative-evaluation-tools&Itemid=135.

⁵⁹ Bond, 2003, accessed 24 August 2015, <http://www.slideshare.net/rexcris/beginners-guideto-logical-framework-approach-bond>.

⁶⁰ Norad, 1999, Logical Framework Approach: Handbook for Objectives-Oriented Planning (4th ed.), accessed 24 August 2015, <http://www.norad.no/en/toolsandpublications/publications/publication?key=109408>.

⁶¹ Ibid., 9.

outputs have been achieved. The third column describes the data source to verify the indicator. The fourth column outlines the assumptions that need to hold true for the activities and outputs to happen.

The Logical Framework approach helps to identify information necessary and clearly defines the key elements involved in the project. It enables the researcher to clarify the purpose and the justification of the project and allows flexibility and expansion. The Logical Framework approach facilitates the researcher and the beneficiaries to be all involved in identifying the success or the failure of the project and how it should be measured. 2 shows the elements in the LFM as described in the project of this study. Qualitative and quantitative measures are applied while implementing the project. The implementation of activities of this project leads to outputs and fulfill the objectives. The purpose leads to the achievement of goals of the project.

Explanation of the Main Sections of the LFM

As seen previously, the LFM has four main sections presented in four columns: the objectives, the indicators, the means of verification, and the assumptions.

The objectives. The first column in the LFM is the intervention logic or objectives. Under this, we find four main components essential to the success of the project. Those components are the goal, the purpose, outputs, and the activities as shown in the tables below. The objectives show what the project wants to achieve.

The goal. The goal describes what the target group expects to achieve or gain from the project or the program. For instance, the goal of this project seeks to equip the church elders for effective ministry, in terms of leadership and teaching ministries.

The purpose. The purpose of the project seeks to establish the changes in behavior, structures or capacity of the target group as a result or an outcome that the project is expected to yield. For example, the purpose of this project has the target of developing and implementing a strategy aimed at equipping and empowering the church elders for effective ministry. Once equipped and empowered for ministry, the church elders will be able to bring positive changes and capacities in church leadership and teaching ministries.

The outputs. The outputs or results reveal the services, products, and goods and other tangible results that lead to the achievement of the project. For example, the outputs may be the discovery and the use of spiritual gifts that will help the church elders to achieve the goal of the project.

The activities. The activities of inputs represent the tasks necessary to be carried out by the project so that the outputs can be obtained. For example, some of the activities involved in this project may be the administration of questionnaire and interview, the development of the training manual, the training seminars, and others.

The indicators. The second column in the log frame matrix is the measurable indicators. It is also known as “objectively verifiable indicators” (OVI). These are “quantitative and qualitative ways of measuring” the progress and success of the project. Their role is to see whether the project goal, purpose, and outputs are achieved in a timeline given.⁶² The measurable indicators show how to measure the change. They need to be developed; they are measurable, feasible, relevant or accurate, and timely.

The means of verification. The means of verification (MOV), which are also referred to as sources of verification (SOV), provide evidence for the success of the

project. They justify whether the project is on target and the outcomes are contributing toward the goals of the project. The MOV show how the information on project success will be collected and who will make a follow up on the process and the success of the project.

The assumptions. The fourth column of the Logframe matrix is about project assumptions. These require the researcher to be aware of external conditions that can support or be the hinder to the project. The assumptions are not generally under the direct control of the project intervention. They are planned ahead of time.

The success of this project requires being visionary. Important assumptions are essential to face external factors, unknowns, and to have contingency plans whenever obstacles occur. At times, goals cannot be achieved without laying down realistic assumptions.

The following 2 is an example of a log frame matrix that can serve to understand the application of the LFM of the project for this study.

⁶² “Logical Framework Analysis,” accessed 24 August 2015, <http://www.gdrc.or/ngo/logical-fa.pdf>.

Table 2. IFRC Logical Framework

Objectives (What we want to achieve)	Indicators (How to measure change)	Means of verification (Where/how to get information)	Assumptions (What else to be aware of)
Goal The long-term results that an intervention seeks to achieve, which may be contributed to by factors outside the intervention	Impact Indicators Quantitative and/or qualitative criteria that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement or reflect changes connected to the goal.	How the information on the indicator will be collected (can include who will collect it and how often).	External conditions necessary if the Goal is to contribute to the next level of intervention
Outcomes The primary result(s) that an intervention seeks to achieve, most commonly in terms of the knowledge, attitudes or practices of the target group.	Outcome Indicators As above, connected to the stated outcome	As above	External conditions not under the direct control of the intervention necessary if the outcome is to contribute to reaching intervention goal.
Outputs The tangible products, goods and services and other immediate results that lead to the achievement of outcomes.	Output Indicators As above, connected to the stated outputs.	As above	External factors not under the direct control of the intervention which could restrict the outputs leading to the outcome.
Activities The collection of tasks to be carried out in order to achieve the outputs.	Process Indicators As above, connected to the stated activities.	As above	External factors not under the direct control of the intervention which could restrict progress of activities.

Application of the LFM in the Project under Study

Objectives

The objectives of this project include four main components: goal, purpose, outputs, and activities. In the planning and implementation of the programs, the project starts with the activities and ends with the goal.

Measurable Indicators

The measurable indicators or OVI are necessary to help determine the success of the project. The indicators of this project involve the survey questionnaire, the questions for the interview, a training manual which is developed, the training

seminar prepared to equip the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders with leadership and teaching skills. The goal to achieve being an increase of at least 70% of church elders being equipped and effectively involved in leadership and teaching ministries.

Means of Verification (MOV)

The means of verification for this project include elements such as available manual and spiritual gifts identified, activities and reports on teaching and evangelism participation. The means of verification of this project will help the researcher, the Nyamirambo SDA Church board, the Nyamirambo church pastor, and the East Central Rwanda Conference to see and get information on the progress and success of this project, as time goes on. The MOV specifies the format in which the information should be made available, such as reports, records, research findings, and publications. They are essential because they inform outsiders that the objectives of the project have been attained. They are also essential for the sustainability of this project.

Important Assumptions

For this project, important assumptions include church elders' willingness to be trained and train other church leaders such as small group leaders for ministry. Trained church elders are to provide servant leadership to church members, be effective teachers of the Bible, effective evangelists, and be ready to positively transform the community surrounding the Nyamirambo church and the Rwandan society in general.

Table 3 is an application of the LFM for this project. The project starts with the activities and ends with the goal.

Table 3. Logical Framework Matrix for the Project under Study

Objectives	Measurable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<p>GOAL To equip and empower church elders for ministry in the ECRC, Kigali, Rwanda.</p>	<p>An increase from 10% to 70% of church elders being equipped and involved in ministry in the Nyamirambo SDA Church.</p>	<p>EXCOM of the ECRC to take action on the project for the whole conference</p>	<p>RUM & ECRC will use the manual to train & equip church elders.</p>
<p>PURPOSE Develop and implement a strategy aimed at equipping and empowering church elders for effective ministry in the Nyamirambo SDA Church, ECRC.</p>	<p>Church elders are equipped in church leadership ministries; teaching doctrines; preaching & evangelism skills; use of spiritual gifts</p>	<p>A manual is prepared and developed by the researcher</p>	<p>ECRC & Nyamirambo SDA Church board will support the project</p>
<p>OUTPUTS 1. Training manual being developed; 2. Questionnaire being prepared; 3. At least 70% of church elders are equipped with leadership and teaching Bible skills; 4. Spiritual gifts inventory done and implication to church elders' ministry 5. Monitoring & evaluation (M&E) of project activities</p>	<p>1. Training manual developed by Dec 2015; 2. Survey prepared; 3. Training seminar from Jan-May 2016; 4. At least 70% of church elders identify their spiritual gifts 5. M&E in May-June.</p>	<p>1. Available manual 2. Questions of survey 3. Seminar conducted 4. Spiritual gifts identification 5. Activities in progress monthly; Reports from pastors' and church committees.</p>	<p>Effective training manual developed. The manual shall be used by the ECRC & church pastor Follow-ups by church pastor and committee.</p>
<p>ACTIVITIES 1. Theological foundation & Literature review are completed 2. Preparation of questions 2.1. Closed-ended & open-ended survey. 2.2. Personal interview questions 2.3. Semi-structured interview; 3. Administration of questionnaire & interview 3.1. A sample of 5 church elders and 3 pastors (3 men + 2 women + 3 pastors); 3.2. Distribution & collection of questionnaire 3.3. Personal interview; 4. Train, equip, empower church elders: 4.1. Manual design implemented: 4.2. Church leadership lessons; 4.3. Conducting board meetings; 4.4. Prayer meetings; 4.5. Bible teaching lessons; 4.6. Preaching; 4.7. Evangelism; 4.8. Spiritual gifts.</p>	<p>Training manual is completed by mid-December 2015 Data developed, administered, and analyzed: Oct & Nov A training seminar is carried out from January to May 2016</p>	<p>Availability of questionnaire Availability of interview instrument Church elders are trained, equipped and empowered</p>	<p>ECRC leadership, Nyamirambo SDA Church elders, and pastor cooperate Nyamirambo SDA Church elders respond positively to the seminar</p>

The Gantt Chart

The schedule that helps to plan the tasks of this project is presented in the Gantt chart. Gantt chart gives information on the activity schedule presented in graphic format. It displays activities and timeline to complete those activities with expectations of certain outputs. The Gantt chart is “a graphical representation that shows the time dependency of several tasks of a project within a calendar. It provides a graphical illustration of a schedule that helps to plan, coordinate, and track specific tasks in a project.”⁶³

Rouse describes a Gantt chart as “a horizontal axis representing the total time span of the project, broken down into increments (days, weeks, months), and a vertical axis representing the tasks that make up the project.”⁶⁴ Furthermore, Sava underlines that a Gantt chart is frequently used in project management to help plan, coordinate, and track tasks in a project.⁶⁵ According to Silva, there are five reasons to use Gantt chart in the Project Management: (1) Avoid completion confusion: Gantt chart helps in providing a visual timeline for starting and finishing specific tasks. It is a method of maintaining timescale-based tasks on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. The Gantt chart of this project is presented in Table 4 as follows:

⁶³ “Interactive and web-based Gantt Chart,” accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.google.com/patents/US7050056>.

⁶⁴ Rouse, 2007, accessed 24 August 2015, https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=Gantt+chart+is+a+horizontal+bar+chart+developed+as+a+production+control+tool+in+1917+by+Henry+L.

⁶⁵ Sava, 2007, accessed 24 August 2015, https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=Gantt+chart+is+a+horizontal+bar+chart+developed+as+a+production+control+tool+in+1917+by+Henry+L.

Table 4. Gantt Chart of the Project

		Year 2015				Year 2016					
Activities		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Output 1	Training Manual										
Activities	Read and analyze chapter two of the project (biblical & theological foundations)	█	█								
	Read and analyze chapter three of the project (Related Literature)		█	█							
	Preparation of questions for interview and questionnaire			█	█						
	Interview with key informants & questionnaire to church elders				█	█					
	Data analysis					█	█				
	Develop a training manual						█	█			
Output 2	Training program										
	Present the Manual to ECRC leaders					█					
	Conducting training program						█	█	█	█	
	Evaluating the program									█	█

Population

The population of this study is made up of the entire membership of 4,589 members of the Nyamirambo church. All the Nyamirambo church elders elected for the year 2015 are the participants of this study. Among these church elders, seventeen are male while three are female. The choice of the Nyamirambo church is due to the fact that it is the church with the biggest membership in the ECRC (see Table 4). The involvement of church elders in evangelism and leadership activities is still low. The researcher is also motivated to do this study in the Nyamirambo church because he is the member of this church.

It is important to note that the number of the Nyamirambo church elders is not enough to minister to the total number of 4,589 membership.⁶⁶ The Nyamirambo local

⁶⁶ Statistical Reports as of December 2015, from the secretariat office of the ECRC.

church contains by itself 79% of the total membership of the whole district of Nyamirambo, with only 20 church elders.

This shows the importance of this project which aims at equipping and empowering church elders for effective ministry in the Nyamirambo SDA Church. Church elders also have the responsibility to train other church leaders such as the elected church officers, to work together for the growth of the church.

Table 5 shows the total membership of the Nyamirambo SDA Church and the total number of its church elders in the year 2015.

Table 5. Nyamirambo Church Statistical Report 4th Quarter 2015

Church elders	Churches	Church membership at the beginning of the quarter	Baptism	Church membership at the beginning of the quarter
20	Nyamirambo	4559	30	4589
6	Rugunga	393	24	417
8	Horebu	469		469
2	Rugarama	323		323
Total				
36		5744	54	5798

Source: ECRC Data, 4th Quarter 2015

Research Instrumentation

This study uses both questionnaire and interview to collect data. Questionnaire and interview questions are prepared by the researcher. They were discussed between researcher and some colleague pastors at RUM. Then they were sent to the adviser who revised and suggested corrections to the researcher for their validity and accuracy. The researcher administered them to the Nyamirambo church elders. Questionnaire and interview were used both to complement information on how the church elders are involved in leadership and teaching ministries.

Questionnaire

This study used structured and unstructured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended and open-ended questions. Both are used to give to the respondents opportunities to express their views, and it is hoped that they would respond better. Open-ended questions allow the respondents to express deep thoughts. The questionnaire comprises of eighteen questions; sixteen closed-ended and two open-ended questions.

The questionnaire was prepared in close consultation with the researcher's adviser for the relevancy, accuracy, clarity and appropriateness of the questions. The questions are meant to discover whether the Nyamirambo church elders are involved in leadership and teaching ministries so that the project intervention would come up with strategies that would foster church elders' involvement. Because the study is done in Rwanda where many respondents use Kinyarwanda, the questionnaire was carefully translated into Kinyarwanda.

Interview

In addition to the questionnaire, this study uses semi-structured interview tool for data collection. The interview is meant to gather additional information that the questionnaire could give. The interview comprises nine closed ended questions. Questions were prepared by the researcher and submitted to the advisor who amended them and suggested one additional question. A selection of five church elders (three men and two women), and three pastors (the church pastor and two retirees pastors who led the Nyamirambo church) were interviewed. The interview was done one month before the implementation of the project intervention.

Personal Observation and Documentary Sources

The researcher did personal observations to complement data. As a church member of the Nyamirambo church, the researcher tried to get enough information and watch what was going on in the church, in relation to the objectives of this study.⁶⁷ He also gathered data from church registers, minute's books, statistical reports and other documents from the secretariat of the church, the pastor's office, and the ECRC office.

Data Gathering Procedures

In order to accomplish the goal of this project, the researcher introduced himself to the leadership of the ECRC as well as to the church board of the Nyamirambo SDA Church. He explained to them this project and requested permission to conduct it. The permission was granted by both the ECRC and the Nyamirambo church board through the local church pastor (see Appendix A).

After this, the researcher conducted a survey. This was to find out to what extent the equipping of the Nyamirambo church elders is effective for their ministry. The questionnaire comprised four sections: demographic data of the respondents and their spiritual lives, questions about leadership skills, questions about Bible teaching skills, and questions about spiritual gifts. The questionnaire assisted the researcher to understand the degree of need for training in leadership and teaching ministries in the church. The questionnaire consists of closed-ended and open-ended questions.

The questionnaire was administered one month before the project implementation. Questions were distributed after some clarifications with the Nyamirambo church elders. Eighteen out of 20 respondents (90%) returned the

⁶⁷ The researcher was a church board member in the Nyamirambo Church, since 2012-2015.

completed questionnaire and deposited it at the church clerk's office. Two were not completed because the respondents were not available. The researcher picked them from the church clerk's office (see the survey questionnaire in Appendix B).

In addition to the questionnaire process, the researcher himself conducted a personal interview with key informants. Key informants include eight persons: five church elders (three men and two women), and three pastors (the Nyamirambo church pastor, and two former pastors who are retirees). The researcher did a personal interview with five church elders and three pastors either in their homes, at church, or at another convenient place. The diversity of individuals helps to view the phenomena under study in different angles. The researcher put at ease the respondents so as to facilitate them express their response freely. The interview was done in an amicable atmosphere that could give both the researcher and the interviewee opportunity to exchange important information.

Personal interview was done with all the key informants, and the data were written up by the researcher. It was conducted in December 2015. The researcher got from key informants fair and correct information. They expressed freely in an amicable atmosphere (see the interview questions in Appendix C). After the administration of questionnaire and interview, the researcher proceeded with data analysis process.

Data Analysis

The first step to analyze the data was to write and organize them in a sequence following the flow of the study. Concerning the questionnaire, eighteen out of 20 church elders (90%) returned the filled up questionnaire. The returned questionnaire was arranged, analyzed, interpreted, and compared to the results yielded by interview, to help in developing the training manual of church elders on leadership and teaching

ministries. On the other side, the written interview was converted into themes or topics for analysis. Those topics were grouped according to similarities from each other. All seven interviewees (100%) responded to the questions successfully. Finally, the researcher assembled the data material belonging to each category. The data collected was entered and analyzed using the Excel Program. The data analysis process was done, and the findings are presented below.

Presentation and Description of Findings

Following is the presentation and the description of the findings of this study. The goal of this study is to equip and empower the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders for ministry, in terms of leadership and teaching ministries. The findings follow the sequence in the following order: demographic profile of the respondents; leadership skills; teaching skills; findings on spiritual gifts. The findings are presented in tables, expressed in frequencies and percentages. Tables are presented after the discussion of items.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the church elders respondents of this study includes: age, gender, marital status, educational level, profession, years of SDA membership, experience as church elder, and devotional life of the respondents.

Table 6 below shows that out of eighteen church elders respondents, seven (38.9%) are between ages 51-60; five (27.8%) are between ages 41-50; four (22.2%) are 61 years old and above; two (11.1%) are between ages 30-40; and none is below the age of 30 years old. The results show that the majority of church elders in the Nyamirambo church (more than 65%) are elderly, advanced in age, experienced and full of wisdom. However, the results show that this church has no young people as church elders. The study reveals that the big majority of 88.9% (sixteen out of

eighteen respondents) church elders in the Nyamirambo church are men; while a very few number of 11.1% of church elders are women.

The same study shows that 94.5% (seventeen out of eighteen respondents) of church elders are married, and one is a widower. The implication of these two results is that there is a strong need for a gender balance and a need for young people in the Nyamirambo church eldership. These can learn quickly and be equipped to enhance the discipleship ministry in the church. On the other side, the researcher is convinced that if experienced church elders were equipped with leadership skills, they would serve their church successfully.

On the aspect of educational level of the respondents, 5 shows that out of eighteen church elders, seven (38.9%) have finished the secondary level of education; six (33.3%) have finished the tertiary education, three (16.7%) have the level of technical schools, while two (11.1%) have finished the primary education level. The implication of this results shows that the big majority of the Nyamirambo church elders (72.2%) have an advanced educational level. This can be a positive tool to assist them to be equipped for a successful discipleship ministry.

On the aspect of profession, this study revealed that the majority of eleven (61.1%) church elders in the Nyamirambo church are self-employed; while 22.2% are working in the government, and 11.1% in public sectors such as NGOs. Since job creation and job opportunities are big challenges today, one may tend to see that people, such as church elders, are very busy with their businesses and their work. They may not have enough time to consecrate on church responsibilities.

In addition, the findings of this study revealed that the big majority of the Nyamirambo church elders, fifteen out of eighteen (83.4%) are SDA Church members for more than 20 years; while only two (11.1%) church elders have between

six to ten years in the SDA Church. This shows that they have a lot of knowledge and understanding to be equipped and revived for the SDA Church ministry.

Table 6 below also reveals that eight out of eighteen church elders of the Nyamirambo church (44.5%) have a lot of experience in church eldership; while 27.8% and 22.2% have respectively three and two years of experience as church elders, in the period of five years (2011-2015). This means to the researcher that the equipping of the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders would present many advantages.

Table 6. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Age	Below 30	0	0
	30 to 40	2	11.1
	41 to 50	5	27.8
	51 to 60	7	38.9
	Above 60	4	22.2
Gender	Male	16	88.9
	Female	2	11.1
Marital Status	Single	0	0
	Married	17	94.5
	Widow	1	5.5
Education Level	Primary	2	11.1
	Technical	3	16.7
	Secondary	7	38.5
	Tertiary	6	33.3
Profession	Government worker	4	22.2
	Private worker	2	11.1
	Self-employed	11	61.1
	Retired	1	5.5
Years of SDA Membership	1-5 year	0	0
	6-10 years	2	11.1
	11-15 years	0	0
	16-20 years	1	5.5
	20 years above	15	83.4
Experience as an Elder	1 year	0	0
	2 years	4	22.2
	3 years	5	27.8
	4 years	1	5.5
	5 years	8	44.5

Source: Primary Data, December 2015

Concerning the practice of devotional life among the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders, Table 7 reveals the following perceptions of the respondents: ten out of eighteen (55.6%) church elders said that their spiritual life is “good”; five (27.8%) qualify their spiritual life as “fair”; two (11.1%) qualify it as “very good”; while only one (5.5%) qualify it as “inconstant.” In addition to these results, the findings show that eight out of eighteen (44.5%) church elders respondents study the Bible seven days of the week; seven (38.9%) study the Bible between three to five days per week; two (11.1%) study the Bible between one to two days; and only one church elder (5.5%) studies the Bible in six days of the week.

Similarly, the findings show that eight out of eighteen (44.5%) church elders use 30 minutes to 1 hour to study the Bible per day; six (33.3%) use only 30 minutes; two (11.1%) spend one hour per day in studying the Bible; while two also spend less than 30 min of studying the Bible per day. Generally, the findings on devotional life show that the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders need a constant spiritual revival. The aim of this study is to empower them to be effectively involved in the ministry which calls for them to be more familiar with the Word of God. This would be possible if the church elders allow the Holy Spirit to empower them with the power of God, be revived by His Word, and be ready to fulfill God’s mission in the same way He empowered the disciples of Jesus in the Upper Room (Acts 1:13-14).

Table 7. Practice of Devotional Life of the Respondents

Description	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Devotional Life	Very Good	2	11.1
	Good	10	55.6
	Fair	5	27.8
	Inconstant	1	5.5
Study of the Bible per Week	7 days	8	44.5
	6 days	1	5.5
	3-5 days	7	38.9
	1-2 days	2	11.1
	No time	0	0
Study of the Bible per Day	1 hour	2	11.1
	30 min-1hr	8	44.5
	30 min	6	33.3
	<30 min	2	11.1

Source: Primary Data, December 2015

Leadership Skills of the Respondents

Questionnaire. Leadership skills of the respondents of this study include items such as, leadership and spirituality, servant leadership skills, team working, church manual skills which entail church committees, Holy Communion and prayer meetings. The respondents would rate their responses in four categories: very good, good, little, very little. Findings are discussed and presented below.

Table 8 shows that the majority of the respondents rate their skills and practice in leadership and spirituality as well as in servant leadership almost with the same scores. With leadership and spirituality, eight out of eighteen respondents qualify it as “good” (44.5%); seven out of eighteen say it is “little” (38.9%); two qualify it as “very good” (11.1%), and one says it is “very little” (5.5%). The same respondents rate their practice in servant leadership as “good” (38.9%) and “little” (38.9%); while 11.1% rate their skills in servant leadership equally as “very good” and “very little.” These findings reveal that the church elders in the Nyamirambo church need to enhance their practice in leadership and spirituality as well as their servant leadership

skills. If equipped with leadership skills, they would be ready to serve the church members by modeling a spiritual life, a servant leadership model to church members, as Jesus did to His disciples (Matt 20:25-27). They would be ready to lead by example all the time.

Concerning “team working” practices, the results of this study show that seven out of eighteen (38.9%) respondents rate the team working of church elders respectively as “good” and as “little;” while two (11.1%) respondents rate their “team working” practices respectively as “very good” and as “very little.” This shows that a half of the Nyamirambo church elders (50%) tend to affirm that the spirit of “team working” among them is good; while another half of them (50%) tend to affirm that the spirit of “team working” among them is “little.”

In other words, though their team working might be “good,” it needs to be effective as the team of Moses, Aaron and Hur was (Exod 18). Another aspect of leadership that is considered in this study was the “church manual practice.” The aim of this was to determine the knowledge of church elders in the practice of church manual, specifically in conducting church committees. The results revealed that nine out of eighteen (50.9%) respondents have “little” knowledge of the church manual; six (33.3%) affirm that their knowledge is “good,” while two (11.1%) have a “very little” knowledge, and one (5.5%) says that he has “very good” knowledge of the church manual in terms of church committees. These findings say a lot on the need to equip the Nyamirambo church elders with the knowledge of the church manual.

Finally, the element of “church services” was also searched. “Church services” referred here to as, the Holy Communion and prayer meetings. The results as shown on 7 revealed that eight out of eighteen (44.5%) respondents perceived their knowledge and skills in the Holy Communion service as “good”; seven out of

eighteen (38.9%) have “little” skills; two (11.1%) have “very good” skills; and one (5.5%) has “very little” skills in the practice of Holy Communion service. From these results, it is evident that almost a half of church elders in the Nyamirambo SDA Church need to be equipped with skills in church services.

Table 8. Practice of the Leadership skills by the respondents

Description (How would you rate)	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Your leadership and spirituality practice	Very good	2	11.1
	Good	8	44.5
	Little	7	38.9
	Very little	1	5.5
Your servant leadership skills	Very good	2	11.1
	Good	7	38.9
	Little	7	38.9
	Very little	2	11.1
Your Team working practices	Very good	2	11.1
	Good	7	38.9
	Little	7	38.9
	Very little	2	11.1
Your church manual practice (In terms of church of committees)	Very good	1	5.5
	Good	6	33.3
	Little	9	50.9
	Very little	2	11.1
Your church services skills (Holy communion and prayer meeting)	Very good	2	11.1
	Good	8	44.5
	Little	7	38.9
	Very little	1	5.5

Source: Primary Data, December 2015

Interview. In addition to the results yielded by the questionnaire, the researcher interviewed some church elders on the aspect of leadership skills. Their responses are the compliment of those given in the questionnaire. Generally, the interviewees affirmed that the Nyamirambo church elders need to be fully involved in the church services. Many (except about 10% of them) affirmed that they lack knowledge on the church manual (many of them do not have a church manual). They don't have skills on how to lead church boards. About 10% of the Nyamirambo church elders said that they have chaired church committee; others never.

The big majority of them lack knowledge in leading church business meetings. The interviewees affirmed that they lack skills in conducting church services, such as the Holy Communion, child dedication, prayer meetings and oil anointing for the sick, funeral ceremonies, and so on. Some said that they don't even know whether a church elder is allowed to conduct those services/ceremonies. They think they are only to be led by a pastor. According to them, there is a strong need to be equipped with leadership skills. They are ready to apply the servanthood leadership skills and to enhance their spirituality. They feel the need to lead by example, and they feel the need to work as a team so as to perform their duties.

Teaching Skills of the Respondents

Questionnaire. The practice of teaching the Bible is another aspect presented and described in this study. It entails four elements: knowledge and skills on teaching Bible lessons, preaching; personal evangelism (Christ witnessing), and public evangelism. The questionnaire yielded the following results as presented in 8 below.

On the elements of teaching the Bible lesson and preaching, it is interesting to note that the results of the respondents were the same. The majority of them, eight out of eighteen (44.5%) expressed their knowledge in preaching and in teaching the Bible

lesson as “little.” Another category of the respondents, six out of eighteen (33.3%) affirmed that their knowledge and skills in preaching and in teaching the Bible are “good”; while two respondents (11.1%) gave respective answers that their knowledge is “very good” and “very little.” Generally, the findings reveal that the majority of church elders (55.6%) in the Nyamirambo SDA Church have a challenge of preaching and teaching the Bible. Thus, the aim of this project study is to equip the Nyamirambo church elders to be effective in teaching and preaching the Word of God.

In addition, Table 9 shows that the majority of the respondents, nine out of eighteen (50%) express their skills in personal evangelism as “little”; while eight out of eighteen (44.5%) express their skills in public evangelism as “little.” Six out of eighteen (33.3%) respondents said that their skills in personal evangelism are “good,” while four out of eighteen (22.2%) respondents rate their skills in public evangelism as “good.” Three out of eighteen (16.7%) respondents said that their skills in personal evangelism are “very little,” while six out of eighteen respondents (33.3%) expressed their skills in public evangelism as “very little.” These findings are in agreement with the findings of the interview which revealed that the Nyamirambo church elders lack skills in evangelism. Therefore, a training of church elders in evangelism is a must.

Interview. As said above, the Nyamirambo church elders were interviewed about their knowledge and skills on preaching, teaching the Bible lesson, and evangelism. Generally, their responses were the same: “our knowledge and skills in preaching and teaching the Bible need to be improved; our skills in evangelism are little if not even very little for some of us.” They even recognized that almost all of them have never conducted an evangelistic meeting, and thus they were eager to be trained and equipped with skills in those domains for an effective discipleship ministry.

The Nyamirambo SDA Church elders recognize that their conference (ECRC) is trying its best to train church elders. However, they say that the trainings are not enough and they do not touch all domains of the life of the church. Furthermore, they wish they could constantly be trained on teaching the Gospel because false teachers have given a false interpretation of the Gospel. The task of the Nyamirambo church elders is to teach the Gospel of the Bible correctly, so that it can transform the new converts, its church members and the surrounding community.

In addition, when asked about their commitment to the study of the Bible, their spirituality, and the church mission, they recognized that the Nyamirambo church elders need constant spiritual revivals, so as to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and fulfill the mission of God as found in Matthew 28:16-20. This information was also revealed and stressed by the church pastor of the Nyamirambo SDA Church, as well as the retirees' pastors who have been interviewed by the researcher. They emphasized the importance of spiritual revival, training and equipping of church elders, commitment, and involvement to the Adventist church's mission.

Table 9. Practice of Teaching by the Respondents

Description (How would you rate your knowledge about)	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching Bible lessons	Very good	2	11.1
	Good	6	33.3
	Little	8	44.5
	Very little	2	11.1
Preaching	Very good	2	11.1
	Good	6	33.3
	Little	8	44.5
	Very little	2	11.1
Personal evangelism	Very good	0	0
	Good	6	33.3
	Little	9	50
	Very little	3	16.7
Public evangelism	Very good	0	0
	Good	4	22.2
	Little	8	44.5
	Very little	6	33.3

Source: Primary Data, December 2015

Skills on Spiritual Gifts of the Respondents

Questionnaire. Generally, the majority of the respondents, nine out of eighteen (50%) affirm that they have not yet discovered their spiritual gifts. Table 10 shows the following responses given by the respondents: eight out of eighteen (44.4%) respondents say that they know their spiritual gifts; six out of eighteen (33.3%) do not know them; while four (22.2%) doubt. In other words, those who doubt tend to show that they do not know their spiritual gifts.

In addition, two out of eighteen (11.1%) respondents affirmed that they were helped to discover their gifts by the church pastor; other two respondents (11.1%) said that they were helped by their colleagues, while five out of eighteen (27.8%) said they were helped by the church members. This shows that the Nyamirambo church elders

can easily develop a relationship and close collaboration with the church members if they are to help them discover their spiritual gifts.

Finally, the results of Table 10 revealed that eight out of eighteen (44.5%) respondents use their spiritual gifts, while the same numbers of eight (44.5%) do not use them, and two (11.1%) say they don't know. This may imply that they don't use their gifts also. As the apostle Paul emphasizes it, spiritual gifts are to equip Christians for ministry in the kingdom (Eph 4:11-13). Therefore, these findings show that there is a need to equip church elders with skills that would enable them to increase their involvement in the ministry of the church if they all discover their gifts and use them effectively. This would also help them train other church leaders and church members to be able to discover their spiritual gifts, and use them for ministry.

Table 10. Practice of the Spiritual Gifts

Description	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Do you know your spiritual gifts?	Yes	8	44.5
	No	6	33.3
	Doubt	4	22.2
Who helped you discover your spiritual gifts?	Church pastor	2	11.1
	My colleagues	2	11.1
	Church members	5	27.8
	Not discovered my gifts yet	9	50
Do you use your spiritual gifts?	Yes	8	44.5
	No	8	44.5
	Don't know	2	11.1

Source: Primary Data, December 2015

Interview. When interviewed about their spiritual gifts, the Nyamirambo church elders gave the following responses as their gifts: teaching, patience, passion on church programs, preaching and singing. These answers show that some church

elders do not understand spiritual gifts. In addition, when asked if they use their spiritual gifts, some said that they have no opportunity to use them, while others were undecided. Again this shows how crucial the equipping of church elders on spiritual gifts would help the church elders and church members discover them and use them to enhance church ministry.

Documentary Sources

The researcher went further to look into the documentary sources to get some data which would help him in the development of the strategy for this project. Data looked at were especially the church registers, minute's books, statistical reports and other documents from the secretariat of the church, the pastor's office, and the ECRC office. These sources provided data in terms of number of church members, church elders, and the statistical reports. They were as well compared with the data from the ECRC. Minutes' books could provide data from church committees, chairpersons, and the procedure of chairing committees. Bible Teachers' program and preachers' program were also looked at to help the church improve their programs. Generally, these documents showed that the Nyamirambo church elders, with the church pastor, need to always work as a team to perform their ministry effectively.

Designing of Intervention: Training Manual Development

The intervention strategy of this project aims at developing a training manual to equip the Nyamirambo church elders for leadership and teaching ministries. In developing the manual, the researcher investigates the Old and New Testament Scriptures, Ellen G. White, and other literature. Considerations on political, social, and cultural values in the Rwandan context were also applied to prepare themes. Themes were developed into chapters which were broken down into sections forming

the training manual. Themes on leadership, teamwork ministry, personal and public evangelism, teaching Bible lesson, prepare and preach sermons, were developed and presented.

Themes on spiritual gifts were also prepared in the training manual. This goes along with spiritual gift inventory survey that helped the Nyamirambo church elders to determine their spiritual gift and use them in leading and teaching church members. The draft of the material was shared with theologians and church leaders in Rwanda Union Mission for the purpose of editing and evaluating the material. The material was translated into Kinyarwanda because it is the commonly used language in Rwanda, and it is also used by the majority of the beneficiaries of this project. Then follow the process of printing the manual of training the church elders. The copies of the final manual were given to RUM and ECRC leadership to be eventually applied to the whole territory of RUM.

Another step was to call all the Nyamirambo church elders together for two days: Sabbath afternoon and Sunday. The researcher gave them an overview of the training, and the material to cover. The church elders and the church pastor welcomed with enthusiasm this project. The church pastor called later the church committee to approve this project, to which he gave the name of “permanent school of the Nyamirambo church.” The researcher involved the church elders in the process of organizing the convenient time, venue, and frequency of the training. The training includes all church elders of the Nyamirambo church (with whom the Nyamirambo church pastor invited all church elders of the whole district to join), the district pastor, and any volunteer among the church officers. Then followed the implementation of the intervention strategy. This activity was carried out from January to May 2016.

Limitations

The most important assumption for this project includes church elders' willingness to be trained for a long period of time, as many of them are self-employed (61.1%, see Table 4) and live in the city. This implies time consecration and availability of means in terms of finance.

Other limitations of this study include the language used to compose the survey questionnaire and interview. English is the second language for the target population; therefore, it is assumed that there could have been differences in interpretations of the terms used in the questionnaire and interview. This may have brought a slight meaning and bias on the survey understanding and responses. In addition, for some ethical reasons, some respondents may have been biased in responding to some questions of the survey.

Furthermore, the inputs of this project include the necessary budget to fund and implement the project. The researcher would depend on his personal/family budget means, the Nyamirambo local church elders, and the RUM for funding the project. Personnel is also needed, such as the church pastor, elders, and colleagues in the church officers.

The implementation timeline within which the tasks should be completed is also another limitation. Many activities of the local church, the ECRC, are also among other interfering factors to this project. However, some important programs served as an advantage to this project, especially the TMI evangelistic program for Rwanda. They helped the researcher to evaluate the inputs of this project.

Summary

Equipping and empowering the Nyamirambo church elders in leadership and teaching ministries is crucial in the leadership development and the growth of this

church. For this reason, a careful study of the macro and micro context of the Nyamirambo church was done to help in developing an intervention strategy for this project. LFA and the Gantt chart give the guidelines for the general methodology of this project. They are used to develop a strategy for the project implementation. The development of this project is made of four main activities. The first output is to produce materials on leadership and teaching ministries, built on a foundation of the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and the writings of other Christian authors. These materials were used to train and equip the Nyamirambo church elders. The church elders would in turn train other church leaders. Data analysis process which included data collection and presentation of the findings clearly showed the need for equipping and empowering the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders. Timeline and constrained budget of the project would be among the crucial limitations for this project.

The next chapter reviews the narrative of the implementation process of this project, followed by a list of the lessons learned. It reviews session seminars and their initiative implementation. A concise narration of the final evaluation would be done to help determine the success of the project.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter four of this dissertation has clearly shown that there is a need for implementation of an intervention strategy for this project. The analysis of data and their findings in chapter four present the need for equipping and empowering the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders for leadership and teaching ministries. The current chapter reviews the implementation process of the project on equipping and empowering church elders for effective ministry in the Nyamirambo SDA Church. It is followed by a chronological list of the lessons learned. An evaluation is done, based on the results yielded by a survey questionnaire, which helps to realize the extent of the success of this project. The intervention strategy of this project implementation was carried out from January to May 2016. The chapter ends with a summary.

Implementation of Intervention Strategy

The purpose of this project is to equip and empower church elders for effective ministry in the Nyamirambo SDA Church. The overall goal is to have an increase from 10% to 70% of church elders being equipped and involved in ministry in the Nyamirambo Church. This section focuses on intervention strategy that was used to equip and empower the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders for effective ministry in terms of leadership and teaching. After the development of the manual, a training program for the Nyamirambo church elders was done in the basement of the Nyamirambo SDA Church venue. By consensus, participants decided to hold

seminars on Sabbath afternoons and Sundays mornings. The church elders elected for the year 2015 participated in the training, including those from other churches of the Nyamirambo district. These were invited by the church pastor, because of the importance of this program. The duration of each session was agreed to be two hours. Its schedule is presented in Table 11 below. Then the trainer used power point presentations of 45 minutes, followed by 55 minutes of questions, brainstorming exercises, and practices. The training was conducted from January to May 2016, with an evaluation of the program done in May. The stability and transport means in Kigali city were an advantage to help church elders to attend the training seminars.

Table 11. Session Schedule of Daily Training Seminar Implementation

Time	Program	Facilitator
15 minutes	Devotion prayer session	Church pastor/church elder
45 minutes	Power point presentation/lesson seminar	Researcher/Trainer
15 minutes	Questions, discussions break	Researcher/trainer
40 minutes	Exercises,practices	Participants
5 minutes	Key remarks, prayer	Church pastor/1 st church elder

The implementation plan detailed specific tasks of the intervention strategy as detailed in the LFM of this project (see Chapter 4). It identified who is responsible for each task, the resources required, and the timeline within which the task was supposed to be completed. The Gantt chart (3) is the schedule which describes the activities and resources undergone to achieve the goals and results of this project within the given timeline.

The implementation of an intervention strategy to equip the Nyamirambo church elders for effective ministry was presented in sequence in the following lines.

It is made of training seminars on leadership, Bible teaching, preaching, evangelism, and spiritual gifts ministries as presented in 11 below.

Seminar on Leadership

The purpose of this seminar was to equip church elders with leadership skills. Lessons covered were: leadership and spirituality, servant leadership, team ministry, church committees, Holy Communion, and prayer meetings. A seminar on leadership and spirituality was meant to help church elders (who are also the leaders of the local church), to enhance their spirituality through spiritual revival, study of the Bible, prayer, in their homes and in the church. See the lesson in Appendix D.

A seminar on servant leadership was prepared to help church elders to lead by example, to be relational leaders (who serve all members regardless of their background), to empower church members for mission, and to be visionary leaders. See the full text in Appendix E.

A seminar on team ministry was designed to help church elders to work effectively as a team. They are to understand the biblical principle of team ministry, working in teams rather than working as individuals, in order to attain productivity in church ministries. After this seminar, the participants decided to enhance the practice of team working among them, as well as with their pastor. They decided to train other leaders to work as a team, because, together everyone achieves more! (See Appendix F).

A seminar on church committees was meant to assist church elders to gain better understanding, skills, and knowledge on how to run church committees. As members of the church committees, the participants have decided to use a model of shifting elders in conducting church meetings. The lesson is found in Appendix G.

A seminar on Holy Communion was meant to train church elders on the importance of Holy Communion, how to organize it, how to lead it, and how to involve church members to participate effectively in the Lord's Supper (See the lesson in Appendix H).

A seminar on prayer meetings was designed to assist church elders in conducting efficiently the prayer meetings, especially the mid-week prayer meetings, so that they can benefit many church members. This seminar was also prepared to help church elders on how to manage time efficiently during prayer meetings. The goal is to help church members enjoy those prayer meetings, with effective participation. The lesson is found in Appendix I.

Seminar on Bible Teaching

The purpose of this seminar is to help church elders to get knowledge and skills on how to prepare and how to teach a Bible lesson. This seminar was very interesting; participants got new insights and knowledge on how to prepare Bible lessons. They started to apply new methods they have acquired to help them prepare those lessons (See the full lesson in Appendix J).

A seminar on preaching was presented to the participants to help them get skills on how to prepare and to give a sermon. After this seminar, participants were given exercise of preparing and deliver their "sermons." (See the text in Appendix K).

A seminar on personal evangelism or Christ witnessing was designed to help church elders to be fully involved in Christ witnessing and be able to train church members to be involved in Christ witnessing activity in their communities. After this seminar, participants were given a task to find at least one family or one person to whom they could witness Christ to, and start the Bible teaching with that family. (See the lesson in Appendix L).

A seminar on public evangelism was designed to help church elders get skills and practice evangelistic campaigns. The participants were very interested in this training because they felt the need to be involved in evangelistic meetings, especially the TMI evangelism meetings which were being prepared in Rwanda. (See the lesson in Appendix M).

Seminar on Spiritual Gifts

This seminar was prepared to help participants understand their spiritual gifts, and how to use them in ministry. It was also designed to help them train others to know and use their gifts. During this seminar, participants were given a survey on spiritual gifts, to help them with spiritual gifts inventory. The participants were very interested to discover their “new” spiritual gifts, while others were surprised to find (or not to find) gifts they were not expected to have! They pledged to apply their spiritual gifts to enhance the ministry and the work of the church. They decided as well to conduct a similar seminar with other church leaders and the church members. See the lesson in Appendix M and the spiritual gifts inventory in Appendix N.

The training seminars as program intervention for this project was carefully prepared, organized, and implemented by the researcher. It is basically made of biblical materials, Ellen G. White writings, insights from Christians’ authors, and notes of professors with their permission. The macro and micro contexts of the Nyamirambo SDA Church were applied in the preparation of the materials used in this manual, as well as the advice from the leadership of the Church in Rwanda and in the ECRC. The researcher came up with a training manual which was presented and approved by the leadership of the ECRC.

The curriculum of the training manual was created to be presented in fourteen lessons, followed by the spiritual gifts inventory. Two main parts characterize each

lesson of a seminar: lesson presentation per power point by the researcher, and lesson practice by participants. Each lesson begins with a short introduction, followed by a body of material, and ends with questions for brainstorming. During a fifteen minute of break and entertainment, participants could also take a refreshment bottle of water. The training program is designed to be completed at least in four hours a weekend: Saturday from 3:00 to 5:30 PM; and on Sunday from 9:00 to 11 AM. A training lesson ends with a word of thanks to the participants for their participation and contributions. Then follow remarks and final prayer.

Table 12 below is showing the program intervention schedule for this project, the time of implementation, and the lessons learned.

Table 12. Program Intervention Schedule of the Nyamirambo SDA Church

Date Conducted	Subject of Seminar	Participants	Attendance
16 January 2016	Leadership and spirituality (John 15:1-8)	Church elders &	17
17 January 2016	Bible, E. G. White and church eldership (2 Tim 2:2; EV 381; GW 196)	church pastor Church elders & pastor	17
24 January 2016	Servant leadership (Matt 20:25-28)	Church elders & church pastor	17
13 February 2016	Team ministry (Gen 2:18; Exod 4:14-16)	Church elders & church pastor	17
14 February 2016	Church committees (Acts 15)	Church elders & church pastor	16
5 March 2016	Holy communion (John 13 & 1 Cor 11)	Church elders	17
6 March 2016	Prayer meetings (RH April 14, 1885, p. 225)	Church elders	17
9 April 2016	Teaching the Bible (1 Tim 3:2; Eph 4:15)	Church elders	16
10 April 2016	Preaching (2 Tim 4:1-5)	Church elders & pastor	17
16 April 2016	Christ witnessing (John 4; Acts 1:8)	Church elders	14
17 April 2016	Public evangelism (Acts 2:32-41)	Church elders & church pastor	16
23 April 2016	The spiritual gifts-I (Eph 4)	Church elders	15
7 May 2016	The spiritual gifts – II (1 Cor 12)	Church elders	15
8 May 2016	Spiritual gifts inventory (Rom 12)	Church elders	15
May – June	Evaluation & recommendations	Researcher+church pastor+ church elders+ECRC	15

Evaluation of the Project Interventions

This section addresses the process and methods used to evaluate the impact of the project interventions of the church elders' empowerment in leadership and teaching training program. The evaluation instrument was developed to assess the responses of the church elders. Since the time for evaluation was short for the researcher, he used the same survey questionnaire to measure the impact of the intervention for this project. He worked hand in hand with the Nyamirambo church pastor and the first church elder for this evaluation. The church pastor together with a team of church elders have even decided to continue with evaluation, to make sure the success of this project is lasting.

Generally, the survey questionnaire revealed that nine out of eighteen (50%) church elders describe their devotional life as "very good," while seven out of eighteen (38.9%) qualify their devotional life as "good." This indicates an overall positive change in the devotional life of the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders. Furthermore, the study indicates that 66.7% of the participants to the training seminar affirmed that their skills and practices in servant leadership have increased; while 22.2% of church elders were involved in public evangelism as evangelists. At the end of the training seminar, fifteen out of eighteen (83.5%) participants to the survey accepted that they had discovered their spiritual gifts. Based on the results yielded by a survey questionnaire, which helps to realize the extent of the success of this project, the following results are presented below.

Evaluation of Leadership Skills of the Respondents

The training seminar on leadership skills was attended by seventeen out of nineteen (89.5%) church elders including the district pastor. They were trained in

leadership and spirituality, servant leadership skills, team working, church committees, Holy Communion, and prayer meetings.

As the survey questionnaire shows it, eleven out of seventeen (64.7%) participants to the training seminar affirmed that their skills and practices in leadership and spirituality as well as in servant leadership have enhanced; while six out of seventeen (35.3%) agreed that their skills in leadership and spirituality as well as in servant leadership are “very good.” In other words, the skills and practices of the Nyamirambo church elders in leadership and spirituality as well as in servant leadership are enhanced.

In the same line of evaluating the item of leadership and spirituality of church elders, the practice of their devotional life was assessed. As the 12 shows, it was revealed that the devotional life of the Nyamirambo church elders was changed from twelve out of eighteen respondents (66.7%) before to sixteen out of eighteen (89.8%) today. This means those who rated their devotional life as “very good” are nine out of eighteen (50%) plus those who affirmed that their devotional life is “good,” seven out of eighteen (38.9%) are in total of sixteen out of eighteen (88.9%). This shows an overall positive change in the devotional life of the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders. It is interesting to note that nobody has no longer an “inconstant” devotional life, while two out of eighteen (11.1%) rated their devotional life as “fair.”

Table 13 shows that twelve out of eighteen (66.7%) participants to the seminar affirm that they study their Bible seven days per week, while ten out of eighteen church elders do their daily Bible study during 30 minutes to one hour per day. It is understandable that when the church elders have a good devotional life, they can know how to lead their churches efficiently. They can have what to feed the flock, and how to tend it, as Christ asked his disciple to do so (John 21:15-17). With a good

spiritual life, church elders are able to cast and inspire excellent vision to the church members, as Nehemiah did in his time (Neh 2:12-18).

Table 13. Evaluation of practice of devotional life of the reson dent

Description	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Devotional life	Very good	9	50
	Good	7	38.9
	Fair	2	11.1
	Inconstant	0	0
Study the Bible per week	7 days	12	66.7
	6 days	4	22.2
	3-5 days	2	11.1
	1-2 days	0	0
	No time	0	0
Study the Bible per day	1h	4	22.2
	30min-1h	10	55.6
	30min	4	22.2
	<30min	0	0

In line with the practice of devotional life of the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders and church members, the trainees took a decision of readopting and reapplying the GC Bible reading program (Revived by His Word). They elected a coordinator of this program and decided to make a good plan of revival which would benefit all church members to improve their quality of devotional lives.

The results of evaluation revealed that six out of seventeen (35.3%) church elders respondents rate their knowledge in team working ministry as “very good;” and ten out of seventeen (58.8%) of them agree that their team working practice is “good.” Only one respondent (5.5%) said that their knowledge and practice in team working ministry is still “low.” This means that the knowledge and practices of the church elders in team working ministry were enhanced. In addition, the evaluation of this study revealed that out of sixteen church elders who participated in the evaluation

survey on the skills and practice of church committees, four (25%) have rated their skills as “very good,” eight (50%) qualify their skills as “good,” while four (25%) perceive their skills as still “little.” Concerning the skills and practice in church services in terms of Holy

Communion and prayer meetings respectively, the evaluation of the survey revealed that eight out of seventeen (47%) participants affirmed that their knowledge and skills in those services are “very good;” eight out of seventeen (47%) perceive their knowledge and skills as “good;” while only one out of seventeen (6%) affirmed that his/her knowledge and skills are still “little.” The implication of these findings is that the knowledge, skills, and practices of the Nyamirambo church elders in church committees, Holy Communion, and prayer meetings have increased after the implementation of the intervention strategy of this project, as Table 14 below shows.

In addition to these results, the researcher received a report from the church pastor that the Nyamirambo SDA Church has started a system of “leadership by shifts” among the Nyamirambo church elders. This “leadership by shifts” allows every church elder to practice what he/she acquired in the training seminar, by conducting church committees, Holy Communion, and prayer meetings. By this, church elders perform their responsibilities with more enthusiasm and motivation. Church members as well find positive changes in the leadership of their elders. And whenever church elders are equipped in their ministry for the work of God, they perform it effectively. This concurs with the Nehemiah’s strategy of motivating God’s people to do the work of God (Neh 2:17-20).

Table 14. Evaluation of the Practice of the Leadership Skills of the Respondents

Description (How would you evaluate)	Category	Frequency	Percentage
You “leadership and spirituality” practice	Very good	6	34.3
	Good	11	64.7
	Little	0	0
	Very little	0	0
Your servant leadership skills	Very good	6	34.3
	Good	11	64.7
	Little	0	0
	Very little	0	0
Your “Team working” practices	Very good	6	35.3
	Good	10	58.8
	Little	1	5.9
	Very little	0	0
Your church manual practice(in terms of church committees	Very good	4	25
	Good	8	50
	Little	4	25
	Very little	0	0
Your “church services” skills (Holy communion)	Very good	8	47
	Good	8	47
	Little	1	7
	Very little	0	0
Your “church services” skills (Prayer meetings)	Very good	8	47
	Good	8	47
	Little	1	7
	Very little	0	0

Furthermore, the researcher has remarked that the prayer meeting programs have known a dynamic change in the Nyamirambo church since this training seminar has been started to be implemented. Table 15 below shows the important change which happened in the Nyamirambo church, in the mid-week prayer meetings. The shows the impact revealed through the application of lessons learned through leadership skills, teaching the Bible lessons, and preaching. An overall difference of 30% of increase of church elders’ participants to the prayer meetings remarked. Hence, these are also involved in the mid-week leadership activities and teaching programs of the church. Likewise, an increase of almost 50% of church members

participants to the prayer meetings indicates that the project has brought positive changes that reached all the church members.

Table 15. Midweek prayer meeting participation

Days	Members participants	Church Elders participants	Remarks
Sunday	Before: 45	Before:20%	Stagnant program
	After: 90	After: 50%	Dynamic program
Wednesday	Before: 35	Before:15%	Dormant & Long program
	After: 70	After: 35%	Dynamic & short program
Friday	Before: 450	Before:60%	Good & Lonf program
	After: 1000	After: 90%	Very good & short program

Evaluation of Teaching Skills of the Respondents

Evaluation on equipping the Nyamirambo church elders with teaching the Bible studies, preaching, Christ witnessing (personal evangelism) and public evangelism was done. The overall results show that there is a positive change in teaching the Bible studies, preaching, personal evangelism, and public evangelism, as Table 16 below shows.

Interestingly, the evaluation of the intervention revealed the same results for the two elements, teaching the Bible studies and preaching. Seven out of sixteen participants rated their knowledge and skills as “very good” (43.7%); “good” eight out of sixteen (50%); and only one respondent (6.3%) said that his/her knowledge is still “little.” In other words, fifteen out of sixteen (93.7%) church elders have evaluated their knowledge and skills in teaching the Bible and preaching as “good” and “very good.” Compared to the previous situation, where ten out of eighteen (55.6%) church elders have revealed their challenges and weaknesses in teaching the Bible studies and preaching, one would see that today there are fifteen out of sixteen

(93.7%) of church elders who have acquired knowledge and skills in those two ministries.

This means that in general, the Nyamirambo church elders have enhanced their knowledge and skills in teaching the Bible studies and preaching the Word of God. By applying these knowledge and skills in God's ministry, the Nyamirambo church elders show that they are implementing what Christ told to His disciples, to go to teach the Gospel, preach to all nations, and be the true witness of the works of Christ (Matt 28:19; Acts 10:42). This concurs as well with what Ellen White says that "the greatest help that can be given to our people is to teach [train] them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers."¹

The results of evaluation on Table 16 shows that the majority of the respondents expressed their skills and knowledge in personal evangelism as "good" and "very good" with a number of twelve respondents out of fourteen (86%); while two out of fourteen (14%) expressed their skills in personal evangelism as "little." In addition, 15 reveals that twelve out of sixteen (75%) respondents perceived their knowledge and skills in public evangelism as "very good" and "good;" while four out of sixteen (25%) said that their skills in public evangelism are still "little."

When compared to the previous results, it is important to note that no one could rate his/her knowledge and skills in public evangelism as "very good" while after the implementation of the project, six out of sixteen (37.5%) church elders affirm that their knowledge and skills in public evangelism have become "very good."

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 7:19.

In other words, the evaluation of the intervention has shown that the Nyamirambo church elders have enhanced their knowledge and skills in public evangelism.

Table 16. Evaluation of the Practice of Teaching Skills by the Respondents

Description(How do you evaluate your knowledge & skills about)	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching Bible lesson	Very good	7	43.7
	Good	8	50
	Little	1	6.3
	Very little	0	0
Preaching	Very good	7	43.7
	Good	8	50
	Little	1	6.3
	Very little	0	0
Personal evangelism	Very good	6	43
	Good	6	43
	Little	2	14
	Very little	0	0
Public evangelism	Very good	6	37.5
	Good	6	37.5
	Little	4	25
	Very little	0	0

The findings in Table 16 are in agreement with the results of the practice in public evangelism after this intervention. As a matter of fact, right after the training seminars of the Nyamirambo church, the results showed that four out of eighteen church elders (22.2%) were involved in public evangelism as evangelists in TMI evangelistic meetings. From 0% to 22.2% of church elders involved in evangelism as evangelists, this shows an important impact of this intervention on the equipping and empowering the Nyamirambo church elders for ministry. Hence, the accomplishment of God's mission to His church (Mark 16:15) is a reality in the Nyamirambo SDA Church.

Evaluation of Skills on Spiritual Gifts

As one of the intervention strategy for this project, the seminar on spiritual gifts was prepared and conducted by the researcher. As it was remarked in chapter four, the majority of the Nyamirambo church elders (55.5%) affirmed that they don't know their spiritual gifts; hence they do not use them in ministry. The seminars were meant to help them get knowledge on the spiritual gifts, identify their spiritual gifts, and start to use them in their ministry. In fact, no one should not be ignorant about the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:1), and God gives "according to the grace that is given" to people (Rom 12:6). The seminars were done in two days, plus the third day consecrated to the spiritual gifts inventory. Fifteen church elders out of eighteen (83.5%) attended to those seminars.

Table 17. Topics of Spiritual Gifts Seminar

Days	Date	Topic	Facilitator
Sabbath	23 April	Biblical definition of spiritual gifts	Researcher
		Functions of spiritual gifts	
		How to discover your spiritual gifts	
Sabbath	7 May	Diversity of gifts	Researcher
		How to use your spiritual gifts in Ministry	Participants
Sunday	8 May	Spiritual gifts inventory	Researcher+Participants

When compared with the findings on spiritual gifts in chapter four, it is interesting to find that after this training seminar fifteen out of fifteen (100%) participants to the spiritual gifts seminar accepted that they had discovered their spiritual gifts. There was no doubt, neither no one could ignore his/her spiritual gift.

In addition, as Table 18 reveals, when asked to what extent the participants have used before their discovered gifts, they gave the following answers: eight out of fifteen (53.4%) asserted that they have never used those “new” spiritual gifts in their lives; two out of fifteen (13.3%) recognized that they had used them “many times;” three out of fifteen (20%) understood that they had used their gifts for “sometimes;” while three out of fifteen (13.3 %) recognized that they used them “few times.” The fact that the majority of participants (53.4%) affirmed that they have “never” used their spiritual gifts before this training seminar is a sign that many church elders in the Nyamirambo church did not know their spiritual gifts, or they were not aware of those spiritual gifts.

This implies that there is a need to start using those discovered gifts to enhance the ministries in this big church in Kigali city. As the researcher was entertaining with the church elders, they assured him that they are going to use all their spiritual gifts in the work of God, in whatever capacities they find the work requires. In addition, they said that they are going to train other church officers to know and use their spiritual gifts in church ministries.

Table 18. Evaluation on the Spiritual Gifts

Description	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Do you know your spiritual gifts?	Yes	15	100
	No	0	0
	Doubt	0	0
To what extent did you use your discovered spiritual gifts?	Many times	2	13.3
	Sometimes	3	20
	Few times	2	13.3
	Never	8	53.4

After the training seminars on spiritual gifts, the church elders were introduced to the spiritual gifts inventory survey and test. Fifteen participants attended to this test. It was an interesting session. The researcher explained the spiritual gifts inventory test and its importance, and all participants answered the 90 statements on their spiritual gifts score sheets. The researcher explained each statement and the definitions of various gifts, so as to help them answer the questions correctly (see Appendix N).

The following is the list of the spiritual gifts discovered by the Nyamirambo church elders after the spiritual gifts inventory test. They are presented in 18 below, by order of spiritual gifts that occurred many times. The list is not exhaustive.

Table 19. Lists of Spiritual Gifts of the Participants

Spiritual Gift	Frequency	Percentage
Faith	12	80
Wisdom	9	60
Leadership	8	53.5
Teaching	8	53.5
Evangelism	7	46.7
Intercession/prayer	6	40
Discernment	5	33.5
Pastoring	5	33.5
Administration	4	26.7
Missionary	2	13.5

By observing this list of spiritual gifts of the participants, one may tend to affirm that the Nyamirambo church elders have the potentialities to enhance the ministries of leading their church, and feeding the church members with the gifts of leadership and teaching. In addition, the gifts of faith and wisdom are crucial in discovering the needs of church members and empowering them to grow in the Word of God and the faith in God. If these spiritual gifts are used effectively as they have

been discovered, they will bring efficient growth in the Nyamirambo SDA Church, and the church will continue to grow and become healthier. Furthermore, the work of God will be soon finished through the employment of the spiritual gifts bestowed upon every member of the church.²

Actions and Initiatives Formulated by Church Elders and ECRC Leadership

At the end of the training seminars, the Nyamirambo SDA Church, and the ECRC President have organized a ceremony in the presence of the Nyamirambo church members. The aim was to examine and evaluate the success of the project so far. It was also to take actions and initiatives for project sustainability. All the participants of the training seminars have attended this program. They presented the report of the seminars, the implementation done so far by the church elders, and they took actions and initiatives to enhance the work in the church, in relation to discipleship ministry. As results of this evaluation, the following actions and initiatives were arrived at:

1. The evaluation pointed out the need to continue equipping other church leaders to work in unity with the church elders. This is the responsibility of church elders trained.
2. The church elders decided to enhance the servant leadership principles in their leadership ministry.
3. The church elders recognized their role as model leaders; they planned to involve the church members in discipleship ministry.
4. After their evaluation, the church elders decided to increase their time in the study of the Bible and prayer.
5. The church elders took actions of conducting business meetings at least each trimester. These would help them understand church members' needs and plan activities and actions accordingly.

² Roy Naden, "Discovering spiritual gifts," *Ministry: International Magazine for Pastors*, accessed 27 July 2016, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1983/03/discovering-spiritual-gifts>.

6. The participants are aware of the crucial use of their spiritual gifts for the growth of the church. They are determined to equip others to know and use their spiritual gifts for ministry. Each member is called to be totally involved in church ministries and mission.
7. The church elders understand their role as teachers of the Bible and evangelists. They are determined to teach church members and new converts Bible doctrines. Four out of eighteen (22%) of them are involved in public evangelism as preachers.
8. The church elders examined themselves and found the need to improve the church meetings so as to transform them into joyful moments for church members and visitors.
9. The church members are determined to work as a team with the church pastor in all church ministries and support the programs of their conference.
10. With the advice of the President of ECRC, the Nyamirambo church leadership accepted to divide this church into seven administrative sections as a means of facilitating church leadership and discipleship program.

Finally, the participants to the training seminars were given handbooks of the training manual prepared and developed by the researcher. It is important to note that most of the church elders who attended the training seminars agreed to train trainers in the Nyamirambo church. About fifteen out of eighteen church elders (78%) of them are continuing to train other church leaders such as elected officers and small group leaders with the aid of the training manual received.

Summary

The intervention strategy for equipping and empowering the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders was designed to train, equip and empower church elders for leadership and teaching ministries so as to help the church to grow qualitatively and quantitatively. This chapter has reviewed the project's implementation process on equipping the church elders for leadership and teaching ministries. Session seminars were chronologically presented and implemented. At the end of the implementation, an evaluation was done, based on the results yielded by a survey questionnaire. As a result of this evaluation, it was discovered that the participants to the training

seminars had increased their knowledge, skills, and practices in leadership, team ministry, teaching the Bible, preaching, and evangelism. In addition, 83.5% of the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders have discovered their spiritual gifts, with the aid of the seminar on spiritual gifts and spiritual gifts inventory.

Furthermore, willingness and positive cooperation with the trainees, the church pastor, as well as the leadership of ECRC, made this project a success to the Nyamirambo church, to the ECRC, and to the researcher as well. This surely would contribute to the qualitative and quantitative growth of the Nyamirambo church, as well as the church members and new converts retention. Furthermore, this project is beneficial to the ECRC, to the Nyamirambo district, and to the Nyamirambo SDA local church. It allows them to have effective church elders capable of leading effectively the church of God, men, and women who are “able to teach” the Word of God (1 Tim 3:2).

The next chapter gives a summary and conclusion of the project. It formulates as well the recommendations that are in line with the equipping and empowering the church leaders for effective ministry.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present chapter presents the summary, conclusions and formulates the recommendations based on the project study. The purpose of the study was to equip and empower the Nyamirambo SDA Church for effective ministry. This chapter starts by giving the summary of the study.

Summary

This study was carried out with the aim of equipping and empowering the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders for leadership and teaching ministries. Under leadership ministry, the researcher examined six ministries: leadership and spirituality; servant leadership, team working ministry, church committees, Holy Communion, and prayer meetings. The teaching ministry involved, teaching the Bible studies, preaching, Christ witnessing (personal evangelism) and public evangelism. The spiritual gifts were also examined in this study.

Chapter one gives direction to the study of this dissertation. It presents the background of the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, delimitations of the study, methodology and procedure, expectations for the study, and definition of terms used in this study.

The second chapter presents a reflection on biblical and theological aspects of this study. The concept of eldership is studied in the whole Bible, the Old Testament, and the New Testament. The model of Jesus on equipping disciples for ministry is

examined. The writings of Ellen G. White are also considered. Chapter two helps in determining the strategy to develop and implement the project of this study.

Chapter three is a review of literature related to this study. Different Christian authors' views are used in this study. The literature on church elders' leadership in the early church, the Reformation church, and in the SDA Church is discussed. The concepts of leadership and teaching the Bible are examined. Methods of teaching the Bible are presented to form the basis for the project of this study. This study revealed that the church elders need to be equipped with leadership knowledge and skills as well as the teaching skills so as to help them perform their responsibilities efficiently.

The focus of chapter four of this dissertation is a description of the initiative of the project. It presents the ministry context, research design, data collection and presentation, and data analysis of the project under study. The general methodology known as LFA is presented. It shows the goal of the project, its purpose, inputs, outputs, and activities which were conducted for the success of the project. The chapter develops an intervention strategy based on theological and literature review of this project in the Nyamirambo SDA Church, Kigali City. In general, the data collected and analyzed in this chapter presented the following results.

Demographic profiles of the respondents investigated were age, gender, marital status, educational level, profession, years of experience as SDA member, and years of experience as church elder. The results showed that the majority of church elders in the Nyamirambo church, twelve out of eighteen (67%) are elderly, men (sixteen out of eighteen, 89%), and married (seventeen out of eighteen, 94.5%). These results show that this church does not have young people as church elders. The study revealed that two out of eighteen (11%) church elders in the Nyamirambo church are women. The study shows that thirteen out of eighteen (72%) church elders have an

advanced educational level; eleven out of eighteen (61%) are self-employed; fifteen out of eighteen (83%) are SDA Church members for more than 20 years; while eight (44%) have a lot of experience in church eldership. The practice of a devotional life of the church elders was examined, and the findings revealed that the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders need a permanent spiritual revival.

Generally, this study revealed that the Nyamirambo church elders need to enhance their knowledge, skills and practices in leadership, team ministry, and church manual. On the elements of teaching the Bible studies and preaching, this study has revealed that ten out of eighteen (55%) church elders have “little” skills in those ministries; while fourteen out of eighteen (77.8%) of them lack skills and practice in evangelism. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents affirmed that they have not yet discovered their spiritual gifts; neither have they used them in church ministry.

These findings show clear evidence of the need to prepare and implement an intervention strategy to equip the Nyamirambo church elders to be effective in ministry. Hence, this chapter is mainly a development of a training manual as an intervention strategy to equip and empower the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders for effective ministry.

Chapter five narrates the implementation initiative of this project. Training seminars are carried out by the researcher, to equip and empower church elders in leadership and teaching ministries. The following lessons were covered: leadership and spirituality, servant leadership, team working, church committees, Holy Communion, prayer meetings, teaching the Bible, preaching, Christ witnessing, public evangelism, and spiritual gifts. After the training seminars, an evaluation was done and it was shown that this project has enhanced the knowledge, skills, and practices of the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders in those ministries.

With the aid of the survey questionnaire, the evaluation of this project revealed the following results: the survey questionnaire revealed that nine out of eighteen (50%) church elders describe their devotional life as “very good” while seven out of eighteen (38.9%) qualify their devotional life as “good.” This indicates an overall positive change in the devotional life of the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders. This indicates that whenever church elders have a good devotional life, they can know how to lead their churches efficiently.

The survey questionnaire shows that eleven out of seventeen (64.7%) church elders who participated in the training seminar affirmed that their skills and practices in leadership and spirituality as well as in servant leadership were enhanced. The evaluation revealed that six out of seventeen (35.3%) church elders respondents perceived their knowledge in team working ministry as “very good;” and ten out of seventeen (58.8%) of them perceived their team working practice as “good.” Four out of seventeen (25%) church elders have rated their skills and practices in church committees as “very good,” and eight (50%) qualify their skills as “good.” The evaluation of the skills and practice in church services in terms of Holy Communion and prayer meetings respectively revealed that eight out of seventeen (47%) church elders affirmed that their knowledge and skills in those services are “very good;” while eight out of seventeen (47%) perceive their knowledge and skills as “good.” The implication of these findings is that the knowledge, skills, and practices of the Nyamirambo church elders in church committees, Holy Communion, and prayer meetings have increased after the implementation of the intervention strategy of this project.

Concerning the teaching ministry, the evaluation revealed that seven out of sixteen participants rated their knowledge and skills in teaching and preaching

respectively as “very good” (43.7%) and “good,” with eight out of sixteen (50%) respondents. Compared to the previous situation, where ten out of eighteen (55.6%) church elders have revealed their challenges in teaching the Bible and preaching, one would see that today there are fifteen out of sixteen (93.7%) of church elders who have acquired knowledge and skills in those ministries. This means that in general, the Nyamirambo church elders have enhanced their knowledge and skills in teaching the Bible lessons and preaching the Word of God. The results of evaluation of this study shows that the majority of the respondents expressed their skills and knowledge in personal evangelism as “good” and “very good” with a number of twelve respondents out of fourteen (86%); while twelve out of sixteen (75%) church elders perceived their knowledge and skills in public evangelism as “very good” and “good.”

After this training seminar, fifteen out of eighteen (83.5%) Nyamirambo church elders have discovered their spiritual gifts. Furthermore, the evaluation showed that four out of eighteen (22%) church elders were involved in evangelism as preachers, in the TMI evangelistic meetings held in Rwanda. This shows an important impact of this intervention on the equipping and empowering the Nyamirambo church elders for ministry. Hence, the accomplishment of God’s mission to His church (Mark 16:15) is a reality in the Nyamirambo SDA Church.

In addition, the evaluation revealed that the Nyamirambo church elders need permanent training seminars and spiritual revivals. On the other side, the trainees agreed to the training of trainers in the Nyamirambo church. About 78% of them are continuing to train other church leaders such as elected officers and small group leaders with the aid of the training manual received.

The researcher is convinced that this project has achieved its goal and objectives stated in the LFM. He has discovered that the ministry of teaching the

Word of God and modeling the servant leadership of Christ is the true answer to the Christianity in the Rwandan community in general. Furthermore, the researcher has discovered that whenever church elders are equipped for God's work, they can be more involved in ministry; they can also train and involve others in ministry. Hence, they can be more effective in their service to the High Master.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The goal of this project is to equip and empower the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders for effective ministry in the ECRC, Kigali, Rwanda. In line with this goal and the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn.

1. The study revealed that the church elders need a constant personal and collective spiritual growth.
2. Leading by example always brings positive changes in the body of Christ. The church elders must always model the servant leadership revealed in the life of Jesus. They must be true followers of Christ, so as to lead their church members to follow Christ (1 Cor 11:1).
3. The quality of "being able to teach" the Word of God (1 Tim 3:2) should always be one of the competencies of every church elder.
4. Improving the knowledge, skills, and practices of the church leaders such as church elders requires taking in consideration leadership and teaching ministries.
5. Permanent training seminars in leadership and teaching ministries boost the spiritual revivals of church elders, hence, the spiritual revivals of church members.
6. Pastors and church elders must always work as a team group in a Christian and brotherhood unity to foster the work of God. This unity is transferred to church members.
7. The church leaders are called to lead followers in God's direction, unite people, modeling Christian life through discipleship ministry. They also have the role to play in transforming their respective churches and societies, such as the Rwandan society into a new, Christlike image. Hence, Christ's mission will be embraced by non-Christians.
8. Every church elder must know, understand, and apply his/her spiritual gifts to enhance God's ministry. One of his/her responsibility is to train church members to know, understand, and use their spiritual gifts to the advancement of church mission.

9. Equipping the church elders in teaching the Word of God leads them to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and thus to be effective leaders who are able to cast their vision which helps the church members to follow God's way. This is the right way to fulfill Jesus' mission to His disciples (Matt 28:19) and bring the churches to their numerical and qualitative growth.
10. As Ellen G. White recommends, every church should be the school for training lay leaders, and every pastor should train and equip people for the work of God.¹ One may add that every trained church leader should also be the equipper of the church members.

Recommendations

Based on the objectives of this study and the conclusions reached, the following recommendations are formulated. They are applied to all levels of the church structure and its leadership. The researcher formulated the general recommendations and specific recommendations to help every entity of the SDA Church organization understand its role in this project. The following are the general recommendations.

1. Every church leader at all levels should model the servant leadership so as to lead by example.
2. All church pastors and church elders should develop the same spirit of working as a team so that they can achieve the goal of the church mission successfully.
3. There should be ongoing training programs at the local church levels to help the church elders improve their spiritual lives through prayer and Bible study; this will as well enhance the quality of devotional life of church members.
4. Every church pastor should be an equipper of church members; at the same time, every local church should have an adequate place for the training of church members.
5. Church pastors and church elders always understand and take into consideration the ministry contexts of their churches so as to be able to minister to the church members and the community surrounding their churches.
6. The lay training seminars should include these subjects: leadership, teaching the Bible, preaching, church manual skills, evangelism, and spiritual gifts.

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 148-149.

7. Every local church leadership should ensure that church meetings, church committees, and business meetings are held appropriately and regularly so as to evaluate their impact on the advancement of the work.
8. The SDA Church, at all levels, should constantly prepare and organize ongoing educational programs to train, equip and empower the local church leaders so as to enable them to perform the church ministries efficiently.
9. Lessons and training seminars on spiritual gifts should regularly be held to help each church member to be involved in ministry by using his/her gift.
10. Further research on similar study may be done in different geographical locations to compare the results.

The following specific recommendations are formulated:

1. Church elders should apply the knowledge and skills they learned during an intervention of this type to increase effective practices in leadership, teaching, preaching, evangelism, and witnessing for the growth of the church. The use of their spiritual gifts in ministry will help enhance their spirituality, as well as the spirituality of the church members. They should continue to train and to model for the members how to be effectively involved in the church ministries. Youth should be involved in church leadership as church elders.
2. Church pastors should sustain effective interventions of this type of program. With the aid of the training manual of this project and other tools of training, church pastors should continue to train, equip and empower the church officers and the church members, in unity with church elders.
3. Conference officers should organize ongoing training programs for the local churches. These programs should fit the needs of the local churches by enabling them to perform the church ministries effectively with the emphasis on teaching, Christian witnessing, and evangelism. The Conference should elect a committee responsible for those programs, and their follow-up. Furthermore, Executive Committees should make effective plans on how to deal with the leadership of the big local churches. One of the solutions might be the use of associate pastors in those big churches.
4. Union officers can play a role in continuing to train pastors and church leaders by increasing the number of students for the DMin and other advanced educational programs. Special attention and effort should be directed to the formation of the local church pastors. One specific recommendation would be to put in place an effective ministerial school for the development of the local church leadership and the church mission. This ministerial school would serve all fields and conferences.
5. Divisions are making an investment in future success by continuing support of the AUA DMin program so that it can benefit to all Unions, Conferences, Fields and local churches. An evaluation of the performance of the DMin students and DMin holders in their respective areas of ministry should be done at the Division level, through the department of Education and the department of Ministerial.

6. This specific recommendation to AUA is appropriate because of its role in graduate education on the continent. To achieve these goals, AUA should continue to put more effort in the academic programs which help students carry out effective projects such as the project of equipping the local churches leadership because the growth and the development of the local church is the growth of the church in Africa.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
CORRESPONDENCE

EAST CENTRAL RWANDA CONFERENCE
NYAMIRAMBO SDA CHURCH
Nyamirambo, 3 January 2016

To: Pastor NIYONAGIZE Jean Baptiste

Re: Your Project in the Nyamirambo SDA Church

Dear Pastor,

The Nyamirambo SDA Church is grateful to welcome you to conduct your Dissertation Project. The church board and the church elders are ready to facilitate you for the success of this project. I hope this project will enhance the skills and the knowledge of our church elders as well as the church members of the Nyamirambo Church.

May the Lord grants you success in your project.

Pastor MWANGAZA Celse

Tel. +250788815545

NYAMIRAMBO SDA DISTRICT PASTOR



APPENDIX B

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE NYAMIRAMBO SDA CHURCH ELDERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

Dear brother/sister,

My name is Jean Baptiste NIYONAGIZE. I am a DMin student at the Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. The following questionnaire is a need assessment instrument for the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders and board members. It is to enable me to get the necessary information to complete my thesis project. My thesis topic is entitled, “**Equipping and Empowering Church Elders for Effective Ministry in the Nyamirambo SDA Church, East Central Rwanda Conference.**” You are requested to participate by giving accurate information to this questionnaire. Do not write your name. Research results will be treated confidentially; they will be used for academic purposes and for the advancement of the mission of the SDA Church. Thank you for your cooperation.

QUESTIONS ABOUT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. A. What is your gender: (a) Male (b) Female
 - B. What is your age: (a) Above 60; (b) between 41- 60; (c) 30-40; (d) Below 30 years
 - C. Your marital status: (a) Single; (b) Married; (c) Widow (er)
 - D. Your level of education: (a) Primary level; (b) Technical education; (c) Secondary; (d) University
 - E. Your profession: (a) Government worker; (b) private worker; (c) self-employed; (d) retired
 - F. Your years as SDA member (a) [1-5]; (b) [6-10]; (c) [11-15]; (d) [16-20]; (e) 20 years above
 - G. Your experience as church elder (a) 1 year; (b) 2 years; (c) 3 years; (d) 4 years; (e) 5 years and above
 2. How would you qualify your devotional life (prayer and Bible study)?
 - (a) Very good; (b) Good; (c) Fair; (d) Inconstant
 3. What is your consecration time to study the Word of God per week?
 - (a) 7 days ; (b) 6 days; (c) 3-5 days; (d) 1-2 days; (e) No time
 4. What is your consecration time to study the Word of God per day?
 - (a) More than 1 hour ; (b) between 30 min - 1hr; (c) about 30 min; (d) less 30 min
- ##### QUESTIONS ABOUT LEADERSHIP SKILLS
5. How would you rate your knowledge and skills in leadership and spirituality?
 - (a) Very good; (b) Good; (c) Little; (d) Very little
 6. How would you rate your knowledge and practice of servant leadership?
 - (a) Very good; (b) Good; (c) Little; (d) Very little
 7. How would you rate your team working ministry with church pastor and other church elders?

- (a) Very good; (b) Good; (c) Little; (d) Very little
8. How would you rate your skills in leading church meetings?
(a) Very good; (b) Good; (c) Little; (d) Very little
9. How would you rate your skills in leading church services like Holy Communion and prayer meetings?
(a) Very good; (b) Good; (c) Little; (d) Very little

QUESTIONS ABOUT BIBLE STUDIES TEACHING

10. How would you qualify your skills in preparing/delivering Bible studies (apart from the SS studies)?
(a) Very good; (b) Good; (c) Little; (d) Very little
11. How would you rate your knowledge and skills in preaching/giving sermons?
(a) Very good; (b) Good; (c) Little; (d) Very little
12. How many times did you prepare and deliver sermons this year?
(a) More than 7 times; (b) 3-6 times; (c) 1-2 times; (d) None
13. How many times did you conduct an evangelistic campaign these last two years?
(a) More than 7 times; (b) 3-6 times; (c) 1-2 times; (d) None

QUESTIONS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS

14. Do you know your spiritual gift? (a) Yes;(b) No.
15. If Yes, what is (are) your spiritual gift (s)?
-
16. Who helped you to discover your spiritual gift(s)?
(a) The church pastor; (b) my colleagues; (c) a church member (d) I have not yet discovered my gift.
17. Do you use your spiritual gifts? (a) Yes; (b) No
18. Any additional comments to make
-
-

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE NYAMIRAMBO CHURCH ELDERS

INTRODUCTION

Dear brother/sister,

My name is Jean Baptiste NIYONAGIZE. I am a DMin student at the Adventist Universty of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. This questionnaire interview is to enable me to get the necessary information to complete my thesis project, in partial fulfillment for the award of a DMin degree from the above university. My thesis topic is entitled, **“Equipping and Empowering Church Elders for Effective Ministry in the Nyamirambo SDA Church, East Central Rwanda Conference.”** The purpose of this project research is purely academic; you are kindly requested to give accurate information that will help the researcher and the church in general. I assure you that the information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

QUESTIONS

1. a) Do you have time to study the Bible and other spiritual materials?
- b) How many days per week?
- c) How many hours?
2. Have you ever been trained in leadership and teaching/preaching skills?
3. If yes, in what areas have you been trained and what were your expectations?
4. If no, in what areas do you need to be equipped in your ministry?
5. Do you agree that the Nyamirambo church elders need teaching and preaching skills for their ministry?
6. How would you rate your knowledge about the 28 Fundamental Bible Beliefs?

7. Apart from teaching and leadership skills, what other areas do you think the Nyamirambo SDA Church elders need to be equipped?
8. Do you know your spiritual gifts?
9. If yes, do you use them in your ministry?

Thank You

APPENDIX D

LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY

Definitions of spirituality:

“The Christian life in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit; being conformed to the person of Christ and united in communion with God and others”—Michael Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality*, p. 146.

Leadership vs. Spirituality

1. All are characterized by love – 1 Cor 13. Christian leadership manifested through love is spirituality at its best manifestation. One could say that all attempts to do something or achieve anything without spirituality is vain.
2. Leadership without love is vain; spirituality without love is also vain.
3. John 15 - The image of the vine and branches says it all.
4. With Jesus leadership is infused with power, creativity, courage, and whatever else it takes for us to bear fruit for the glory of God. A leader’s greatest gift is: a heart fully yielded to Christ.
5. Galatians 5:16, 17 “Live by Spirit, and you will not gratify sinful desires...”

Why spirituality for leaders?

1. Research on ministry concludes that the Christians need spiritual leaders.
2. The effectiveness of a spiritual leader derives from sound spirituality.
3. The leader’s spirituality evokes spirituality in others.
4. Adventist belief and conviction that the Church’s mission is to prepare people to meet God ,underlines the importance of spirituality.

DISCIPLINES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

1. Meditation – Richard Foster’s Inward Disciplines (a way of listening to God).
2. Ellen G. White: “The opening of the heart to God as to a friend.”
3. Fasting (Matt 6:16): The practice of abstaining from food without going on “hunger strike..” for spiritual purposes.
4. Disciplines of silence and solitude: this calls for aloneness without intolerable loneliness. Silence provides a way of seeing for ministry, resists our inclinations.
5. Study: Careful observation with concentration, ... habits of thought leading to formation of habits for character formation.
6. SIMPLICITY: The outward life that does not seek to impress anyone because it is anchored in Christ or centered in Him.
7. FELLOWSHIP: Crucially important today in the light of Cox’s observations. The threefold function of Church—Proclamation, Service, and Fellowship go together
8. WORSHIP: Intentional entrance into the Shekinah of God’s presence where the “spirit is ignited by divine fire” Driving away idolatry of entertaining thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.—Tozer.

APPENDIX E

SERVANTHOOD LEADERSHIP

Introduction

1. Common leadership styles used by leaders: authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire.
2. Biblical style of leadership: servanthood leadership
3. Jesus made it clear that good leadership must be marked by humble service.
4. He came to serve and save humanity (Ps 22; Mark 10:45).

Servant Leadership in the Bible

1. Throughout the Bible, God calls men and women, young and adult, to serve Him as servant leaders. He calls them His servants¹ (Gen 26:24; Josh 24:29; 2 Sam 7:8; Ezek 28:25).
2. Moses was called to serve as a servant leader to the people of Israel (Num 12:3, 7; Heb 3:5). He mentored Joshua who accepted to be a servant leader (Ex 33:11).
3. Paul served the church as a servant leader, modeling servant leadership experiences to Timothy and Titus (Phil 1:1; 2; Titus 2:7). He invited others to imitate his example (1 Cor 11:1).
4. Jesus modeling servant leadership to his disciples: Matt 20:25-28
5. Jesus taught them leadership practices to help them grow as successful servants leaders (John 13; 15:1-11)
6. “You are not to be like worldly rulers; the one who rules should be the servant of others” (Luke 22:26).
7. He repeatedly taught them patiently with love and encouragement. Jesus knew the process of personal development. He modeled servant leadership in His interactions with them and with others. He invited them to imitate what they had observed Him doing (Matt 10:1), and He evaluated their experiences with them (Matt 17:19-20).

Conclusion

1. We are to follow the example of Jesus Christ as leaders who are approachable, humble, full of love if we want to be successful in our ministry.
2. Servant leadership changes hearts and churches.

¹ The Hebrew term ‘ebed’ used in OT means ‘slave, servant’. It is sometimes used to express humility or subject (Gen 18:3, 5; 21:25; 1 Sam 1:16; 24). The NT renders it as ‘doulos’ (most used), and ‘diakonos.’

APPENDIX F

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR TEAM MINISTRY

Objective: Church elders to understand the importance of working as a team.

Introduction

Humans are social beings who long for relationship and support of one another.

Definition

A group of two or more persons intentionally involved together in ministry over a specified period to accomplish a common goal for the growth of God's kingdom.

Old Testament Evidences

1. The Trinity: Gen 1:26 - Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, ..."
2. Moses and Aaron: Exod 4:14-16 - "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite?"
3. Moses and Elders: Exod 18:17-22 - Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. ... select capable men from all the people—men who fear God..."
4. Nehemiah: Neh 4:6 - "So we built the wall. ... for the people had a mind to work."

Other Examples of Teamwork: Elijah and Elisha (2 Kgs 2:3, 15-18; 4:1, 38; 5:22); Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh 8); Zerubbabel and Joshua (Hag 1:1; 2:2)

New Testament Evidence

1. Jesus and His disciples: Mark 6:7 - "And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two."
2. Seventy disciples: Luke 10:1 - "The Lord appointed seventy others"
3. Saul and Barnabas: Acts 13:2-3 - "The Holy Spirit said, now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
4. Unity of church: 1 Cor 1:10 - "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, ...that all of you agree with one another ...and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought"
5. Fellow workers: 3 John 8 - "Therefore we ought to support people ..."

Other examples of teamwork: Barnabas and John Mark (Acts 15:39)

Essential of Team Ministry

- Willingness for mutual understanding and collaboration;
- Humility – the spirit of servanthood (Phil. 2:5-8);
- Strong commitment to the mission of the church and the group;
- More accomplishments in terms of quality and quantity;
- It promotes a sense of oneness and unity.

Conclusion

Jesus' plan is that the church will continue to function as a team.

APPENDIX G

CHURCH MANUAL AND CHURCH COMMITTEES

Objective: Each church elder should have skills to conduct church board committees.

Introduction

Why does the SDA Church have a Church Manual and why the church committees?

1. God is a God of order as evidenced in His works of creation and redemption.
2. The Church needs order, rule, and discipline to be successful in its mission.
3. Scripture affirms: “all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40).
4. Church committees work for the maintaining of the church’s order, rule, and discipline for the achievement of God’s mission to His Church.

Church Committees in the SDA Local Church

Biblical Support

1. The committee is a divine concept: Gen 1:26; Isa 1:18; 11:2
2. The Christian church solved its questions through committees: Acts 15
3. The SDA Church adopted the biblical concept of the committee and instituted different committees: Church board committee, business meeting, administrative committees, executive committee, and others.

Church Board Committees

1. Definition—A functioning board whose members have been elected by church members.
2. Function: Its chief concern is the spiritual nurture of the church and the work of planning and fostering evangelism in all of its phases.
3. Responsibilities: 1. Spiritual nurture; 2. Evangelism; 3. Maintenance of doctrinal purity; 4. Christian standards; 5. Church membership; 6. Church finances; 7. Church properties; 8. Church departments.
4. Meetings
 - It is recommended that church committees meet at least once each month;
 - It is well to fix the monthly meeting time: same week and the same day each month;
 - The board meeting is announced at the regular Sabbath worship service;
 - All board members are urged to attend.
 - The church determines the number of board members who constitute a quorum.
 - Chaired by Church pastor or a church elder designed by the church pastor
 - Agenda is given to each board member before the meeting
 - Agenda items come from church members’ ideas and suggestions.

How to conduct a church board committee:

Suggested Outline:

- Opening Prayer: Every church committee must start with a prayer.

- Meeting called to order: The chair will call the meeting to order, which means that the meeting is officially starting. The secretary calls roll to establish a quorum (50% + 1)
- Minutes of the last meeting: The secretary provides a copy of the minutes to every member to read over. He/she reads the minutes, and the chair asks for a motion to accept as read.
- Old business: List of items that needed to be addressed before the new business has been established.
- New business: List of items that the pastor or board wishes to discuss or bring up for consideration. The chair will entertain a motion, second, and discussion before voting on items or tabling to another date.
- Motion to adjourn: Once all new business has been completed, the chair may state, "With no other business, is there anyone who would like to make a motion to adjourn?" A second is needed along with a yea or nay. If passed, the chair will say the meeting is adjourned.
- Closing Prayer: Every church meeting must end with a prayer.

Conclusion

The aim of the church meetings is to enhance the mission of God into His church (Matt 28:18-20). Hence, church elders need to be equipped with skills on how to conduct church board meetings for the advancement of the mission.

APPENDIX H

HOLY COMMUNION

Introduction

The Holy Communion service is celebrated once per quarter. It includes two services: foot-washing followed by the Lord's Supper. The Holy Communion ought to be a most sacred and joyous occasion to the congregation, pastor, and elders. The service usually takes place during the worship service.

Biblical Basis of the Holy Communion and Its Meaning

1. The Holy Communion is the type of the Passover in the OT: God's institution to the salvation of His people (Exod 12:13-14).
 2. It was appointed by Christ for His Church (John 6:53-58; Luke 22:19-20; Matt 26:26-28; 1 Cor 11:23-26).
 3. The Holy Communion entails two services: foot washing and the Lord's Supper
 4. The Foot washing ceremony means washing of our sins by Jesus Christ.
 5. In the act of washing the disciples' feet, Christ performed a deeper cleansing, that of washing from the heart the stain of sin. The communicants sense an unworthiness to accept the sacred emblems before experiencing the cleansing that makes them "completely clean" (John 13:10). Jesus desired to wash away "alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. . . . Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away. . . . Looking upon them, Jesus could say, 'Ye are clean.'"—DA 646.
 6. The Lord's Supper ceremony symbols – bread and wine – representing His body and His blood.
 7. Meaning: Memorial of His crucifixion and holy sacrifice (1 Peter 1:19);
 8. Meaning: A Proclamation of the Second Coming (1 Cor 11:26)
 9. Who May Participate to the Holy Communion? All who have committed their lives to Christ; Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper.
 10. Who May Conduct the Holy Communion Service—The communion service is to be conducted by an ordained pastor or an ordained elder.
- N.B.: Communion for Those Who Cannot Attend: If members are ill or cannot for other reasons attend the communion service, the pastor or elder, accompanied and assisted by a deacon or deaconess, may conduct a special service in their homes.

Conclusion

1. The service of the Lord's Supper is just as holy today as it was when instituted by Jesus Christ. Jesus is still present when this sacred ordinance is celebrated. "It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence."—DA 656.

Each church elder is encouraged to have knowledge and skills on how to conduct the 2. Holy Communion service, and motivate church members to attend passionately.

APPENDIX I

PRAYER MEETINGS

Introduction

1. The prayer meetings should be the most interesting gatherings for church members.
2. Unfortunately, they are frequently poorly managed.
3. Many members attend preaching, but neglect the prayer meeting.

Biblical Basis for Prayer Meetings

1. Recommended by Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:6)
2. Jesus admonished His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4).
3. Acts 12: Peter is in prison, the church holds prayer meeting.
4. This prayer meeting wasn't just on his behalf only; it was their practice.
5. Hebrews 11:25 tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

Who should lead the prayer meetings?

1. The church pastor or a church elder (Acts 6:4; 1 Tim 3:2) – these are the ministers to perform prayer and the Word of God.
2. Any other layman or lay woman appointed by a Minister (1 Pet 2:9).

How to Conduct Prayer Meetings?

1. Wisdom should be sought of God;
2. Plans should be laid to conduct the meetings;
3. They ought to be interesting and attractive;
4. The minister (church elder) ought to keep time;
5. Spiritual and material preparations are important
6. Vary the plan of the service from week to week.
7. Let them be short but feeding;
8. “Our prayers should be short and right to the point. Long and tiresome petitions be left for the closet, if any have such to offer. Let the Spirit of God into your hearts, and it will sweep away all dry formality.”— 4T 70, 71.

Conclusion

Prayer meetings are important to help Christians grow daily spiritually;
They must be organized wisely and attractively;
They must bring spiritual revival into the life of the congregation;
Church elders ought to be familiar with the prayer meetings.

APPENDIX J

TEACHING THE BIBLE STUDIES

Introduction

1. A church elder should be ready to develop his spiritual gift of teaching the Bible.
2. For this reason, he needs to be equipped with skills in teaching and/or preaching the Word of God;
3. This will help him/her be able to prepare Bible studies, sermons, conduct evangelistic meetings, and nurturing church members and new converts.

Biblical Mandate for Church Elders

1. One of the competencies for a church elder is to “be able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2);
2. Teaching Bible studies is the fulfillment of the mission of the church (Matt 28:18-20);
3. This teaching helps a teacher to understand better the Word of God, to detect and fight against heresies (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

Methods of Teaching the Bible

1. Allow the Bible Interprets Itself: The Bible is its own expositor; it has its harmony (1 Peter 1:10-12).
2. Learning from the Holy Spirit and Sharing with Others: Teaching is one of the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ellen G. White advises: “Never should the Bible be studied and taught without prayer.”¹
3. Teach Students, Not the Lessons! - Some teachers focus on the content they want to cover to the detriment of students’ needs. This method calls teachers to link the content and the student’s needs.²
4. Warren’s Method: The Bible should be taught in such a way it can bring real change in the lives of its hearers.³
5. Revived by God’s Word Method – Read-and-Apply Method: consists of reading the whole story, writing insights, meditate on their meaning, and apply them in life.⁴

Important Tips to Give Bible studies:

1. Present God in your life and help the person accept the sacrifice of Jesus.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1894), 59.

² Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt, *Creating Bible Teaching*, Rev. and Exp. (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1998), 109.

³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 296.

⁴ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Revived by God’s Word: A Mini-Handbook for Bible Study* (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 13-19.

2. Before you go to witness, you need a spiritual preparation (prayer & study of Bible); material preparation (Bible, materials to help you give Bible studies, visual aids,..); physical preparation is also important
3. Begin a study with prayer;
4. Keep time: start on time, end on time;
5. Establish a friendly spirit before you start the study.
6. Introduce everyone (each one introduces him/herself);
7. Sit in a circle (everyone participates freely);
8. Use question and answer method;
9. Be careful and use good judgment;
10. Speak clearly, slowly;
11. Encourage discussion and questions;
12. Review the high points of the topic;
13. Read the Bible texts clearly (encourage them to find text and read the Bible);
14. Compliment good answers, even if they are not accurate;
15. Make brief comments, make sure every student understand.
16. Use illustrations that fit the study.
17. Avoid preaching, or lecturing
18. Stick to the subject of the lesson; don't give too much information in a single study;
19. Never argue; a controversial point needs to be studied for another time; avoid criticizing others or other religions;
20. After the Bible study, greet people, make next appointment, and quit.

Conclusion

Learning the Bible goes hand in hand with sharing it with others; this calls church elders always to be “updated, research-based,” be teachable from the Holy Spirit, in order to fulfill the Great Commission and develop their local churches⁵

⁵ Bernard M. Spooner, *Christian Education Leadership: Making Disciples in the 21st Century Church* (Coppell, Texas: Christian Leadership, 2012), 6-7.

APPENDIX K

PREACHING

Introduction

1. The Bible shows the importance and responsibility of preaching God's Word (Rom 10:14-15).
2. In 2 Timothy 4:1-5, the apostle Paul admonishes the church elders on their responsibility of preaching the Word of God.
3. The Bible is the main tool to use in the preparation of sermons.

Preparation Before Delivering a Sermon

1. Be familiar with your Bible
2. Allow the Bible to teach you
3. Believe in the power of the Bible: "As the Bible says."
4. Understand the context

While Delivering Sermon

1. Let the Bible speak. Let people know how they can find hope.
2. Ere kana icyo isomo rivuga kuri Yesu: 1 Kor 2:2.
3. Let your sermon lead people unto Jesus, their only hope for eternal life. Present your sermon in a simple way (EV178).
4. Every sermon ought to be Christ-centered (John 12:32).
5. Remember the need of your church
6. Keep your eye contact on your audience
7. Be passionate, show enthusiasm
8. Use physical signs, illustrations are important
9. Invite people to dedicate their lives unto Jesus (Call)
10. Be yourself; don't imitate others.

Important Parts of a Sermon

1. *Introduction* (The Hook): Attract people and invite them to follow the message. Don't give excuses. Use 5 minutes.
2. *Body of a Sermon* (The Book/What/Implications): Give knowledge; let the Bible enter into the hearts; use illustrations; remain focused. Use 20 minutes.
3. *Conclusion* (The Took/Response): Conclude well, not quickly neither longer. Give main points that help people accept the message and God's love. Use 5 minutes.
4. *Call* (Change): Every sermon should end with a call to dedicate life unto Jesus. Give people opportunity to accept Jesus as their personal Saviour. Pray for them. Use 5 minutes.

Types of Sermons:

- Textual. Example: John 3:14-16
- Expository. Example: Gen 3:1-21
- Doctrinal. Example: Second Coming of Jesus
- Thematic. Example: Love.
- Biographic. Example: Jacob became Israel (Gen 28-32); Saul became Paul (Acts 9).

Conclusion

1. Preaching should help people rededicate their lives unto Jesus, their Saviour.
2. It ought to be Christ centered sermon.

APPENDIX L

PERSONAL EVANGELISM/CHRIST WITNESSING

Introduction

1. The Early Christian Church was characterized by a rapid growth
2. From the experience of the Upper Room in Jerusalem (Acts 1:15)
3. The secret: Every member was involved in the mission; every house was a center of mission (oikos).

A call to Christ witnessing/personal evangelism

1. Bible's invitation: Matt 28:19, 20; Is 60:1; Acts 1:8; 13:47; Mark 5:19.
2. Evidence of our salvation (2 Kor 5:15; 1 John 3:16-18)
3. For the glory of God (Luke 15:6, 7).
4. It strengthens the power of the Holy Spirit
5. Use of spiritual gifts (1 Pet 4:10).
6. Evidence of the Second Coming of Jesus (Matt 24:14).
7. Follow Christ's method of evangelism (John 4)

Process of Witnessing/personal evangelism:

A. Christ Method Alone: Five steps used by Jesus in witnessing

1. Jesus mingled with people as one who desired their good;
2. He showed sympathy;
3. He ministered to their needs;
4. He won their confidence;
5. He bade them follow Him.

Jesus has used successfully this method: Nicodemus (John 3); the Samaritan woman (John 4); the man who was sick at the pool of Bethesda (John 5);

B. Use your own testimony: Three elements are important

1. Your life before accepting Jesus;
2. How you became a Christian;
3. Your life after becoming a Christian;

You can prepare Bible studies to give to your client while witnessing (See tips on how to give a Bible study lesson in Appendix I).

Methods of Witnessing:

(1) Create relationships with people; (2) Find a common thing; (3) Wake/Touch their needs; (4) Start communication; (5) Don't go beyond; (6) Don't judge; (7) Remain focused; (8) Speaks clearly about his/her life; (9) Propose Bible study; (10) Prayer and leave (Avoid eating if possible).

Conclusion

1. Christ witnessing or personal evangelism is a powerful means of evangelization.
2. It creates permanent friendship that leads to Christ's friendship.
3. It leaves eternal influence that leads to eternal salvation of people.
4. It helps the church grow qualitatively.

APPENDIX M

PUBLIC EVANGELISM

Introduction

1. Public evangelism is a call to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20)
2. It helps the church grow numerically

Biblical Basis

1. The apostolic church: Acts 2:41, 42 – Immediate results: 3000 people baptized
2. Acts 2:47 – More members added because of Peter' public evangelism
3. Paul was a powerful evangelist: Acts 21:20

Preparation and Plans of Public Evangelism

1. Every evangelistic meeting needs visionary leaders, people of hope, hardworking people, and prayer warriors.
2. Plans of Public Evangelism entail:
3. Church preparation: Revival of church members
4. Visit and invitations (use of cards)
5. Site preparation;
6. Inside the tent
7. Put up the tent (toilet is important): 2 or 3 days before the beginning of meetings;
8. Publicity
9. Songs and Choirs
10. Youth and women involvement
11. Security of people and properties (cars, motorcycles, bikes)
12. Teachings on health and family life must be prepared and delivered (Find professionals).
13. Meetings are necessary before, during, and at the end of evangelism
14. Preparation of baptism
15. Integration of new members and follow up

Note: Different strategies can be used to have a successful evangelism meeting: Bible studies distribution; small groups involvement; groups of evangelism by internet (facebook, whatsApp,...); publications; testimonies; choirs; radio and television;...

Conclusion

1. Because of the importance of evangelism, all church elders ought to be involved in this work, and involve all church members to work actively as a team.
2. Public evangelism is a powerful means of bringing many people into the church;
3. It needs a powerful strategy on keeping these new members in the church.

APPENDIX N
SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Introduction

1. Spiritual gifts are supernatural graces given by the Holy Spirit to every believer of the Body of Christ.
2. They are given for edification and growth of the Church of God.

Importance of spiritual gifts

1. For the work of ministry of God’s word (Eph 4:12)
2. For the growth of Christ’s body and its unity (Eph 4:13)
3. Reach the perfection of Christ (Eph 4:13b)
4. For the glory of God (1 Pet 4:10, 11)
5. To give knowledge and understanding to church members (1 Cor 12:1).

How to discover your spiritual gifts

- Step 1: Open your heart to God in prayer.
- Step 2: Be ready to apply your gifts.
- Step 3: Get informed.
- Step 4: Begin with what you enjoy.
- Step 5: Experiment as much as possible.
- Step 6: Verify your effectiveness.
- Step 7: Seek the opinions of others.
- Step 8. Utilize a formal spiritual gifts assessment.

NB.: Whenever you discover a specific gift, it is important that you use it. Find out where your gifts are most urgently needed.

Gifts and tasks must correspond.¹

The major spiritual gifts lists are found in the New Testament, in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.

Romans 12	1 Corinthians 12	Ephesians 4
Exhortation	Administration	Apostle
Giving	Apostle	Evangelism
Leadership	Discernment	Pastor
Mercy	Faith	Prophecy
Giving	Healings	Teaching
Prophecy	Helps	
Teaching	Knowledge	
	Miracles	
	Prophecy	
	Teaching	

¹ Yvonne Carter, Spiritual gifts in the disciple-making church, accessed 23 June 2016, http://nmweb.abhms.org/resources/church_life_leadership/wcll-101_Spiritual_Gifts.pdf.

	Tongues	
	Tongues interpretation	
	Wisdom	

Conclusion

1. The Holy Spirit gives the spiritual gifts for the ministry of God's work
2. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift
3. Christians should complement each other.

APPENDIX O

SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY

This guide in discovering your spiritual gifts should not be viewed as a test. The only “right” answers here are honest answers. The answers you provide will help you find your areas of strength within the realm of Christian service. Score the exercise as follows: Circle 1 if the statement is always false or doesn’t apply. Circle 2 if the statement is usually false. Circle 3 if the statement is evenly divided between true and false. Circle 4 if the statement is usually true. Circle 5 if the statement is always true. “This statement has been satisfactorily experienced in my life” or “I believe I have the ability for this”:

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Easily delegating important responsibility to others					
2	Clearly perceiving the difference between truth and error					
3	Leading others to a decision for salvation through faith in Christ					
4	Verbally encouraging the wavering, troubled or discouraged					
5	Believing God will keep His promises in spite of circumstances					
6	Managing money well in order to give liberally to the Lord’s work					
7	In the name of the Lord, curing diseases					
8	Assisting key leaders to relieve them for their essential job					
9	Providing food/lodging graciously to those in need					
10	When praying for others, I often lose track of time					
11	Having the ability to discover new truths for myself					
12	Persuading others to move toward achieving biblical objectives					
13	Working joyfully with persons ignored by the majority					
14	Adapting easily to a culture different from mine					
15	Enjoying the responsibility for the spiritual growth of Christians					
16	Enjoy being called upon to do special jobs around the church					
17	Enabling persons to learn biblical truths in detail					
18	Applying truth effectively in my own life					
19	Able to organize ideas, people, things for effective ministry					
20	Judging well between what is evil and what is good					
21	Sharing joyfully how Christ has brought me to Himself					
22	Being an instrument for people to direct them to face spiritual reality					
23	Generally being more excited about the future than the past					
24	Giving things or money liberally to the Lord’s work					
25	In the name of the Lord, healing the emotionally disturbed					
26	Ushering or cleaning up at a church-related facility					
27	Providing a gracious haven for guests					
28	Taking prayer requests more seriously than other Christians seem to					
29	Having insights of truth which bring conviction to other Christians					
30	Knowing where I am going and seeing other Christians follow me					
31	Aiding the undeserving					
32	Learning well another language to minister to a different people					
33	Sacrificially giving myself for young or straying Christians					
34	Enjoy routine work at church that would bore others					
35	Explaining clearly Scriptural teaching to others					
36	Enjoy working out solutions to complicated problems					

37	Am able to set goals and make effective plans to reach them					
38	Tending to look beneath surface and question people's motives					
39	Explain clearly Bible truths that point people to Jesus as the Savior					
40	Verbally challenging those who seem spiritually apathetic					
41	Trusting in the presence and power of God for the impossible					
41	Feeling moved when confronted with financial needs in God's work					
43	In God's name, treating successfully those who are spiritually sick					
44	Typing, filing or recording figures or minutes for the Lord's work					
45	Having a knack for making strangers feel at home					
46	Prayer is one of my favorite spiritual exercises					
47	Acquire and master new facts and principles of Bible truth					
48	Influencing others toward accomplishing biblical goals					
49	Visiting in hospitals or retirement homes and being blessed					
50	Relate well to Christians of different race, language or culture					
51	Knowing intimately and being well known by those I serve					
52	Feeling satisfaction in doing menial tasks for God's glory					
53	Making difficult biblical truths understandable to others					
54	Choose from several biblical alternatives an option which works					
55	Able to lead a group in making decisions together					
56	Knowing well what spiritual gift another Christian has/does not have					
57	Emphasizing a message which is primarily the Gospel of salvation					
58	Able to counsel effectively the perplexed, guilty or addicted					
59	Know God's will for future growth of His work even when others are not					
60	Able to earn much money for giving to the Lord's work					
61	Praying for others so that healing occurs					
62	Distributing Gospel literature and papers in my community					
63	Having a genuine graciousness and appreciation of each guest					
64	God consistently answers my prayers in a tangible way					
65	I study and read a great deal to learn biblical truths					
66	Steering others through difficulties in the Lord's work					
67	Taking shut-ins out for a drive and assist them in practical ways					
68	Enjoying life in a foreign country					
69	Help needy Christians and guide them to the Bible and pray with them					
70	Willing to take orders rather than give them					
71	Communicating biblical truths to others which produce changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or conduct					
72	My nominating others for positions prove to be good selections					
73	Able to recruit Christians and put them to exercise their spiritual gifts					
74	Can see through a phony before his phoniness is clearly evident					
75	Continually seeking out unbelievers in order to win them					
76	Comforting a Christian in his affliction or suffering					
77	Trusting in the reliability of God when all looks dim					
78	Willing to maintain a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work					
79	Helping effectively those who are feeble-minded					
80	Happy to be a teacher's aide in a Bible class					
81	Enjoying strangers in my house					
82	Sometimes praying when I probably should be doing other things					
83	Able to distinguish key and important facts of Scripture					
84	Others follow me because I have knowledge which contributes to the building up of my church					
85	Talking cheerfully with those in prison, or the lonely shut-in person					
86	Having the ability to learn foreign languages					
87	Able to restore persons who have wandered away from their Christian community					
88	Enjoying it when others express a need for help					
89	Training Christians to be more obedient disciples of Christ					
90	Feeling an unusual presence of God when an important decision needs to be					

made						
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Spiritual Gift Evaluation Sheet

Value of Answers	Total	Gift
Row A	1 19 37 55 73	Administration
Row B	2 20 38 56 74	Discernment
Row C	3 21 39 57 75	Evangelist
Row D	4 22 40 58 76	Exhortation
Row E	5 23 41 59 77	Faith
Row F	6 24 42 60 78	Giving
Row G	7 25 43 61 79	Healing
Row H	8 26 44 62 80	Helps
Row I	9 27 45 63 81	Hospitality
Row J	10 28 46 64 82	Intercession
Row K	11 29 47 65 83	Knowledge
Row L	12 30 48 66 84	Leadership
Row M	13 31 49 67 85	Mercy
Row N	14 32 50 68 86	Missionary
Row O	15 33 51 69 87	Pastor
Row P	16 34 52 70 88	Service
Row Q	17 35 53 71 89	Teacher
Row R	18 36 54 72 90	Wisdom

Circle the three highest scores, and this should help you in determining your area of spiritual service for God and His church.

APPENDIX P

DESCRIPTIONS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

All spiritual gifts inventories contain descriptions and definitions of the various gifts. These descriptions and definitions represent the efforts of the authors to describe as best they can how the various gifts function. The descriptions that follow are from C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*. They are included here for your information and do not necessarily represent the last word in either descriptions or definitions.

Administration. The gift of administration is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the body of Christ and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals. 1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 6:1-7; Acts 27:11; Luke 14:28-30; Titus 1:5.

Discerning of Spirits. The gift of discerning of spirits is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to know with assurance whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality divine, human, or Satanic. 1 Cor. 12:10; Acts 5:1-11; Acts 16:16-18; 1 John 4:1-6; Matt. 16:21-23.

Evangelism. The gift of evangelism is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to shared the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the body of Christ. Eph. 4:11-14; 2 Tim. 4:5; Acts 8:5,6; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 14:2 1; Acts 21:8.

Exhortation. The gift of exhortation is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel to other members of the body in such a way that they feel helped and healed. Rom. 12:8; 1 Tim. 4:13; Heb. 10:25; Acts 14:22.

Faith. The gift of faith is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for his work. 1 Cor. 12:9; Acts 11:22-24; Acts 27:21-25; Heb. 11; Rom. 4:18-21.

Giving. The gift of giving is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness. Rom. 12:82; Cor. 8:1-7; 2 Cor. 9:2-8; Mark 12:41-44.

Healing. The gift of healing is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illnesses and restore health apart from the use of natural means. 1 Cor. 12:9,28; Acts 3:1-10; Acts 5:12-16; Acts 9:32-35; Acts 28:7-10.

Helps. The gift of helps is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to invest the talents they have in the body, thus enabling others to increase the effectiveness of their own spiritual gifts. 1 Cor. 12:2 8; Rom. 16:1,2; Acts 9:36; Luke 8:2,3; Mark 15:40, 41.

Hospitality. The gift of hospitality is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to provide an open house and a warm welcome to

those in need of food and lodging. 1 Peter 4:9; Rom. 12:9-13; Rom. 16:23; Acts 6:14,15; Heb. 13:1, 2.

Intercession. The gift of intercession is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent and specific answers to their prayers, to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian. James 5:14-16; 1 Tim. 2:1,2; Col. 1:9-12; Col. 4:12,13; Acts 12:12; Luke 22:41-44.

Knowledge. The gift of knowledge is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas which are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the body. I Cor. 2:14; 1 Cor. 12:8; Acts 5:1-11; Col. 2:2,3; 2 Cor. 11:6.

Leadership. The gift of leadership is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God. 1 Tim. 5:17; Acts 7:10; Acts 15:7-11; Rom. 12:8; Heb. 13:17; Luke 9:51.

Mercy. The gift of mercy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals (both Christian and non-Christian) who suffer disturbing physical, mental, or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully-done deeds which reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering. Rom. 12:8; Mark 9:41; Acts 16:33,34; Luke 10:33-35; Mart. 20:29-34; Mart. 25:34-40; Acts 11:28-30.

Missionary. The missionary gift is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture. I Cor. 9:19-23; Acts 8:4; Acts 13:2,3; Acts 22:21; Rom. 10:15.

Pastor. The gift of pastor is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to assume long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers. Eph. 4:11-14; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; John 10:1-18; 1 Pet 5:1-3.

Service. The gift of service is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired results. 2 Tim. 1:16-18; Rom. 12:7; Acts 6:1-7; Titus 3:14; Gal. 6:2, 10.

Teaching. The gift of teaching is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the body and its members in such a way that others will learn. 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11-14; Rom 12:7; Acts 18:24-28; Acts 20:20, 21.

Wisdom. The gift of wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insights into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the body of Christ. 1 Cor 2:1-13; 1 Cor 12:8; Acts 6:3,10; Js 1:5-6; 2 Pet 3: 15, 16.

APPENDIX Q

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

A. FEEDBACK FROM CHURCH ELDERS

Please, tick where applicable according to you (SA: Strongly agree; A: Agree; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly disagree).

1	The training given to church leadership is relevant	SA	A	D	SD
2	The training given on teaching & preaching the Bible was relevant				
3	The training given on evangelism & witnessing is relevant				
4	I gained knowledge on how to work more closely as a team with my pastor				
5	Through this program, I am equipped and developed as church elder				
6	I gained knowledge on how to lead the church effectively				
7	I gained knowledge on how to teach & preach the Bible effectively				
8	I gained knowledge on how to conduct evangelism effectively				
9	My knowledge on SDA Church manual has increased				
10	I gained knowledge on how to discover and use spiritual gifts				
11	The manual prepared and given is relevant				
12	The manual given can be used as a tool to develop and equip other leaders				
13	The program was participatory				
14	The allocated time was enough				
15	Time given for discussion was enough				
16	The participants were actively involved in the discussions				
17	This program will bring changes in the leadership of our church				
18	This program will bring changes in the teaching & preaching of the Bible				

B. FEEDBACK FROM CHURCH PASTOR

Please, tick where applicable according to you. (SA: Strongly agree; A: Agree; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly disagree).

1	The training given was relevant	SA	A	D	SD
2	Church elders will improve their ministry as a team				
3	Knowledge of church elders on SDA Church manual has increased				
4	The manual prepared and given is relevant				
5	The manual will serve church elders to develop and equip other leaders				
6	The program was participatory				
7	The allocated time was enough				
8	Time given for discussion was enough				
9	The participants were actively involved in the discussions				
10	This program will bring changes in church ministry of church elders				

APPENDIX R

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

1. What do you think are the major benefits you gained from this program?
2. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of this project in your ministry?
3. Did you observe any weakness or strength in the program?
4. Could you recommend remedies to that weakness?
5. What is the best way to make this program sustainable and what do you recommend to the SDA Church in general?

Thank you

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Background: I was born to Thamar Mukankubito and Hesron Kibibi on June 24, 1965 at Gitwe, Ruhango District, Rwanda. I am the sixth of seven children in the family, and was reared by my parents who were also my first teachers. I was baptized on June 19, 1982 and received the Adventist education from my parents who were ordained ministers. I did my education from primary to university in the SDA schools.

Family: I was married on March 3, 1996 to Mediatrice Uwitonze at Gitwe, Ruhango District. We have been blessed with three children, Gisele Irakoze (Born in 1998), Provy Mbabazi (Born in 1999) and Olivier Byiringiro (Born in 2003).

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2013-Adventist University of Africa (AUA), Nairobi, Kenya (DMin Student)

2004-2007 University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, (Bugema Campus), (MEd)

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1981-1987 Secondary Education at Gitwe Adventist College, Ruhango, Rwanda

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Ordained:

1998 Ordained Pastor holding a ministerial credential from Rwanda Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Experience:

2009-Head of Translation Department at Rwanda Union Mission

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2002-2003 District Pastor of Gitisi and Mujyejuru SDA Churches, Ruhango.

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