

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry
Emphasis in Mission

Adventist University of Africa

**TITLE: SOCIAL MINISTRY AS A STRATEGY FOR MEMBERSHIP
RETENTION AND EMPOWERMENT FOR MISSION
IN ABA SOUTH CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS**

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Date completed: June 2016

Many Seventh-day Adventist Church members leave the Church for want of social care in Aba South Conference. Obviously, these members are attracted to other denominations where they feel that their social needs would be met. This was confirmed by the focus group findings. The church has not sufficiently employed and explored the instrument of social ministry in the retention and empowerment of her membership. Other denominations and the newly emerging ones seem to be maximizing the benefits of social ministry strategy better than the Seventh-day Adventist Church, hence regularly recording an increase in their membership. The needy church members feel dissatisfied or neglected due to lack of social attention by the church. If measures are not taken to empower the members, it will lead to continuous loss and dissatisfaction of the membership in the church.

This research designed and developed a strategy to promote social ministry in the churches in Aba South Conference. In addition to this, it sought to encourage

church members to embrace and do social ministry for the retention and empowerment of the membership. Also, it was designed to use social care as an effective in-reach and outreach evangelistic tool.

This research followed a qualitative approach. A biblical and theological background on social ministry based on Old Testament and New Testament views including the Writings of Ellen G. White were considered. A literature review of some Adventist and non-Adventist scholars examined. Focus group discussions were carried out within the Churches of the case study, namely Umuocham (urban) and Akpaa 1 (rural) respectively. The findings were analyzed to develop interventions or programs to address the problems.

The results were evaluated using SWOT analyses instruments to measure the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats of the research exercise.

Implementations of the interventions were on two occasions extended to other churches to test the efficacy of the methods. Reports of the results of implementation were received from the research teams within the Churches.

Through the interventions carried out which included Community Services, Visitation Training, Capacity Building/Empowerment, social ministry consciousness, and activities were raised among church members. Thus the Churches were impacted, and subsequent outcomes being monitored and reported by the research team members.

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

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ADVENTISTS

A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Joseph Marizu Ukegbu

June 2016

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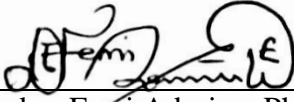
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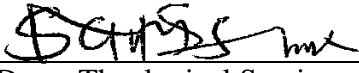
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Dedicated to God who has granted me the privilege of His service.

To the poor and needy whose anguish evoke a restless concern, sympathy, and curiosity. To my wife and children for their loving and caring support that helped to cushion the challenges of our changing ministry.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AMO	Adventist Men's Organization
ASC	Aba South Conference
AWM	Adventist Women's Ministries
AYM	Adventist Youth Ministries
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist Church
SDF	Spring Time Development Foundation

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Description of the Ministry Context

In the researcher's 20 years of field and office experience as a pastor and administrator, he has identified and appreciated the impact of Social Ministry as one of the unfailing strategies for the mission in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Social ministry includes every work of welfare and hospitality or deeds of compassion. In this context, it implies the social and economic implications of the gospel as it affects the poor under-privileged within and outside the Church.

In a sense, it could also be described as care ministry. Having served the church in various capacities, as a church and district Pastor, Children's Ministries director, the Secretary of a Conference, and currently a Conference President, observations have confirmed the need to step up the services of the church and the members in the area of social ministries. It must be borne in mind that a church which is busy in "evangelism" without any concern to respond to the social pressures of human life is a church which has lost her mission and the transforming power of the gospel.¹

It is hoped that this research would sensitize as well as encourage our church in welfare evangelism, thereby strengthening human relationships within and outside the SDA Church community. This will, in turn, result in membership empowerment

¹ John H. Gladwin, *God's People in God's World: Biblical Motives for Social Involvement* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1980), 181.

and retention. It has been shown that where direct messages have failed, welfare services have most often succeeded. Presently, some of our church members do not show enough concern regarding the overwhelming needs of our Adventists and non-Adventist friends who visit our churches from Sabbath to Sabbath seeking for welfare assistance. Their numbers are always on the increase.

It gives a concern that while God blesses His church at all time, many members are still living in abject poverty. Many come to church even without food, much less good clothing. This is an unhealthy shift from the apostolic church example, and something urgent needs to be done about it. The church is supposed to be the poor man's abode of hope, capable of providing succor to the poor, the unfortunate, and the weary. The case was different with the early church, for it is recorded in Acts of the Apostles that the believers then had everything in common. The majority of the believers were of one heart and one soul and none could say that any of his personal possessions belongs to him. More interestingly, it is recorded that because of this love and concern for one another, there was nobody who lacked anything among them (Acts 4:32, 34).

Christians believe and accept that believers in the same domain of faith should be their brothers' keepers. Appeals for welfare, care, and hospitality have gone unheeded sometimes in our churches. Even during emergency situations, the responses do not meet desirable expectations. Some recent cases at hand include that of a young boy of fourteen years, who had an accident while returning with his mother (AWM leader) from visiting and taking food items to the newly baptized members. One of the young man's legs got amputated as a result of the accident. Another instance was a young lady who could not deliver her baby completely, and having done so halfway the baby got suspended (medically referred to as breached

delivery). Consequently, the woman was taken to another hospital, where surgery was performed and the baby lost in the process, and her own life nearly lost as well. The Church could not meet up with the financial demands of these two challenges, for social ministry has to do with giving and sacrifice.

Observations have shown that when church members lack the enthusiasm to give, their gifts tend to be of low quality. Understanding the need and dynamism of social ministry as mission strategy in the SDA Church would go a long way to attracting souls to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing else could be more demonstrative of the love of Christ and practicality of the gospel than welfare ministry. Gorrel is of the view that, if the church should develop a social consciousness of the community where she is operating, it would fulfill her great purpose and commission of transforming the human society into the kingdom of God.²

Social Ministry evangelism is a practical and an impactful system of soul winning. Commenting on the efficacy of this type of evangelism, a renowned church writer sees it as a Christ-like style with a near flawless potential for success. She says, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good, He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them ‘follow Me.’”³

As a minister of the gospel, personal experiences seem to affirm White’s observation about Christ’s method. People want to see sermons (what we do) today

² Donald K. Gorrel, *The Age of Social Responsibility: The Social Gospel in the Progressive Era 1900 – 1920* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 87.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Ontario, Canada: Pacific Press, 1942), 143.

and not hear sermons (what we say). If this method is integrated into Aba South Conference churches and their evangelism packages, it would not only advance the mission of the church but also serve as an eye-opener to many churches in the Conference. Demonstrating practical Christianity is usually where it proves most difficult for many of the professed Christians. Involvement of church members in social ministry should make the difference between genuine church members and pew-warmers. I strongly believe that if welfare evangelism is effectively embraced and applied by even one-half of the church members, there will be a success where hitherto other methods have been failing.

A good example is the positive impact of the Adventist Church social ministry evangelism in many of the prisons and motherless baby's homes in Aba city. From the year 2012 to 2016, 59 inmates have joined the church through the effort of the personal ministry and the youth departments. A good number of others become members when released, mainly as a result of welfare packages received during periodic visitations made by the church to the prison yards. In my public evangelistic campaigns, more souls have been attracted to the church when we intensify welfare services, like the medical ministry, community projects, and welfare activities.

For example, a chronic alcoholic and drug addict joined the church during one public evangelistic campaign. After all the strategies to reach him failed to make an impact, personal gift items including shoes and clothing which were packaged and sent to him by some of the evangelistic team members, eventually led him to a decision to join the church and he has remained in the fellowship till date. This is just one, among other instances. Organizing outreach campaigns where ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) or other church's social activity had preceded puts Adventism in good light and makes soul winning more fruitful.

It has also been observed by others that the other religious and non-religious organizations are increasingly becoming aware of the viability of the social ministry as a strategy for soul winning.

Statement of the Problem

Many Seventh-day Adventist Church members leave the Church for want of social care in Aba South Conference. The problem is that the church has not sufficiently employed and explored the instrument of social ministry in the retention and empowerment of her membership. Obviously, these members are attracted to other denominations where they feel their social needs would be met. Other denominations and the newly emerging ones seem to be maximizing the benefits of social ministry strategy, hence regularly recording an increase in their membership. The needy church members feel dissatisfied or neglected due to lack of social attention by the church. If measures are not taken to empower the members, it will lead to continuous loss and dissatisfaction of the membership in the church.

Statement of the Purpose

This research was designed to develop a strategy to promote and effect social ministry in the Churches in Aba South Conference (ASC). In addition, it was intended to awaken Church members to embrace and do social ministry for their retention and empowerment. Again, its design was to use social action as an effective in-reach and outreach evangelistic tool.

Justification

The fact that many of Christ's teachings center on giving and care (Luke 6:38; Matt 10:8), notwithstanding many church members still find it difficult to share freely. There are many poor ones in our community and society. The weak or indigent

persons may not be blamed for their situation in many cases. The Bible says clearly that “The poor will never cease from the land. ... ‘You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.’” (Deut 15:11 NKJ). It is better to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Many Protestant churches seem to be more generous in supporting their weak members than the SDAs.

If SDA Church members should imbibe the attitude of bearing one another’s burdens, and apply the principle in Galatians 6:9-10, it is likely to bring a phenomenal increase in her membership. It says ‘And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith’ (NKJV). Till today, some of the Community services, including ADRA projects carried out in the rural communities still speak volumes in favor of the SDA Church. Some of these projects include drilling of boreholes, building, and renovation of primary schools, provision of relief materials to the disaster and accident victims.

The church has not effectively harnessed this aspect of ministry for the good of the poor and the mission of the church. This study will among other things help to boost the image of the SDA Church in the community, as it would position her to fulfill its missionary assignments. The church would become a place of succor and comfort for all and sundry. However, Burrill echoes a slightly different opinion that when churches are helped always, it is an evidence of weakness, lifelessness, and helplessness. Anything of such weakness is as serious as the habit of depending on others for those things which we ought to provide for ourselves. For him, a disciple must not be dependent on other Christians and still remain spiritually alive.⁴

⁴ Russell C. Burrill, *The Life and Mission of the Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Books, 1998), 40–41.

Delimitation

The scope of this research is limited to Aba South Conference of SDA Church. Since not all the 80 churches and branch Sabbath Schools in this Conference are equally affected by this poor attitude to giving to the poor, this research will focus only on two of such churches. The two churches are in Aba South Conference in the Eastern Nigeria Union Conference of SDA. While ‘Umuocham’ church in Umuocham District will represent a church in the urban area, ‘Akpaa 1’ church in Akpaa1 District will represent a rural church, all in Aba South Conference.

The choice of the two is to have a balanced view of social ministry from the urban and rural perspective. Having pastored the two Churches, accessibility to information concerning them may not pose many challenges. Social ministries as performed by some major arms of the church, like Adventist Men’s Organization (AMO) and Adventist Women’s Ministries (AWM) shall be highlighted.

It should be noted that this paper focuses on social ministry benefits given and received by the church and individual church members within and outside the church community, and not necessarily those sponsored by the Non- Governmental Organizations like ADRA, Spring Time Foundation (Nigeria), and the Red Cross Society etc.

Methodology

This research will basically follow a descriptive or qualitative approach as follows:

- A. This research shall include both theoretical and practical aspects:
 1. A theological foundation for social ministries taken from the Old and New Testaments will be furnished. In addition to this, the writings of

Ellen G. White will be investigated to gain insights on how social ministry impact mission and evangelism.

2. In addition to this, contemporary SDA and other Christian literature, especially from Evangelical and Protestant and non-Christian writers on social ministry activities will be reviewed.

B. A model strategy on social or care ministries will be developed and presented to the Aba South Conference of the SDA Church.

1. Focus Group discussion would be conducted in Umuocham and Akpaa 1 Churches to investigate the opinions of the local Church members on the issue of social care. It will be analyzed to help design programs to address the problem.
2. The strategy shall be integrated into the churches of Aba South Conference Churches through a seminar on visitation, community services, capacity building, and empowerment.
3. The implementation shall be done through leadership / membership participation in social ministries. It will involve the use of some Pastors and skilled facilitators in the investigation and running of the programs.
4. This strategy will be followed, prior, during, and after this study, through welfare or social ministries committees of ASC, districts, and Churches, and the results will be evaluated and presented to Aba South Conference for information and adoption.
5. All steps toward achieving these social ministries goals for mission shall be included in this dissertation.

C. The approximate date for completion of this dissertation process is April 2016.

Definition of Terms

The following terms used in the research work shall be given working definitions

Social Ministry: this has to do with social and economic implications of the gospel as it relates to the poor and the under-privileged members and non-members of the Church.

Welfare: any work or act of charity bestowed to the needy for their happiness and wellbeing.

Hospitality: friendly and generous treatment, entertainment of guests or strangers, especially in one's own home.

Compassion: pity for the suffering of others, concern, and care.

Empowerment: the researcher agrees with Lord and Hutchison who define it as processes of helping individuals to achieve progressive control over the various aspects of their lives so as to participate in the community with dignity.⁵

The Poor: the condition of being economically and socially deprived leading to dependency.

The Needy: somebody in want though may not necessarily be of money.

Capacity Building: the act of developing and strengthening human and institutional resources, skills, abilities for the purpose of survival in a changing world.

Missions/Mission: While 'missions' has to do with the missionary endeavors of the church that go beyond her borders and immediate gospel influence, to win

⁵ John Lord and Peggy Hutchison, "The Process of Empowerment: Implications for Theory Practice," *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 5–22.

converts from other faiths and non-faiths, ‘mission’ includes the upward, inward, and outward ministries of the church.⁶

A church member in the context of this research is both the baptized and non-baptized of the faith. The needy in this research work include Adventist members who are regular and the non-regular ones, and nonmembers who desire the support and help of the more economically privileged members.

Spirit of Prophecy (SOP) – the writings of Ellen G. White which make clear the Bible as the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.

Expectations

This dissertation is expected to positively impact the life of the church and non-church members in regards to giving and caring. It will project and promote the image of the church in the immediate and remote environments, as she would be identified as having genuine welfare or social ministries concerns. It is expected to strengthen all the departments of the church, especially the AMO, AWM, Personal Ministries, and other vital arms of the SDA Church.

In addition, it is hoped to achieve the following objectives:

1. To change the mentality of church members and stir up the spirit of mission, social care, and hospitality.
2. To foster the attitude of giving among the members, especially the Adventist Men’s Organization (AMO) who should be on the frontline of this ministry. The Adventist Women’s Ministries (AWM) will not be left out.

⁶ A. Scott Moreau, *Introducing World Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 72.

3. To reduce the dependency culture on external aids, thereby making the church more welfare-sensitive and service oriented as the foreign missions.
4. To challenge church members to make more contributions to Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), rather than waiting for financial grants from abroad to execute immediate community needs or projects.

It is intended to expand the vision of the SDA Church on social ministry evangelism and outreaches. The church cannot do less in terms of keeping her members if her welfare packages cannot measure up with those of her contemporaries operating within her environment. If this is achieved, it will help to reduce further loss of church members to the other denominations. Social ministry evangelism emphasizes practical religion and makes soul winning effective. Welfare or care evangelism has always proved to be a catalyst to church growth as demonstrated during the time of the early church (Acts 2:45-47). If every church member buys into this biblical evangelism strategy, it will not only reduce the workload of the gospel ministers, it will also cut down on the outrageous expenditures made on some fruitless public evangelistic campaigns that bother on mere platitudes and lip services. The elaborate social ministry would among other things hopefully strengthen relationships, in terms of building faith, trust, and confidence among fellow church members, and may open outreach opportunities as more people are attracted to join the Church.

Furthermore, it will improve the life of the poor in the community, and help them to appreciate the love of Christ. The researcher himself and the entire pastoral family shall be challenged into making more commitments toward social ministry efforts, thereby setting the right example for the laity. It would, to a large extent, raise more 'givers' than 'receivers' in the church. It will revive the dying relationships

among church members and neighbors within the community. It is hoped that this research would sensitize as well as encourage our church in her in-reach and outreaches, thereby strengthening human relationships within and outside the SDA Church community.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
FOR SOCIAL MINISTRY

Preamble

This chapter seeks to establish the theological and biblical foundation for Social Ministry from the Old and New Testaments as well as insights from the works of Ellen G. White on Social Ministry. Although the word “social ministry” is not used in the Bible, it is implied in related words, ‘Welfare,’ ‘Compassion,’ and ‘Hospitality,’ which form the framework for all social and care activities both in Old and New Testament Churches. These three words are like the tripod stand for social ministry. And for that reason, a brief word study of these keywords is provided in this introduction.

Welfare

The word ‘welfare’ refers to ‘good’ or goodness’ in its broadest sense. It derives from the Hebrew verb ‘*tob.*’ It has different shades of meaning which include practical, economic, material or abstract goodness such as beauty, desirability. For present purposes, it is important to identify that the usages are almost within the same range of meanings. Its extended meaning include hospitality and friendship (Gen 26:29); beneficial counsel (2 Sam 17:7,14); general economic prosperity (1 Kings 10:7); God’s intentions (Amos 9: 4); and practical gain from work (Eccl 13:13), among others.¹

¹ R. Laird Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Computer Data Base, PC study Bible, 2012.

Compassion

The Hebrew word for ‘Compassion’ is ‘*Rakham*’ derived from the noun *rekhem* (womb) meaning ‘compassion, tender mercy, and love.’ The verb is used with both God and humans as subjects but appears more frequently in reference to the compassion or tender mercy of God. There are categories of meanings and overlap between some of them, but in the context of this paper, only the former applies, which means, the tender mercy of God (Ps 55:1) which is related to the material instincts of a mother for the child of her womb.²

Hospitality

It comes from the root word ‘*Xenos*’ meaning foreigner, stranger (Acts 17:30; 1Pet. 4:4) or *Xenia* which means hospitality, quest-room (Rom 16: 23); or *Xenizoe* meaning surprise, entertain (Heb 13:2; Acts 10:23), and the adjectival form is ‘*xenodocheoe*’ (to show hospitality). Although ‘hospitality’ is the less common meaning in the NT, most of the meanings apply directly or indirectly to the context of this paper. Strangeness produces mutual tension between the native and foreigner, but hospitality resolves this tension, as it takes the foreigner in as a friend. Hospitality is a better way to deal with strangers and incorporate them into the umbrella of the law and faith.³

As shall be seen below, social ministry featured prominently in the Old and New Testaments. Concern for the poor, needy, and the stranger has always been on the top of God’s agenda (Deut 15:11; Job 5:15-16; Prov 14:12, 16) It is part of the divine

² R. Laird Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Computer Data Base, PC study Bible, 2012.

³ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridge Edition*, Computer Data Base, PC study Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985).

plan that we should support and share from one another. In the New Testament, it constitutes a central part of Christ's ministry and indeed of the early church (Matt 9:35-36; Acts 2:42-46).

Old Testament Background on Social Ministry

Social ministry may seem like a strange term, but discoveries in the Old Testament show that it has been an old concept deeply rooted in the Bible. The following study will attest to the authenticity of this claim.

God's Welfare Plan for Israel

The book of Deuteronomy is described as the 'second law' and also known as a book of instructions delivered by Moses before his death. Among other things, chapter 15 of the book unfolds God's welfare package for his people (Israel) which addresses the welfare of the poor. The poor is to be released every year (vs.1), and he is also to be freed from his debts or one incurs God's displeasure (Deut 15:10-11; Exod 22:23; Prov 23:10,11).

The year of restoration or rehabilitation of the poor is referred to as the year of jubilee (Lev 25:11-14). This package was designed to accommodate the slave, widow, and stranger also (vs.15). Israel is here reminded of the need for generosity to their needy brothers, sisters, and neighbors. God makes it clear that the poor shall never cease from the land (vs. 11; Matt 26:11). Failure to adhere to, or even to evade it for any reason was seen as wickedness by God. On the other hand, they were to receive His blessings by following this command (vs. 10; Jer 7:6,7).

The genre of this passage under exegetical lenses could be seen as 'instructions,' 'speech' or Moses last words to the people of Israel. The instructions should be considered particularly significant in view of the fact that, it was Israel's last chance to receive direct instructions from Moses the man of God. The message is

very clear, because of what God has done, especially in leading them for these 40 years, they are to be committed to him and his instructions unconditionally. God so adequately provided for them not only by supplying them with manna but sustained their wears, in other words, prevented them from wearing out (Deut 8:3, 4).

The book of Deuteronomy was written during the time of Israel's journey in the wilderness. It's is dated around 1407 – 1406 BC, at the time, after the earlier generations who received the instructions first were all dead. So there was an urgent need to reiterate these instructions to the new generation who were not yet born in the wilderness, nor witnessed God's past miraculous work.⁴ Naming the book 'Second Law' does not necessarily mean it was a repetition of all of Sinai's instructions and laws. It was for the purposes of reminding and preparing them for the Promised Land.

The structure of the immediate context of the passage: (a) The canceling of debts in the year of Jubilee (Deut 15:1-3); (b) If you obey my words there will be no poor among you." (vs. 4-5); (c) God's promise of blessings as they remain obedient (vs. 6); (d) in case there be a poor brother treat him with generosity (vs. 7); (e) Be generous to your poor brother (vs. 8); (f) Warning against abuse of the year of jubilee (vs. 9); (g) Warning or appeal to open your hand to a poor brother (vs. 10); (h) The poor shall never cease from among you (vs. 11). For the definitions of the 'Poor' and 'Needy' refer to the definition of terms on page 10.

In Isaiah 58, God describes what constitutes true godliness as the following, to deal kindly; relieve burdens; set the oppressed and persecuted free; liberate the yoke of bondage; to share our bread with the hungry; hospitality to the poor and outcast; providing clothing and cover to the naked; caring for those around you and not shirk

⁴ Danny McCain, *Notes on Old Testament Introduction* (Kansas, MO: Overlands Park, 1996).

such responsibilities among others (Isa 58:6-7). More than many prophets of the Old Testament, Isaiah without mincing terms spells out or acknowledges that social care to our relatives and neighbors is the summation of genuine piety.

It should be noted that the passage summarizes the obligations of the Israelites to their neighbors, poor, and needy brethren. It cautions against abuse or exploitations in the year of jubilee, that is, the year of canceling of debts which may lead to more poverty in the land. Again, it exhorts them to be liberal to their poor brothers, as that would attract the blessings of God upon their works and undertakings. This should be done without grudges. ‘The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself’ (vs. 7:2, Prov 11:25 NKJV). This plan, if followed, would reasonably take care of the poor and needy in the church, and the community.

Pharaoh’s Daughter and Moses’ Adoption

Moses was discovered by Pharaoh’s daughter who demonstrated a profound compassion on him. It is interesting that this princess, notwithstanding Moses’ Hebrew background showed concern (vs. 6). One cannot rule out the act of providence or God’s hand in this affair. When it was obvious that his mother could no longer hide him, God intervened to save baby Moses (Exod 2:1-10). The birth of Moses took place during Israel’s years of bondage in Egypt by Amram and Jochebed, his parents (Num 26:59).

This favor is unprecedented, in the sense that, not only was the child returned to his mother, who least expected it, Jochebed was also paid wages for nursing her own child (vs. 9). Pharaoh’s daughter adopted Moses out of a selfless concern for the situation of the Hebrews under Egyptian oppression. The social benevolence demonstrated by this Princess hereby endorses and establishes adoption as a worthy practice for God’s people.

The name Moses is from the Hebrew ‘*Moseh*,’ derived from the Hebrew verb ‘*Masa*,’ which could be translated ‘pulling out.’ This name was particularly significant and was rich in spiritual meaning. According to one scholar, Moses was named by his mistress (vs. 10), obviously, she might have as well understood the tongue of her domestic servants as well as thought about it before giving it.⁵

This name had an Egyptian origin. Moses had a unique privilege. It was a form of royal adoption. Much credit should be given to Pharaoh’s daughter for extending this wonderful welfare service to a Hebrew slave. Added to Moses’ favor was the opportunity of attending and learning in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (1 kgs 4:30; Acts 7:22). Pharaoh’s daughter’s charitable deed was a very remarkable social action that became a legal practice, even in the New Testament church.

Interestingly, many of the Bible scholars are of the opinion that Pharaoh’s daughter which in Hebrew is ‘Bithiah’ meaning ‘daughter of God’ deserves a place of honor in the annals of Jewish history. In keeping with Jewish tradition, Moses should belong to her both by naming and the right of adoption (Exod 2: 10). It actually beats the imagination what a risk Pharaoh’s daughter must have taken by adopting Moses, and identifying with God’s people in the face of vehement proscriptions against the Hebrews, and consequence of her decision. This cannot be anything less than an act of divine providence.

Moses and Free Will Offerings

Liberality in giving to God’s causes is no doubt a desirable social virtue. Through free will donations, funds could be raised for social projects. In Exodus 35:20-29; 36:3-6, free-will offering is part of God’s stewardship plan for Israel. This

⁵ R. Alan Cole, *An Introduction and Commentary on Exodus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 58, 59.

is usually based on a willing heart (Exod 35:5, NKJV). Nobody was exempt in this obligation. Here the Israelites were encouraged to donate materials for the construction of the Tent. Every man was to give a gift, a skill, or articles of personal jewelry or raw materials, including women (Prov 31:13). King Solomon recognized that we should willingly give our offerings to God because He is the owner of all that we possess (1 Chr 29:14).

Israel had every reason to respond to this appeal to give for the erection of the tabernacle since most of the items of gold and jewelry they donated were the spoils they took from the land of Egypt (12:35-36). The passage makes it clear in verse 30 that it was God's 'favor' upon them, and not a matter of right. Actually, slaves had no right of possession, much less receiving such a great favor from their Egyptian neighbors (enemies) and masters. Cole confirms that this is the 'typical reaction of God's people to the saving grace and forgiving love of God.'⁶ The safest and easy way of enriching as well as retention of what belongs to us is by first committing it to the Lord. 'Give, and it will be given to you,' 'The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself' (Prov 11:25, NKJV).

Giving from a willing heart (vs. 35:5) demonstrates love and faithfulness to God without encouraging selfishness and laziness. We are made more responsible when we are left to assess ourselves, and our personal judgment comes into play. Therefore when God says, 'Give as you like,' and I do not want to be given anything that you do not wish, remember that 'Give as you like' ought to mean, 'Give as you, who have received everything from me, are bound to give.'⁷ To put it succinctly,

⁶ R. Alan Cole, *An Introduction and Commentary on Exodus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 218, 219.

⁷ Alexander McLaren, *Expositions of the Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 1:217-218.

capacity is the measure of duty, and God's expectations of us, are based on the faculties and opportunities He has given to us.

The fact that both talents and items of varied materials were received or accepted, and even poor women who had no materials to offer gave their labor (Exod 35:22-25) is remarkable. Each human gift was needed, and each has its place in the social ministry which Christians have been called to participate. Nobody has any reasons to say that there is nothing I can offer. The Old Testament has by this record bequeathed a very liberal example in giving. God does not so much ask how much we have given provided we have given according to our individual abilities. He also takes cognizance of how much we have kept back, utilized opportunities, as well as unemployed potentials and powers (Lev 5:15-17).

It is also historic to notice that the suppliers from the people became so much and overwhelming that they were restrained from making more donations (Exod 36:6-7). This was a rare case, and this level of generosity is seldom paralleled in the New Testament church. McLaren observes trusting of humankind's giving to spontaneous liberality was rather exceptional under the law, than under the Gospel when it was a normal phenomenon.⁸ The Gospels are replete with the accounts of voluntary givers, for that is an acceptable Christian service. The above models of generosity are good examples that would assist in bringing a revival of the apostolic church fellowship.

One Old Testament scholar compares the generosity of ancient Israel to that of the Philippian church (Phil 4:14-19). According to him: It must have been both a disappointment and a frustration to those who had delayed their gifts because they could not bear to part with their treasures, and who now found that God had no further

⁸ McLaren, *Expositions of the Holy Scripture*, 1:215.

need of them. His work was finished, but they had excluded themselves from any share in it.⁹

The above observation of this scholar underscores the fact God expects us to give, not only to meet specific needs but in good time. It also buttresses the fact withholding that which is needed for God's service does not receive God's approval.

Boaz and Ruth's Empowerment

The story of Ruth and Boaz Ruth 2:14-23 is a testimony of the hand of God in shaping human affairs and destiny. It is remarkable how providence directed her to the part of the fields belonging to Boaz, having not known him before (vs. 3). As a foreigner, Ruth sought for permission to glean and was surprised by Boaz' generosity (vs. 6-7). Already, God has an elaborate welfare provision for the poor and needy in Israel (Lev 19:9; Deut 24:19). Boaz notices Ruth's hard work. Though Ruth as a widow, was among the vulnerable group that needed an encouragement, it should be recognized that it was her positive attitude to work that first commended her to Boaz. The Bible counsels believers to 'honor widows who are really widows.'

Boaz takes a special interest in Ruth, a strange woman, and responded to her initiative to work by furnishing the fields¹⁰ (vs. 8-9). In the family of God, although social ministry is advocated as a support for people in need, members may be relieved from much suffering if they are encouraged to work hard. The scripture portrays the diligence and humility of Ruth which endeared her to Boaz, and she was eventually rewarded as an ancestress of a king and the Messiah (Ruth 4:13-18).

⁹ McLaren, *Expositions of the Holy Scripture*, 1:235.

¹⁰ Donald Guthrie, John A. Motyer, and Francis Davidson, *The New Bible Commentary*, Revised (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 280-281.

Added to Ruth's spirit of industry, her reputation, especially as evidenced by her strong moral character, sensitivity, kindness and loyalty to Naomi was a credible testimonial to Boaz (vs. 11-12). Our good work not only advertises but predisposes us to greatness (Prov 22:29). By showing kindness and generosity Boaz went beyond the rule (law) of gleaning in providing social care and empowerment to Ruth, a strange widow. He offered Ruth the additional favor of instructing his workers to make the work of gleaning easier for her (vs. 15-17).

Swindoll observes, the instances of providing for two widows, Naomi and Ruth, with little prospects for a future, is a proof that He really cares for the outcasts of society just as He asks us to do¹¹ (Jer 22:16; Jas 1:27). God used Boaz to bring a turnaround in the life of Ruth Credit ought to be given to Boaz for being the instrument God used to provide social care for the poor widow in the person of Ruth

Abigail's Welfare Package

The story of Abigail's welfare intervention to save David and his soldiers from a desperate hunger is recorded in 1 Samuel 25:1-35. The Bible puts it this way, "Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs" (vs. 18 NKJV). Abigail makes haste, or urgently loaded all the items above on donkeys, and went after David and his men of war who were enraged at Nabal's wickedness. Abigail is so given to a righteous cause that she could not want to be hindered by her husband (vs. 19; Prov 21:14). The passage tells us that David accepted Abigail's gifts, and blessed her in return for her kindness (vs. 35).

¹¹ Charles R. Swindoll, "Book of Ruth Overview," *Insight for Living Ministries.*, accessed July 4, 2014, <http://www.insight.org/resources/bible/Ruthhtml>.

David makes a deep confession that Abigail's visit had disarmed and saved Nabal's family from his hand.

Abigail's welfare action toward David and his soldiers, and the profitable outcome is another good example of the impact of welfare and hospitality in our community. It has a winsome effect upon the hearts of both poor and rich and makes a way even when there seems to be none (Prov 18:16; Gen 32:20). Nabal who had enough to eat and to spare, and withheld is a sad example of selfish meanness at the detriment of the poor (vs. 36). David would have been guilty of bloodshed, but for the intervention of this wise woman (vs. 1:33). This is typical of a Sudanese proverb which says that 'kindness can pluck the hairs of a lion's mustache.' The impact of welfare ministry can unlock many donors.

Abigail's humble and social dispositions gain her credit in the society. She addresses David as 'My lord' and refers to herself as his 'handmaid,' showing her determination to provide for those in need. By responding to David, 'On me, my lord, on me let this iniquity be' is an indication she could not identify with the greed of her husband (vs. 24, NKJV). 'Though she speaks as a 'handmaid', to her Lord, Abigail is master of the situation.'¹² This is because she was able to provide felt needs to address and relieve the hungry. Nabal's meanness is a sad example. To live in riches and luxury at the neglect of the restless young people as Nabal did could aggravate, and make them become robbers and miscreants in the community or society.

It is difficult to wrap up this discourse on Abigail without reiterating how her welfare trip or social ministry immensely saved a dreaded situation. David's confession of how Abigail's social action has saved him from blood guilt and many

¹² Joyce G. Baldwin, *An Introduction and Commentary, 1 and 2 Samuel*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 8:150–151.

from death (vs. 33) illustrates the powerful effect of social care and hospitality. Abigail through a social ministry has won her case and has changed the course of events.

David and Mephibosheth's Empowerment

King David's kindness stands out in his generation as a good historical reference point to social ministry. The picture that is given in 2 Samuel 9:7-13 is a clear indication of David's large heart for the poor and under-privileged. His recognition and acceptance of Mephibosheth were a great social uplift that was uncommon among the oriental kings of his time. That Mephibosheth received so much favor was for his father Jonathan's sake, illustrates the fact that kindness begets kindness (1 Sam 20:14-17).

His treatment of Mephibosheth, among other things, attests to David's piety and integrity as a leader who understands his obligation to show love, mercy, by allowing him to eat at his table daily. Doing God's will includes showing mercy and fairness. His inquiry 'Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake' (1 Sam 20: 1) is worthy of note. Incidentally, the only person Ziba could present was Jonathan's crippled son, Mephibosheth (2 Sam 4:4). Rather than courting for the king's favor, the king sends for him, which defies the rule of oriental convention. This was an undeserved favor to Mephibosheth. This unreserved concern shown to him demonstrates God's willingness to care for everybody. Thus even a 'dead dog' as Mephibosheth has a provision on God's table. (vs. 6-8 KJV). What an extravagant welfare and hospitality!

Referring to this social empowerment, Baldwin remarks that Mephibosheth's sudden twist of fate seems like a transition from prison to palace. He, Mephibosheth who was hitherto dependent on the hospitality of his father's servant, suddenly

became a rich man, the owner of wealth—producing property (1 Chr 27:25-31) where David’s estates were located.¹³ You shall eat at my table always (vs.10). As Christians, we should be able to deal with love, fairness, and equity at all time. Through social ministry, the rich, the poor, the able and disabled like Mephibosheth can have a real sense of belonging.

The life of Mephibosheth through the generosity of King David is a demonstration of an undeniable power of godliness to repair, build and restore. By giving Mephibosheth the authority to determine the business of his household, restoring his lost dignity, and assuring him of the social status of those who had to help out in the assignment, he has been sufficiently empowered.¹⁴ Such a kindness is needed among members in order to redeem many lost and broken hopes in our churches and communities today.

David adequately mobilized and empowered Mephibosheth. This was with some social and economic implication. It also took some process, which involved Ziba (the chief steward) who knew what was required. David wanted Mephibosheth to be financially independent. In other words, David’s plan to provide economic security for Mephibosheth was not without some cost to him and to others.¹⁵ God’s children should go beyond giving mere material and moral support to members, and equip them for gainful employment, as that is when the church could be said to be truly strengthened and empowered for mission.

¹³ Baldwin, *An Introduction and Commentary, 1 and 2 Samuel*, 8:227.

¹⁴ Linda Jean H. Larson, “The Treasure in ClayJars: Preaching Ideas on Disabilities,” *Reformed Worship*, December 2004.

¹⁵ Baldwin, *An Introduction and Commentary, 1 and 2 Samuel*, 8:228.

Glimpses from the New Testament on Social Ministry

In the New Testament account, facts abound that social ministry featured prominently in the early church. From the time of Jesus through the early church, social welfare was in regular occurrence and part of the worship system. It is difficult to exclude a social action from worship or the gathering of God's people.

Jesus and People's Needs

Jesus was specific to announce His social ministry agenda and mission immediately after triumphing over Satan's temptations in the wilderness. He declared, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor,' which also include, healing the brokenhearted, setting the captives free, restoring of sight to the blind, and liberating the oppressed (Luke 6:18-19). Some describe Christ's declaration as 'The Magna Carta' of Jesus ministry. The stories of Jesus' feeding the two group of multitudes as recorded in Matthew 15:32-39, and John 6:1-12, is a suitable confirmation of His commitment to this assignment. The Seventh-day Adventist Church proclaims in her Mission Statement the three tiers of the gospel which includes, 1. Teaching 2. Healing and 3. Discipling.

Jesus said to His disciples, "I have compassion on the multitude because they have now continued with me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on their way "(Matt 15:23, NKJV). This statement is an apt illustration of Christ's unalloyed and fatherly love and concern for the suffering humanity. This great throng, according to Matthew's account, was mainly or part of the multitude of the lame, blind, and maimed whom He had healed in the preceding verse (vs. 29-31; Mark 7:31-37). It is important to remark that the feeding of the 4,000 is a separate event from the feeding of the 5,000. And hereafter,

Jesus social ministry continues to expand. These mighty events, among others, establish the fact that Jesus is no doubt the author of social ministry.

In John's account of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus expressed a similar compassion to another great and weary multitude that followed Him. Jesus requested of Philip, 'where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?' (John 6:5, NIV). The disciples' suggested that the multitude is sent away hungry, contrary to their Master's wish (Matt 14:14; Luke 9:12). It is important to contrast how Jesus was able to feed more with less—five thousand with five loaves and two small fish (John 6:9-11), and four thousand with seven loaves and a few little fish (Matt 15: 36-37). Jesus uses what is available to provide for the unavailable.

Jesus never bypasses the needy one. How profound and tender are his words "I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way" (Matt 15:32). It is important that by performing this miracle, Jesus did not apply any magical powers. McLaren observes that the reason why things happen and change in the ministry of Jesus is because of the inherent and indwelling power of God in all His works. This is the most authentic will and power in the physical.¹⁶ By this miraculous action, Jesus teaches us the all-sufficiency of God to provide for His children. Jesus understands how it feels to be hungry as He Himself experienced during His wilderness temptation (Matt 4:1). "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness" (Heb 4:15).

Furthermore, James reminds believers in a blunt fashion to always translate their gospel professions into action. Under no circumstances should a brother or sister tell a fellow believer, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled" (Jas 2:15-17). Jesus never

¹⁶ McLaren, *Expositions of the Holy Scripture*, 10:258.

jokes with anything that encourages relief. According to a certain commentator, Jesus was ‘acutely conscious of the economic hardships’ of the masses, of His followers and non-followers.¹⁷ This passionate concern for humanity enabled Him to actively and effectively carry out social ministry reforms.

Finally, in the feeding of the four thousand, and five thousand, Jesus aptly proves that He lives what He preaches. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, He shows that in the judgment, how His disciples related to the needy and afflicted will either commend or condemn them before God. The righteous would be ushered into the joy of their Master,

Come, you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, for I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty, you provided drink, a stranger and you took me in, naked and you covered me, sick and you cared for me, in prison and you attended to Me (Matt 25:33-36).

The researcher recalls on two occasions when two released prisoners from the Aba Prisons came straight to meet him at Umuocham parsonage to give thanks on how the SDA Church intimately cared for them while they were remanded. This, they were directed to do by the warden officers.

Paul and Collection for the Saints

Paul had in the previous verse (15:58) exhorted the Christians on the fact that nothing they do for the Lord is in vain. Here, he appeals further to the Christians in Jerusalem who were suffering from poverty and famine (1 Cor 16:1-7). As a faithful steward, he champions and solicits for charitable donations, in cash and kind to be furnished to the poor among the saints in Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-31), for the Christians are to be their brothers’ keepers, Gentile believers inclusive. It was his

¹⁷ George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter’s Bible: The Holy Scriptures in the King James and Revised Standard Versions with General Articles and Introduction, Exegesis, Exposition for Each Book of the Bible*, vol. 12 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 554.

suggestion that believers set certain amounts aside on a weekly basis, and keep it in the church until he arrives to take them to Jerusalem. But owing to some circumstances, Paul could not go straight to Corinth as he made a detour. But he eventually arrived and took the gifts to Jerusalem (Acts 21:18; 24:17).

There are lessons to learn concerning Paul's method and object for this collection. It is obvious that Paul had hoped to raise a substantial sum of money from this fund drive. The appeal to contribute extended to the churches in Galatia and Macedonia (2 Cor 8:1), which he founded. And again, that the gathering of the funds was to take over a period of one year (2 Cor 8:10) illustrates the urgency of his expectations, and how the brethren needed to co-operate with this welfare plan. The plight of the affected brethren must have been very serious, enormous, and widespread, demanding for an urgent relief attention. Lenski believes this perennial famine which had continued for four years in Palestine calls for consistent attention.¹⁸ The fact that Paul and Barnabas had brought alms and relief to the Christians in Judea a few years earlier is a confirmation (Acts 11:29, 30), precisely in AD 44.

This explains why Paul's relief measures were not hurriedly carried out. They needed some time to mature and bear fruit, so that the results of such endeavor could assist in putting the Judeans back on their feet. Paul proposes that on the first day of the week (Sunday), let each church member lay something aside, as he prospers (vs. 2), to save him the time of doing so when he comes. Lenski writes that the idea of urging Christians to give Sunday by Sunday was not borrowed from the pagans whose own contributions were rather made from month to month. The Christians were to retain their gifts at home until they were due to be collected when they should be

¹⁸ Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1963), 7:754.

called for.¹⁹ Although the church was not fully organized as at the time, the fruitful outcome of this method provides a good example even for the churches of today to follow.

That each is enjoined to give based on what one has should not serve as a pretext for meanness or stinginess. It is a universal and spiritual principle that the more one gives, the more abundantly that he receives (Matt 10:8; Heb 6:10). God's church ought to be an inexhaustible storehouse for the poor and helpless. That is God's plan for His church (Luke 6:38). God's 'storehouse' was a place in the temple for storing grain and other food items given as tithes. Many of the principles regarding tithes and offerings were designed to elicit the spirit of gratitude, as well as eschew the attitude of selfishness from among God's people. God does not want us to give grudgingly, but to be cheerful givers (2 Cor 9:7).

It should be observed with interest how the younger churches rallied round with enthusiasm in order to mobilize support for the mother church. This project, in essence, goes far beyond a gracious piece of charity to the poor and needy. It goes further to demonstrate the affinity of the Gentile churches founded by Paul to the mother church in Jerusalem. Based on this, one finds the ground to disagree with Lenski's view that the collections were not born out of charity, but rather as a payback to the Romans for bringing them the gospel.²⁰

The influence of social ministry is particularly impressive and far-reaching. Paul calls this project 'collection of the saints' (vs. 1; Rom 15:26) rather than of the 'poor.' It is to remind the Corinthians that he was not begging since that was meant for the welfare and service of the Lord's people, who are their own brethren.

¹⁹ Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 7:754.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 7:262.

Unfortunately, the community of goods, gifts, and donations that characterized the early church (Acts 2:42-46) existed only for a while, and provided just a temporary relief, and was soon discontinued. What a pleasant irony that he has suddenly become the foremost in identifying with them and promoting their relief now under crisis.²¹

Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla: Tent Making Models

After Paul had left Athens, he went to Corinth. The context indicates that it was not persecution that drove Paul out of this place. Corinth then was the capital of Achaia, anciently known as Ephyra. It was one of the most populous and wealthy cities of Greece. Paul is here mentioned as having labored with his hands (vs. 3). Paul, not minding the corruption and perverseness of this city, found in this place a great ministry opportunity with his team members where he could exercise his trade or craftsmanship. This was common with Paul. He labored with his own hands in Ephesus (Acts 20:34) The researcher witnessed years ago while in Akpaa 1 and Umuagu districts when some renowned artisans in the Church like carpenters, masons (bricklayers), and mechanics would go out to get contracts, and involve their professional colleagues who were Church members in the execution. This made life easier for the brethren without jobs at that particular period. There is no better way of expressing love and care for fellow church members.

It was a tradition in Israel that each Jewish boy learns a trade to guide against the vicissitudes of life. Some commentators believe that Corinth, being a wealthy city implied having many slaves and poor people living below the poverty line.²² But it is

²¹ Bible Hub, "1 Corinthians 16," *Bible Hub*, accessed July 15, 2014, http://biblehub.com/commentaries/jfb/1_corinthians/16.htm.

²² Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), 3:267–268.

made clear that they had associated with one another for business reasons. Both were tentmakers (1 Cor 4:12; 1 Thess 2:9). When Christians become partners in fellowship and in business, it is easier to cater for one another or to effect social care. Partnering together in their areas of profession as Paul did with the Aquila's enhances job provision among members thereby reducing the poverty level in the Church.

Opinions vary on the nature of tent making in the then world. Some are of the view that training in tent-making involved cutting and sewing the woven cloth of goats' hair into tents. It is believed that tent-making was a big business. Other translations denote that a tent manufacturer could use animal skin or fabric (cloth). It was a reliable source of living as well as an honorable occupation.²³ Paul found it a pleasure identifying with this trade. Whatever be the case, there is dignity in labor. No member should look down on any legitimate job or business as being demeaning.

It is interesting that Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla made their own living while preaching the gospel. Paul was not forced into this trade. He discusses this more elaborately in 1 Corinthians 9:1-15, and argues clearly that though he was entitled to marry, and to be supported by the church, he willingly surrendered this privilege. It is important to observe that Paul's trade as a tentmaker probably helped to sustain him economically during the eighteen months he spent at Corinth (vs. 11). Paul was not ashamed of employing himself in a modest industry. A genuine believer ought not to be ashamed or weary of engaging in a useful enterprise (Prov 19:15). Christians should labor with their hands to be able to assist the poor and needy members.

Even though the Jews were instructed in the liberal sciences, yet they considered a handicraft trade or some skilled labor as an indispensable part of

²³ Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, 3:268.

education. This is to reduce or prevent laziness and tendency to depend on the charity of others. The wisdom of this kind is recommended in our times and needs to be rekindled to preserve the health and lives of many professional men and women. Many of such people would find this an adequate security against a precarious future and provide the needed discipline for many, whose lives have been wrapped in the lap of indulgence and wealth.²⁴

It is true that Paul naturally chooses to lodge with a fellow Jew during travels so that he could operate from there to the synagogue. It appears that the couple (Aquila and Priscilla) were already practicing tent making craft at Corinth before Paul came to join them. Thus we have reasons to suppose they were Paul's employer and his closest Christian friends. Lenski observes that Paul spent the first weeks in Corinth working on his craft, and uses the Sabbath for his synagogue discussions. Aquila and Priscilla, as Jews, were devoted to the same trade, though faithful messengers of the gospel.

Tent making style of evangelism modeled after Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla is becoming more and more popular, especially among the Pentecostals. One of its advantages is that it nullifies the idea that God is served only in our free time. No, tentmakers integrate work and ministry. This advantage includes making gospel preaching as a way of life for the members. Every day they actively engage in the gospel and share it at the least opportunity. Above all, their work provides the platform or natural contacts. Godly tent makers work to make the organization and the

²⁴ Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, 3:267.

boss successful. Findings also show that tentmakers are the kind of employee that employers want most of the time.²⁵

The Biblical Imperative for the Poor and Needy

Having mentioned Jesus' acclaimed divine commission to do an all-round ministry of attending to the poor and needy which is a social ministry in P. 27. The key verse for reflection in this passage for social empowerment is verse ten where Paul admonishes the Thessalonian believers on the need to work to earn a living (2 Thess 3:9-11). 'For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat' (vs. 10 KJV). Of course, they had reasons to follow the example of Paul and his colleagues since they had not behaved disorderly amongst them (vs. 7; 1 Thess 2:6 KJV). It is recorded that some Thessalonian believers had stopped working, justifying themselves on the basis that the Lord's Day was at hand. This attitude was contrary to the previous admonition they had received (1 Thess. 4:11,12), which Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had followed by principle and practice (Acts 20:35; Eph 4:28; 2 Cor 11:9). One of the Jewish Rabbis, Rabbi Juda is quoted as saying, he that teaches not his son a trade teaches him to be a thief. And the Talmud confirms that a father is commanded to circumcise his child, teach him the law, and teach him a trade.²⁶

However, Paul's example is not to be misunderstood to suppose that the gospel ministers are not entitled to membership support. Paul and his gospel partners purposely surrendered that privilege in order not to set a bad precedence, which the

²⁵ Admin, "Frequently Asked Questions About Tent-Making," *Global Opps*, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://globalopps.org/faq/indexhtm#what-are-tentmakers>.

²⁶ Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 5:747.

Thessalonian believers seemed so prone to copy. Idleness is grossly condemned in the Bible (Prov 19:15; 31:27; Matt 20:3). There is the view that though the reason for some Thessalonians' refusal to work is not stated, it does appear that an over-realized eschatology was advocated by some members of the Thessalonian church. Since some members of the community had already died in anticipation of the second coming, those remaining were 'unsure how the dead could be benefited from Christ's return.' Therefore some concluded and found solace in believing that the eschatological return had already occurred²⁷ (2 Thess 2:1-3). Thus working was no longer necessary.

Many today, including professed Christians hiding under the pretext and expectation of the second coming have become lazy, irresponsible, and incapable of rendering any useful service to themselves, family and church. Failure in our domestic duties is the height of irresponsibility (1 Tim 5:8). Just like all believers cannot be pastors or gospel workers, the Thessalonians were not apostles, yet, they could do well and be unselfish like those who taught them to work and labor with their own hands. The attitude of inactivity contradicts the Christian philosophy and negates Christ's injunction that we work as He does with his father (John 5:17; 6:28-29). Again, lack of activity would only lead to sin and make more busybodies out of Christ's followers (2 Thess 3:11). Idleness is the major cause of poverty, and should not be encouraged among members.

A prominent Biblical scholar sees a connection between Paul's dictum "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" and Genesis 3:19. "In the sweat of your

²⁷ Gerald F. Hawthorne, ed., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 935-936.

face you shall eat bread.’²⁸ In other words, the command to work is not optional. If Jesus and His father are working until now (John 5:17), it becomes imperative for every Christian to work. There is a dignity in labor. The message of Paul goes beyond the Thessalonians: ‘It abolishes all false asceticism, all unchristian disinclination to work, all fanaticism, and all self-inflicted pauperism.’²⁹ Work is a blessing and puts us right before God and men.

Paul’s argument is very clear. It is better to work and care for ourselves instead of being idle. A principle of God’s creation is to work for our welfare. The only exception to this order and rule are people who are incapacitated to work. If the Christian church should imbibe this principle, it will not only show a good example, it would encourage other members, and above all, reduce a ‘parasite mentality in the church.’³⁰ That will also help to ameliorate the rate of unemployment and idleness in many of the contemporary churches. It is also an irrefutable fact that those who engage in useful labor keep fitting mentally, spiritually, and otherwise than lazy drones or idle persons.

Jesus and How to Do It Right

Although this section focuses on the restoration of Peter after his fall, the feeding of the disciples, and Christ’s interest for their success during fishing expedition at the Tiberias Sea has some object lessons. In John 21:1-13, it could be deduced that Jesus presented a model of capacity building. A similar event is recorded

²⁸ Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon* (Minneapolis, MN: The Wartburg Press, 1956), 461.

²⁹ Ibid, 462.

³⁰ Grant Rickson, “Thessalonians Verse,” *Commentary*, accessed July 16, 2014, <http://www.commentary.Com/2>.

in Luke chapter five. Christ had compassion with the disciples after the long and fruitless night of failure at catching fish (vs. 3). The question posed by Jesus, “children, have you any food?” also translated “Have you any fish” (vs. 5) shows a deep loving concern of Jesus for his disciples. Upon their confession of failure, Jesus directed that their net is cast on the right side (vs. 6). Here, Jesus teaches His disciples how to do it right. Obviously, the success of this attempt led John to recognize Jesus before the other disciples (vs. 7).

Christ’s commitment to social ministry is clearly brought into focus. Jesus cannot afford to neglect to satisfy the hunger of His weary disciples who had toiled all night in vain without catching any fish. He cannot forsake His own. Even after the resurrection, His love for His disciples stood fast. It is recorded, ‘having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end’ (John 13:1). As the subsequent verses reveal, Jesus considers it wise to use the channel of welfare and hospitality as a rallying point for meeting with His disciples, and for the restoration of Peter back to the faith (21:13-35). The power of social ministry is strongly evidenced in strengthening Christ’s fledgling church. Jesus must provide for His church which represents the household of faith, in fulfillment of His command (1 Tim 5:8).

This was unlike the story in Luke 24: 42 where the disciples gave Jesus a piece of boiled fish to eat, for He asked for it. But here in John’s account, though Jesus had presided at the lake-side meal, there is no evidence that He ate with them.³¹ It was absolutely a selfless service, done to satisfy the need of his disciples. It was a

³¹ John Henry Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1972), 2:699.

good thing indeed breaking fast at the behest of the Master. Chrysostom observes that the disciples sat down for the meal in silence and trepidation.³²

Addressing the disciples as ‘children’ (vs. 5) is a term of affection and friendship. Jesus command that they cast their net on the right side was particularly significant. A certain commentator is of the opinion that this right side had the less probability of yielding any fish. It was to teach them the lesson of dependence and that of putting their confidence on the Master. It should be known to them that He was One skilled in that trade, and knew where there was the greatest probability of success.³³ By this unexpected and unprecedented favor, Jesus also teaches the lesson of trusting God for the provisions of the daily life and less on our self-effort. Without Him indeed success is impossible, no matter how hard one might try (John 15:5).

Jesus teaches the disciples that He does not only provide, but He also sustains their means of livelihood. All that their toilsome night of searching could afford them was a miserable failure. Jesus is still active in the business of directing the affairs of His followers, in training and creating job opportunities for them. Jesus answered, ‘My father has been working until now, and I have been working.’(John 5:17, NKJV). Casting our net on the right side is a capacity building initiative by Jesus, who has promised to furnish all it takes to sustain the life He has given (Matt 6:25-27).

The events of the twenty-first chapter of John adequately demonstrate that Jesus is love and the Author of life. McLaren perceptively posits, “In Him, life was, as in its deep source. He is the Fountain of life. We believe that no being ever comes into

³² Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 2:700.

³³ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 2:380–381.

existence without His creative power, so none continues to exist without His sustaining energy.”³⁴

Ellen G. White and Social Ministry

Spirit of Prophecy provides many useful counsels on social ministry. White sees humanity as sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, all belonging to the big household of God. As such, love and care for one another should not only be demonstrated but should form the watchword for the Christians.

According to her,

Human beings belong to one great family—the family of God. The Creator designed that they should respect and love one another, ever manifesting a pure, unselfish interest in one another's welfare.³⁵

Obviously, hospitality and human welfare had been in God's plan for man from the ages. White was given profound and insightful thoughts on this very issue, as can be seen from the comment above. Our love for our fellow human beings should be manifested in our concern for their welfare. To neglect this aspect of our duty to man amounts to selfishness and disrespect to human dignity.

She observes with disappointment that

To give or to labor when our sympathies are moved, and to withhold our gifts or service when the emotions are not stirred, is an unwise and dangerous course. ... Christians should act from fixed principle, following the Savior's example of self-denial and self-sacrifice.³⁶

Our motives for giving should be right and stem from the heart. If our giving should be commended by God, it should follow Christ's example. We should avoid impulsive giving because it is inconsistent and unprincipled. Jesus gave sacrificially

³⁴ McLaren, *Expositions of the Holy Scripture*, 11:360.

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1940), 24.

³⁶ Ellen G. White, “Workers with God,” *Review and Herald*, December 7, 1886.

and benevolently. Those whose attitude to giving are actuated by emotions, are not regular and consistent givers, thus the cause of Christ or the church often suffers for their inability to live up to the expected duties.

It is important to realize that just as White puts it

Many can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. Their physical wants must first be relieved. As they see evidence of our unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ.³⁷

The word disinterested kindness here referred to should be seen as indiscriminate concern and love towards one another. For many to be reached with the gospel, consideration for their physical needs is crucial. Our neighbors earnestly desire to see the love of Christ in the preacher and not to hear the love of Christ from the preacher. The gospel makes no meaning to a hungry soul, what he needs first is to be relieved of hunger and thirst. When we neglect these aspects of physical and material care in our outreaches, the gospel would more or less become a savor (aroma) of death to death rather than savor of life to live which Paul referred to in 2 Corinthians 2:15,16.

Caring for the Poor Within

Christ's command through the apostle Paul is very clear, 'Do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' (Gal 6:10ff). Provision should be made to aid the worthy poor and to furnish employment to those who love God and keep His commandments. They should not be left without help, to feel that they are forced to work on the Sabbath or starve. It is of this class, especially that the Lord speaks when He says, "Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house"³⁸ (Isa 58:7).

³⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 8:83.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6:85.

It is God's plan that special care and consideration in terms of welfare services should be extended to needy fellow church members who profess the same faith.

The poor who maintains his faith irrespective of his immediate social and economic needs is indeed a faithful poor. Such individuals should be seen as sincere members of the 'household of faith.' Extra effort is to be made to care for their physical needs so that they do not see themselves as losers in cases where sacrifices were involved in their course of accepting the faith.

A good example is when such an individual has lost his job as a result of accepting the Sabbath truth. Failure to accommodate such faith challenges within the church in the context of Paul's advice in Galatians 6:10 may expose the church to the reproach of other denominations, as well as disaffection of the neighbors within the community. And there is a risk of losing such members before long too.

Getting the Church Ready for Welfare Ministry

It is important the church understands she should play a leading role in the work of charity. White strongly suggests that the church should be united in the exercises of charity, and further remarks that if members are truly awakened and converted they should be readily involved in the work of charity. It also follows that wherever Bible truth has been presented, a work of practical godliness is to be seen. As the church establishes, missionary work for the helpless and the suffering, therefore, becomes primary.³⁹

If the church fails to be at the forefront of welfare and humanitarian services who else will take the lead? Jesus and the early church have left us solid examples of what should constitute a practical religion. Believers should follow the examples of

³⁹ Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1952), 105.

the Christian pioneers. They worked as a team in their missionary efforts, reaching all nooks and crannies of the community, offering practical help to the needy, helpless and the outcast. The impact of the church cannot be felt in the church community and beyond without identifiable charitable deeds and projects.

Involving the Youth in Social Ministry

The work of social ministry within and outside the church would impact more positively if the youth should also contribute their meaningful quota. In preparing our youth for practical service, White reveals that “The Great Teacher cooperates with all the efforts made to relieve suffering humanity. It is necessary to teach the students to make a practical application of the lessons they have received. Undoubtedly, if they witness human woe and the deep poverty of those they are trying to help, they will be stirred with compassion.”⁴⁰

If church leaders would show genuine love for the poor and needy members, identifying with their plights, assist the unemployed and job seekers, create a friendly atmosphere for every member, such actions would unfailingly bear good fruits in the lives of the young people. The youth usually copy and follow good examples.

No better agency can be of most use than the youths in the course of discharging welfare and social concerns. White is of the view that using the young people within the church would effectively advance the work of welfare and hospitality. They are very easily touched with the feeling of those whom they are called to labor for. In the same vein, while they are stirred with compassion to work for and to assist the needy, to a large extent their peers are motivated with the spirit of

⁴⁰ Ellen G. White, “Manuscript 70,” 1898, 70.

service in the same direction. It cannot be disputed that the youths have their gifts, show more zeal and fervor in their assigned responsibilities.

Christ's Method Alone

According to White's counsel,

Christ method alone will give through success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'follow Me'.⁴¹

It is a futile attempt using the human method in carrying out the divine assignment. But prayerfully following Christ method ensures our victory.

It is good to condescend and humble ourselves while reaching out to the poor. In trying to reach out to the poor, the despised, the forsaken, as much as possible avoid putting on haughty and dignified spirit, for this will accomplish nothing. Only the meek and lowly spirit of Christ will bring true conversion.⁴² The Bible is clear that the servant cannot be greater than the master. For us to succeed in helping and uplifting the poor and the needy, we ought to humble ourselves enough. Let us put ourselves in their shoes, and divest ourselves of pride and self-esteem. Only as we do this can we represent the true spirit of the Master (Jesus) who has taught us to learn from Him and be meek and lowly in heart (Matt 11:28, 29).

God Not to Blame for Human Suffering

People who experience some levels of suffering charge their suffering upon providence and regard God as the author of their woes. White, a notable Adventist pioneer observes that intemperance, to a greater or lesser degree, is responsible or lies

⁴¹ Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1942), 143.

⁴² White, *Testimonies*, 6:277.

at the foundation of these suffering. God cannot be held accountable because He is just and fair in all His ways.⁴³

Man cannot be wiser than God. The messenger of God, White, observes, “Methods of helping the needy should be carefully and prayerfully considered. We are to seek God for wisdom, for He knows better than shortsighted mortals on how to care for the creatures He has made. There are some who give indiscriminately to everyone who solicits their aid. In this they err.”⁴⁴

Ellen White’s statement should not be seen as a failure of social welfare in this instance, or social care as an end in itself rather than a means to an end. She is only advocating for wisdom in relating to social care issues. The messenger of God admonishes us not to be involved in social ministry missions without recourse to prayer. Nothing works in the church without dependence on prayer, for that was the secret of the success of the Master and our forebears.

In our giving, it is not wise to do so indiscriminately without careful thought, lest some recipients try to take advantage of the giver. Our giving should be a blessing and solve pressing needs rather than encourage laziness and inactivity on the part of the recipient. Our acts of mercy should not lead people to sin but make them capable of living an active and responsible life.

It is not God’s plan that we ride on each other’s back: “No man who can earn his own livelihood has a right to depend on others.”⁴⁵ For the fact that God has given all of us life enjoins us to work hard and fend for ourselves, family, and even to support the weaker ones around us. To hope and depend on charity from others is not

⁴³ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 2 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1958), 411.

⁴⁴ White, *Testimonies*, 6:277.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 6:278.

the ideal thing for any man. Being our “brothers’ keepers” precludes riding on other peoples’ back for survival. This does not only show ungratefulness to ourselves and our Creator but also reduces human dignity.

The proverb, “The world owes me a living,” has in it the essence of falsehood, fraud, and robbery. The world owes no man a living who is able to work and make a living.⁴⁶ In that sense, the harsh world owes no man a living but instead thorns, thistles, sweat and toil as the Bible states clearly (Gen 3:17-19). It is not everybody that has the heart for the poor and needy. We should rather seek to better the lot of humanity than to receive.

Being a Friend of the Poor

Believers in Christ are not supposed to be selective or discriminatory in our relationships with our neighbors in the community. God expects gospel ministers to be friendly to the poor, the afflicted and oppressed in the community. Christ made Himself friendly to the poor. And therefore the interest of the poor should be guarded sacredly.⁴⁷ Friendship evangelism still works, for it is the only key that will open the door of the human heart. And that was the reason why Jesus employed this method so effectively. In fact, God uses the poor in our midst to test the faith of the rich.

Working for All Classes

Christians cannot afford to neglect or bypass anybody in our missionary outreaches. We are admonished not to forget the higher classes, the lawyers, ministers, senators, and judges, many of whom are slaves to intemperance. We are to

⁴⁶ White, *Testimonies*, 6:278.

⁴⁷ White, Ellen G., *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association of General Conference of SDA, 1995), 230.

leave no effort untried to show them how God values their souls.⁴⁸ We should recognize the fact that everybody needs salvation. The book of James 2:1-4 confirms White's admonitions. Christians should not be partial in regard to how they relate to the rich and poor members. It is not fair to judge people based on their appearances. It would be a sin to fail to reach out to every soul for which Christ has ransomed with His precious blood.

It is a divine counsel that "men and women of God, persons of discernment and wisdom, should be appointed to look after the poor and needy, the household of faith first. These should report to the church and receive counsel as to what should be done."⁴⁹

What that means is that every church needs to be welfare conscious in her plans and budget, and in fact, have a regular and functional social services department. It should further be understood to mean that only men and women who are sensitive to such needs should be appointed to serve in that department. It also implies that needy members in the church should first receive special care and attention before such services are extended across. Members of the household of faith are to be considered as bona fide members of the family in verity.

The elderly are to synergize with the young people to move the work of social ministry forward. Let boys and girls be thoroughly taught some useful trade or occupation. The poor should be educated to become self-reliant. This will be a true help, for it will not only make them self-sustaining but will enable them to help others.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ White, *Welfare Ministry*, 73.

⁴⁹ White, *Testimonies*, 6:278.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

We should not just be providing food and drinks alone neither should we be focusing on the immediate needs of the poor brethren in the church. Rather, plans should be made to make them useful members of the community, in terms of teaching them trades, making them less dependent, for that would also help them to value and appreciate whatever that has been received as welfare. The church should aim at assisting the poor and the needy in their midst, such that they mature to become burden bearers themselves.

Most often, we fail to look inwards thereby missing the opportunity to appreciate the plights of fellow members:

Many not of our faith are longing for the very help that Christians are in duty bound to give. If God's people would show a genuine interest in their neighbors, many would be reached by the special truths for this time. Nothing will or ever can give character to the work like helping the people just where they are.⁵¹

The observation of the Messenger of God as indicated above is a very pertinent one. Many of our Christian and non-Christian neighbors need to feel the impact of our welfare and missionary thrusts within the community. It may be wrong to assume that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is taking the lead in welfare evangelism. Some personal observations and investigations seem to show that many denominations especially the Pentecostals are aggressively exploring this aspect of evangelism more than the SDA Church. It may not be surprising to see them gaining much more converts as the current trend seem to show. Charity evangelism has always proved a formidable method of soul winning.

⁵¹ White, *Testimonies*, 6:280.

Caring for the Orphans

Nobody is left out in God's agenda:

Among all whose needs demand our interest, the widow and the fatherless have the strongest claims upon our tender sympathy. They are the objects of the Lord's special care. They are lent to Christians in trust for God. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"⁵² (James 1:27).

It is interesting to note the phrases 'all whose needs demand our interest' and 'are lent to the Christians in trust.' The former does not limit the works of charity to the confines of God's household alone. The widows and fatherless within and without us are to be treated with equal concern.

The latter makes it clear that such needy ones are not only objects of God's special care but actually lent on trust in our care. This makes us not only responsible for their care but should be held accountable for their ill or wellbeing. The book of James says that attending to the needs of these groups amongst us is the real and pure godliness that makes the Christians blameless. The imperative of caring for the needy is clearly underscored:

Many a father has died in the faith, resting upon the eternal promise of God, left his loved ones in full trust that the Lord would care for them. And how does the Lord provide for these bereaved ones? He does not work a miracle in sending manna from heaven; He does not send ravens to bring them food; but He works a miracle upon human hearts, expelling selfishness from the soul and unsealing the fountains of benevolence. He tests the love of His professed followers by committing to their tender mercies the afflicted and bereaved ones.⁵³

Faithful Christians have died with the hope that their loved ones they left behind would not be forsaken by the church where they exercised their faith and

⁵² White, *Testimonies*, 6:280.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 6:281.

fellowship. The Lord does not need to beg for their support from outside the fold or to perform some supernatural acts before fellow members respond to their care.

The researcher still recalls his experience a few years ago, when an old retired mentor Pastor in his dying days summoned him with the charge ‘Please look after my wife.’ This, to the researcher, was like a divine commission, typical of the confidence that the dying believers repose upon the church or fellow believers as they are inevitably separated by the cold hand of death. It reinforces the call that those who have the love of God open their hearts and homes to take in these children. It is not the best plan to care for the orphans in large institutions. If they have no relatives able to provide for them, the members of our churches should either adopt these needy ones or continually provide for them.

It has been sufficiently shown that in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, God’s people have been involved in social ministry through one way or another. Many of the Bible characters who never witnessed verbally, directly or indirectly impacted their communities through social concerns or activities. Even their heathen neighbors were not left out in these social welfare endeavors, whose benevolent acts benefited God’s people in various ways. Examples of such people include Pharaoh’s daughter, Ruth, and others. The social ministry has proved to be one of the effective in reach and outreach mission strategies for the church since the ages. It also has ample support from the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW ON SOCIAL MINISTRY

In this chapter, efforts will be made to review related materials on social ministry or activity. This may include contemporary literature such as books, articles and other publications from some religious organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are engaged in social activities.

Nevertheless, the review of social outreaches of some social support groups locally and internationally may be considered. The essence of this exercise is to appreciate the relevance of social ministry in the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the vital role it is playing in religious and non-denominational institutions and the entire world. Particularly, this chapter discusses the following sub-themes: principles for effective social ministry the goal of social ministry, Christians and other model programs for social ministry, Islam and social ministry, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Social ministry: a strategy for empowerment and mission is also examined before the summary of the chapter.

Social ministry is believed to have been founded in the 19th and 20th century Christian activities. The purpose was for a just and compassionate society to fulfill the social and economic implications of the gospel. Pierli Francisco in 1994 became its advocate for the poor and excluded. He and his adherents denounced the unjust and discriminatory social structures wherever they existed. Having served as a missionary in Africa, his vision was to provide professional and ministerial training for lay

persons in deprived and marginalized communities.¹ However, in this thesis, ‘Social Ministry’ embraces every welfare and social activity, or outreach programs extended by religious and non-religious organizations, and shall not be discussed as a movement.

Principles for Effective Social Ministry

Social ministry exists and remains one of the reliable methods of outreach used by churches, government, and non-governmental agencies. Terry and Payne observe that converts who were won by the early church mainly came in through social ministry. They identify ten ministries performed by the Christians namely, giving alms in general, supporting teachers and officials, supporting widows and orphans, supporting the sick and infirm, caring for prisoners and convict in mines, burying paupers, caring for slaves, providing disaster relief, furnishing employment, and extending hospitality.²

Timothy Tennent describes two ways by which social action could be carried out through a ‘Relief work,’ which refers to immediate assistance to those in need. A short- term provision to victims whose cases cannot be delayed, known as ‘micro solutions.’ It could be addressed through ‘Development’ work which focuses on structural and systemic causes of poverty, referred to as ‘macro solutions.’ The development work is a lengthy process aimed at helping vulnerable individuals to be

¹ M. W. Joomla, “Social Ministry in Mission; What Is It?,” *Social Ministry Forum*, accessed August 20, 2014, www.socialministryforum.net/index.php/socialministry/what-is-it.

² J. D. Payne and John Mark Terry, *Developing a Strategy for Missions (Encountering Mission): A Biblical, Historical, and Cultural Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 70.

self-reliant, capable of meeting their own needs.³ Some churches refer to this development work as social empowerment or capacity building.

The following are general principles for effective social ministry have been gleaned from some of the churches regarding their social activities: Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Preferential Option for and with People who are Poor; Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity; Care for God's Creation.⁴

These additional guidelines are necessary for the social workers in order to establish a positive relationship.

1. See human relationship as a process of giving the member an opportunity to grow, develop, and ultimately to understand and discover himself.
2. Recognize the worth of the individual member regardless of his/her circumstances, with the aim of fostering human dignity and self-respect.
3. Encourage self-help and as a means of growing in self-confidence, and as part of the qualification to become a responsible person.
4. You must be sensitive to the member's feelings. Put yourself in the member's position. It helps if you understand your own strengths and weaknesses. If you accept yourself as you are, you may be able to accept others.
5. You must be genuine. Be open, real and honest.⁵

Studies indicate that positive outcomes can be achieved if the member sees your empathy, genuineness and a positive regard. Note: In the Art of Building a Helping Relationship; Make yourself approachable; genuine and warm; Be sensitive,

³ Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2010), 389–390.

⁴ Mel Lawrenz, "A Four – Fold Strategy for Church Ministry," *Catholic Charities*, accessed August 2, 2015, <http://www.catholiccharities.md.org/parish-social-ministry/catholic-socialteaching.html/#sthash.tA43WcRQdpuuf>.

⁵ Wilma Guez and Allen John, "Social Work," *UNESCO*, accessed September 9, 2015, http://www.unesco.org/education/mebam/module_3.pdf.

listen attentively; Spend time listening to, and talking with, your client / member;
Disapprove the act, not the person; Be firm and friendly; Try not to use threats;
Explain the rules of good relationship.⁶

The Need for Social Ministry

Killen in his book, *What Does the Lord Require?* observes ‘We all need loving relationships. Suicides and attempted suicides are often cries for loving relationships. Acts of violence are often protests against the absence of loving relationships.’⁷ Social Ministry is a ministry of love. In the Scriptures, God prescribes equity, love and social justice as the standards for human relationships as established in chapter two of this thesis.

Robb observes that ever since the fall in the Garden of Eden, humans have taken advantage of fellow humans in cooperating with Satan and his agents in afflicting societies. This manifests in woes like famine, disease, poverty, slavery, injustice and suffering. He posits that whenever we attempt to help the victims out of these calamities, we consciously or unconsciously enter into a battle with Satan and his spiritual forces who are bent on ruling the world’s massive institutions, social structures, and systems. Moreover, Satan is determined to destroy God’s handiwork, especially man created in His own image.⁸

Bill Hull in his book commends the life of Frances of Assisi who devoted his life in loving the poor as Christ did. The Franciscan monastics remind us the need to live simply, using our wealth for the benefit of others. However contemporary

⁶ Wilma Guez and Allen John, “Social Work,” *UNESCO*, accessed September 9, 2015, http://www.unesco.org/education/mebam/module_3.pdf.

⁷ James L. Killen, *What Does the Lord Require?* (Lima, OH: CSS, 2004), 86.

⁸ John D. Robb, “Strategic Prayer,” in *Perspectives*, ed. Ralph D Winter and Steve C. Hawthorne, 3rd ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 145–146.

literature on discipleship seems to disclose this aspect of ministry is shamefully neglected.⁹ Clowney opines some see social action as a means to evangelism and others view it as a manifestation of evangelism and a partner to evangelism. He submits that the Great Commission is not explicit and exhaustive on the Great Commandment that enjoins love to God and our neighbors. As Christ was committed to service when He was in the world, it is expected that His disciples follow the Master and serve humanity's need wherever it is encountered.¹⁰ It is not enough to share the gospel with others, it extends to mankind's socio-economic needs.

Obviously, some churches have shifted from their primary responsibility of disciple-making and caring for the needy. This has led critics to describe the church as ineffective because she cannot address the present realities that demand attention. In view of that anomaly, Hunter submits that when the church as an entity is not healthy and growing, it is as a result of not following the Master's will. When there is genuine repentance, growth occurs, and it will also show that the people of God have returned from their mission to follow God's commission.¹¹ Christopher Thomas advocates we need to develop new ministries and strategies to feed the hungry children who sit in our pews and live in the communities where we pastor. We cannot not just stop at that, mentoring programs and community centers are needed to be able to provide them love, affirmation, and support.¹²

⁹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book on Discipleship*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2006), 85.

¹⁰ Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 195–196.

¹¹ Kent R. Hunter, *Foundations for Church Growth: Biblical Basics for the Local Church* (Corunna, IN: Church Growth Center, 1994), 48.

¹² Christopher C.. Thompson, "The Least of These," *Ministry*, March 2015.

Rheenen credits Rufus Anderson as a renowned missional figure. ... Anderson identifies four major activities necessary to accomplish the goal of mission as the following; the conversion of the lost, organizing new believers into local churches, training competent native leadership and helping the church to become independent and self-propagating.¹³ Anderson states that social activities cannot take the place of the gospel and claims that the churches established by Paul were least dependent because they made the spreading of the gospel their chief concern.

He submits that it is the lack of genuine conversion that produces ‘rice Christians.’ Anderson believes that Christians will be willing to support church work if they experience true conversion. He shares the same philosophy with Venn who sees mission (social activities) as scaffolding work which the carpenters discard after a building is erected.¹⁴ Anderson may not be very right in this opinion because Christians need to continually support one another spiritually and materially. Hence, social assistance ought not to be dispensed with.

The Goal of Social Ministry

Social Ministry is basically about relationships: our relationship with God, our relationship to each other and to those in needs. Adekunle Alalade, states, ‘Christianity cannot be pursued in isolation from the concrete social and cultural facts of human existence.’ He highlights three major functions of the church which are inter-related and interdependent namely; 1. Spiritual Journeying. 2. Caring and 3. Empowering. The first understands the church as the pilgrim people of God, the second perceives her as a caring community, while the third understands the church’s

¹³ Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies for Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 182–183.

¹⁴ Ibid.

primary obligation as equipping persons and groups to live with greater power and effectiveness.¹⁵

Alalade observes, while every other function of the church contributes in the liberation of human needs and challenges, social activities contribute more. The church goes beyond meeting spiritual needs. ... As a caring community, the goal is to share the caring spirit of Jesus by encouraging supportive actions, healing, and transparent relationships with others. Caring should not only be directed outward but also inside the church. It is pertinent to note his last statement, “The caring function of the church is the best way to incarnate the word.”¹⁶ His scholarly observations strongly suggest the primacy of social action as an empowerment tool for ministry, especially in the area of fostering relationships among church members.

Craig Ott and his missional colleagues state that approaches to mission that offer shallow spiritual answers for humanity’s problems without addressing the sociopolitical and economic roots of those problems are definitely not in line with the spirit of the gospel. God’s concern for the poor and less privileged is conspicuously registered in the Old Testament and also demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ and the early church. What makes the difference is the ‘care.’ Therefore the essential issue which is the overall task of mission is how should these concerns be meaningfully addressed?¹⁷

¹⁵ Adekunle A. Alalade, *Limiting Factors to the Success of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Agbo Areo, 2008), 186–187.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 192–193.

¹⁷ Crag Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 132.

Christians and Other Model Programs of Social Ministry

This section describes the social activities that the various institutions are involved with and how they do it. Sometimes, these are expressed through their vision and mission statements.

The Catholic Church and Social Activities

Scott in their book declares that part of Catholic Church's mission includes working towards social justice, land reform, and helping the poor. The philosophy of the church clearly expresses that any obedient child of Christ not only seeks the kingdom of God but receives a stronger and purer love for helping his brothers and doing what is just under the inspiration of charity. And it cannot be denied that the Church has outstanding missions record of ministering to the suffering and needy, common in the recent years than mother Teresa of Albania. She succeeded in not just working for the 'poorest of the poor' in Calcutta, but also founded many missions of Charity.¹⁸

Lilya Wagner supports upholds the idea this pious woman did so much to be reckoned with. Wagner believes that Teresa's work is a typical example of social and compassionate ministry in action. She won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 in recognition of her outstanding success in Care ministry. It is recorded that her religious order or charitable homes number up to 263 spread across over 67 countries of the world. She is also known and quoted as saying during her active years of service that one thing was not found missing in all the places she visited was 'compassion.'¹⁹

¹⁸ Moreau, *Introducing World Missions*, 152.

¹⁹ Lilya Wagner, *Caring Is Not a Spectator Sport*, Lifeline (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1986), 54-57.

During the 2014 Annual Report of Catholic Social Services (CSS) by the Archbishop of Philadelphia entitled ‘Love is our Mission,’ Pope Francis is said to have emphasized commitment to make the gospel call to serve the poor a hallmark of his papacy. He warns members of the dangers of indulging in materialistic consumerism that promotes frivolous pleasures, which results in selfish neglect of the poor and others who are in need. He believes the antidote to such self-absorption is to practice love which is aptly expressed in generous service to others. ‘It is often said that we help people not because they are Catholic, but rather because we are Catholic.’²⁰ It is interesting that the Pontiff himself promotes social ministry with such a degree of urgency.

According to the Catholic Human Resources secretary of Philadelphia, J. J. Sereaney, the church already has enough things to show in regards to her success in the area of social ministry. Family challenges, cases of drug addiction, homelessness, lack of food and clothing, adult children with disabilities, among others, are all taken care of by the church’s social services, thereby making the lives of members and nonmembers better. Interestingly enough most of these offers are supported by the generosity of members, donors, partners, and volunteers.²¹ The effective mission begins with the church or the home front.

Anders Bäckström, Per Pettersson, and Grace Davie Catholic scholars group the Catholic welfare services into four main types of functions namely; Vanguard roles; Improver roles; Value-guardian roles, and service-provider roles. In the value vanguard function, the church is in the frontline of searching for new areas of need,

²⁰ Catholic Social Services, “Annual Report,” *CSS Connections 18 Vol. Issue 1-2015*, last modified 2014, accessed August 17, 2015, http://cssphiladelphia.org/wp_content/uploads/2015/06/css_annual_report_2014.pdf.

²¹ Ibid.

prioritizing, forgotten groups of people. The Improver role focuses on the enhancement of the services already provided to ensure quality. The Value - guardian role has to do with the social justice aspect of defending and advocating for various human values, while the Service - provider plays the primary, complementary, and supplementary roles.²² Anders and his colleagues affirm that many Catholic churches in Europe, Sweden, France, Norway, England, and others serve as agents or outlets of European social welfare. In their opinion, their contribution to social welfare could be categorized into two major types: material and non-material provisions. While many respondents believe that the Catholic Church is doing more than the state in the provision of welfare services, others have different opinions. The latter see the state as doing better since, in a sense, she is neutral with her gifts, whereas the Church's engagement into social activities is perceived as done with the motive of gaining converts.

Evangelicals and Social Ministry

Nicholls describes 'Evangelical' as churches that lay more emphasis on evangelism, edification, and worship over social concern basically on the gospel of the New Testament. This is because social outreaches are considered 'distraction' for the church which should not be given any primary attention. He strongly maintains that evangelism is "the exclusive mission of the church"²³ It is important to be reminded that negligence of social ministry neglects Christ's model of compassion and mercy for the poor, the needy, the sick and the outcasts. Evangelism should be

²² Per Petterson, *Welfare and Religion in 21st Century Europe: Gendered Religious Social Change*, ed. Grace Davie, Anders Bäckström, and Ninna Edgardh (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2011).

²³ Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and World Evangelical Fellowship, *In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility*, ed. Bruce Nicholls (Exeter, England: Paternoster, 1985).

understood in its broad-based context of doing rather than just professing it.

Separating the spiritual and physical has given rise to an unbalanced Christianity.

Debra reveals how Evangelicals came up with a youth body called the Youth with a Mission (YWAM). Members of this group were of the view that handing out food and sharing the gospel were not enough. They took the additional step of getting involved in human right issues. They also took it upon themselves fighting for human rights of those considered valueless in the society.²⁴ He cites Robert Linthicum who informs that the Jews' understanding of Shalom was more than just peace. It is broadly translated to include prosperity, welfare, well-being, wholeness, and harmony. In fact, it's God's plan for humankind. From the onset, God has always been interested in community and does everything to ensure the peace and happiness of every community member.²⁵

In addition, Christians have not only been called but also empowered to heal relationship and to challenge whatever that dehumanizes, confront everything that is opposed to justice. Such actions are rooted in her value for communities of faith, marriage, and other faith afflicted institutions. For the church to act promptly and effectively, she needs to analyze social and environmental issues critically and probe the reasons why such things exist. The Lutheran Church is committed to sustaining and supporting its members as enshrined in their baptismal vocation to serve God and the neighbor in daily life. These include among other things, support its members to live out their callings, to love their neighbors, mind creation and minister in situations of brokenness. They are to enhance democratic processes in countries; Help redress

²⁴ Debra Buenting, "Evangelicals and Social Action: YWAM's Adoption of Kingdom Mission," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 15–19.

²⁵ Ibid.

persistent social and economic inequalities that prevent many from participating effectively in these processes.²⁶

Her mission statement as per social ministry and empowerment is clear. When people are in a crisis situation in life, a personal or family need or at a most vulnerable challenge, it is necessary to respond with care and compassion, ready to serve and love our neighbor. ‘We believe Christ has freed us to embrace and care for people of all ages in any situation or context.’²⁷ It may be true as it is at times argued, that some faith-based social organizations play many roles that they sometimes delay or find it difficult to meet up with some of the needs or emergencies.

Moreau believes that the Evangelicals today are beginning to look more favorably on the relationship of the gospel to social action. She says opinions are gradually shifting from those who were once suspicious that social action will take the place of gospel proclamation, to those who clamor for more of the Churches’ involvement in society. It is also reported that off the boardrooms and the auditoriums of conferences of mission agencies, grassroots North American and European Evangelicals have shown more commitment to mission. The scope of their involvement has been so impressive, in street evangelism, food distribution, medical assistance, etc.²⁸ Rather than undermining the efficacy of the gospel, social activities have strengthened and created more leeway for it to flourish.

²⁶ Department for Studies, “Division for Church in Society,” *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, last modified September 1993, <http://www.elca.org>.

²⁷ Admin, “Social Ministry Organizations.,” *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, accessed August 2, 2015, <http://www.elca.org/our-work/relief=and-development/social-ministry-organizations>.

²⁸ Moreau, *Introducing World Missions*, 154.

The Salvation Army and Social Ministry

Among the evangelicals, Salvation Army as a Christian denominational church seems to be a little unique, both by nomenclature and its military fashion. She is also actively involved in charitable works locally and internationally. She primarily concerns herself with gender-based violence and receives the attention of many other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly on those affecting women. The Salvation Army has made definite impacts in helping people during times of disaster. Her activities include helping families or single parents without food, clothing or furniture.²⁹

These activities are usually family-centered which in some occasions may involve rehabilitating families which have been torn apart by violence, fire accidents, and so forth. Many low-income families have also received school supplies and Christmas gifts for their children. Salvation Army focuses on the family by reason of the fact that it is the core unit of a society, and also because thousands of families are living in abject poverty.

In the delivery of services, the Salvation Army is known to be non-discriminatory in services and programs. Programs and services are provided not necessarily on faith affiliation, but specifically to address needs. But compliance with some developed criteria and program participation is expected. Another interesting aspect of the services is that they are rendered without regard to the immigration status of service recipients, that otherwise required by applicable law or a funding contract. In other words, she endeavors to extend her gifts and services to the needy with minimal restrictions or conditionality. Her worship services, spiritual

²⁹ Salvation Army Carolinas, "Doing the Most Good," *The Salvation Army*, <https://www.salvationarmycarolinas.org/greenvillesc/programs/programs-that-help/direct-services>.

encouragement are open to all persons. In addition, this organization is active in promoting intergroup understanding, civil and human rights, as well as spiritual affinity as what helps to achieve oneness the human family. Her welfare and spiritual concern for the needs of people dates back to her inception. Above all, her commitment to the biblical principle of equity based on the fact that all humans are created in God's image (Gen 1:27)³⁰ should be a model for other religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Social Activities

The SDA Church does not neglect the gospel aspect of Social and Welfare Ministries. The Church has a mission to proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel which she believes is expressed in Revelation 14:6-12. This gospel is described as the 'Three Angels Messages.' Similarly, the Church reaches the world using the three basic arms of preaching, teaching, and healing. This tripartite approach to evangelism is explained as follows:

1. **Preaching:** Fulfilling Christ's commission in Matthew 28:18-20 to proclaim to all the world the mercy and unconditional love of God as demonstrated through His Son, who died to reconcile the sinful humanity to Himself.
2. **Teaching:** This emphasizes that development of mind and character is an essential preparation for the appreciation of God's redemption plan. The Church promotes a wholesome understanding in relation to God, humanity and His entire creation.
3. **Healing:** The Church upholds the biblical emphasis on the well-being of the human person, the preservation of health and the healing of the sick to be of great priority. Through her ministry to the poor and the oppressed, she is to cooperate with the Creator in His compassionate work of restoration.³¹

³⁰ Salvation Army Carolinas, "Doing the Most Good," *The Salvation Army*, <https://www.salvationarmycarolinas.org/greenvillesc/programs/programs-that-help/direct-services>.

³¹ D. F. Neufeld, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, vol. 10 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1976), 112.

Victoria Jackson, though social work has been viewed as secular-oriented, and humanistic in principles, it very clearly originated under the inspiration of Judeo-Christian religious tradition of its philanthropic founders. Johnson describes the church as the “Mother of social work.”³²

Social ministry in the SDA Church dates back to the latter half of the 1800s. There were then a good number of private functional relief agencies aimed at assisting the needy. It is interesting to note that in the early years of SDA Church, social work was viewed with suspicion, and considered antithetical to religion. However, the author believes that is gradually disappearing today, as more and more families are now interested in seeking the attention of social workers, even during church service for resources to help in taking care of the aged, ailing marriages, misbehaving children and other social challenges.³³ And for the whole of this page, we continue to consider the views of Victoria Jackson.

In 1998, social work celebrated its centennial year. In the early years, first social work agencies started, and the women who visited homes were then known as ‘Friendly Visitors.’ This group misjudged the issue of poverty and related to defects in moral character. These social ambassadors of that day met basic needs such as giving foods, shelter, resolving conflicts with some sound religious admonitions. The idea was that improving people’s morality will transform their spiritual lives.³⁴

³² G. Victoria Jackson, “Social Work and Adventist Education: Strange Bedfellows or Kindred Spirits? Social Work and Adventist Education: Strange Bedfellows or Kindred Spirits?” (presented at the 26th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Loma Linda, CA: Geoscience Research Institute, 2000).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

Another era of social work was based on the assumption that improved relationships among neighborhoods would engender better communities, while changed communities will enhance the quality of lives of individuals. Consequently, the result will be a better and developed society.³⁵

Eventually, as social works moved into the era of Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, there was a National Association of Social Workers that emerged, which promoted and also advocated for an emphasis or the need for improved social conditions. It also became necessary that, when people began to agitate for Civil Rights, especially in favor of the Feminist and Gay Rights, social work got redefined. Rather than focusing on spiritual aspect, it worked in consonance with her name, adopting a more secular approach to the social problems.³⁶

In one of the reports of Wilcox on the role of social mission in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Monte Sahlin—the Regional Vice President of Adventist Disaster Relief Agency in North America—declares, “We believe as a religion that issues of religion cannot be separated from the health of the family, neighborhood or any aspects of human life.”³⁷

It is important not to forget the fact that the founders of Adventism had a history of social actions. The late 1800s recorded or documented that Joseph Bates was a major proponent in Temperance and Abolitionist movements—major social cause of the time. James White was a bonafide member of the Christian Community

³⁵ G. Victoria Jackson, “Social Work and Adventist Education: Strange Bedfellows or Kindred Spirits? Social Work and Adventist Education: Strange Bedfellows or Kindred Spirits?” (presented at the 26th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Loma Linda, CA: Geoscience Research Institute, 2000).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ John Wilcox, ed., *Symposium on Mission and Social Action: The Role of Social Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Silver Spring, MD: Adventist Development and Relief Agency, 1997).

Denomination. John Byington, first General Conference president of the Seventh-day Adventists, ran a station on the underground Railway on his farm in upstate New York. And not to forget that Sojourner Truth, a very committed social activist who saved thousands of slaves with a great risk to her life, became a Seventh-day Adventist in her old age.³⁸

For the next three paragraphs, the discussion will be centered on Sahlin’s contributions that emphasize that the mission of Adventists should be seen as being compassionate to the ‘poor, hurting, and victims of injustice.’³⁹ Examining three core values of the social work profession provides a comparison of three core values of Adventism. Table 1 shows that the SDA Church’s social work values are in consonance with the conventional social work values and ethics.

Table 1. Comparison of SDA and Conventional Social Work Values

Conventional Values	Adventist Values
Respect for Human Dignity	Dignity and Worth of Individual
Social Justice	Promoting Social Justice
Wholeness (the bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective)	Commitment to Wholeness of the individual

A major tenet of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is respect for individuals, so it is that social work’s primary values include respect for the dignity and worth of individuals. Just as Adventists advocate for the wholeness of the human person, social work—as Jackson remarks—has a Bio-Psycho-Social-Spiritual thrust. First, when a social worker encounters a new client, the social worker takes into consideration all four areas of a person’s life—the physical, social, psychological, and spiritual. The

³⁸ Wilcox, ed., *Symposium on Mission and Social Action*.

³⁹ Monte Sahlin, *Ministries of Compassion* (Lincoln, NE: Christian Resources Distribution, 1994), accessed September 9, 2015, http://ict.aiias.edu/vol_26A/26Acc_177-190.htm.

spiritual dimension is not left out by professional social workers, be they religiously-affiliated or not. Second, in the *Journal of Adventist Education*, as Jackson observes, Adventist education values for the 21st century outline four areas of a student's life to consider. These values also include a focus on the same four areas: physical, social, emotional, and spiritual. Both social work and Adventism promote social justice through impartial treatment for everyone. Pacific Union College describes social work as "practical theology," suggesting a need to blend social work and spirituality in service to others.

A popular Professor of New Testament, Jon Paulien acknowledged by Jackson, remarked that those who are anticipating the imminent return of Jesus will be individuals who will be visiting the sick, visiting with those in prison, clothing those naked, and feeding the hungry.⁴⁰ This is a social ministry and the Adventist message at its best.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church takes the world as a mission field. Therefore the gospel seed is to be sowed into the world which includes humanitarian and social activities, before the end of times. This is considered a prime and solemn duty of every believer as assigned by God. So the SDA Church further seeks the fulfillment of this divine injunction through some of her arms and institutions, such as Adventist Women's Ministries (AWM); Adventist Men's Organization (AMO); Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM); Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA); Adventist Health Services (AHS) among others. These arms of the church and other subsidiary bodies offer welfare services in conjunction with the Personal Ministries Department of the Church to cater for the welfare of the members. Their

⁴⁰ Jackson, "Social Work and Adventist Education: Strange Bedfellows or Kindred Spirits? Social Work and Adventist Education: Strange Bedfellows or Kindred Spirits?"

services also extend to non-members for the purposes of establishing a deeper relationship and goodwill between the Church and Community. And more recently, an indigenously founded welfare organization by name Springtime Development Foundation (SDF), which also has become a household name in welfare endeavors, is tremendously advancing this all-important mission of the Church.

The church does so many social activities within and outside the church in order to empower and strengthen relationships among members and non-members. For example, in order to stem the rising loss of the unemployed youth from the church, the Executive Committee of the West Central Africa Division of the Seventh-Adventist took an action with the following expected outcomes; 1. The church will become more attractive to the young people as they see it as a source of the positive change in their lives – making them assets to their families, church, and society. 2. The church will be seen to be more relevant to the young people as it not only addresses their spiritual needs but their physical and social needs as well. 3. The youth will love the church, become more loyal to it, and be more ready to carry out its mission.⁴¹

William Shelf reveals when God does anything in this world, he does it through the church. It is interesting to note that, the church was into education before the government. The very popular universities such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, began with the major purpose of educating the clergy. Over a long time, the church has been feeding the hungry, providing services for the community. ‘It was the church

⁴¹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Minutes of Meetings of West Central Africa Division Committee* (Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire: West Central Africa Division, November 8, 2009).

which broke down the Berlin Wall, led the march on Selma, produced Martin Luther King Jr., and it was the church that led the war on poverty.’⁴²

Daly observes that when we fail to impact the community in which we live, people will see us as mere lodgers in the community and not as useful residents. Most churches have the tendency of focusing on themselves or maintaining self-preservation. There is a need for refocusing of priorities. While the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been called to be separate in lifestyle, it has never been called to be isolated from the people that it aims to impact. Very often, the SDA Church effort to engage its community could be said to be motivated by a proselytizing agenda. The reason why there is no effective community is when churches have lost a sense of their mission.⁴³

For us to be seen as people of the truth which others should know, the life of the Saviour ought to be seen in us. When Jesus described His mission in Isaiah 61, He did so by holistically combining gospel proclamation, comforting, and providing. Christ mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed no partiality within the people groups He came in contact with, for example, Pharisees, Publicans, women, children, and strangers. He showed sympathy for their needs. This is described as Christ’s method.⁴⁴

Particular cognizance of Christ’s approach ought to be taken. He (1) mingled with people –desired their good. (2) Showed sympathy. (3) Ministered to their needs. (4) Won their confidence. (5) Follow Me. Sometimes churches are guilty of jumping

⁴² William L. Self, “The Church Is Worth the Effort,” *Ministry* 84, no. 7 (July 2012): 10–12.

⁴³ Richard Daly, “From Just a Church Service to a Serving Church,” *Ministry* 85, no. 9 (September 2013): 10–12.

⁴⁴ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 143.

from step 1 straight to 5, and still, expect results. But an appreciation of the whole process is what ensures success, and lasting relationships.⁴⁵ The community is watching us and cannot follow except their lives are meaningfully touched as Christ did.

Thompson an Adventist scholar makes a pertinent observation. He suggests that the church should give quality gifts. He views as ironical the food that comes from the joint Church's food pantries in partnership with the local food banks which is not good enough. He discloses that the foods that come from such centers are not eaten by the donors, not even by the ones who work in the pantry. He is of the opinion that improved approach to the hunger issue should be adopted.⁴⁶

Springtime Development Foundation (SDF)

Dare reports about Springtime Development Foundation founded 1996 by Adedeji Adeleke, with the zealous intention of providing social ministry to Adventist Church institutions and equally propagate the gospel in Nigeria. SDF as at 2015 has existed for almost twenty years relentlessly serving out its mission. Unlike ADRA which derives its funding from different interest groups as well as an international and non-ethnic organization, the founder of this foundation is the sole financier. In some occasions, non Adventist members had benefitted, while numerous Church members have been immensely blessed, including the researcher.⁴⁷

The vision and mission of this important body are very clear. It has not only encouraged in the realization of the Church's goals but also boosted the volume of her

⁴⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁶ Thompson, "The Least of These," 14.

⁴⁷ E. O. Dare, *Report of Activities of 1996 to the Board of Trustees* (Osun State, Nigeria: Springtime Development Foundation, 1997), 1.

activities in Nigeria. Part of her missionary effort is to deploy every human and material resource within her disposal toward achieving membership growth of SDA Church in the country.

Women's Ministries

As an important arm of the church, the Women's Ministries of the church is actively involved in encouraging, equipping, challenging and nurturing SDA Church women in their sphere of sharing the gospel message with the world. It is clearly reflected in her statement of purpose that the development of Women's Ministries is to nurture, facilitate, and support women in reflecting the life of Jesus Christ within the church community and beyond.⁴⁸

This statement of purpose or mission although clearly states the services this department render, it does not capture the fact that their program is all inclusive, in the sense that the interests of the other arms of the church are served by the women. Adventists men and non-members, during women's programs, have received substantial moral and material support from the women's department.

Six critical issues have been identified as barriers preventing women from reaching their full potentials namely, illiteracy, poverty, health-related risks, abuse, overwork, and unequal training opportunity and mentoring for involvement in the mission of the church.⁴⁹ If these goals and ideals are fulfilled by the women's department in a non-competitive spirit, then it would advance the mission of the church, enhance the capacity of her usefulness among church members and community women.

⁴⁸ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2014-2015* (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2014), 355–356.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Adventist Men's Organization

Adventist Men's Organization (AMO) was established with the objective of promoting programs and activities geared towards spiritual, intellectual, social, moral, health and physical well-being of not only businessmen and professional men, but also students and professionals and so forth. This equips and affords them the opportunities of understanding of understanding the responsibilities of Adventist men, and challenge them to be involved in evangelistic activities. Part of her mission is to provide spiritual strength and unity amongst men. 'It also guides, teaches, counsels and mentors other men so they become godly men, faithful fathers, loving husbands and leaders with integrity.⁵⁰

Adventist Community Services

God has called every Seventh-day Adventist Church to be a transforming agent in his community. This is made possible by following the example of Jesus as recorded in Luke 4:16-21. Adventist Community Services (ACS) is a large umbrella with a wide range of public services provided by the Seventh-day Adventists. It is the denomination's community action agency and some arms of the church like ADRA, AMO, AYM, AWM and others that operate at the church level.⁵¹

It is important to note that while all the local arms of the church operate under the wing of ACS at the levels of the church and community, ADRA which is the official non-governmental organization sponsored by the SDA Church works at the global level. It is very challenging, if not disgusting that in the joint publication of the

⁵⁰ Admin, "Adventist Men Organization," *Bantama SDA Church*, accessed September 7, 2015, <http://bantamasdachurch.org/adventist-mens-organization-a-m-o/>.

⁵¹ Admin, "Social Welfare," *Community Service*, accessed June 2, 2015, www.communityservices.org.

departments of the Seventh-day Adventist Church under view; a 2001 survey of church members revealed that only 29% of the SDA members are involved in their communities.⁵² How can the church impact the community with such a low-level participation and attitude of the members? At any rate, this percentage doesn't seem to portray a good community image of the Church.

The ever-increasing problems of poverty, diseases, disaster, among other social challenges in our world have some positive side, especially if viewed from the spiritual angle. It is very glaring that these pressing problems present unlimited opportunities for God's people to act individually or communally. It is by so doing that they can experience the joy of service. This joy is derived by providing compassionate care that alleviates and prevents suffering. This also serves as open doors of hope for our neighbors to experience Jesus amid their struggles.⁵³

Four levels of community services. Ronald Sider informs work could be done at four different levels in any community. Believers need not deceive themselves feeling complacent that the level where they work is the only thing to be done. These four levels address anything that might be said of social concern.

Level one. It involves church volunteers both in SDA and other faiths who usually work at the level of 'relief'—i.e. providing for the immediate basic need of water, shelter, food, clothing by individuals and families. Most government welfare programs do the same thing and even raise check and voucher to meet such emergencies. But churches that make the difference apply Sider, Olson, and Unruh's principle who believe that the church should go beyond giving fish and providing

⁵² Personal Ministries Director, "Personal Ministries Leaflet No. 16," *Sabbath School & Personal Ministries*, accessed June 2, 2015, www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/asci.

⁵³ Ibid.

emergency needs forever. Once an impoverished person has been empowered to meet his or her own needs, he is in a position to flourish and grow. Stopping at the first level will multiply ‘dependency syndrome.’⁵⁴

Level two. Church members could also work at the second level called ‘economic development’ in developing areas or societies, needy families can be provided with tools or information on business techniques which they could use to earn some income. This has the advantage of ensuring regular supplies of food, as well as protecting the dignity of the poor. It enhances individual and community development. This is called capacity building and social empowerment.⁵⁵

Level three. Some church members work for “Systemic (Structural) Change,” also known as advocacy, seeking to improve institutional policies and laws that encourage unjust or unhealthy conditions. This includes making efforts to impact laws on housing or work or living conditions to help disadvantaged persons enjoy a better life. Sider et al observe that this is like “making sure that everyone in the community has equal access to the fish pond.”⁵⁶

Level four. This level is described as ‘Community action.’ At this stage, all other levels of relief, economic development, and systemic change are brought together in a well-planned strategy. It involves implementation by joint efforts to make a lively and sensitive neighborhood or community. Therefore Adventist Community Services are encouraged to rise above the current level and improve on its

⁵⁴ Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson, and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 86–87.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 20, 87.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

capacity to take more challenges.⁵⁷ These four levels of social empowerment actually remind the members of the processes required for the poor and needy around Umuocham, Akpaa 1, and the entire Aba South Conference to be fully and socially rehabilitated within and outside the Church.

Linthicum, a renowned leader in Urban and Community-based ministry, sees the mission of the church as a community oriented ministry. Linthicum categorizes the church into three, namely:

1. The church in the city (community). This is a reference to her location; members are not from within the same community, and so members have very passive involvement in the community.
2. The church to the city (community). This church is committed to the community needs and projects, shows concern, without necessarily accessing or diagnosing such needs. This church encourages community participation in programs though she (community) may not be interested.
3. The church with the city (community). This is the most community sensitive church. She sees and does mission in partnership with the community. Probes to discover the burning issues from the community. Works to make the image and the presence of the church to be felt in the community. She asks to find out the needs of the community involving her resources. This church is ever-willing to attend to the community needs, at times in collaboration with other existing organizations.⁵⁸

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) came into existence in November 1956 and was established by Seventh-day Adventist Church purposely to provide welfare and humanitarian services. It was previously known as Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service (SAWS) but eventually changed to Seventh-day Adventist World Service in 1963. By 1958 SAWS' initial delivery covered up 22

⁵⁷ Personal Ministries Director, "Personal Ministries Leaflet No. 16."

⁵⁸ Robert C. Linthicum, *Empowering the Poor: Community Organizing among the City's 'Rag, Tag, and Bobtail'* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1991), 21–30.

countries valued at about \$485,000. Within a period of four years, her services had extended to about 29 countries with a total value of \$2.3 million in shipments. Benefiting countries at that time included South America, Middle East as well as some major disaster areas. By the middle of the 1970s, the organization had enlarged her mission to include some long-term development projects, rather than just relief programs alone. In order to bear a name that was to capture the full essence of her activities, SAWS became known as ‘Adventist Development and Relief Agency’ (ADRA) in the year 1983.⁵⁹

ADRA’s activities soon included building health clinics in Africa, assisting hurricane victims in Central America, teaching hygiene and health to children in Asia, creating awareness of worldwide humanitarian needs through ADRA’s network outfits or Global village in the United States. ADRA does not attach strings to her humanitarian works but aims to reach those in need irrespective of their religious affiliations, race, gender, or cultural background. The Agency is purely actuated by the principle of love and benevolence. Currently, over 125 countries are beneficiaries which are eloquent testimonies of her unmitigated missionary impacts.

In some occasions, the organization targets or scouts for the least favored groups of people in the society, with the aim of not just helping, but involving them in a participatory project. In such cases, the recipients take part in the stages of the project in terms of implementation, assessment, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. By so doing, provision of manpower, community development, supplemental funding, and some other contributions are not only ensured but provided.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ ADRA, “Who We Are,” *Adventist Development and Relief Agency*, accessed April 9, 2015, http://www.adra.org/site/PageNavigator/who_we_are.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

ADRA operates as an independent humanitarian agency. It was established by the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the primary purpose of assisting in community development and supplying disaster reliefs to victims and needy communities. The Church has a long history of nearly 80 years of organized humanitarian services. It is pertinent to observe that the United Nations granted ADRA general consultative status in 1997.⁶¹

The agency is committed to enhancing the dignity inherent in each person. She is actively involved in improving the quality of human life, especially those who are most vulnerable such as women, children, and aged people. Another salient aspect of ADRA's activities also geared towards ameliorating the quality of lives is partnering with other established donors, communities, and some non-governmental organizations in order to make her goals realizable. These she seeks to execute through five major portfolios namely, food security, economic development, primary health care, basic education and emergency management

The basis for ADRA's existence and the purpose for her actions is to share and demonstrate the Spirit and example of Jesus Christ. This, she carries out, as earlier mentioned, through serving and partnering with individuals and groups in need. Additionally, it is interesting to note that ADRA also seeks to identify and address social injustices and deprivations in developing countries mainly via her welfare packages or initiatives. Through such initiatives and investments, individuals and communities are empowered while at the same time their potentials are harnessed.⁶²

Islam and Social Ministry

The structure of Islamic society is based on social wellbeing and social welfare according to the Islamic principles and teachings. There are three main pillars

⁶¹ Beryl Turtill and Sylvia Turtill, "Training Nurses at Ile-Ife, Nigeria," *British Advent Messenger*, September 25, 1964, 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 1.

of Islamic society, namely: 1. Social Cohesion 2. Co-operation 3. Self-Sufficiency.⁶³ Islam has a strong emphasis on social ministry, and that probably accounts for one of the reasons why it is among the fastest growing religions.

Islamic societies claim to be the ideal for all other societies in the whole world. The following statement is credited to her beloved founder and Prophet Muhammad: “A believer is to another believer what the bricks of a solid (cemented) building structure are to each other firmly connected together.”⁶⁴ What a powerful and stimulating observation. If all other religions should go by Muhammad’s philosophy and get committed to it, especially as it concerns social welfare, what a lovely place that our world become.

The above mentioned Hadith (Illustration) shows that building structure is useless until the various components adhere to each other in a concrete and cement-like fashion. Believers need to develop genuine affection for one another and beyond. This is so vital in a human relationship. Nobody can live in isolation. Even in the human body, there are so many links that help the organs to keep in touch with each other. Cells die off if they are not bound to another cell.⁶⁵ Understanding this reality enhances mission and community development as we come to appreciate the usefulness and humanity in us more and more.

John Esposito reveals that from early Islamic history, Muslims have been known to establish many religious, educational, political and social welfare institutions. These institutions include hospitals, clinics, schools, day care centers,

⁶³ Admin, “The Concept of Social Welfare in Islam,” *Self Growth*, accessed May 29, 2015, <http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/the-concept-of-social-welfare-in-islam>.

⁶⁴ Admin, “The Concept of Social Welfare in Islam,” *Self Growth*, accessed May 29, 2015, <http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/the-concept-of-social-welfare-in-islam>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

refugee relief agencies, social services and banks etc. Some Muslim charitable organizations are well known and supported by religious endowments in terms of land or money designated or donated for such purposes by the government or wealthy individuals. More recently, some oil-rich Arabian Countries are beginning to focus their missionary activities through preaching, the building of Mosques, translation, and distribution of the Quran and other religious texts. In some cases where governments are unable or not willing to provide reliable and affordable essential and other social services, the gaps are filled by certain Islamic institutions. In such situations, some social network societies that provide support for the poor and accident victims resulting from earthquakes, and those killed during wars are created.⁶⁶

For every Moslem adherent, *zakah* is a moral obligation. It is assumed that the difference between *zakah* and *sadaqah* is that while the former is obligatory, the latter is voluntary. Many socially committed Jordanian Muslims disagree with this assumption, however. It is a common belief that every believer has a moral obligation to engage in *sadaqah* when confronted with other people's need and has the opportunity of helping them. According to Harmsen, a certain teacher of social work at Jordan University in Amman defines *sadaqah* as any voluntary effort to improve the welfare of the community. Every Muslim is duty-bound to perform it, even the poor themselves.⁶⁷

Joana Macrae and Adile Hermer say it is understandable why Islamic religion is charity oriented. Prophet Mohammed was an orphan, and as such almost all of her

⁶⁶ John L. Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 131, 176.

projects are geared towards supporting orphans, and regular appeals made on their behalf. In fact a wide range of services is provided to the grassroots, ranging from residential homes and daycare centers to individual sponsorship. In some cases, school fees, textbooks, special clothes for festival days and school uniforms are provided.⁶⁸ Many Islamic countries of the world have Muslim ministries and institutions.

In the UK, two of the foremost Muslim agencies are Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. Islamic Relief Agency which was founded in 1984 by an Egyptian doctor has been known for having successful fundraising drives as well as branches in several other Western countries. Her position is clear, always maintaining an impartial and neutral position as long as humanitarian services are concerned. As a result of their liberality in this regards, generous assistance and encouragement are offered to people regardless of their religious affiliation. This has more or less been suggested as one of the secrets of her rapidly growing missionary frontiers. On the contrary, slightly smaller Muslim Aid, which is more fundamental in position, insists that its work should be used to benefit Muslims only.⁶⁹ The fact that Muslims in their humanitarian actions seem to have some political undertones is not strange to critics and non-Muslim observers. At the same time, it will not be fair to reduce every Islamic humanitarian action as merely political.

It must, however, be noted that since the September eleven attack on the USA, Islamic charities have been highly subjected to surveillance basically for alleged links

⁶⁸ Joana Macrae et al., *Humanitarian Action and the 'Global War on Terror! A Review of Trends and Issues*, ed. Joana Macrae and Adele Harmer (London, England: Overseas Development Institute, 2003).

⁶⁹ Admin, "Social Welfare in Islam," *ODI*, accessed April 16, 2015, www.odi.org.uk/hpgpublications.html.

with extremists groups. These days, it takes the USA some quality time to be able to identify charities designed to facilitate terrorist activities and to cut off funds channeled through them. Ironically humanitarian actions set for the purposes of mission so suddenly turned into awful and sinister motives.

It is reported that in 1937/1938, the Muslim Ladies' Association was formed by Zaynab al-Ghazali to carry out social welfare activities. However, the interests of the women were considered. The program of the association was expanded to train women to perform *da'wah* (religious exhortation), as well as to teach religious principles to other women.⁷⁰ This was an empowerment for the Moslem women both young and old, to enable them to contribute meaningfully to the Moslem community and beyond.

The structure of Islamic society is based on social wellbeing and social welfare according to the Islamic principles and teachings. There are three main pillars of Islamic society, namely: 1. Social Cohesion 2. Co-operation 3. Self-Sufficiency.⁷¹ Islam has a strong emphasis on social ministry, and that probably accounts for one of the reasons why it is one of the fastest growing religions.

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⁷⁰ AMSA, "Muslim Advancement," *American Society for Muslim Advancement*, accessed May 20, 2015, <http://www.asmasociety.org>.

⁷¹ Admin, "The Concept of Social Welfare in Islam."

⁷² *Ibid.*

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DeLong-Bas remarks that observations reveal that in the twentieth century, more conversions into Islam have been recorded. Something was particularly responsible for this – combined spread of illiteracy, promotion of public education for both boys and girls; as well as the expansion of job opportunities for women. Muslim women have been noted for been resourceful, creative and dedicated to their faith lives; and also for making good neighbors individually and communally.⁷⁴

DeLong-Bas indicates that the Muslim Ladies Association was formed by Zaynab al-Ghazali around 1937/1938 to carry out welfare activities. That also provided training sessions for women. It was a sort of social empowerment for the women that has focused into the mainstream of Islamic socio-political activities where they exercise their right with their male counterparts.

⁷³ Admin, “The Concept of Social Welfare in Islam.”

⁷⁴ Natana J. DeLong-Bas, *Notable Muslims: Muslim Builders of World Civilization and Culture* (New York, NY: Oxford One World, 2006).

Wadud, Amina once published a deliberately female-inclusive exegetical work. In her argument asserts that female equality with men dates back to the time of creation, and in terms of religious obligations, provides the framework for challenging gender roles. She indicates that gender roles are a matter of culture, rather religion. Following this development, Sisters in Islam came to discover that inferior and subordinate status of women to men is not part of the Qur'anic revelation. Because the women are also trained to interpret the Quran, the rate of marginalization will be reduced and the exclusive control exercised by the male.⁷⁵

Esposito says, 'Karamah' an American-based Muslim organization was founded in 2004 by an Egyptian- American scholar fights for Human Rights. This Muslim Women Lawyers association has done so much in curbing the discrimination towards women, developing gender equitable Islamic Jurisprudence, reinterpreting some gender-biased laws, addressing the issues of marriage and divorce, child custody, domestic violence, political participation of women, and inheritance rights among others.⁷⁶ This shows how the social ministry has been very effectively utilized by the Muslim religion, and how this ministry can assist in bringing coherence and stability if rightly adopted in other religious groups.

Barlas declares, through social ministry, Muslim women are still making significant strides towards achieving women emancipation in some more areas within the Muslim social, religious and political culture. Another challenging aspect for which the Muslims women are still networking is the area of having more voices in the Quranic interpretations, which has remained very conservative. However,

⁷⁵ Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (New York, NY: Oxford One World, 2006).

⁷⁶ John L. Esposito, *Women in Muslim Family Law* (New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001).

some Muslim men are beginning to see reasons, and to encourage and accept the participation of women as legitimate interpreters of the Quran alongside their male counterparts.⁷⁷

One of the strongest statements of the Quran in support of social ministry states. It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which ye have made. Qur'an (2: 177).

Quran enjoins the strictest practice of love and charity for her adherents. Care and social ministry have its place in the gospel ministry but cannot earn us salvation.

Furthermore, from the Islamic perspective, the process of securing individual freedom is linked directly to the conscious act of discharging one's responsibility to assist the poor in the society. Failure to do so is declared to be a denial of faith by the Qur'an. Quran (107: 1-3). Giving to the poor and needy is an act of righteousness but not compulsive.

Naqvi discloses, in Islam, it is believed that the way to live is not to emphasize on the maximization of material personal gains, but on how readily one could accept a cut in his own material welfare for the sake of others. In other words, Islamic precepts believe in the hereafter, while commitment is based on 'rational' motivation: a sort of exchange is involved—an individual resolves to reduce his present welfare only to enhance his expected welfare.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002).

⁷⁸ Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi, "Individual Freedom, Social Welfare and Islamic Economic Order," in *Essays in Islamic Economic Philosophy* (Islamabad, Pakistan: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 1981), 12.

When properly analyzed, all elements put together, Islam's social vision seems to tilt more to a social revolution rather than an egalitarian posture, in the scale of ethical values. It determines that the process of social reforms must continue in every walk of life, and can settle for nothing less. In order to achieve this goal, Islam emphasizes voluntary renunciation of one's abundant material possession as a diversion from higher goals of life that man must of necessity aspire to man's acquisitive instincts, are seen more or less as excesses that cannot be allowed to degenerate into greed or avarice. It is something that must be curbed or restrained to prevent him from leading the society into a social catastrophe.⁷⁹ All these principles or measures when followed are considered capable of preserving, nourishing and injecting vitalities into the precious gift of Allah.⁸⁰

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Over time, private or group of individuals have assisted in carrying out social activities along denominational and non-denominational lines. Most of the time, their activities are executed by self-effort without necessarily having any government funding. Notable organization in this regard is the world vision.

World Vision. World Vision International is an Evangelical Christian humanitarian aid, development, and advocacy organization. She primarily concerns with gender-based violence, and receives the attention of many other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly on those affecting women. Besides organizing awareness-raising campaigns and setting up hotlines to facilitate communications, she also provides temporary shelter, psychological and legal support

⁷⁹ Naqvi, "Individual Freedom, Social Welfare and Islamic Economic Order."

⁸⁰ Ibid.

to the victims of domestic violence and other emergencies. Sometimes, she initiates bills or laws that deal with domestic or family violence, subject to Government approval.⁸¹

In some communities, World Vision is currently advocating for the establishment of a national system of social works which works to register the presence of social workers in every community. This initiative World Vision in the communities, where World Vision has Area Development Programs (ADPs) several years ago, has already started yielding its expected results.

The social workers among other things not only strengthen community-level child protection mechanisms, they also forestall domestic violence and child abuse or institutionalization and so forth. In addition to helping families and children in difficult circumstances, advisory opportunities are provided for families on how to improve their economic situations. Just in the past two years, some of these social workers in communities where the presence of World Vision is active, over 50 cases of domestic violence involving more than fifty families have addressed.⁸²

Harmsen in his book disagrees that the work of Muslim NGOs in Jordan is a political tool used by the Islamist movement; for him that would be a misjudgment of the longstanding Islamic tradition of solidarity, caring for the underprivileged: the needy, orphaned, sick and widowed. Such social practices pertaining to this tradition have, for centuries been supported by numerous Qur'anic 'ayat and *hadiths*, that encourages believers to give generously and to help those in need. Indeed, according to religious sources, such practices are necessary in order for Muslims to win the

⁸¹ World Vision, "Social Workers, One of World Vision's Most Significant Investments in Armenia.," *World Vision*, accessed September 9, 2015, <http://www.wvi.org/article/social-workers-one-world-vision%E2%80%99s-most-significant-investments-armenia>.

⁸² Ibid.

favor of God and to enter paradise. In the Islamic concepts of zakah and sadaqah, there is the related notion that serving the poor is equal to serving God.⁸³

Minear observes that within the international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) community, the human rights NGOs engage in the work of protecting victims of conflict and persecution, oppose human rights violations, monitor and speak against governments who are negligent with their subjects. On the other hand, humanitarian NGOs are more focused on addressing the problems of victims of conflicts and natural disasters, but find it difficult to denounce human rights violations for fear of being curtailed by the government. They rather maintain a ‘quiet’ intervention approach in the raising of concerns over human rights abuses with the relevant public officials or armed groups.⁸⁴

Ferris argues although in practice it is not easy to separate the work of humanitarian and human rights NGOs because they overlap, very often faith-based organizations usually involve in both human rights and humanitarian work. Another important thing is that secular and faith-based organizations technically draw reports from their constituents to be included in the international policy agenda.⁸⁵ This is very significant as it helps to put their cause within perspectives. In many parts of the world, it’s been noted that the assistance of NGOs has provided protection for the people. Such protection included the medical and educational assistance that was provided by the Joint Relief Ministry. This organization went as far as issuing the

⁸³ Egbert Harmsen, *Islam, Civil Society and Social Work* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 173.

⁸⁴ Karry Minear, “Partnership in the Protection of Refugees and Other People at Risk” (UNHCR working paper No. 13, Geneva, 1999).

⁸⁵ E. Ferris, “Faith-Based and Secular Humanitarian Organizations,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 87, no. 858 (2005): 321.

Sudanese registration /identity card. Cases were reported when some of the refugees were delivered from difficult situations by presenting those official-looking documents.⁸⁶ It is also true that in event of war, indigenous NGOs have only been the providers of protection in such war-torn areas, especially when international community withdraws or is unable to cope. A typical case was in Eastern Timor, when forceful expulsions, or withdrawal of most humanitarian agencies and the international community in the face of escalating violence. Only the local NGOs and some churches remained behind, as well as put their lives on the line in order to provide to endangered people.⁸⁷

In some very severe circumstances, people fled to churches and convents and in some cases found comfortable hiding places there, for reasonable lengths of time. Even when the international community withdrew from Sierra Leone in 2000, and abandoned the population to armed and warring groups and organizations, the indigenous NGOs, churches, inter-religious organizations and the Sierra Leone Red Cross saw reasons to stay behind, providing succor to best of their ability. We shall continue to depend on the views of Ferris on the activities of NGOs in the whole of this page. In the areas of advocacy, the NGOs have also done immensely well. For example, NGOs in collaboration with churches play important public education roles in raising awareness of humanitarian situations. It is on record that for almost forty years (40) years African churches have advocated on behalf of the needs of refugees and internally displaced people. Certain Sundays were earmarked Refugee campaign days.

⁸⁶ E. Ferris, "Faith-Based and Secular Humanitarian Organizations," *International Review of the Red Cross* 87, no. 858 (2005): 321.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Some churches networked together to elicit international or inter-regional collaboration on advocacy for the needy refugees. What a great ministry. European Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Church networks particularly distinguished themselves in this advocacy business and needed to be commended. However, it has been identified that part of the problem of some secular and faith-based NGOs is coordination. The fact remains that effective coordination implies a loss of ‘sovereignty’ on the part of the organization which many NGOs are unwilling to let go. In view of the competitive environments for raising funds, and nature of emergencies, coordination has been more effective at the local level and more difficult at the global level. Joint activity coordination also possesses its own challenges. At times it is time-consuming to mobilize resources to respond to areas affected by disaster. For example, it took a tremendous effort to gather the resources needed to address the December 2004 Tsunami disaster, except that the churches and NGOs had to work so hard.

Similarly, another social activist group in Malaysia in conjunction with Sisters in Islam, a group of professional Muslim women was founded in 1988 and registered as an NGO in 1993. The objective was to promote awareness of the principles of dignity, freedom, and equity. This social outfit among other things, aimed at creating a society that upholds these principles within a democratic state, particularly through more humane treatment and protection of women. This organization carefully bases its arguments on the basis of the Qur’anic text, highlighting the Qur’an’s emphasis on equality and fair treatment for all people.⁸⁸ This is a good indication that the issue of fairness is a concern even among the Islamic religion. Sisters in Islam has particularly

⁸⁸ Ferris, “Faith-Based and Secular Humanitarian Organizations.”

challenged interpretations that endorse the oppression of and violence toward women and interpretations that deny women the basic right to human dignity and equality because these interpretations violate Qur'anic principles. Sisters in Islam are not comfortable to be subjected to inferior and subordinate status to men, as that is contrary to Qur'anic revelation. Undoubtedly, this marginalization is as a result of men having had exclusive control over the interpretation of the Qur'anic text.

The same sentiment for social equality among the women has cut across many Islamic societies, Syrian-American Nimat Hafez Barazangi inclusive. This active group has asserted the importance of women, remembering that they are individuals, as well as members of a community. This group is advocating for the recognition of women's roles as simply complementary to that of men, and as individuals who are to be judged on the basis of their piety (taqwa). This interpretation asserts that the only difference God recognizes between human beings is in the level of taqwa, rather than gender, tribe, or birth (Qur'an 49:13).⁸⁹

Social Ministry: A Strategy for Empowerment and Mission

Most evangelicals are actively involved in social ministry and are committed to it. They also have an outstanding record of establishing social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, orphanages, etcetera, more than their counterparts.⁹⁰ Many consider the Seventh-day Adventists as evangelicals. An investigation of some key evangelical declarations such as Wheaton declaration (1966); World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin (1966); Chicago Declaration (1973); and Lausanne Covenant

⁸⁹ Admin, "Islam and Social Ministry," *Islamic Society of North America.*, accessed September 9, 2015, <http://www.isna.net/>.

⁹⁰ Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 391.

(1974) organized by the International Congress on world evangelization, indicate they were unanimous in identifying social action as a major factor in evangelizing the world.⁹¹ These churches acknowledge the implications of evangelism as something that go beyond merely spiritual concern. It also addresses socio-political realities which subject people to poverty and distress.

In the same token, Lausanne covenant was very explicit in her following submissions as Timothy Tennent puts it. First, it describes the social action in the same theological context as the doctrine of reconciliation, righteousness, and equality of man and woman created in the image of God. Secondly, it must be understood that evangelism and social ministry cannot be separated. Thirdly, this Church admitted to her failure and inability to live up to the Biblical requirements of social responsibility and justice for the oppressed.⁹²

In view of the above observations, there seems to be a clear confirmation that social ministry knows no boundaries. As the literature puts clearly, it is non-denominational, hence the reason why it is a core ministry for Islam, Catholics, and majority of other world religions. It is difficult to identify any Christian and even non-Christian religion that does not involve in social activity one way or another.

Although religious organizations should be concerned with the spiritual aspect of poverty, it is their duty at the same time to empower people through education, which helps them to learn and practice genuine love for one another.⁹³ Empowering people is to strengthen them spiritually, politically, economically, socially,

⁹¹ Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 391.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 392–393.

⁹³ UN, “Promoting Empowerment of People in Achieving Poverty Eradication,” *United Nation*, accessed June 8, 2016, www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/Full.

educationally and otherwise. Empowering the poor backward communities also involves the provision of education, enlightenment on their rights of citizenship, building their vocational skills, creating job opportunities, and an even distribution of government assets. Thus by so doing, they are empowered to be self-reliant and able to sustain themselves and their own families. Consequently, poverty is gradually removed.⁹⁴ Where the Church members fail to benefit from the government empowerment schemes, the Church should be able to complement the effort of the government in the interest of her poor members. That is the church people like to keep their membership.

If the SDA Church and indeed others could devote enough effort on in reach ministries, church membership will be retained, empowered, motivated to do greater missions. It is a healthy church that inspires missions. In the course of reading around social issues in mission, which include the totality of all that the church does in preparation for the kingdom of God, much emphasis is placed on outreach programs with less attention to the members of the household of faith. Churches need to balance this. It should be remembered that when the needs of Church members are taken care of, they will bring their relatives and friends to the Church.

Social ministry is so crucial in a mission that no church restrains it, as it is given a priority attention. It is interesting to know that some religious Organizations that seldom engage in public evangelistic campaigns, like Catholic and Islam, which utilize social ministry strategies, are counted among the fastest growing religions. It is evangelism that penetrates every boundary, tribal and cultural lines. Churches which actively involved in social ministry have remained mission proactive. This is why it is

⁹⁴ UN, "Promoting Empowerment of People in Achieving Poverty Eradication," *United Nation*, accessed June 8, 2016, www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/Full.

always a very welcome approach for the mission. Regrettably, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is yet to maximize all her potentials and opportunities through Social Ministry.

ADRA, as one of the Seventh-day Adventist social arms, ought to be identifying more readily with the mission of the church. The most meaningful package that could ever be offered to the world is futile if it does not lead a soul to salvation. On this note, it could rightly be said that ADRA is yet to fully meet her expectations.

CHAPTER 4

MINISTRY CONTEXT: A STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL MINISTRY

Social ministry if actively explored and employed in the church will go a long way in not only equipping and empowering the church's membership but also preparing and stabilizing her for mission. The researcher is of the view that very few approaches could so favorably ensure this primary goal of the church for membership retention and empowerment as a social ministry. Churches that have utilized the benefits of social ministry as revealed in the literature review are inclined to mission and usually with active and participatory membership. As a result, such Churches and denominations have made social ministry a core ministry. Discussed below are the macro and micro contexts of ministry in the areas of study, the research design, and data analysis.

Description of the Macro Context: Aba Metropolis

This chapter provides the background or project setting which includes some brief history, demography, economic life and religion of Aba metropolis. The estimated population is currently put as 1,215,000, with 35 square miles or 91 square kilometers.¹ The city is made up of two Local Government Councils: Aba North and Aba South. The entire communities of Aba known as 'Aba la Ohazu' villages include

¹ Demographia, "Built up Urban Areas or World Agglomerations 12th Edition," *Demographia World Urban Areas*, last modified April 2016, accessed June 7, 2016, <http://www.demographia.com/db-worldua-index.htm>.

Aba South, Aba North, and part of Osisioma local government areas are popularly referred to as ‘Enyimba City.’

Describing Aba as a big city is simply stating the trite. It is so significantly located that it is accessible from most of the eastern States of Nigeria namely; Imo; Anambra; Rivers; Enugu; Ebonyi; Akwa Ibom; Cross River and so forth. Aba is famous for her big markets such as Ariaria, Ngwa Road (Ahiaohuru), and Cemetery markets. Privately owned Industries and financial institutions are common sites in Aba. Okoroafor Humphrey Kalu et al observes that the original settlers of the town are the Ngwa people who are mostly Christians.

He further states that conglomeration of Igbos from across the country where previously they owned some flourishing import and export businesses before the civil war are responsible for the volume of bubbling business and economic activities that are always going on in Aba. It is the presence of these seasoned Igbo business persons that mainly drive these social and commercial activities.² These activities include importation and manufacture of textiles, clothing, shoes, nylon materials, beverages etcetera. The major food crops of Aba are vegetables, cassava, maize, yam, palms and fruits, oranges, and so forth

Alaneme during his lead paper presentation at the University of Jos noted that, “Aba has the widest migration field of all cities in eastern part of Nigeria” that though it is so diverse in terms of tribe, culture, and religion, she shows a rich and great social diversity observable as one moves from the various locations of the city.³ It is not in

² Okoroafor Humphrey Kalu, et al., “Rural Infrastructure Development: A Tool for Resolving Urbanization Crisis. A Case Study of South-Eastern Nigeria,” *Scientific & Academic Journal* 4, no. 1, World Environment (2014): 14–21.

³ S. S. Alaneme, “Evolving an Urban/Rural Classification Module” (presented at the Workshop on Urban/Rural Classification, Jos, Nigeria: University of Jos, 2000).

dispute that “Aba Ngwa” as many people often refer to her as belonging to the indigenous Ngwa settlers of Aba. Aba which started as a trade center eventually became a military post established by the then British colonial administration by 1901.⁴

Aba became a notable depot for agricultural products. One could possibly infer that business in Aba flourished and was facilitated after the railways were constructed that ran from Aba to Port Harcourt. Aba is no doubt a major and most populated town in Abia State. No wonder some call it the heartbeat of Abia State. It is also one of the commercial nerve centers in Nigeria. Most people will always describe Aba as the Japan of Africa because of the creativity and industry of the people of Aba. The following diagram shows the map of Aba, the Enyimba City.

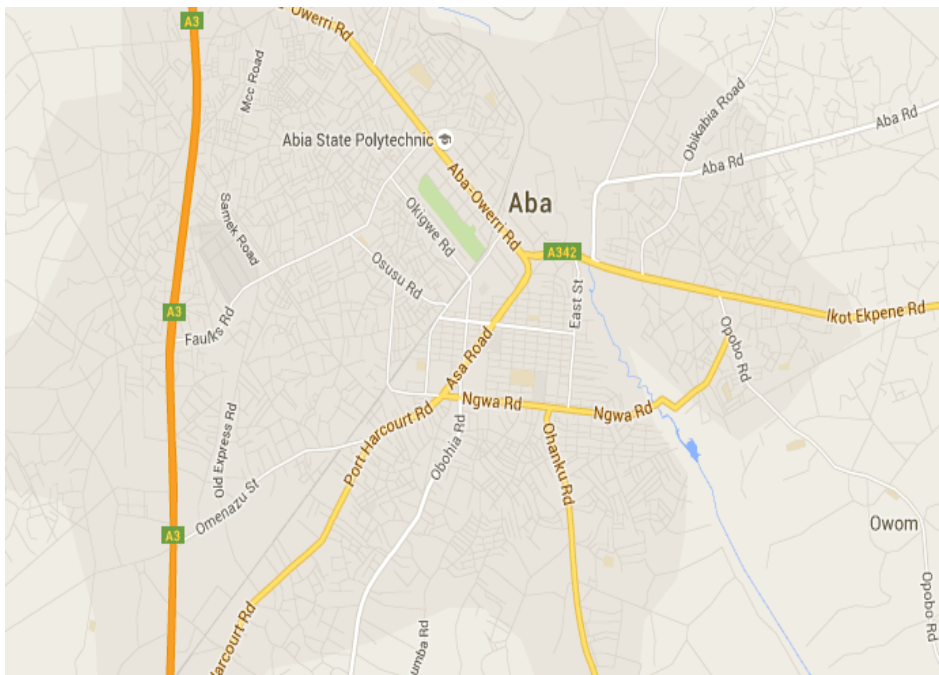


Figure 1. Map of Aba, the Enyimba City

⁴ Admin, “Umuocham Destination Guide,” *Your Place Abroad*, accessed May 31, 2016, www.yourplaceabroad.com/nigeriageneral/umuocham/.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church came into Aba in 1923. The Seventh-day Adventists became distinguished and respected by their biblical faith, quality hospitals, and good educational institutions.⁵ The SDA Church is committed to evangelism and social care to the members and nonmembers.

Aba South Conference of the SDA is one of the Conferences located in Aba metropolis. It is under the umbrella of this conference that the urban and rural churches of Umuocham and Akpaa 1 operate. Aba South Conference territory covers three local government councils—Aba South, Aba North, and Osisioma Ngwa. Aba South is a Local Government Area of Abia State in Nigeria. Its headquarters is in the city of Aba, Osisioma Ngwa area precisely. Aba South Conference was organized as a conference in January 2013. It has a membership of over 12,000. There is a total number of 58 organized churches while there are 22 unorganized churches, making a total of 80 churches.

Micro Context: Umuocham and Akpaa Churches

This is a brief look at what social ministry used to be in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Umuocham and Akpaa 1 districts. Reference will be made to the historical background of social ministry in Umuocham and Akpaa 1 Churches as disclosed by some experienced members. Whilst the nomenclature might not have been specifically ‘social ministry’ then, the acts when properly understood, are actually the underlying principles of social ministry.

⁵ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “Aba East Conference,” *Adventist Yearbook*, last modified 2014, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.adventistyearbook.org>.

SDA Church Umuocham

Umuocham church presently has a membership of about 1,200 and was organized in the year 1932. Umuocham is strategically positioned within the Aba metropolis. Umuocham is a district of four organized churches namely Umuchichi, Umungasi, Umuogele. SDA Umuocham is the district headquarters with a heterogeneous membership of different backgrounds and tribes. She has people from different walks of life such as elites, businessmen, traders, civil servants, farmers, artisans, etc.

In order to obtain a balanced information for this study, the opinions of the members from the urban and rural areas need to be sampled. As an urban church with a large population, coupled with her central location in Aba South Conference, Umuocham church will likely be favorable to social activity.

Due to the atmosphere of love that permeates every relationship in Umuocham, the act of giving gifts and sharing things in common was more pronounced then than now. Clothing and food items were occasionally distributed to the less privileged. Sharing things in commonly used to be the order of the day in Umuocham but gone are the good old days. Then meals were brought to church to be eaten and shared with whoever wishes to partake.

Osisioma Ngwa is a Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria. Its headquarters is in the town of Osisioma. It has an area of 198 km² and a population of 219,632 as at the 2006 census.⁶ Having been exposed to Christianity quite early in

⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, "Aba East Conference," *Adventist Yearbook*, last modified 2014, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.adventistyearbook.org>.

their lives, Umuocham and Abayi had the opportunities of being more mission minded than other villages around her.

The following are some of the ways these acts of kindness were displayed in the church among the congregation. It is believed Umuocham and the sister village Abayi have played some significant religious and economic roles in the Aba South metropolis. According to tradition as early as 1897, Umuocham and Abayi people were already venturing into some trades and oil business. As a result, they were exposed to Christianity quite in an early period which embraced well enough.

John Iwuala posits that it used to be the custom of the Adventists of the older generation, especially under the Lay Activity and Missionary arms of the Church to go and erect structures that shall eventually become home for the homeless. During these times, the Church go beyond the provisions of her budget to acquire the land on which to erect such structure. The members whose buildings were damaged or dilapidated received favor from fellow members who would gather on an agreed date or days to repair and rebuild the house(s) as the case may be.⁷ Elaborating on this, elder Adaelu, E.O, a renowned philanthropist, and church member recalled how many of thatched and mud houses they either built or repaired for members. At times such social activities could take them to faraway places, and used as, strategy for bringing in new members and strengthening the old ones. He also cited churches at Umuadienwe, Azumini, Ohanku, and others which built through Lay Activity and social care.⁸

⁷ John Iwuala, "One of the Oldest Members (Elder) in SDA Church Umuocham, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria.," interview by E. C. Nna, December 3, 2015.

⁸ Emmanuel O. Adaelu, "A Long Serving Elder /A Statesman and a Church Member for over 60 Years in SDA Church Abayi, Aba, Abia State,," interview by Author, November 17, 2015.

SDA Church Akpaa 1

SDA Church Akpaa 1 was organized in the year 1933 and presently has a membership of 455. This church happens to be one of the biggest in the rural area in terms of membership. The choice of SDA Church Akpaa 1 as a center for this research was informed by the various crops of members and leaders found in the church, whose ideas or opinions on the subject of social ministry cannot be neglected. Such members include farmers, palm fruit cutters, mud-house builders, tailors, seamstresses, artisans, traders, civil servants, etc.

These members assisted in furnishing the researcher and his team with diverse knowledge of present and past history of social activities in the church. This church is also blessed with one of the oldest members, Elder Ogbuagu, whose vast and rich experience will remain an asset to the church in our present time. A lot was revealed through him as regards what social ministry used to be in the church.

History has it that the Church then in Akpaa 1 village had the habit of visiting, clearing and weeding of farms for the aged and sometimes do the entire farm work from bush clearing to harvesting. There were times when an able-bodied member might not have enough money to hire labor, members may rally round to aid such member in farm cutting or any farm related chores.

It is interesting to know that members were visiting and spending quality time with members of all ranks and files, these made fellowship more cordial and enjoyable. The visiting may not always come with gifts but their coming showed how much they cared. Burdens were shared and brotherhood enhanced. Social ministry and welfare services were not limited to 'heavy duty' demands. There were times when study group members will just make out time to run errands such as fetching

water and firewood for other church members especially the aged or incapacitated members.⁹

Elder Ogbuagu, who has a history of genuine commitment to the Church told a story of how he single-handedly was running an orphanage or a mercy home immediately after the Biafran civil war. Out of sympathy for the children whose parents were displaced by the war, he decided to keep about one hundred of such children in his private house and was taking care of them. According to him, this selfless service would've continued for a longer period if not that the government interfered for inexplicable reasons, eventually leading to the interruption of that pious endeavor. In fact, he was forced to close down by the government, and to return the children from where he took them, while the rest of them were returned to SDA motherless babies home Ogbor Hill Aba.

Having served at Akpaa 1 district for over three years as a district Pastor in the past years with eight (8) under my pastoral care, with SDA Church Akpaa1 as the headquarters, there are many things that make Akpaa 1 unique in terms of Social Ministry. The people of Akpaa 1 have been known for living a communal life which dates back from history. Though located in the remote area of Osisioma L.G.A, with multiple road networks, their strong fraternity and warm fellowship among believers. Testimonies abound from church workers who served before and after the researcher on the uniqueness of Akpaa 1 peoples' social services for the clergy and non-clerics. Beggars and needy brothers and sisters who visit Akpaa 1 headquarters Church from one Sabbath to the other for alms were not left empty handed.

⁹ A. O. Ogbuagu, "The Oldest Ordained Elder and Member of SDA Church Akpaa 1 for over 60 Yrs.," interview by Author, December 1, 2015.

This Church has a track record of caring for the needy and strangers. Among the churches / districts the researcher has been privileged to pastor, this Church stands out and ranks first among the churches in terms of providing social care for him and his family. Interestingly, many church members from there, are still extending the same largess and social goodwill to the Pastor and his family, even after many years of leaving that Church.

It was the habit of the Dorcas Society (now Women Ministries) members as to enlist capable sisters whose duties shall be to keep company with their bereaved member, assisting her to get over the trauma of bereavement. It used to be the habit of Dorcas Society members to visit and assist their nursing mothers throughout their post-natal period.¹⁰

Research Design

This research will be descriptive. The project will be designed based on the findings from the focus group interviews and study which would seek to address the social issues in the Church. The intervention will involve seminar on visitation, capacity building, and community service.

Type of Research

This work is basically a qualitative research. This study, therefore, is designed to find out why and how social ministry is done with the view of proffering better ways of improving the ministry.

¹⁰ Rose John, "A Regular Member for over 30yrs in SDA Church Umuocham, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria," interview by Author, December 3, 2015.

Rationale for Selection of the Research Method

The idea behind the selection of descriptive research approach is to present a clear and logical narration of social activities in the area of study. Added to this, the study on social ministry as a strategy for mission in Aba South Conference is to help to effect social action in our churches. Social welfare and the gospel go together and thus cannot be separated from each other.

Appropriateness of the Study

The church in our time needs social ministry as a support to the gospel in order to measure up to the challenges of the 21st century gospel ministry. It is a practical ministry that attends to the physical, emotional, economic and social needs of the people. The study will help the church to identify the ways and means to handle or tackle her social challenges. It will also equip the church leaders with effective tools to deal with the church's social issues. It is expected that the interventions to be designed from this study will provide the church with the necessary insights to make effective decisions on social-related issues of her members.

Population and Sample of Participants

The total population of the two churches under study is 1,200 for Umuocham while Akpaa 1 is 455 totaling 1655. This figure (1,655) is, therefore, the population of the study. On the other hand, the total sample or participants for the study is made up of 40 respondents selected from different arms or departments of the churches as follows: 10 Elders (five from each church), 10 Diaconates (five from each church), 10 AWM members, and 10 AYM members. These participants were interviewed based on the designed focus group questions on social ministry situation in the two churches.

Criteria for Sampling Procedure and Selection

The criteria for sampling procedure and selection was based on the problem and purpose of the study which is to investigate, promote and effect social activities in the church. In a bid to achieve this, the advisor's instructions were followed for selection of participants. This is to ensure that the various levels and shades of opinions of church members are captured. This comprises the church leadership, young and old, rich and poor, opinion leaders, office holders and non-office holders. These persons by their nomenclature, position, and proportion that cut across the various levels of the Church membership fully represent the Church.

Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study include focused group study and interviews. Focus group study involves a discussion of a group of persons who are gathered for an in-depth discussion on a specified subject since it is believed that two heads are better than one. In this study, the groups met to share views on social welfare matters as pertains to the needy and underprivileged in the church. Since the research is church-centered, adoption of focus group instrumentation would be more appropriate to investigate the social challenges of the church. These groups which include elders, women, deacons, deaconesses and youth who are at the forefront of church activities would best furnish the authentic information needed for the study. The designed focus group questions were applied to both the urban and rural churches of Umuocham and Akpaa 1 respectively. The researcher's assisted in developing and confirming the reliability of the contents of the focus group instrument.

On the other hand, oral interview approach is adopted for its flexibility, accessibility, and dependability. In view of the fact that not many church members

know the history of the church, it becomes necessary that the few ones who could supply the needed information as regard topic of study be consulted. Also, since not every church member is lettered, oral interview is, therefore, more suitable to solicit the required information in order to make up for this deficiency. Few church members whose opinions were necessary for this respect were interviewed. The names those granted oral interviews appear on the footnote.

Data Analysis

In this section of the study, the participants' views from the Focus Group study are to be analyzed. Since it appears that all the questions designed in the Focus Group study and the attendant responses are pertinent, the effort would be made to as much as possible analyze the much that presents Social Ministry challenges within the perspective of the researcher.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began on March 30, 2015, with a letter written to Aba South Conference Executive Committee for permission to carry out the study. The collection ended on December 3, 2015. The necessary steps taken are summarized as follows:

Researcher's request to conduct research. The researcher wrote Aba South Conference Executive Committee requesting to be permitted to carry out a study in the selected churches. The purpose of the study was also explained in the letter. After obtaining approval, the two churches selected for the study were also written to. These requests were granted hence the researcher proceeded for the survey. See details in appendix A.

Approval/action by the conference executive committee. During the Executive committee meeting of Aba South Conference of Seventh-day Adventists on April 17, 2015, it was voted and authorized for the researcher to carry out his research

in the Churches and Districts of his choice. Letter from the Conference reflected in appendix A.

Researcher's request to conduct research at Umuocham and Akpaa 1 SDA Churches. The request letters are in Appendix A. Letters of consent from the churches were received as authorized by their respective church Boards in response to the researcher's applications requesting to be allowed to carry out the research. Those letters are to be seen in the appendix with its approval (Appendix A).

Focus Group Discussions

Umuocham. On June 13, 2015, the focus group discussion took place at Umuocham. The research team was constituted comprising the church pastor, an elder, and two youth members. The researcher gave some specific instructions to the team before they were assigned to supervise each of the four (4) groups for Umuocham Church. They would also assist him in recording, collecting and compiling the information.

Prior to the exercise, adequate explanations and translations were made concerning the focus group questions to ensure that every participant fully understood it. They were allowed to ask questions on the explanation given. Approval was sought from the respondents whose names were to be mentioned while they were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. These respondents were educated on the purpose and relevance of the study before the discussions started. There were four units of a focus group for each church.

Akpaa 1. On Saturday, October 24, 2015, SDA Church Akpaa 1 was visited for a focus group discussion. The choice of conducting this exercise on Saturday was in order to meet the target group since having enough members during the weekdays may be a failure. On this day, the researcher presented a sermon during the divine

service aimed at sensitizing the congregation and team members on the subject of social ministry titled ‘Have you found the key? See Appendix B.

Immediately after, a research team was formed. These team members include two pastors, one elder, and two youth members. Explanations were given on the questions, and the meaning and interpretations were rendered in the Igbo Language for the clarity of the team members and participants. The four focus group members for each of the churches was made up of Elders, AWM, Diaconate (deacons and deaconesses), and AYM. Each of the groups has five participants making twenty members for each church, totaling forty participants for the two churches. Members of these groups were selected from the local church membership of the two Churches considered to have adequate knowledge of the Church and members. The focus group discussion exercise was successfully conducted and the participants appended their signatures.

Eleven (11) questions were designed and used for the focus group discussion based on the recommendation of the researcher’s advisor. However, only seven (7) questions that most pertinently addressed the critical social issues were considered as reflected below in the analysis. Part of the focus group questions and answers are reflected in appendix C.

Presentation, Description, and Analysis of Data

This study uses a qualitative approach that includes extensive participant observations by the researcher, focus group interviews, and one-on-one interviews with congregants, church staff, and the church leaders. The age of participants ranged from 18 years of age to 65 years of age. Since the religious experience has many complexities, the qualitative methodology provides an opportunity to reiterate the

opinion of everyone within the church organization as important, which is well suited for the vivid, verbal imagery commonly used in this method. Also, since it is not possible to represent all the population of the study which comprises the entire membership of Umuocham and Akpaa 1 Churches, the researcher has divided the church into subgroups of four for each of the two focus groups formed in the churches. Consent of members whose names are mentioned was sought by their pastors.

The participants were shared into four groups of Elders, Diaconate (deacons and deaconesses), Adventist Women's Ministries (AWM) and Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM). Eleven (11) questions were designed and used for the focus group discussion. However, only seven (7) questions that most pertinently addressed the critical social issues were considered as reflected below in the analysis. The researcher used the principle of quota sampling only for the interpretation of Table 2 below, which however does not make it a mixed method. Quota sampling is defined in the footnote.¹¹ Most important, these different lenses provide a richer examination of how various individuals within the church view social ministry as a strategy for membership retention and empowerment for the mission in Aba South Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Table 2, next page, shows the percentage representation of the participants according to their groups. The table shows that out of the forty (40) participants selected for the focused group study ten (10) are elders of the church, another ten (10) are deacons and deaconesses, the AWM constitute ten (10), while the AYM was also

¹¹ Admin, "Quota Sampling Is a Non- Probability Technique Wherein the Selected or Chosen Sample Has the Same Proportion of Individuals as the Entire Population with Respect to Known Characteristics, Traits or Focused Phenomenon," *Explorable*, accessed May 31, 2016, <https://explorable.com/quota-sampling?gid=1578>.

represented by ten (10) persons. Each of these groups constitutes twenty-five percent of the total number. The distribution and proportion of the group members as shown on the table is not just a fair representation of the church population but had much to do with the opinion leaders of the Church.

Table 2. Distribution of Study Participants

Respondents	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Elders	10	25
Diaconate	10	25
AWM	10	25
AYM	10	25
Total	40	100

Responses to Focus Group Discussion Questions

Care for needy members. Five of the participants representing twelve and half percent are of the view that the church shows adequate care for her needy members. For these people, the church is doing enough in caring for her needy members. Eight of the participants representing twenty percent agree but not strongly that the church is showing adequate care to its members. These people believe that the church has been so doing considering the resources at her disposal but not adequately because of financial constraints. Two of the respondents representing five percent were undecided. These ones didn't comment or contribute on the issue.

Twenty (20) of the participants representing fifty percent of the sample disagree that the church is showing adequate care to her needy members. These ones believe that the church needs serious improvement in caring for her needy members as what she is doing at the moment is not adequate. While five participants representing twelve and a half percent strongly disagree that the church shows

adequate care to her needy members. So long as these people are concerned the church scores zero when it comes to caring for needy members. From the above analysis, it is obvious that the church is not doing enough or showing adequate care to her poor and needy members. This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Level of Care for Needy Members

Category	Do you believe that the church shows adequate care for the needy members?
Elders/ AMO	a. Yes, I do. b. Yes. We are trying c. Not all the time. Because they don't have anybody to speak on their behalf, it will be difficult for them. d. Not really. e. I don't think she does. f. No, because the church has more poor people than she can care for. No, because there is lack of funds, zeal, and planning for this ministry in the church
Adventist Women Ministries (AWM)	a) We have so been doing but not adequately due to financial constraints. b) Two out of five respondents believe that the church doesn't show adequate care for her members, not for lack of interest, but for lack of funds. c) Three respondents posit that the church doesn't show adequate care because it appears selfishness is growing while love is dying in the church.
Diaconate (Deacons and Deaconesses)	a) No, because they prefer those outside in the name of evangelizing. b) Yes, I do. c) I think she does. d) No, not at all. e) Yes, she does. f) Yes, the church does so within its locality but to a small extent not to a very large extent e.g. hospital bill, food and clothing.
Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)	a) Yes, we need to improve. b) Yes, she does enough. c) Yes, she does. d) The church is trying. e) Yes, I think so. f) Yes- The church assist their sick members who can't afford hospital bills esp. the widows & less privileged g) NO- The church only takes care of active members who are in positions thereby ignoring the less privileged Yes- The church goes as far as assisting the less privileged & widows during farming seasons.

Church attendance and social care. Twenty (20) of the participants representing fifty percent said they know about church members who left the church

or stop attending church programs due to lack of social care from the church and her members. While twenty of the respondents representing fifty percent said that they are not aware of any member who left the church due to lack of social care from the church and her members. From the responses given by half of the participants, the church is losing some of her members due to lack of social care or welfare, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Church Attendance and Social Care

Category	Do you know of any Church member (s) who stopped attending Church due to lack of social care?
Elders/ AMO	<p>a. Yes, I know one or two.</p> <p>b. I don't know yet.</p> <p>c. Not aware.</p> <p>d. Somebody says it.</p> <p>e. Yes, there are.</p> <p>No! We have not recorded any such thing.</p>
Adventist Women Ministries (AWM)	<p>a) We do not know</p> <p>b) Not quite sure</p> <p>c) Don't know about that.</p> <p>d) It is possible.</p> <p>e) That is obvious.</p> <p>f) Yes. A certain sister left the church because she was hospitalized for an illness and discharged after she recovered, and the church didn't visit her. As a result of that, she joined another church that showed concern towards her. Sister Helen equally left the church because she lost her husband and the church didn't pay her a condolence visit.</p>
Diaconate (Deacons and Deaconesses)	<p>a) No idea.</p> <p>b) Not aware, but some no longer come to church and Sabbath school.</p> <p>c) Yes, members do.</p> <p>d) Not really</p> <p>e) No, not yet identified</p> <p>f) Though it may occur but the extent of its occurrence is at a very small extent</p> <p>g) I don't know. Some indigent people have left the church due to poor social care to embrace where they thought they will be well taken care of but the number is to a very small extent.</p>
Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)	<p>a) Yes, there are.</p> <p>b) Yes, we do hear that.</p> <p>c) None I know of.</p> <p>d) No, maybe for other reasons.</p> <p>e) Not sure of anyone now.</p> <p>f) Yes- The member's reason for not attending church is that the church has refused to visit them when they are sick. The church often times fails to recognize when a member stops coming to church for more than a month. Not more than seventy percent of the members get adequate social care from the church and from other members who deem it fit to assist.</p>

Effect of social care on church membership/attendance. Respondents were largely of the opinion that social care would increase church attendance. Additionally, over time, membership would also increase, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Effect of Social Care on Church Attendance and Membership

Category	How can social care increase Church membership/attendance?
Elders/ AMO	<p>a. By visiting</p> <p>b. Helping and visiting them while in need</p> <p>c. When we help them achieve their goals with capital, the church has, it will increase their faith the more.</p> <p>d. If those in need/facing difficulties are attended to, they will, in turn, preach to others.</p> <p>e. To make them feel more committed to church activities.</p> <p>f. It can help, because it is evangelism on its own, SDA's are known for that; it has helped in the past and will continue to help.</p> <p>When people receive social care from the church, members and nonmembers alike, it helps to increase their love to be part or remain part of the church.</p>
Adventist Women Ministries (AWM)	<p>a) It will motivate the members to worship God.</p> <p>b) By taking care of them</p> <p>c) By helping them</p> <p>d) By helping them</p> <p>e) By visiting them, them they are sick or have some problems.</p> <p>f) Four respondents believe that when social needs of poor church members are met in the church, and by the church, it protects the members from being enticed with such things from other churches. One respondent thinks, it also serves as evangelism to non-members.</p>
Diaconate (Deacons and Deaconesses)	<p>a) By showing members that the church cares.</p> <p>b) By building up confidence, love and trust of those in need</p> <p>c) By closer and regular visitation.</p> <p>d) Through visitation, you know needs and problems of members and where they falling and help revive them.</p> <p>e) Helping and visiting them while in need.</p> <p>f) By assisting the poor widows</p> <p>By assisting the orphans in the church by given them formal education, skill acquisition job opportunities in the institution etc to give them a sense of belonging and to avoid being lured/enticed to other church denominations.</p>
Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)	<p>a) By visiting and encouraging them</p> <p>b) By visiting</p> <p>c) It entices and encourages them</p> <p>d) It will increase it.</p> <p>e) By helping them.</p> <p>f) Social care can increase church membership through frequent visitations to members who needs encouragement and prayers.</p> <p>g) It can also increase attendance when the church at large provides financially for the needs of its members especially the widows and less privileged.</p> <p>h) Through evangelism to neighbors and friends and also helping them with most of their needs & inviting them for church service.</p> <p>By conducting programs that will uplift the members of the church. Such as getting together programs, inspirational songs service.</p>

All the participants unanimously agree that social care can increase church membership and attendance. They identified the following as ways through which it can happen:

1. By helping and visiting the needy members;
2. Helping them to achieve their personal goals with soft loans or capital with little or no interest will increase as well as strengthen their faith;
3. It will inspire and instill in them a sense of belonging as well as responsibility to encourage and preach to others;
4. They will be motivated to be more committed to the activities of the church; and
5. It will help to build up confidence, love, and trust of the needy in the church.

From the views expressed by the participants, it is obvious that social care can increase church attendance and membership retention because people are naturally attracted to the source that helps in solving or mitigating their problems and challenges. Consequently, members and nonmembers will like to be in the church if they see the church as a forum where they meet people that care and willing to help in alleviating their problems. In other words, social care increases church membership and attendance.

Care activities that make other churches attractive to members. The participants identified the following as core activities that attract members to other churches:

1. Capacity Building and Empowerment
2. Visitation/Communication
3. Prison Ministry
4. Poor Fund: Financial assistance
5. Community Service Center
6. Community Service

7. Social Justice

8. Healthcare

The responses to questions on care activities are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Attractive Care Activities in Other Churches

Category	What particular care activities attract members to other Churches?
Elders/ AMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Talent hunt and youth empowerment. b. Social activities c. Cash, food items, visitation of members who are sick, either at home or in various hospitals. d. Regular visitation and giving of arms/financial assistance. e. Prayer and visitation. f. Food <p>Healthcare, because those who save a life are like second God.</p>
Adventist Women Ministries (AWM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visitation, financial assistance, exchange of gift, Christian social gathering e.g. Christian picnic or campouts. b) Healthcare. c) Visitation. d) By encouragement. e) When the church is not helping them when they are in need. f) According to two respondents, Healthcare, financial assistance, Building and renovation of houses, and visitations do. <p>Three respondents believe that social care activities don't really attract much of our people to other churches.</p>
Diaconate (Deacons and Deaconesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Communication, Financial support, visitation, music, social events etc. b) Meeting up with spiritual, physical needs of the person. c) Community service. d) Welfare packages to some less privileged. e) Social activities <p>Visitation of members by the Pastors and Church leaders mostly in time of difficulties which is to a very small extent in our church.</p>
Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visitation (regular), financial assistance, concern in welfare. b) Like this ten days program. c) Visitation and helping the needy. d) Ignorance e) By encouragement f) Support to members who cannot meet up with their daily needs g) Allowing their members to function effectively in church activities as this may help in the spiritual growth of the members. <p>Encouraging and praying for their members instead of stigmatizing and criticizing them.</p>

From the above-expressed views by the respondents, Capacity Building and empowerment may attract members to the church. Many church members and

nonmembers within Aba South Conference are living below poverty line as a result of the high level of unemployment in the land. Many of our young people are idle and restive due to unemployment. Many have described the high level of unemployment in the country as a time bomb. As it is axiomatically said ‘an idle mind is a devil’s workshop.’ What occupies the minds of idle youths more is taking the first step into crime as a means of survival. They think less about church activities. Paramount in their minds is how to break loose from the shackles of unemployment and idleness. Therefore, to attract them, the church’s social care programs must include empowerment and capacity building.

Visitation is another care activity that attracts members to other churches. Some respondents revealed that sister A (name withheld) left the church because she was hospitalized for an illness and discharged after she recovered, and the church didn’t visit her. As a result of that, she joined another church that showed concern towards her. Sister B equally left the church because she lost her husband and the church didn’t pay her a condolence visit. Therefore, visitation of church members especially during the time of trouble, grief and other challenges and difficulties will help to prevent loss of members to other denominations and enhance membership retention.

The participants unanimously agreed that communication is another key care activity that attracts members to other churches. They said that most ‘Pentecostal’ churches do better than the SDA Church in terms of communication with members. According to participants ‘they make phone calls and send SMS just to know how their members are faring, encourage and motivate them in their challenges.’ They suggested the need to create a bulk SMS platform to reach members on a regular basis

with encouraging words. This according to them will help improve church attendance and membership retention.

Financial assistance such as payment of hospital bills and the establishment of Community Service Centre for the exchange of gift items such as clothes and sharing of food items attract members to other churches. If the church can take these areas of social care seriously, then nonmembers will be attracted to the church and membership retention will be guaranteed. The participants see Christian social gatherings such as picnics, campouts, and others as things that draw members to other churches. They believe that if Christian social gatherings are arranged at least twice a year, it will help to improve church attendance and membership retention.

All the participants were convinced that community service could attract people to other churches because it improves the image of Church who engages in it. Some of the participants said, “a Church that engages in community service will be seen by the community as being socially responsible and responsive to the needs of the host community hence the need to identify with such church.” The respondents also submit that it doesn't matter whether the community service addresses individual or collective needs of the community. For them, the most important thing is that the church engages in community development.

The participants also identified social justice as another crucial care activity that attracts members to other churches. According to Elder C who is a medical doctor, ‘The church should serve as a voice for the voiceless.’ Another Elder D remarked ‘Christ was a defense counsel to the woman accused of adultery and by so doing turned her to be his follower. The motive behind Christ's action was not to condone sin but to redeem and save a sinner by giving her a second chance.

The church should follow the example of Christ in this area.’ The participants suggested that the church should galvanize Seventh-day Adventist legal practitioners to offer free legal aids and services to the less privileged who are being denied the rights and privileges due them in the society because they cannot afford the cost of legal services. A lady Barrister E suggested

The church should establish an arm or department to be known as Adventist Legal Aid. Through such arm or department, she can mobilize legal practitioners in the church to offer free legal services to those who need it but cannot afford the cost.

All the participants totally opined that free health care services attract members to other churches. They echoed the axiom that health is wealth. According to Elder F, “those who save a life are like God. Most of the care that Jesus showed dwelt more on healing physical diseases and spiritual diseases such as casting out of unclean spirits.” Elder G asserted “the scripture says that above all things God wants us to prosper and be in health. If the church can mobilize our members who are health workers to offer free healthcare services, the poor sick members and nonmembers from time-to-time will receive medicare and the church will tremendously increase and membership retention will not be a problem.” Deaconess H was of the opinion that this was the reason why Jesus Christ told us the story of the Good Samaritan, and the Church needs to work more on this area. There is a need for serious improvement.

Perception of poor church members about the church. At least twenty of the participants representing fifty percent are of the view that the church members see the church as their last place of hope in times of need. According to them, the church is like a family and home for every believer. They referenced the example of Jesus in the book of Matt 12: 46-49

While he yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to be with him. Then one said unto him, ‘behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.’ But He answered

and said unto him that told him, ‘who is my mother? And who are my brethren?’ And he stretched forth His hands towards His disciples, and said, ‘behold my mother and my brethren!’ (KJV).

They cited the examples of converted Adventists who by the reason of their acceptance of the faith were rejected and abandoned by their family members but were accepted and taken care of by the church.

Five of the participants representing twelve and a half percent were undecided on the issue. They said that they have no comment for now. Fifteen of the participants representing about thirty-five percent are of the view that church members do not see the church as their last place of hope in the time of need. But they are of the view that the church ought to be the last place of hope for the needy church members but that she is not. They cited lack of love and trust and existence of cliques and class in the church. According to them, that makes it impossible for members to freely associate and feel at home with every member of the church. The responses on the perception of poor people are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Perceptions of Poor Members about the Church

Category	Do you believe that poor church members see the church as their last place of hope?
Elders/ AMO	<p>a. Somehow</p> <p>b. Perhaps sometimes.</p> <p>c. Yes, this is because all their spiritual, social welfare needs are being met. This makes them worship God.</p> <p>d. Yes in some cases.</p> <p>e. It is very true.</p> <p>Yes, especially members who are not part of other associations like a club.</p>
Adventist Women Ministries (AWM)	<p>a) Yes, the Bible says that the name of the Lord is a strong tower.</p> <p>b) Many times some members see it that way.</p> <p>c) Many poor persons do.</p> <p>d) That is very obvious.</p> <p>e) In most cases.</p> <p>They unanimously conceded that needy church members see the church as their last place of hope, but concerned that, very often, the help from the church isn't adequate.</p>
Diaconate (Deacons and Deaconesses)	<p>a) Some don't belong to any other group than the church and also see the church as a place of refuge.</p> <p>b) Many poor people do.</p> <p>c) At times yes.</p> <p>d) Yes, I agree.</p> <p>e) Not all the time.</p> <p>f) Yes, the believer is to a very large extent.</p> <p>No, because of insincerity, favoritism on the part of our leaders e.g. job placement in church own institution hospital bill to members.</p>
Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)	<p>a) Yes, very poor ones do.</p> <p>b) Somehow</p> <p>c) It's not true.</p> <p>d) Yes, some do.</p> <p>e) Yes, I agree.</p> <p>f) Yes- members such as the widows see the church as their last resort. They require assistance from the church or the members who are in good positions to help for their needs financially and otherwise.</p> <p>At times some poor members also get help from the church when everyone they depended upon has failed to come to their rescue.</p>

Neglect of poor members by rich members. Thirty-five of the participants representing seventy percent are of the view that most of the rich members neglect to care for the poor members. According to them the majority of the rich prefer to give for special projects in the church where their names will be mentioned and receive the applause of the congregation. They acknowledged that only a few of them help and care for the needy members. A certain I who is a Master Guide talked about one Mrs.

J who has empowered some unemployed youth through buying Tricycle (KEKE NAPEP) on higher purchase. She remarked, “Today those members have been gainfully empowered. They are no longer a burden to the church, now they can take care of their families and also support the church.” She went on to say, “If other rich members can do as Mrs. J is doing, many unemployed members of the church will be economically empowered.”

Some commented, “Some privileged ones will rather buy the poor person’s land instead of helping out. They want you to provide collateral before they will help you.” According to Elder K, “They forget that any help rendered to the poor and needy is done to God and therefore a treasure laid up in heaven.” Some blurted, “Some rich members will want you to worship them before they offer you help. They believe that the poor has nothing to offer them and so prefer to help their fellow rich people.” It was also discovered that some young unemployed ladies who are members shy to disclose their needs or to court favor of the rich male members. They are afraid of receiving help from the rich so that they do not take advantage of them. From the above analysis of the participants’ views, most of our rich members in Aba South Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are neglecting to care enough for the poor needy members, as seen in Table 8.

Table 8. Neglect of Poor Church Members by Rich Members

Category	Do you think that rich members neglect to care for the poor members?
Elders/ AMO	<p>a) Very few based on their personal reasons.</p> <p>b) Yes, many think so.</p> <p>c) Thinks that up to a half of the rich members of our church are ready to help.</p> <p>d) Yes, most of them do</p> <p>e) Sometimes.</p> <p>f) Often times the rich members see it as their obligation to assist in God's work by helping the poor and needy, in order words, I don't think they do neglect the poor members.</p> <p>g) The rich members don't believe in assisting the poor financially, but they do give out encouragement to the poor to find something doing which I think is a way of neglecting the poor members.</p> <p>h) Most of the rich members believe in helping the poor members they know too well, thereby neglecting the other members whom they do not know.</p>
Adventist Women Ministries (AWM)	<p>a) The answer is a bit personal because some rich members may be without the general knowledge of the entire church.</p> <p>b) Yes, some do.</p> <p>c) I don't know.</p> <p>d) Sometimes they do.</p> <p>e) That is what we see.</p> <p>They all think that rich members do neglect the poor once, even when they give, they give for political reasons, or to show off, or when it rubs their ego.</p>
Diaconate (Deacons and Deaconesses)	<p>a) Yes, because the poor has nothing to offer and the rich goes to the rich instead of associating with the poor. And also want the poor to worship them like God.</p> <p>b) Yes, some do.</p> <p>c) Some rich members, not all</p> <p>d) Some of them.</p> <p>e) No, I don't think so.</p> <p>f) Not all rich members but to a moderate extent.</p> <p>Some don't care at all.</p>
Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)	<p>a) Very few based on their personal reasons.</p> <p>b) Yes, many think so.</p> <p>c) Thinks half of the rich members of our church are ready to help.</p> <p>d) Yes, most of them do</p> <p>e) Sometimes.</p> <p>f) Often times the rich members see it as their obligation to assist in God's work by helping the poor and needy, in order words, I don't think they do neglect the poor members.</p> <p>g) The rich members don't believe in assisting the poor financially, but they do give out encouragement to the poor to find something doing which I think is a way of neglecting the poor members.</p> <p>Most of the rich members believe in helping the poor members they know too well, thereby neglecting the other members whom they do not know.</p>

Expected impact of social activities on the church. According to the participants, social care is an evangelism of its own. It draws people closer to God.

Elder K remarked, “social care played a key role in Peter’s conversion as a follower of Jesus Christ. He gave peter enough fish for the day after a fruitless toil all day. After giving him fish, he now told him He will make him a fisher of men.” With such a great social care from the savior, Peter needed no more persuasion to heed the invitation of Jesus to become a fisher of men. That social care from Jesus Christ made a great difference. Jesus took care of the physical before the spiritual. Our evangelistic effort should take care of the physical and spiritual needs of the people we are ministering to. The summary of responses on the expected impact of social care on the church is shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Expected Impact of Social Activities on the Church

Category	How will social activities impact our church?
Elders/ AMO	<p>a. Social activities are other activities within the week in the church apart from Sabbath worship (a) it can strengthen the relationship between members. (b) it enhances the sense of belonging.</p> <p>b) It helps us to grow</p> <p>c) Helps in winning souls</p> <p>d) Yes I will as long as I have to contribute.</p> <p>e) The church is trying but lets's do more on reviving love amongst brethren</p> <p>f) Social activity will help to uplift members of the church by supporting them morally, spiritually and otherwise, because there is no church without needy members.</p> <p>g) Visitations and Counseling, organizing youth, singles & married seminars in our church.</p> <p>Assisting the needy and creating job opportunity seminars that will help the skilled & unskilled in developing their God-given talents.</p>
Adventist Women Ministries (AWM)	<p>a) Social activities can improve spiritual upliftment and increase church membership.</p> <p>b) It will help knowing each other's problems.</p> <p>c) Increase social welfare.</p> <p>d) Having more interest in people's welfare. By providing some of their needs.</p> <p>e) Two believe that it will positively impact evangelism and soul winning.</p> <p>f) One thinks it will strengthen the reputation of the church by creating a good image for the church.</p> <p>Two believe it will help greatly in membership retention.</p>
Diaconate (Deacons and Deaconesses)	<p>a) Through evangelism and through education</p> <p>b) By winning souls to Christ</p> <p>c) Sustains love and confidence</p> <p>d) It reduces hatred and enmity, thereby promoting love and fellowship.</p> <p>e) None for now</p> <p>f) Increase in level of awareness</p> <p>g) Sense of belonging</p> <p>h) Viewing as the last hope of a common man</p> <p>i) Promote love and faithfulness</p> <p>j) Trust.</p>
Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)	<p>a) Social activities are other activities within the week in the church apart from Sabbath worship (a) it can strengthen the relationship between members. (b) it enhances the sense of belonging.</p> <p>b) It helps us to grow</p> <p>c) Helps in winning souls</p> <p>d) Yes I will as long as I have to contribute.</p> <p>e) The church is trying but lets's do more on reviving love amongst brethren</p> <p>f) Social activity will help to uplift members of the church by supporting them morally, spiritually and otherwise, because there is no church without needy members.</p> <p>g) Visitations and Counseling, organizing youth, singles & married seminars in our church.</p> <p>h) Assisting the needy and creating job opportunity seminars that will help the skilled & unskilled in developing their God-given talents.</p> <p>Through Evangelism outreach to members of the community.</p>

The participants identified the following as how social care will impact Aba South conference:

1. Evangelism
2. Spiritual growth
3. Physical growth
4. It makes the church live the gospel
5. It makes us children of God.

Summary of Findings

The findings from the focus group discussions are summarized below:

1. The church is not showing adequate care for her needy members.
2. The church is losing members to other denominations as a result of lack of adequate social care for members.
3. The following care activities attract members to other churches - Capacity Building and Empowerment; Visitation/Communication; Prison Ministry; Poor Fund (financial assistance); Community Service Center: Community service; Social Justice; and Healthcare, because those who save a life are like second God.
4. Church members see the church as their last place of hope in the times of need and difficulty.
5. Social care impacts the church through the following ways – it enhances Evangelism; Spiritual growth; Physical growth; strengthens Membership relationships; makes the church live the gospel, and above all makes us sincere children of God.
6. Social Ministry equips the Church for mission.
7. Every member has a contribution to make in the Church's social activity.

Intervention and Project Design

There is a common maxim among the Igbos that says, “show me how to fish and don't give me the fish.” While some may view the fish as a way out of their immediate predicament, such as medical bill, food, clothing, shelter and so forth, most

do not need fish but how to fish. The intervention that this research work seeks to carry out will focus on giving church members fish and teaching them how to fish too. But the intervention will dwell more on the later because it will be more beneficial to the church to have more members on the giving end than on the receiving end. This will help members to take care of their own needs as well as support the church materially, socially and spiritually. It would also guarantee membership retention and empowerment for mission.

Presentation/Description of Findings

In view of the need to address the social issue challenges based on the summary of findings from the focused group study, the intervention will be carried out in the following areas:

1. Community Service
2. Revisiting our Visitation Training
3. Capacity Building;

Like the early church as recorded in the book of Acts 3:44-46 social care contributes greatly to the spiritual and physical growth of the church,

and all that believed were together and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man, had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart (Acts 3:44-46 NKJV).

Other participants totally affirmed that social care played a key role in the numerical addition and spiritual growth of the early church hence the need for the church today to take social care seriously as a strategy for membership retention and empowerment in Aba South Conference of the SDA.

The participants unanimously described social care as “practical gospel.” They referenced to the book of Mathew 25:34-36

Then he shall say unto them in his right hand, come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was hungry and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me (KJV).

Jesus emphatically established in these verses that the gospel is incomplete without social care. The gospel must not only be preached it must be lived. It can only be lived through social care. Social care is the living aspect of the gospel.

The gospel or evangelism can be likened to science and technology. Of what use is science without technology and how can technology be possible without science? Both are intertwined. Science is the knowledge while technology is the act. So it is with the gospel. We preach and we act. We must “evangelize”- we must live the gospel. It is what makes us the children of God.

Intervention Modules

The intervention modules to be run in the designated Churches have been informed by the needs of the local Churches in the Aba South Conference of SDA. These needs and challenges were discovered mainly through focus group findings. The interventions are the local church- centered because many of the Church’s problems are interrelated. The designed programs will be extended to other local churches within the Conference in due course.

Community Service

Community service means the service that a person(s) renders for the development or the benefit of their local community. It makes one active and responsive to the needs of his or her immediate community. The following community service projects shall be carried out: cleaning of drainages; clearing and weeding of farm lands for poor widows in the community, for both members and

nonmembers; sand filling of potholes on the roads; and fetching of water and firewood for the aged in the community.

Before carrying out the community service program the following steps will be taken:

1. Visiting and interacting with the community stakeholders to identify the felt needs of the host community such as traditional rulers, women leaders, youth leaders, and opinion leaders and so on.
2. Building up preliminary opinion and support for the project through sensitization and advocacy of the identified major stakeholders.
3. Identification of resources needed for the project.
4. Mobilizing the resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
5. Execution of the project
6. Follow up and feedback

The resources needed for this intervention would be sourced from members. They include cutlasses, shovels, hoes, firewood, and so on. Members would also be used to execute the project. The Community Service will involve the Youth (AYM) who are more energetic to lead out in most of the activities, though none of the Church members will be excluded except the very elderly ones. Actually, no formal training is needed for the Community Service.

Dates for the implementation of the project are as follows:

1. 28th June 2015 – Cleaning of Drainages and filling of potholes (Umuocham Church)
2. 13th December 2015 – Clearing of farmland, Weeding of grasses and fetching of firewood for members and nonmembers (Akpaa 1 Church).

The researcher also hopes to extend the community service program to at least one more community in order to achieve a more desirable goal.

Revisiting the Visitation Training

Depending on evangelism and witnessing for membership growth and retention alone may not be sufficient since many people attend church not so much for doctrinal reasons as for Christian support system (social care). Alternatively, some people stop attending church not because they disbelieve the doctrines but because they do not find the support and fellowship they seek. Visitation and fellowship were the secret of early church's growth:

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers ... And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:42-47).

Christian visitation and fellowship encompass vital aspects of the ministry of the church and should be considered not a duty to be performed by any single (pastor), but a lifestyle to be enjoyed by the entire church community.¹² However, the pastor must take the lead because according to Ellen White,

the pastor must remember that a minister's work does not consist merely in preaching. He is to visit families in their homes, pray with them, and to open to them the scriptures. He who does faithful work outside the pulpit will accomplish tenfold more than he who confines his labor to the desk¹³.

As a result, the pastor must

1. Plan the visitation.
2. Discuss the plan with the Elders.
3. Evaluate the plan in order to make necessary change or improvements.

¹² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook* (Silver Springs, MI: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2009), accessed March 21, 2017, [http://ministerialassociation.org/store/products/ministers-handbook-\(pdf-download\)](http://ministerialassociation.org/store/products/ministers-handbook-(pdf-download)).

¹³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 9:124.

4. Recruit a team to work with him.
5. Provide visitation ministry training for the team.
6. Get input from the team.
7. Determine which church members need visits; this should be done on an ongoing basis.
8. Create a visitation schedule.
9. Stay committed to the visitation schedule and adjust it as needed.¹⁴

By so doing the pastor and the church will provide a network that will allow for the inclusion of members that may otherwise be overlooked. It is expected that the church and the pastor will need to focus their visitation on these primary six concerns:

1. Christian fellowship
2. Spiritual needs and encouragement
3. Shut-ins
4. Hospital visitation
5. Moments of joy especially childbirth, wedding, traditional marriage etc.
6. Bereavement and end-of-life support

The date for the training (November 14, & 15, 2015) for Umuocham and Akpaa 1 Churches.

Capacity Building and Empowerment Seminars

Some church members have talents and skills but do not know how to use them to become useful to themselves, the church and the larger society. Many have not acquired any skill at all and are yet to discover their talents and how to translate them into economic ventures. No matter how economically viable a church is, it

¹⁴ Michael Stango, "Visiting for the Master," *Elder's Digest*, September 2011.

cannot cater for all the problems and challenges of the needy members within and outside her fold. The high rate of socio-economic hardships in the country is alarming. The level of unemployment in the country is nothing to write home about, many are living below poverty lines and diseases abound everywhere. There are a lot of church packages and government policies to alleviate these problems and challenges, which many church members are ignorant about. One of such policies is encouraging people to go into farming as a business.

The government has developed a lot of incentives to entice and encourage people to see agriculture as a viable alternative for white collar jobs which are non-existent, or even if they do are very limited compared to the millions of job seekers in the society. With the price of oil falling in the international market, diversification of the Nigerian economy is the most important key policy objective of the government. To achieve this, the development of the agricultural sector is the number one priority of the government. Some other poverty alleviation programs designed by the government in the past to alleviate the challenges of hunger, poverty, and unemployment among church members and in the land include National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP). NAPEP was established in 2001 to tackle the challenge of poverty in Nigeria. Its core objective was to help bring extreme poverty to the barest minimum by 2010 and this was in line with the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty by 2015.¹⁵

There is also the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). NDE was established to play a dominant role in the effort of the federal government to fight unemployment and minimize poverty particularly in the areas of attitudinal change

¹⁵ Ezionyiye E. Ukegbu, "Poverty Alleviation in Ngwa Land, Abia State 1960-2006 – The Road Not Taken" (Masters Thesis, University of Calabar, 2010), 67–68.

and training for self-employment.¹⁶ The Youth Entrepreneurship Support program (YES-PROGRAMME) is Bank of Industry's (BOI) approach at curbing the worrisome phenomenon of youth unemployment in Nigeria by developing their potentials and capacities and funding their business ideas.¹⁷ The aim of the YES program is to equip young people with skills and knowledge to be self-employed by establishing and managing their own business. What this means is that since the Church is part of the society, she cannot isolate herself from the privileges of the government programs.

As earlier mentioned, many church members are ignorant of these programs and policies of the government or lack what it takes in order to benefit from them. Information is power. As it is generally said when one is not informed he is deformed. As part of her social care efforts, the church can help members tap into these programs through Capacity Building programs. Capacity building will equip and position members well enough to tap into these programs.

What capacity building entails. It involves human resource development, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills, and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively in their fields of endeavors.

Before embarking on a capacity building program adequate plans must be made. The following steps will be taken in carrying out the capacity building program:

¹⁶ Ukegbu, "Poverty Alleviation in Ngwa Land, Abia State 1960-2006 – The Road Not Taken."

¹⁷ BOI, "Youth Entrepreneurship Support Programme," *Bank of Industry*, last modified 2016, www.boi.ng/yes/.

1. The first step is a design of what the program is set to accomplish which are the following:
 - a. Self-discovery which will focus on personal development;
 - b. How to establish and successfully manage a business (Entrepreneurship Development);
 - c. Skill acquisition on agro-allied which will focus on macro-propagation of banana/plantain suckers; and
 - d. Sensitizing members to create and join platforms/forums that will enhance their access to information on empowerment.
2. The second step will be to develop a budget for the program.
3. The next step is choosing a date and venue for the program – both churches operate nursery and primary schools hence the classrooms will be used for the program. That means that both churches will serve as venues for the program. (Sat. January 16, & Sun. 17, 2016 are dates for the program). The first date being for Personal Development / Entrepreneurship in Umuocham, while the second date is for Akpaa 1 Church.
4. Another step is to arrange for the facilitators/trainers for the program.
5. The last step is follow up to ensure that members are making use of the knowledge acquired.

How to provide social justice for the less privileged. To consult with barrister L (Esq), one of the senior lawyers and a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and invite him to Umuocham and Akpaa 1 Churches to deliver a seminar on how poor members could benefit from free legal services of Adventist lawyers. The date for this lecture will sufficiently be announced so that members who are interested could avail themselves of the opportunity to attend.

There is a high need for free legal services to be extended to the underprivileged in the church. Already there is the Association of Adventist lawyers who can afford to render free professional legal services to the widows, orphans, and indigent members, thereby giving them a sense of belonging. Even if this legal body cannot defend or prosecute free of charge for the poor members, such could be done

at reduced fees or charges. The expected date for the delivery of this seminar is 5th& 6th of March, 2016 in both Umuocham and Akpaa 1 respectively.

Limitations

The researcher was limited to the available resources within his reach. Due to the novelty of this research, especially in my locality, it was difficult to lay hands on all the needed resources, since not many researchers have ventured into this subject. This study encountered some challenges which include non-existence of an already conducted study on social ministry in order to provide the researcher with insights, and direction.

Again, it was difficult to meet all the needed persons for the oral interviews. People do not usually keep to appointments hence, there was delay or disappointments in some of the research processes. As a result of time constraints, only three interventions were carried out. Attempts to feature the services of social justice for the less privileged, using the Adventist Lawyers Association as initiated in chapter four (4) could not be completed. Another difficulty encountered was the improper recording of the focus group discussions by some team members that were not detailed enough in spite of all the instructions earlier given.

The Focus Group discussions have given a comprehensive survey of the social issues in the two Church centers under study. It is hoped that the interventions prescribed such as capacity building; community service, and visitation seminars, when implemented may go a long way in equipping church members to participate more actively in social ministry. The results of the Focus Group study show that the Church needs to wake up to her social responsibilities in order to empower her members and curb the danger of membership loss for want of social care. The Focus Group findings clearly reveal that the Church seriously needs to provide and improve

on the following services: Capacity building and Empowerment; Visitation
/Communication; Prison Ministry; Poor Fund (Financial assistance); Community
Service Center; Community service; Social justice and Healthcare among others.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

In this chapter reports of the required interventions are presented. These reports are basically field work results from the Seminar on visitation, Capacity Building, and Community Service as proposed in the previous chapter.

Preparation for Implementation

Similarly, another group of church members were interviewed, whose views were considered very relevant to the topic of study. Their experience and years of membership in the various churches were also taken into consideration. This exercise was conducted between November 17 and December 3, 2015, by the members of the research team. For the details of the interview questions see appendix D section.

This chapter describes the implementation steps taken to carry out the interventions. Although much has been revealed concerning the social challenges common in our churches through the Focus Group study, they cannot totally be taken care of by any one module or intervention. The following interventions are to be implemented, Community Service, Seminar titled ‘Revisiting our Visitation Training’; Capacity Building; and. The decision to do these three interventions is informed by the results of the Analysis. The SDA Church in Umuocham and Akpaa 1 are the major centers where the interventions were carried out. These three areas of social challenge if strengthened, seem to be the key that addresses most of the other social issues raised and responded to during the focus group study. Some Pastors

/elders assisted in coordinating, while professional facilitators and few Church members were involved in the implementation processes.

The Process of Implementation

Since the consent of the churches was officially sought, church facilities were basically used during the time of implementations. This helped to make the programs affordable and encouraged more membership participation. Questions were entertained after every presentation, and at some occasions lead questions were asked by the facilitators to enhance the understanding of the participants.

Activities for Intervention

The following are the reports and the narration of all the interventions that were carried out in the Churches. As much as possible the details are provided to the best of the researcher's abilities.

Community Service

As mentioned in chapter four, community service is a social work or project rendered by an individual or a church for the benefit of the community or members of the community. Community service activities were carried out at the two sites.

Umuocham. On Sunday morning between the hours of 7 and 9 am being the 28 of June 2015 at the church premises in Umuocham, the church members gathered for community service. This happened after identifying the major challenge of the area which was over flooding of the drainages around. This had become a serious environmental hazard for the community dwellers and other road users. It, therefore, became necessary for the church to embark on a project intervention in order to salvage the ugly situation. The stagnant water was not only stinking but had become a hatching place for mosquitoes and also water flowed off the road. That spot became a

repulsive sight for passersby, especially during that rainy season. On this day of community service about fifty church members, mainly the Youth (AYM) were mobilized for action. The church provided working tools which included spades, cutlasses, rakes, head pans, etc. were provided. The few elderly men and women present took the supervisory role and motivated the youths into action. Among the major works done was to remove a boulder (big stone) which had been identified as the major cause of blocking the passage of water in the drainages.

Before this very project was done, some efforts had been made by the Church to tackle this particular problem mentioned above. Reasonable amounts of money were spent in consulting some road engineers in order to identify the cause of that problem which had become a nuisance to the residents around without success. Upon identifying that a stone was the cause of the problem, it took the effort these active young men and women before the stone and stagnant stinking waters could be removed. As the work was going on, only a few passersby stopped to compliment the good work of the church, probably because they thought it was the duty of the Church to render such service. Hence, there was no immediate tangible impact.

Akpaa 1. On the other hand, the plan to hold Community Service at Akpaa 1 community could not be carried out as scheduled. However, in order to achieve the set objective of the community service intervention, it was extended to another community during a Conference-planned AWM evangelism. This took place from April 3 – 8, 2016 as a preparatory to the public evangelism which was designed as part of the church's campaign package.

During the said evangelism, Obokwe Community was chosen as the venue. About forty women camped in this village for evangelism. Three days were used for community service activities which involved weeding of farms and compound,

fetching water and firewood for the aged, the poor, and some physically challenged persons by these AWM women. A man whose wife divorced and abandoned with four little children was visited, his compound weeded, and cassava planted for him, specifically in this village called Obokwe. This community service which served as a precursor to the public evangelism was monitored by the researcher. This exercise had an immediate positive effect as opposed to that of urban city of Umuocham community. It has actually attested to the efficacy of this service as a veritable tool for mission, particularly in the rural community.

Post Community Service

Four (4) backsliding members returned to the church as a result of the community service at Obokwe. It also provided an opportunity for more evangelistic campaigns. Twenty (20) new members joined the Church at the end of the AWM evangelistic series, of which community service was a contributory factor. Unlike the urban people, the Obokwe community earnestly commended the service and asked to know who the people were. Some nonmembers joined hands in doing the work, while some gave money for refreshment as they were asked not to worry. It becomes clear that Community service works better in the rural areas than in the urban settings.

Revisiting the Visitation Training

This is one of the intervention models carried out by the research team in the two churches under study as reported below. The purpose of the program was to review the nature of the church's visiting activities and how better to improve on it as a social ministry tool. The researcher generated the Visitation Seminar materials which were used in running the program in the two Churches. See Appendix E.

Umuocham. On Saturday, November 14, 2015, a visitation seminar titled 'Revisiting Our Visitation Training' was conducted. The speaker was the church

Pastor and a member of the research team. The event started at 3:00pm and ended at 5:00pm. The opening hymn was taken from SDAH 367. The Bible reading was selected from Acts 2:42-47 which is centered on how the Early Church continued with a steadfastness in the teachings of the Apostles teaching and had regular fellowship. As a result of this practice, the church experienced a tremendous growth as members 'had all things in common' and had Christian support of one another.

This aptly illustrates social care as something that was upheld by the church from the beginning. One of the key comments made by the speaker to the audience was that one of the handicaps facing the SDA Church is the inability of having effective Christian fellowship as it were during the first Christian era. He recommended that for the church today to flourish in achieving her social goals visitation and house must be reactivated. Visitation should not be left in the hands of the church leaders alone but out to be all-involving. A total of 197 persons participated in the seminar.

Akpaa 1. Conversely, on Sunday, November 15, 2015, the research team at Akpaa 1 conducted their own 'Revisiting Our Visitation Training' seminar. The program held between 7 – 9 am. The opening song was taken from SDA hymnal 350; while the Bible text was Galatians 6:2: 'Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.' He highlighted the need to care and to show concern for one another stressing that the early church was known for the same practice. The speaker who also was the church Pastor commented or observed the following: 1) visitation was the lifestyle of the early Christian church. 2) Visitation gives a true knowledge of the visited. 3) It encourages and builds up faith. 4) Through it, backsliders are restored. 5) It enhances fellowship. 6) Every member (not only the pastor) should be involved in visitation. 7) Visitation helps to revive the soul of the sick and needy members. As he

concluded his presentation, participants were allowed to make their comments. Some of them complained that the church performs poorly in visitation and expressed their dismay for not been visited by the church members.

Responding to the effectiveness of the visitation training, a Pastor's wife at Akpaa 1 reported of a certain church member, who after getting confined in her sickness for five months without the visit of any church member almost took a decision to leave the Church. But just at the verge of that decision, some of the trainees from the Visitation retraining program paid her a visit, and she returned to the Church. Another member, Emeka Nkire expressed his joy knowing that visitation is not meant for the Pastors alone. But one retired Pastor who participated disclosed that one of the hindrances to Christian visitation is that some members who go to unholy healing centers will not want the Church to report of their sickness so that nobody will know where they are, However, the church welcomed the seminar and the ideas presented. The closing song was selected from SDAH 374. A total number of 52 persons participated.

Knowledge is indeed power. After the visitation seminars were held in churches of the case study, the Pastors and members alike were equipped for better ministry. The church members were overwhelmed with joy as they saw that witnessing and evangelism alone are really insufficient for membership growth and retention. It was proved beyond doubt that visitation is not only for Pastors but should become an ongoing lifestyle of the entire church. The Pastors also saw that visitation accomplishes more than what preaching does in many cases.

As the Pastors and church members engaged in a more planned visitation, it has been observed that after the program more members began to show interest in visiting other church members, three (3) members who stopped coming to church

over a long time in Akpaa 1 started to attend; the church is also becoming aware of the Spiritual and physical needs of her members. It has also dawned clearly on some members that we are to be our brothers' keepers. Communion service is now being extended to some physically challenged sick members as they were discovered through visitation. Members began to remember and to give a report of their sick ones that have not been visited. Celebrating with members at their moments of joy and mourning and supporting them at bereavement improved. Consequently, members of the churches under study began to see the church as a true family of God.

But unfortunately, this visitation enlightenment worked better in the rural Church of Akpaa 1 than the Urban Church in Umuocham. Sooner than later the enthusiasm died down, as many begin to complain of lack of time, lateness from work, inability to meet members in their homes, among others especially in Umuocham church. The little challenge experienced in the rural church of Akpaa 1, brothers on family line squabbles, as few members who because of fear refuse to have anything to do with certain members. Example, some members who have land issues or litigations against fellow members continued to keep off from the persons who had issues with them. Equally important is that the visitation exercise has also given some newly baptized members a quick sense of belonging and integration into the church. It is interesting to know that Eziukwu Aba Township Church which adopted this visitation training reported the following resolutions:

The resolutions/actions adopted by the church include:

1. Visitation henceforth is integrated into our worship culture as an obligation of every member.
2. Every week, each member must visit seven persons.
3. Effective visitation teams were created to include every member.
4. The Church got divided into seven groups for effective House fellowship.

5. Hospital ministry teams were created instantly.
6. Visitation is made on daily basis and not only on worship days.
7. Welfare committee was created which never existed before.

Capacity Building/ Empowerment

The key facilitator, a business expert, and consultant, and presently the head elder of SDA Church Rumukurusi was the professional invited for this program. He is a small business consultant and a personal development expert popularly known as bizcoach Charles. The official charge for bizcoach empowerment / seminar and workshop is over two hundred thousand naira (#200,000.00). However, he decided to sacrifice that charge owing to his love for the Church. However, it took the researcher few thousands of naira being the running cost to bring the team to the two Churches. The facilitator and his team decided to run the program in one day, being Saturday as against the proposed two days' plan as stated in chapter four. The details of the activities of the program for the two churches are reported below.

Umuocham. On Saturday, January 16, 2016, between 3-6 pm the empowerment program titled 'Empowering Church Members through Entrepreneurship' kicked-off at Umuocham church with an opening song from SDA hymnal 375. This was followed by a prayer said by the facilitator (Elder). He began by taking the audience to the book of 2Thes. 3:8, 10-12 which says "*... nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ...10. For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 11. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they walk in quietness and eat their own bread.*" (NKJV).

Elder Charles summarized the verses by telling the participants that ‘God wants us to work and eat from the work of our hands without being a burden to anyone and even the church.’ He continued, ‘who wants to be a burden to a fellow member or even the church?’ The participants echoed ‘no.’ ‘God hates busybodies and rather wants us to be busy with our own businesses so that we can be useful to ourselves, the church and the larger society.’ Said the bizcoach expert.

That was a general sensitization for the participants on the essence of the program, which was to help them achieve greater success in their various vocations and life endeavors. Also, to help the unskilled and the unemployed in the church to acquire vocational skills for business or self-employment because of the scarcity of menial and white collar jobs in the society. And, also, to give the participants and the beneficiaries business tips and tools needed to be successful in business.

The partakers were made up of farmers, civil servants, teachers, traders, drivers, lawyers, private business owners and so forth. He admonished the unemployed or the applicants not to be defeatist but positive, and de-emphasized the use of the word ‘applicant’, as that is not a chieftaincy title but rather a defeatist’s attitude.

At the end of the lecture in Umuocham, reactions and questions were allowed. A female participant remarked that the cost of foodstuff has become more expensive than ever before. The facilitator replied that that is the reason for the seminar, to enable the participants to devise an alternative self-reliant plan to make an additional income. Another participant, an elder of the church, asked questions, ‘What kind of business should we go into? The facilitator answer, ‘I will not tell you to do this or that business. He referred them to him to the book of Proverbs 14:23, ‘In all labor there is profit: but the talk of the (tendeth) only to penury.’ All legitimate businesses

are lucrative but success depends on what one brings to them. He, however, advised that it is good to do business that one has a passion for. A total number of 173 participants were in attendance.

Akpaa 1. On Saturday morning of January 16, 2015, first visited SDA Church Akpaa 1 Headquarters for the Bizcoach empowerment seminar. He arrived with his team from Port Harcourt at about 9:00am. He started the Akpaa 1 Church by preaching during the divine service with a sermon titled 'Fear God.' The sermon was used as part of the preparation or preamble to the empowerment seminar. The capacity Building / Empowerment program was interactive. The session began with an opening prayer which was said by the Church Pastor. The Pastor also introduced the facilitator and his team a second time as 'Bizcoach' Consults. He solicited the cooperation of the participants for the training.

The facilitator drew the attention of the participants to Acts 20:34-35, 'Ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35. I have shown you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the works of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Bizcoach told the participants they must work with their hands to provide for their needs and also support the needy around as God has directed through Paul. At the end of the devotion program, a participant commented that the prices of goods and services have sky-rocketed. Another lamented that 'pests and diseases have overtaken our farms.' The participants decried the hardship in the land. The facilitator in response to these asked, 'What should we do to overcome these problems?.' Another participant responded we should pray to God' while another remarked' knowing God is the solution to the problem. They were commended for their relevant responses. He then continued with his lectures.

Lecture 1. At the beginning of the lectures, the facilitator describes the capacity building as the act and process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, capacities/abilities, processes and resources that individuals, organizations, and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world. It is much more than training.

The facilitator started by telling the participants the story of his life – from a Chemical Engineer to a small business consultant. He rhetorically asked the participants,

What is the relationship between Chemical Engineering and business consulting/personal development? Don't define yourself by qualification. After graduating in 1997, I searched for a job for many years and the jobs were nowhere to be found. It got to a point that I was attending job interviews with those who never gained admission when I graduated from the university. Some of you might also have the same experience. After today your story will change.

The participants replied in the affirmative.' amen. The facilitator told the audience that when he discovered that he was attending job interviews with those who never gained admission when he left school, he realized that something was fundamentally wrong. 'I needed to look inward.' He discovered he had really limited his abilities by defining himself by his qualification as a Chemical Engineer.

There were many potentials that he was endowed with that needed to be developed. He continues, 'Developing those potentials turned me into a highly sought after small business consultant and personal development expert.' He told the participants that no matter how much he could have been earning as a chemical engineer he wouldn't have been fulfilled as he is now. 'Today I am happy that I find self-fulfilled in what I'm doing. I am paid to do what I love doing and that gives me self-fulfillment' he said.

He continues, 'by discovering and developing potentials that God endowed me with, I have also helped thousands to discover and develop theirs through books and radio programs.' They needed to know the potentials God has endowed them with for development. 'I never knew that I can write a book until I looked inward. I have written and published two books in business and personal development.' He observes, the problem with some of the participants is the inability to discover their talents and potentials.

While for others, theirs is that they have defined who they are based on their paper qualifications. A participant asked 'How can one discover his or her talents and potentials in order to develop and maximize them?' The facilitator responded to the question by giving them a questionnaire titled how to discover your life purpose. He told them that the items in the questionnaire should guide them. See appendix F section for details.

In view of the many questions answered by the participants bothering on how to raise money to start a business; what kind of investments to go into; how to improve their economy, etcetera. The Bizcoach facilitator encouraged them to seriously consider going to Agriculture as the government has developed a lot of incentives in the agricultural sector with aim of diversifying the nation's economy. He advised them to go into less capital-intensive businesses like mushroom farming, sewing, and so forth. He told them the story of how he sold his Telephone and Generator to raise capital for his first business. He counsels, 'Give up some things you can do without at the moment in order to raise money for business now.' One of the participants who asked to know how best he could advertise his skills as an electrician. He was advised to do so by telling others what he does and to also render free services to people at times. This would help beneficiaries to advertise his services

in a wide scale. To this end, a form was distributed to the participants on ‘How to Discover Your Life Purpose.’ See Appendix M.

Lecture 2: entrepreneurship. The facilitator informs the participants that the high level of unemployment in the country and the attendant consequences are a wake-up call to think of self-employment or entrepreneurship. He reminds the participants that the white-collar jobs they are looking for were created by someone, hence they must think of creating for themselves and others too. He gave a definition of what it means to be poor by someone as P=Passing O=Over O=Opportunities R=Repeatedly: He sees that opportunities abound everywhere but the problem is how to identify these opportunities so as to tap them and turn them into money making ventures. For him ‘These opportunities are solutions to the needs of the society or the people around them.’

He considers entrepreneurship as ‘Identifying opportunity and a need in the environment and mobilizing to fulfill or supplying those needs with the aim of making a profit.’ He observes, ‘Every entrepreneur is a problem solver or solution provider.’ He gave the participants some qualities of an entrepreneur which include the following:

1. Calculated risk taker
2. Innovative
3. Visionary
4. Problem solving
5. Strong integrity
6. Ability to consolidate resources
7. Strong management and organization skills
8. Leadership

9. Competitive
10. Desire to work hard
11. Persistence
12. Ability to communicate well

The participants were asked to mention for example the types of businesses that go on in their area. They mentioned the following:

1. Design: fashion
2. Manufacturing: cosmetics, pure water
3. Supply and distribution: electronics, toiletries
4. Installations: electrical, mechanical and ICT installations
5. Repairs: mechanical and electrical repairs
6. Service Industries: event management, master of ceremony (MC), business development and consultancy.

The facilitator taught the participants how to generate business ideas. He told them that matching their skill with their community needs is one way of generating business ideas. Others include:

1. Hobbies and interests: do you enjoy computers (ICT), food (food processing).
2. Franchises: usually exclusive local distribution goods/services in exchange for royalty.
3. Mass Media: look at general business news, commercial advertisements and request to support goods and services.
4. Exhibition: exhibition and trade fairs may help generate business ideas and allow you to meet existing business people.
5. Partners: do you know potential partners with similar interests and complementary skills that you can discuss ideas with?
6. Local Advantage: are there business conditions such as business clusters (auto industry at Nnewi), raw materials (Leather at Kano) that favor industries?

He drew the attention of the participants to what he called the ‘components of entrepreneurship.’ They are the following:

1. Business Skills;
2. Financial Skills; and
3. Vocational skills.

He said some of the rules of entrepreneurship are the following:

1. Your network is your net worth.
2. Time management – time is money and a valuable resource in business.
3. Perception – never underestimate any business. Look beneath the surface you will see what others don’t.
4. Personality assessment – know thyself; build your business around your values and passion.

He ended the lecture by telling the audience what they needed to start which he said are: a head for analytical thinking; a heart for intuition and passion; and hands for implementation.

Lecture 3: personal and business visioning. The facilitator told the participants that vision could be seen as

1. Dream
2. Hallucination
3. Apparition
4. Mental picture
5. Visualization
6. Imagination
7. Forethought
8. Idea
9. Ability to see

He asked the class to close their eyes for a few minutes and conjure up a detailed image of what they want their lives to look like in 5 years. He told them to be as specific as possible.

He now defined vision as *“the ability to think about, or plan the future with great imagination and intelligence.”* He drew their attention to a church in Sussex, England which expresses the idea that vision without a task is but a dream; a task without a vision is drudgery; a vision with a task is the hope of the world.

The facilitator went ahead to define personal vision as “Knowing your values and beliefs and understanding personal interests and passions. It is about how you envision all aspects of your life.”

He defined Business Vision as “the future thought of or imagination of your business today.” He said that it usually starts as an idea. It is important that your business vision aligns very well with your personal vision. A good business vision actually motivates the entrepreneur, builds and feeds on his talent and skills; while also building his confidence and self-esteem.

He said the following about core values:

1. A small set of timeless guiding principles
2. Requires no external justification
3. Not based on market research
4. Have intrinsic values/importance to individuals
5. Will hold through even if they become competitive disadvantage
6. Should stand the test of time

He urged the participants to note and take the following seriously:

1. Make choices about work that matches your values
2. Your values help you to make better choices for work and life

3. It is important to know who you are and where you are going
4. Remember, personal vision should drive business vision, and not the other way round

He asked the participants to write down what they consider as their personal:

1. Values
2. Beliefs
3. Interests
4. Passions, and
5. Envisioned future

He made the class understand that envisioned future conveys concreteness on one hand; involves a time yet unrealized with its dreams, hopes, and aspirations on the other hand. Envisioned future, therefore, has two components: Measurable goals and Vivid description.

He, therefore, concluded that when personal vision merges with the business vision the result will be a successful entrepreneur. He asserted when personal and business vision aligns your business is no more than:

1. Harvesting a gift
2. Pursuing a passion
3. Following a mission
4. Capitalizing on your assets

Following a mission. Goal: finding a work you feel uniquely called to do to make a contribution to improve the world and make it a better place.

Capitalizing on your assets: “following on your nature”. Goal: defining your abilities, experiences, and resources and using these assets to make a living.

During the class activity, they were given an assignment as follows:

1. List your talents/gifts that align with your core values
2. Select a business vision for yourself, something you could easily do with ease
3. Try and marry your talents with your business idea

Harvesting a gift – “following your talent”. Goal: Discovering what you do very well and that others need and will pay for.

Pursuing a passion – “following your heart”. Goal: Discovering what you love most and finding a way that people will gladly pay you to do it.

Lecture 4: business plan. The participants were made to understand the objective of the lecture was to learn the process of preparing a business plan and also develop an understanding of each and every component of the same.

The facilitator told the participants that failure to plan is a decision to fail. He defined a plan as a ‘structured guideline to achieve a goal. Or a detailed action program outlining every conceivable aspect of a proposed venture.’

He defined a business plan as, a document, which spells out the goals and objectives of a business and clearly outlines how and when these goals will be achieved; A roadmap to owning and operating a business; and a proposal that describes a business opportunity to financing agencies or investors.”

He outlined the benefits of a business plan as the following:

1. Guide for opening a business – a road map
2. Guide to managing a business – a reference point
3. To communicate clearly with interested parties – investors and creditors especially
4. Aids in obtaining finances
5. Serve as a benchmark for monitoring purpose and at the same time provides a framework control.
6. To demonstrate the viability of the business proposition and the potential to repay credit provided.

7. When the business plan is written:
8. When starting a new business
9. Expanding an existing business
10. Entering a market
11. Changing your product
12. Adding new product
13. Changing production technique

Every prospective/potential business owner should be able to put down their idea on paper. Assisted by qualified consultant/field expert

Users of business plans include:

1. The entrepreneur / management of the business
2. Banks, investors, and donors
3. Business consultants
4. Creditors and suppliers
5. Employees

The facilitator outlined the following as the features of a good Business Plan

1. It must be easy to read and understand.
2. It must be accurate and consistent.
3. It must be subject to review.
4. A good business plan must be market-driven, not product driven.
5. A good business plan qualifies for competition.
6. A good business plan emphasizes management strength
7. A good business plan presents attractive projections
8. A good of business plan exploits your business's uniqueness

Lecture 5: basic marketing and sales techniques. The objective of the lecture was to expose the participants to practical marketing principles and how to

apply them in their business. At the end of the lecture the participants should be able to:

1. Find out who your customers are
2. What they need and want
3. How to satisfy them
4. How to make a profit from the transaction

The facilitator defined marketing as “Everything you do to find out who your customers are and what they need and want and how to satisfy them and make a profit.” He said it is all about the following:

1. What product your customers want;
2. What price your customers are willing to pay;
3. At what place your business should be located so that you can reach your customers;
4. What promotion you can use to inform your customers and attract them to buy your products or services.
5. He said in marketing price means:
6. Setting a price your customers are willing to pay
7. Making sure that the price is attractive and still gives you high enough profit

He summarized the above by saying ‘your price should be low enough to attract customers to buy, and high enough to give your business a profit.’

Defined customers as ‘the people or other business that want your products or services and are willing to pay for them.’ He continues by saying that you need a market research to find out who your customers and competitors are; and find out if there are enough customers. Get information about:

1. What products or services they want;
2. What price they are willing to pay’

3. Where they are and where they usually buy; and
4. How often and how much they buy

He told the participants that ‘the customer is the king or the boss of every business.’ Meaning that the customer is the most important for every business because without the customer there is no business. He advised them to always ensure that they satisfied their customers because if customers are satisfied they will come back to buy from your business. More satisfied customers means larger sales and larger profit.

He said the participants should note the following before setting their price:

1. Know your cost
2. Know how much customers are willing to pay
3. Know your competitors’ prices
4. Know how to make your prices more attractive to your customers, for example by using special offers or discounts

He said ‘to make a profit your price must be higher than your total cost for the product or service.’ He said that in marketing product means having the product or services your customers need or want at all times. While he said a place in marketing means ‘your business locations and distribution channels or outlets.’ He advised the participants to ensure that they locate their business where customers are. He said promotion means ‘informing and attracting the market to buy your products and services.’ He said promotion can be done through the following:

1. Advertising
2. Sales promotions
3. Publicity
4. Improving your skills as a salesperson

He gave the following on customer care:

1. Be patient. Give the customers time to ask questions and decide if they want to buy.
2. Always be honest. For example, tell your customers the good and bad point about a product or service.
3. Do not disagree with your customer if they decide they don't want a product. Allow them to say no.
4. Never argue with a customer. Make your customers feel they are right.
5. Greet your customers. Call them by their names
6. If you are already serving a customer, greet new customers and tell them that you will soon help them.
7. Be polite and friendly so that customers feel welcome and enjoy visiting your business. Smiles and friendliness cost nothing
8. Dress well – look tidy and clean
9. Offer your help
10. Do not talk too much. Listen carefully to know their needs
11. Thank your customers for their patronage.

Funding. On where to get funding for their business the facilitator told the participants that they can fund their business through:

1. Personal Savings
2. Grants from individuals, NGOs, and the government agencies like Youth Enterprise Support Program (YES-Program),
3. Bank Loans
4. Cooperative Society – he told the participants that they can form cooperative society and pull their resources together to collectively start a business or use the cooperative to access loan facilities and grants and share the loans among themselves to fund their businesses. He gave them guidelines on how to form a cooperative society.

For information on how to register a Cooperative Society, Section 6 of the law provides important points which must be fulfilled before a Society can be registered in Nigeria. Some of them include:

1. A primary cooperative society cannot be registered except it has at least ten (10) members who are at least 21 years old.
2. A secondary or apex cooperative society cannot be registered unless it has at least two or more primary registered cooperative societies as its members
3. The word 'Cooperative' must be part of the name of the society to be registered
4. The word 'Limited' shall be the last word in the name of every registered society with limited liability.
5. Except in the case of a registered society whose principal object it is to grant loans to other registered societies which are referred to as 'central financing society', the word 'bank' or 'banking' shall not form part of any registered society.
6. No society shall be registered by a name which is identical or resembles a name by which anybody, an association of persons or society is already registered.
7. No society shall be registered by any name which in the opinion of the Registrar may, or may be likely to mislead the public as to the identity of the society or the nature of its business.
8. If a society through negligence or otherwise is registered by a name that is identical or that looks like that by which a society or any person is already registered, the society will change its name if the Registrar so directs.

The Section 7 segment of the law deals with how to register a Cooperative Society, the application for registration and the guidelines which include:

1. Application must be signed by at least ten (10) members qualified for membership
2. In case of a secondary or apex cooperative society, the application must be signed by duly authorized persons on behalf of every registered society member
3. Copies of the proposed bylaws of the Society must accompany the application, and the persons by whom or on whose behalf the application is made will provide information that pertains to the society as the Registrar may require.

When all these are done and the Registrar is satisfied that the Society has complied with the provisions of this Decree and that its bye-laws are not contrary to the objectives of the Society, he may register the society and its bye-laws. Then the Society can begin its operations and it is safe to partner with such a cooperative because it is now recognized by the law.

After the presentations, some of the participants who could not hide their joy said “This is a step in the right direction. I can now fish on my own and stop depending on others for fish.” Another said “this is what they should be telling us during steward programs and not only return of 20% tithe and offering without thinking of our socio-economic welfare. How can someone who is not working or whose business is not doing well be faithful in tithing and offering? Now I know how to start and run my business successfully.” Another said “I have been empowered to discover my talents and potentials and make a livelihood out of it. I thank the church or whoever organized this program.” Some participants acknowledge “Now we know why some businesses we ventured into failed us in the past.” One participant reported, “I cannot make such mistakes again. This is what people pay thousands to go to business school to learn. Now the church has provided it free of charge. I personally thank the church for this.”

At the end of the Capacity Building / Empowerment program, the two churches expressed their happiness for the favor and opportunity granted them to participate. Elder John Iwuala of Umuocham Church thanked the facilitator and the organizers and pleaded for more of such programs especially in these times of economic downturn in the country. Elder Apollos Ogbuagu, who didn't conceal his excitement, gave the vote of thanks for Akpaa 1 Church, invoked God's blessing on the facilitator and his team. He also requested for a revisit of such training within the shortest possible time, promising that the church would always give her support.

Post Capacity Building Result

A member who was touched promised to donate a sewing machine to an indigent woman who had earlier acquired a skill as a seamstress, this happened at Akpaa 1 church. The woman could not hold her tears of joy and thanked the donor

and especially the church and the organizers of the program who made it possible. The woman eventually fulfilled her promise. The recipient has started her sewing business. The business is now sustaining the once poverty-stricken family in no small measure. Such a gesture has helped to encourage members to empower the poor and the needy in the churches the more.

Also at Akpaa 1 church, following the capacity building program, another member bought a motorcycle and gave to one of the members on hire-purchase bases for the beneficiary to pay back in installments. The member is now using the motorcycle for transport business especially in the rural areas. Hopefully, a beneficiary who works hard could pay back and raise money to purchase another new one for commercial purposes too. Thus having been empowered the recipients are now positioned to empower others.

In the same vein, at Umuocham church, about four (4) jobless church members received tricycles (KEKE NAPEP) on a hire-purchase arrangement from fellow members to start a transportation business. KEKE NAPEP is one of the popular means of transportation in Aba South and Osioma metropolis, even in the rural settings. Some of these members have dependent relatives. It is interesting to note that the beneficiaries have not only been rescued from the clutches of poverty, they are happy, and all of them coming to church with their families in Umuocham and Akpaa 1 Churches respectively. They also seem to show more dedication to the Church now and relating well with other church members. We can confidently hope that having been so generously empowered, the church can look forward to seeing these services replicated and reciprocated among members and nonmembers in due course. It is expected that none of the beneficiaries should subsequently fail on his/her social obligations any longer.

Evaluation of the Project Interventions: SWOT Analysis

Having completed the interventions embarked upon, this section seeks to assess the success or otherwise of the project. SWOT Analysis is an evaluation technique which helps to assess your Strengths and Weaknesses and identifies the possible Opportunities and Threats.¹

The feedback received from the programs are worthy of appraisal to ascertain whether the projects met the set objective. The research team leaders in the two churches appraised the outcomes of the scheme and reported to the researcher. At Umuocham church, the team reported that the effect of the community service hadn't much to impact on the membership of the church. However, some people were impressed by such a great social feat by the church. On the aspect of visitation, it was reported that the church member's attitude toward visitation has improved. However, most members are yet to participate fully.

The empowerment program for members is being seen as a blessing. Those who received gifts are thankful, some who have already established their business before the empowerment seminar are applying the principles learned while some others are facing the challenge of raising capital to set up business ventures. There is good news filtering in that some of the promises made by handy church members to favor the needy ones after the empowerment program are gradually being fulfilled, as informed by the team members. The outcomes of these intervention models were communicated to the researcher through interactions that are verbal interaction.

¹ Mind Tools Team, "SWOT Analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)," *Mind Tools*, accessed March 10, 2016, https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCM_05.htm.

On the other hand, Akpaa 1 church is not left behind. The pastor and a research team member reported that the few who attended the seminar on visitation have improved on their attitude toward visitation. Nevertheless, it is expected that though these few other members will be motivated to do visitation. The empowerment program has become a source of encouragement for those who participated and especially the recipients of the gifts. Church members through this program have learned that the church cares for both their spiritual and physical needs. The evaluation exercise commenced from October 2015 to the end of April 2016.

The Strengths of the Method

If the SDA Churches in Aba South Conference should accept and adopt the discoveries of this project, they will have the benefit of the following:

1. Visitation would be seen as an obligatory service by every church member.
2. Through Community service, the image of the Church is strengthened
3. There will be strong and reliable empowerment for our members.
4. This will reduce the frustration of endless job seeking among our members.
5. It will create opportunities for growth. People are naturally attracted to the progressives.
6. It will enhance the relevance of SDA Church in Aba South community.
7. Furthermore, witnessing will no longer be done in pains and grudges because of lack of funds.
8. Above all poverty will reduce among members.

Weaknesses of the Method

From this discovering, this empowerment seems to be a sure remedy for the ugly the church. But if for any reason it fails, it will be as a result of the beneficiary not following the empowerment rules and principles. So, to forestall these challenges the following is being suggested by the researcher:

1. There should be the regular training of the church members who are benefiting from this scheme by the experts.
2. Their businesses should be monitored regularly to ensure optimum performance
3. The Conference Administrators, the researcher, and the people being involved must work together.
4. The church may not have the resources always to pay professional facilitators run capacity building training.

Opportunities for using the Method

The opportunities in this strategy include:

1. The church will be free of idleness, backbiting, and ‘busybodies’ since all will be busy in their individual lives.
2. Visitation fosters intimacy among members thus enabling church members to bear one another’s burdens.
3. It will reduce the practice of our depending on others for help. This is sending some privileged few away from the church.
4. It will help boost evangelism. Money will no longer be a serious challenge to run it.

Possible Threats to the Method

1. Some beneficiaries may be non-compliant to the things learned.
2. When members lack financially, it may lead to a continuous drop in church attendance. Service and worship require money.
3. If the church is not empowered, she will continue to be irrelevant to the community and members.
4. The dependence rate will likely be very high on the few privileged ones.
5. Projects, evangelism and welfare services which any living church should be conscious of would be left unattended to, and if done at all will be in pains and tears.

Upon the completion of the research work, the Executive Committee of Aba South Conference and the Church Boards of Umuocham and Akpaa 1 who authorized this project shall be notified. It is expected that this work shall be voted by the

Executive Committee and adopted as a working tool of the Conference. The administration of the Eastern Nigeria Union Conference who collaborated in the sponsorship shall also be communicated.

The interventions were successfully implemented. But that does not completely take care of the social needs of the Church. Church members cannot afford to neglect to continually sustain the three programs. Effective visitation, constant equipping of jobless members, and community service will ensure membership retention and stability. The interventions can be useful only with an effective follow-up and participation by every individual member. Every social intervention program must be people – oriented for it to function. Only the above three interventions could be carried out by now which have not adequately taken care of the social needs of the Church, as revealed by the Focus Group findings. More interventions will be required in due course.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this concluding chapter, the summary, lessons learned (observations) and recommendations are objectively presented to the best of the researcher's ability. Efforts have been made to capture the key points of the study to enable the reader's recollection and reflection as the paper is read through.

Summary

Social ministry has proved to be one of the reliable mission strategies for denominational and non-denominational organizations. Everybody needs care and love, even animals. Where every missionary endeavor fails, social ministry succeeds. Most of Jesus messages centered around relationship and amplifies the need for loving relationship as the basis for our very being. We cannot claim to love God when we care less about our fellow humans. The urgency of this biblical imperative was summarized by Christ's statement, "by this, all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35 NKJV). The command to love and be our brother's keeper is almost as old as creation, hence Cain was queried for his flagrant and outrageous neglect of this divine injunction which led to the murder of his brother (Gen 4:9). The command to love our fellow humans is very clear, even in the Mosaic Law (Lev 19:18).

Social ministry is love in action. The early church thrived so well through social activities. It seems to be the best practical and impactful system of soul winning, since people prefer seeing what we do than hearing what we say. The care

and bonding together of the believers during the formative years of the church it was recorded of them that they were of one heart and none could say that any of his personal possessions belongs to him, and there was nobody who lacked anything among them (Acts 4:32, 34). The early church model still remains the standards which the present church strives to attain. What a big contrast from what it then was and the prevailing spiritual declension of the church today.

A church that fails in her social ministry has lost the sense of her mission. It is an unfortunate situation if the members of the church cannot share the blessings of one another when she is to be the last hope of the poor member. It is difficult to separate evangelism from welfare or social ministry. This could be the reason God instituted several welfare packages right from the Old Testament times. Examples are the year of Release, (Deut 15): Gleaning for the poor and strangers (Lev 23:22, Ruth 2:14-23); year of Jubilee (Lev 25); welfare intervention (1 Sam 25:1-35). Jesus also provided better windows into welfare ministry in the Testament example of feeding the hungry (Matt 15:32-39); and social justice (Luke 18:1-8).

The act of social ministry should not be an impulsive or spontaneous activity but a proactive thing. Social Ministry calls for being principled and generous dispositions, willingness to follow the Savior's example of self-denial and self-sacrifice. Our social care should not be exclusively directed to the members of the Seventh-day Adventists, but mainly catered for (Gal 6:10). The bible and spirit of prophecy (SOP) enjoin us to be careful and prayerful in our giving so that people don't take advantage of us. There are some who give indiscriminately to everyone who solicits their aid. This is wrong. Our giving should be a blessing and solve pressing needs rather than encourage laziness and inactivity on the part of the recipient. No man ought to wholly depend on others, as White counsels. Ruth was not

a lazy widow to have attracted Boaz' favor (Ruth 2:14-23). Dorcas was not lazy either (Acts 9:39).

The need to give or render practical help to our brothers and sisters cannot be overemphasized. We have received freely by the grace of God and freely we are to give (Matt 10:8). Every faithful giving comes with a reward of blessing (Prov 11:25). No act of giving escapes divine attention (Mark 12:42,43). Christians should learn to give unconditionally as David did to Mephibosheth (2 Sam 9:7-13). Our giving should be driven by love and forgiveness. David did not just give to lame Mephibosheth, he restored his dignity and empowered him. Nabal was a sad example of meanness and selfishness who would prefer to throw a party and lavish his substances at the peril of famishing souls of David and his servants (1 Sam 25).

Jesus would not leave a weary, and hungry soul without taking care of the person (Matt 15:23). On two occasions He fed 5,000 and 4,000 persons. Jesus bequeathed model of social ministry to His disciples. Jesus knows what it means to be poor and hungry for He once was (Matt 4:2; 2 Cor 8:9). Paul collected for the saints in Jerusalem who were struck by hunger and famine. That each was enjoined to give willingly should not give room to meanness and stinginess.

It was in keeping with the tradition of the Jews for every young man or woman to learn a trade to guide against the eventualities of life. That was the reason Paul had a trade and combined evangelism and tent making. Every church member needs to be able to fend for himself and family. The bible is clear that idleness is a sin and whoever would not work is not worthy to eat (2 Thess. 3:10). After an unsuccessful toilsome night of fishing, Peter and other disciples were not only provided for but taught how to do it right as a way of empowerment (John 21:1-13).

Ellen White declares the basis to love, respect, and care for one another is because human beings belong to one great family—the family of God. She remarks that man can be reached only through social care, or disinterested kindness. White was of the opinion that if the members are truly converted they would readily be involved in the work of charity. She proposes for the young and the elderly in the church to synergize for the work of ministry to move forward. She counsels the privileged church members not just to provide for the orphans in the church but adopt them and continually care for them. Social ministry is a welcome evangelism for all Christian organizations, and even the door of the heathen is often unlocked by the social ministry.

We cannot afford to negate the principles of social care in dealing with church members and nonmembers as mentioned in the literature review, which includes recognizing the dignity of the human, caring for God’s creation—a preferential option for and with people who are poor, and so forth. It is worrisome to note that it is for want of social care and loving relationships that suicides, attempted murder, and violence of different magnitudes are committed. Social care is so crucial that the church should not trifle with it.

Catholics, Evangelicals, and Seventh-day Adventists are among the leading advocates of social ministry. Mother Teresa, of the Catholic faith, became the world beater in welfare services, winning a Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 in recognition of her outstanding success in care ministry. It is reflected in the mission statements of the evangelicals the belief that Christ has freed humanity to embrace and care for people of all ages in any situation or context. In other words, social care is seen and interpreted by them as the essence of the church’s existence. The Salvation Army is particularly known to be non-discriminatory in the distribution of her welfare services

and programs. These services are provided to address people's needs, not necessarily on faith affiliation.

The SDA Church does not reject this very important aspect of the gospel— Social or Welfare Ministry. The church has a mission to proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel which she believes is expressed in Revelation 14:6-12. This gospel is described as the “Three Angels’ Messages.” Similarly, the church reaches the world using the three basic arms of preaching, teaching and leading. The following action of the Executive committee of the West-Central Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventists as cited in my literature review attests to the value the SDA Church has placed on social ministry. This is in response to capacity building. The church will become more attractive to the young people as it makes positive changes in their families, church, and society. The church will be seen to be more relevant to the young people only as it addresses their spiritual, physical and social needs. The youth will love the church, become more committed, and ready to participate in her mission if her social services are improved to include all and sundry.

All these are considered the prime and solemn duties of every believer in keeping with God's mission. The Adventist Church seeks to fulfill this perceived divine injunction through her various arms and institutions such as Adventist Women's Ministries (AWM), Adventist Men's Organization (AMO), Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM), Adventist Health Services (AHS), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), among others. These arms of the church and other subsidiary bodies offer social ministry services in conjunction with the Personal Ministries Department of the church to cater for the welfare of the members. Their services extend to non-members not necessarily to win them, but for the purposes of establishing deeper relationship and goodwill between the church and community.

And more recently, an indigenously founded welfare organization by the name of Springtime Development Foundation (SDF) has touched many lives through social activities thereby helping to advance this crucial mission of the church.

Despite the importance of Social Ministry to an Adventist Church mission in Aba South Conference, many of her churches/members are not yet committed to it. Many members are ignorant of the fact that Social Ministry impacts on the gains and losses of the church's membership to a large extent. If the church should accomplish her missionary objectives in these last days, reduce her membership loss, and strengthen relationships among members and community, enough emphasis is to be placed in social care. The interventions designed in this project are geared toward filling these vacuums.

Lessons Learned

Generally, several observations and findings can be drawn from this study regarding Social Ministry such as the following:

1. God is the Originator of Social Ministry.
2. God instituted several welfare packages like:
 - a. Year of Release: Deuteronomy 15
 - b. Gleaning: Leviticus 23:22, Ruth 2:14-23
 - c. Year of Jubilee: Leviticus 25.
 - d. Welfare Interventions: 1 Samuel 25:1-35.
 - e. Capacity Building and Empowerment: 2 Samuel 9:7-13.
 - f. Feeding the Hungry: Matthew 15:32-39, John 6:1-12.
 - g. Welfare Fund: 1 Corinthians 16:1-7; Social Justice: Luke 18:1-8 etc.
3. Social Ministry is an evangelism strategy that seems to succeed where other strategies fail.

4. Many church members only ‘talk’ and not ‘do’ social ministry.
5. Social Ministry is needed in this age of social crises, job loss, economic and political instability more than previous generations.
6. The Bible sees social ministry as one of the bases for constructive human relations.
7. Social Ministry is the most practical and impactful system of soul winning and seems to be one of the major secrets of the early church's success.
8. Social Ministry should not be an impulsive act rather proactively planned work.
9. The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy enjoin us to pay particular care attention to our poor members of the household of faith (Gal 6:10)
10. Social ministry should be geared towards solving problems not to encourage laziness, inactivity, or dependence on the part of the recipient.
11. The Seventh-day Adventist at the world level is actively involved in social ministry through the work of ADRA especially.
12. Despite the importance of Social Ministry to SDA mission in Aba South Conference, many SDA Churches in Aba South Conference are not yet committed to social ministries.
13. The SDA Churches in Umuocham and Akpaa 1 in Aba South Conference which served as the centers of this research are gradually waking up to social ministry challenges.
14. With the right interventions have been carried out in the churches, the people will be rightly motivated towards social ministry.

Recommendations

1. The intervention in this research should be used as seminar material for all the churches in Aba South Conference. It is further recommended to the higher levels of the Church, which includes the Union (ENUC); Division, and the General Conference of SDA.
2. The church should move from relief work to capacity building and empowerment.
3. The church should not encourage laziness in the name of social ministry.
4. Common sense and a little discrimination should be applied in the work of social ministry, so that selfish people will not take undue advantage.
5. The positive results of the interventions should be consolidated by the churches and conference.

6. Every SDA Church should develop an effective visitation module which does not exclude any needy or poor person in the church.
7. The church should devise a consistent follow-up and report mechanism in order to access and address her social challenges as at when due.
8. More research should be encouraged in the area of social ministry, as only very few research work has been done on this subject by the church.

It has been provided that social ministry is a sure way to church growth. Just as there is no engine without oil, the gospel will be empty and insipid when there is no social support to the members especially. Social ministry succeeds when other methods fail, that is why both denominational and non-denominational organizations have adopted it as a key strategy. Social ministry makes the image of the church and evangelism more relevant and rational. If there is no social care, the poor and the less privilege would suffer, and members would not have a loving interrelationship with one another.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
CORRESPONDENCE

March 30, 2015.

Aba South Conference Administration
Of Seventh-day Adventist
Alaoma, Osisioma Ngwa L.G.A
Through the Executive Secretary.

Sir,

REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO CARRY OUT MY RESEARCH IN
TWO OF YOUR CHURCHES

I wish to be permitted to conduct a few hours research interviews in two of your churches in respect of my research project.

The churches to be visited for this research exercise include SDA church Umuocham, in Umuocham district and SDA church Akpaa 1, in Akpaa 1 district.

Kindly permit that this exercise be carried out at the researcher's convenient time.

Thanking you for anticipated favorable consideration.

Yours in His humble service



Pastor J.M. Ukegbu

Reply from the Conference



**SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH**
In Nigeria

Aba South Conference
Along Alaoma Road,
Abayi, Aba,
Abia State, Nigeria.
08038895089 , 08064060187 , 08034033080

April 30, 2015

Pastor Joseph M. Ukegbu.

RE: PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH WORK (Dmin)

Jesus' peace to you.

Dear Pastor,

I write to inform, you that the executive committee of Aba South Conference, at her April 17, 2015 seating voted to approve your application for a permission to carry out your Dmin research work in some churches/district of our conference.

You are hereby permitted to do so in the district(s) of your choice in our conference.

Please note that you are expected to present this letter to the appropriate church leaders on arrival for their maximum cooperation and support.

We wish you success in this endeavour.

God bless you.

Yours in His service

Pastor Alozie G.O.
Executive Secretary.

Request for Permission from SDA Church Umuocham

May 4, 2015.

The Church Board
SDA church Umuocham
Umuocham District, Osisioma L.G.A
C/o The District Pastor

Dear Board members,

REQUEST TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH IN YOUR CHURCH ON SATURDAY JUNE 11, 2015

I write to formally request to be allowed to conduct research interviews in your church after service on the above date. This exercise is to assist in developing my research work.

Only few church members would be involved during the exercise. The persons involved are to honestly respond to some questions on certain social issues affecting the church. It is hoped that the outcome of this research project would be of immense service to the church.

Thank you for your anticipated favourable cooperation.

Yours in His humble service



Pastor J. M. Ukegbu

Cc: Aba South Conference Administration
Umuocham District Pastor

Letter To Akpaa 1

September 23, 2015.

The Church Board
SDA church Akpaa 1
Akpaa 1 District, Osisioma L.G.A
C/o The District Pastor

Dear Board members,

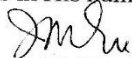
REQUEST TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH IN YOUR CHURCH ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 24, 2015

I write to formerly request to be allowed to conduct a two-three hour research interviews in your church after service on the above date. This exercise is to assist in developing my research work.

Only few church members would be involved during the exercise. The persons involved are to honestly respond to some questions on certain social issues affecting the church. It is hoped that the outcome of this research project would be of immense service to the church.

Thank you for your anticipated favourable cooperation.

Yours in His humble service



Pastor J. M. Ukegbu

Cc: Aba South Conference Administration
Akpaa 1 District

Consent Letter from Umuocham Church



SEVENTH -DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH in Nigeria

UMUOCHAM DISTRICT
Headquartered @
UMUOCHAM CHURCH
#120, Aba-Owerri Rd.,
Osisioma Ngwa LGA
P. O. Box 12658, Aba,
Abia State, Nigeria
May 17, 2015

Pastor J.M Ukegbu
Aba West Administrative Unite Conference (Propose)
No. 2 Umuoda Road, (3rd Floor, Aba Prince),
Obehie, Ukwa West L.G.A.
Abia State.

Dear Sir,

REF: YOUR REQUEST TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN OUR CHURCH

On May 4, 2015 you wrote to the board of Seventh – day Adventist Church Umuocham.

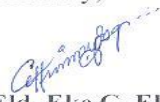
The board received your letter on May 6, 2015. You requested that the board should allow you conduct series of research project work in our church.

I have been directed by the church board today being 17th May 2015 to inform you that the board have approved your letter.

The church is ready to assist you carry out the needed co-operation required to enhance the success of the research work.

Thank you.

Sincerely,


Eld. Eke C. Eke
Church Clerk

Consent Letter from Akpaa 1



SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Akpaa 1, Akpaa 1 District
Aba South Conference (ASC)

P.M.B. 8007 Aba, Abia State – Nigeria

Our Ref:..... Your Ref:..... Date: 10th October, 2015

Pastor J. M. Ukaegbu,
Aba West Conference,

Sir,

Reply to Your Request for Research Authorization

We are happy to communicate to you through this medium that your request to carry out a research work in our church has been approved by the church board.

Meanwhile, we consider 24th October, 2015 more suitable for this exercise. While thanking you immensely for choosing our church.

Signed:

Pastor Chikezie Sunday
District leader

M/G. K.C. Nwankwo
Communication Secretary

APPENDIX B

AN APPEAL TO ASSIST THE POOR AND NEEDY

Sermon Preached at Ihieukwu District, Akpaa 1 Church

Call to Worship: 1Chro. 29: 12-14

SDAH 186

Bible Text: Luke 12:33-34

Title: Have You Found the Key?

(Ichotala Otugwa a)

Vs 33 “Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.

34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (NKJV)

Greetings!

Question: which key? The key to unlocking the door of success, to a goldmine of treasures, to happiness, to staying young and beautiful, to raising smart kids, to finding the right spouse, to life and security, etc. Many people are trying the wrong, and still holding the wrong keys. I am referring to only one key that matters. Jesus refers to that key in Luke 11:52. ‘Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered (NKJV). An English adage says ‘Knowledge is power, and empowerment (added). How did the lawyers take away the key of knowledge? By giving erroneous interpretations of the scripture, and added man-made rules. This includes false Pastors who made God’s truth too hard to understand and practice. Hosea 4:6 - My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you ...”

Examples of those who tried the wrong keys: Two of formerly American richest men died so unhappily. Billionaire Howard Hughes who left two billion dollars at his death had no wife or children to mourn for him. He spent the last ten years of his life as a recluse, and in great loneliness. Another one John Paul Getty lived a sad and unhappy life, married and divorced five times; his younger son died from pneumonia in 1953, and his eldest son died an alcoholic in 1953.

Dr. Yonggi Cho (the popular Koran preacher) says “Trust in money, and money will fail you. Trust in your position, and you will lose it. Trust in position, and it will leave you. Trust in fame, and it will elude you. But trust in God, and He will never fail you.”

During the shipwreck of 1912, history had it that the richest man of the then world, John Jacob Astor was on board. As the ship, the great TITANIC which the manufacturers boasted with a guarantee that it can never sink was gradually dropping into the high sea, some climbed to the topmost of the vessel. Astor was among those who climbed to that height praying probably with his potbelly. His last prayer before he was sunk was, “Lord! All that I have, I would gladly exchange for another chance to live.” It was reported 3 days ago in one of the northern states that 2 men were

drowned in a well while chasing a goat. The goat fell inside and the two of them ran into the same well.

Unknown to some church members, what they're holding is a padlock, not a key. And they're locking up ourselves. Question: Are you holding a key or a padlock or an iron lock. Some people have made themselves like padlocks in the lives of other people. Ellen White says, "It is contrition and faith and love that enable the soul to receive wisdom from heaven. Faith working by love is the key of knowledge and every one that loveth knoweth God" Desire of Ages p.139. Jesus says I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." John 10:9. On our key text: Jesus asks us to sell all that we have in order to receive that key from God. The key controls your heart and selfish desires, and channels it heavenward where it receives God's peace in exchange. The key text is worth disposing of, discarding and dispossessing everything that you have in order to acquire it. The rich young popular ruler refused to do it, Matt 19:21-22.

Question: Have you found the Key? Money seen as an end itself quickly traps us and cut us off both from God and the needy. The key to using money wisely is to see how much we can use for God's purposes, not how much we can lavish for ourselves.

Does God's love touch your wallet? Does your money free you to help others? If so, you are storing lasting treasures in heaven. But if your money or possessions hinder you from giving generously, loving others, or serving God, then it will padlock you completely from God and godly relationships. You will soon ally with idol and mammon worshippers. Somebody has said that former and resigned Pope Joseph Ratzinger confessed that "he was tired of kissing anus of Beelzebub (heathen deity) – the prince of evil spirits. Baalzebub (god of Ekron). As Adventists, should we not be getting tired of the sins and evils that tie us down here?"

There is no magic about it. If your money is in your business, all your preoccupation will be on how to make the business most profitable. If you empower the needy with your resources you will become concerned with their welfare. If you put your money into evangelism and mission, like Adeleuwa, Dr. Adesina (my friend), you cannot forget thinking about souls. Jesus is saying that what you mostly think about is inextricably tied to your financial investments somehow.

Question: So where do you put your time, money and energy? Is it possible to change the way you use your resources in order to reflect kingdom values more accurately?

You do not need to wait for the best songs to be rendered, or names to be mentioned before you give to God. We are talking about planned giving in SDA Church today. Bring the amount you have planned for today's worship, excluding your tithe and offerings

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Remaining Focus Group Questions and Answers

Elders

Q.8 Are their members you think have been discriminated against as regards to social care?

- a) Yes, it appears so.
- b) Yes I think
- c) Yes. Those of lower standard that has not gotten to the level with those rich people, and they are neglected because they don't have money.
- d) Many know it.
- e) Yes, it is true.
- f) Yes, most times the church's social care focuses on the widows; this is a discrimination against non-widow poor church members with needs.

Q.9 Are there any known complaints about the church's social care?

- a) Some do complain.
- b) No answer.
- c) So many. The complaint is that whenever they want to help, they do it with those people that have big names in the church.
- d) Yes, I've heard it.
- e) Prayer and visitation
- f) Yes, the church appears to see widows as the only group in need of social care.

Q.10 What do you think is the biggest need of the members?

- a) Financial.
- b) Financial needs
- c) To bring people to Christ.
- d) The church showing concern for her members in need and make efforts to visit them.
- e) Empowerment.
- f) Food.
- g) Shelter.
- h) Clothing.
- i) Visitation.

Q.11 Will you be willing to contribute financially if the church establishes an interest-free loan scheme to assist needy church members?

- a) Yes, I'll try.
- b) Yes, it's good.
- c) By His grace, if I have. I will personally render any financial assistance.
- d) Yes but as a loan, not a donation.
- e) I'll be interested.

AWM

Q.8 Are their members you think have been discriminated against as regards to social care?

- a) I do not know
- b) Yes, maybe a few.
- c) Maybe.
- d) I don't know
- e) 5.Sometimes they do.
- f) Four respondents see widows with grown children as being discriminated against.
- g) One respondent thinks that kindred that have no elder to represent their interest at the board are discriminated against.

Q.9 Are there any known complaints about the church's social care?

- a) Yes, some sick members complain of lack of care and visitation.
- b) Some do.
- c) Yes, especially the poor ones.
- d) I don't know.
- e) Not aware.
- f) They all agree that members complain that the renaming of Dorcas to Adventist women ministry and Lay activity to Adventist men's organization has really caused a loss of focus, thereby killing social care in the church.

Q.10 What do you think is the biggest need of the members?

- a) Financial empowerment to members and sponsored skill training programs for members
- b) Prayers and care.
- c) The contribution of money and visitation.
- d) Prayers.
- e) Spiritual and financial growth.
- f) Shelter.
- g) Food.
- h) Clothing.
- i) Visitation

Q.11 Will you be willing to contribute financially if the church establishes an interest-free loan scheme to assist needy church members?

- a) Yes, if members-beneficiaries will be faithful in repayment of the loan.
- b) 2. Yes, I will.
- c) 3. If I have I will.
- d) 4. By God's grace.
- e) 5. Yes if I have the means.

We will gladly contribute to help the needy but not in form of loan because the church will not be able to prosecute defaulters, therefore members will easily run away with the loan.

Diaconate

Q.8 Are their members you think have been discriminated against as regards to social care?

- 1. No reason for that, it is an individual difference.
- 2. It seems to be so.
- 3. I don't know.
- 4. Some feel that way.
- 5. There are.

6. Yes, but with reasons such as punctuality to the church activities, family status i.e. status of his/her children.

Q.9 Are there any known complaints about the church's social care?

1. Yes, but to a small extent e.g. rendering social care to nonmembers while members are in dear need of that.
2. The church hardly receives such from its hierarchy such as Conference, Union, Division and etc.
3. Yes, a brother, Obioma Augustine wrote to the church for financial support more than once and the church did not respond to that
4. I've not heard.
5. Not aware.
6. There are several.

Q.10 What do you think is the biggest need of the members?

- a) Love, unity and financial breakthrough
- b) The power of earning a living.
- c) Spiritual upliftment and emotional stabilization
- d) Holy spirit
- e) Financial
- f) Second coming of our Savior
- g) Stomach infrastructure
- h) Peace in the family
- i) Spiritual growth

Q.11 Will you be willing to contribute financially if the church establishes an interest-free loan scheme to assist needy church members?

- a) Yes, because the church members need money for the church to move ahead.
- b) Yes, I'll try.
- c) Yes, I'll be willing.
- d) I think so.
- e) Certainly.

Yes, but if equality or equity, openness, sincerity, and frankness will be maintained.

AYM

Q.8 Are their members you think have been discriminated against as regards to social care?

- a) I can't say.
- b) Yes, it appears.
- c) Not aware.
- d) Not sure.
- e) I don't know
- f) I don't believe any member should be discriminated as regards to social care since it's a way of assisting the poor and needy

Q.9 Are there any known complaints about the church's social care?

- a) Yes, but to a small extent e.g. rendering social care to nonmembers while members are in dear need of that.
- b) The church hardly receives such from its hierarchy such as Conference, Union, Division and etc.

- c) Yes, a brother, Obioma Augustine wrote to the church for financial support more than once and the church did not respond to that
- d) I've not heard.
- e) Not aware.
- f) There are several

Q.10 What do you think is the biggest need of the members?

- a) The biggest need of the members
- b) Financial
- c) Prayer
- d) Spiritual revival and more love.
- e) Financial assistance to members
- f) Regular visitation to sick members.
- g) Organizing youth to assist the widows and less privileged in farming season.
- h) Less stigma and discrimination from rich members to poor members.
- i) Reward members who have contributed to the growth of the church.
- j) Conducting youth seminars to advise them of the dangers of the end times.

Q.11 Will you be willing to contribute financially if the church establishes an interest-free loan scheme to assist needy church members?

- a) Yes if I have money.
- b) Yes, I will.
- c) By the grace of God
- d) I will not hesitate.
- e) Yes if I have the means.
- f) Yes. Since it will assist the members to establish their business with the scheme and pay back as at when due.
- g) The scheme will help members develop their potentials towards creating a job for the unemployed members of the church.
- h) The risk is high because members might run into loss during the course of business and might not be able to return the money when expected.

Members might not be willing to contribute due to stigmatization in the sense that the church will only release the loans to active members or members who contribute to the growth of the church (favoritism)

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you think the love among church members today is the same as it used to be in the past?
2. What were the members doing for one another that is not there today?
3. What were social care activities particularly identified with the SDAs?
4. How long have you been a member of the church?
5. Could you tell a brief history of your church?

The above questions were translated and presented in Igbo dialect for the respondent's easy understanding.

APPENDIX E

VISITATION PLAN MODEL

1. Plan the visitation.
2. Discuss the plan with the Elders.
3. Evaluate the plan in order to make necessary change or improvements.
4. Recruit a team to work with him.
5. Provide visitation ministry training for the team.
6. Get input from the team.
7. Determine which church members need visits; this should be done on an ongoing basis.
8. Create a visitation schedule.
9. Stay committed to the visitation schedule and adjusts it as needed.¹

By so doing the pastor and the church will provide a network that will allow for the inclusion of members that may otherwise be overlooked. It is expected that the church and the pastor will need to focus their visitation on these primary six concerns:

- i. Christian fellowship
- ii. Spiritual needs and encouragement
- iii. Shut-ins
- iv. Hospital visitation
- v. Moments of joy especially childbirth, wedding, traditional marriage etc.
- vi. Bereavement and end-of-life support

The date for the training (November 14, & 15, 2015) for Umuocham and Akpaa 1 Churches.

¹ Stango, "Visiting for the Master."

APPENDIX F

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR LIFE PURPOSE

Step One: Purpose Questions

1.Areas of Interest

(i)What do I love to do?
.....

(ii)What activities give me satisfaction?
.....

(iii)What is my secret ambition?
.....

(iv) What excites me about life?
.....

(v)What activities give me the most enjoyment and inner peace?
.....

(vi) Where have I been happiest?
.....

(vii)What are my hobbies and why?

2.Talent, knowledge, and Skills

Write down all the things you feel you are good at and all the things you know.

(i)What do I get complimented on?
.....

(ii)Where have I excelled in the past (i.e. sports, entertaining, relationships, communicating, problem-solving, persuading, leading)
.....

(iii)What are some of my strengths?
.....

(iv) What were/are my favorite subjects at school?
.....

(v)Where have I been successful?
.....

(vi) What are the things I know how to do?
.....

3.Governing Value

(i)What would I commit myself to if money was not an object?
.....

(ii)If only I have 5 years to live, what would I absolutely have to accomplish for my life to have been meaningful?
.....

(iii)What has caused me to make great sacrifices in the past? What would I be willing to risk my life for?
.....

(iv) What do I stand for? What won't I stand for?

.....
4.Destiny

(i) What is my unique mission in life? Where can I make a difference?
.....

(ii) What specifically does God want me to do?
.....

(iii) What is my niche? What unique space do I occupy on this planet?
.....

(iv) What do I sense is my destiny?
.....

Step Two: Purpose Statement
.....

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VITA

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Background: I was born on April 1, 1967, in Eziukwu Community, Aba South Local Government Area in Abia State, Nigeria. I was raised up in a Christian family of ten persons. I got baptized into the SDA Church in 1989, had the privilege of acquiring Adventist education from my bachelor's Degree to the current DMin in view.

Family: I got wedded to Ezionyinye Ukegbu on October 7, 2001, and have been blessed with four children, two males and two females, namely, Chineweli, Chibuisi, Janet, and Eziaku.

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1992 – 1996 Andrews University, Michigan (Babcock Univ. Campus)

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Experience:

2015 to date President of Aba West Administrative Unit of SDA

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2011 – 2012 Children's Ministries Director / District Pastor (Umuagu)

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