

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPING THE SKILLS OF YOUNG LADIES FOR CHURCH GROWTH AT AGONA AKROFONSO CHURCH, GHANA

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso is blessed with young female endowed with numerous skills that, when developed, would accelerate the growth of the church. The skills vary from natural skills to acquired ones.

Furthermore, the young female adults outnumber their male counterparts in the church. If their skills are developed, it will reduce the unemployment problems in the church and widen the church's revenue generation base.

Besides this, the project aims at developing the skills of the young ladies to help them understand the trend lines of the church and its challenges and how their skills can reduce the challenges and impact church productivity.

The study among other considerations followed Bible studies, organization of young ladies' sensitization programs, personal interviews, workshops, preaching, and opinion polls and receiving feedback to make the research attain its desired goal.

The research has revealed the fact that young ladies' skills development across the board is a collective responsibility of the church and the community. The research ascertained the fact that majority of these undeveloped young ladies in the church are orphans, others from broken homes, whilst others are plagued with poverty. The research advises that, irrespective of the fact that church members have varied views on who is responsible for the development of the skills of young ladies in the church, the church—as a place of rescue for perishing souls—can develop these young ladies to boost church growth.

In addition to the above, the research reveals the need for the church to allocate budget funds for the establishment of skills development centers to help young ladies. Again, the well-to-do individuals in the churches can be approached and encouraged to help the less privileged individuals, especially the young ladies to avoid immorality and promote church growth.

Having got the cooperation of all concerned, the research exposes the fact that young ladies' skills development at Agona Akrofonso Seventh-day Adventist Church is a wakeup call to the church at large for the redemption of the image of the young ladies in the church. This can be attained through establishing low-cost training institutes, assisting the young ladies in some existing institutions; lastly, urging some individuals in the church to be of help to these young ladies.

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GROWTH AT AGONA AKROFONSO CHURCH, GHANA

A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by

Emmanuel Kwaku Amoako

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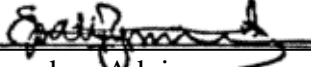
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This project is dedicated to my family.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Situation

The Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso in the Agona District of Mountain View Ghana Conference, responding to the gospel commission in Matthew 28:18-20, has won a lot of young ladies to the church. The church has a congregation of 300 people with more than 30% of the congregation being young ladies.

These young ladies are endowed with creative, intellectual and entrepreneurial skills. It has been noted that several factors militate against the development of skills of young ladies in the Church. According to the report of the church, some of the factors include illiteracy, poverty, early marriage and initiation to shrines in the communities. Other factors include juvenile delinquency, peer pressure, intimidation from their guardians as well as their choice to worship on the Sabbath. These young ladies whose characters are formed within the confines of the world continue to struggle to be morally sound in the church.¹

Ellen G. White states that “Bible-based, Christ-centered approach to skills training and development is an effective strategy for discipleship within the Seventh-day Adventists tradition to win and retain the youth.”² She reiterated the famous statement that the young ladies should be trained as thinkers, not mere reflectors of

¹ West-Central Africa Division, Department of Education, “Week of Education Emphasis,” paper presented at the Week of Education Emphasis, Accra, Ghana, 24-30 September, 2017, 13.

² Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 17.

what others think.³ Their know-how, time and strength should be used for Him.⁴ And such growth must be holistic.⁵ It is for this purpose that the Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso was established.

In 2 Corinthians 2:15, Paul affirmed that the church is the pleasing aroma to God. This means that the body of Christ, that is the church, should have a sweet aroma to attract perishing souls. This implies that the Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso owes it a duty to develop the skills of her young ladies for sustainable church growth.

Statement of the Problem

Availability of adequate skills is vital to the success of every organization. Agona-Akrofonso Adventist Church, by its adherence to the gospel commission (Matt 28:18-20), has won many young ladies into the church. These ladies are between the ages of 15 and 35, endowed with diverse potential skills and abilities. Many Ministers expressed concerns about skills development of young ladies in individual congregations in Mountain View Ghana Conference of the Adventist Church. The Ministers thought that many young ladies in their churches do not possess adequate skills that would allow them to adequately compete for formal employment in the job market; thereby rendering them unemployed. Based on these concerns, the researcher consulted the Women Ministry leaders of Agona-Akrofonso SDA to find out the number and proportion of young ladies in the church who were fully educated and/or trained in other vocations. The records indicated that only about 10 percent of the

³ White, *Education*, 17.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1967), 217.

⁵ West-Central Africa Division, Department of Education, "Week of Education Emphasis," 5.

young ladies had received some level of basic or secondary education, with few of them being trained in other vocations. Being young ladies, they would either accept miniature job for low remuneration or would have to resort to other devilish ways to earn a living. This results in a lot of challenges such as early marriages, initiation to shrine priestess, illiteracy and poverty. There was therefore a need to have skills development program to help young ladies in Agona-Akrofonso SDA Church in Mountain View Ghana Conference develop their vocational skills for trading.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to develop and implement strategic plans and programmes for the skills training of young ladies at Agona Akrofonso Church for church growth. This study also aims at providing an objective platform from which to access productive skills development for young ladies. Hopefully, the outcome of this project will become useful in other churches and districts of the conference.

Significance of the Study

This project is to expose problems faced by young ladies within the Agona-Akrofonso SDA Church about their skills development, and provide biblical and practical solutions to the problems. These are problems that have not yet been adequately addressed by the Church's leadership.

The strategy applied in this project will not only restore the confidence of young ladies but will also convince church leadership that young ladies' skills development is an evangelistic tool to win and retain them for church growth.

Methodology and Procedure

The research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. Informal and formal well-structured interviews, questionnaires, workshops, sermons and

correspondence on the subject are used in the study. The collected data are analysed and conclusions are made from the analysis.

Chapter one gives an overview of the situation, stating the problem on the ground and the purpose and significance of the study. This chapter also gives definition of the terms used in the body of the study.

The second chapter deals with the theological foundations of the whole study and brings up findings from the Holy Scripture, the Spirit of Prophecy, other religious and secular authors, and previous existing research done on young ladies and women's development.

Chapter three describes the local setting. The research presented here took a look at Ghana as a country, the Ashanti Region, and the Agona Akrofonso community and local SDA Church.

Chapter four provides practical solutions to the subject matter of the study through program development for young ladies in the Church and community, implementation and evaluation. Here, the study employs questionnaires, interviews, workshops, sermons and correspondence with connected bodies.

In chapter five presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations derived from the research and implementation.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR YOUNG LADIES' SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Biblical Background of Young Ladies Skill Development

This chapter focuses on the review of related literature on the subject under discussion. The Biblical, Spirit of Prophecy and Historical Perspective of Young Ladies Skill Development will be scrutinized. There are a lot of scholarly works on the subject because of its centrality in church development.

Skill Development of Women in the Old Testament

Detailed Biblical Hermeneutics endorses the fact that the Bible explicitly buttresses the development of the skills of the Young Ladies in the church for church growth. The Bible preserves the memories and acknowledges women (Young Ladies) of skill, courage, wisdom, and dignity.

In spiritual, social and national life, there are examples of women including Young Ladies in the Old Testament taking an active part in maxing freely and showing initiative and resourcefulness in the national life of Israel¹ Women in Hebrew *Ishah* and Greek *gyne* denote women without regard to age or marital status². The

¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *Gods People in God's Land* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 183-200.

² R. B. Edwards, "Woman," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, completely rev. and reset ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: W. E. Eerdmans, 1988), 4:1089.

Bible defines ‘Woman’ as that part which was taken out of man (Gen 2:23). She is the mother of all the living (Gen 3:20). Esther has been, particularly, referred to as the savior of a nation, in the book of Esther.

In the context of this study, Young Ladies are the intermediate age of females between puberty and adulthood. It is also the transitional period between puberty and adulthood age. They can be found in upper primary schools, secondary schools, tertiary institutions. They can also be found in business centers selling all kinds of items, assisting people at market centers in a business termed as *Kayayo-Hausa* term meaning Helper. Many of the Young Ladies render services to people as house helps; some also learn a trade in various capabilities to brighten their future and a number of these Ladies are not engaged in any economic activity; as such are subject to morally challenge social practices.

Women, including Young Ladies, have played significant roles in diverse ways to add value to their creation. Among the many is Sarah, the wife of Abraham. Though the Bible is silent at the age when Sarah was betrothed to Abraham.³ Their unity was remarkable. She was regarded as an exceptional matriarch. She was a bold companion. Sarah’s skills as a cook were profitable to Abraham and it was manifested when Abraham received visitors in Genesis 18:6. In Genesis 18:7-8, the Bible account that Sarah was summoned to prepare the bread, while Abraham, along with his servants assisted in the food preparation.⁴ Hagar, one of the two women that received enunciation from God in Genesis 21, is worth mentioning. The age of the Egyptian slave was mentioned but contributed immensely to attract the attention of the

³ Janice Nunnaly-Cox, *Foremothers: Women of the Bible* (New York: Seabury, 1981), 9.

⁴ Trevor Dennis, *Sarah Laughed: Women’s Voice in the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994), 176, 179.

compilers of the Bible. Though a victim of a great mistake by Sarah and Abraham, the Egyptian slave attracted the attention of God, she was honored and blessed. The Bible declined to disclose how she was nurtured; she must have been endowed with something unique that led to her being acknowledged by God in Genesis 21:17. An angel appeared to her for the first time in the Bible, who called her by name and was promised that her son Ishmael will be a great nation.

Rebecca's account in Genesis 24 demonstrates another young woman whose upbringing was rewarded by God. Her skills in rendering quality services to visitors led her to become a wife to a noble husband. How Rebecca accepted to leave her parent's home to follow a stranger to a foreign land portrayed how courageous she was.⁵ Her hospitality arrangement for Eliezer, tells of the skills that she was endowed with. She made an inquiry with God like Moses and Elisha in Genesis 25:22 concerning her children and accordingly rewarded.⁶ Another woman whose skill was developed and became a great asset to her community was Deborah in Judges 4. Deborah was the wife of Lapidoth, she was a musician, a judge, and a prophetess. Furthermore, Deborah was an authoritative military leader, like any other male generals (Judges 4:5). Though a woman, she was developed such that her gender did not detract her from performing her duty as a judge and prophetess.⁷ Her attitude earned her an oracle of the divine will.⁸ Candidly speaking, God naturally nurtured

⁵ Sharon Pace Jeansone, *The Women of Genesis: From Sarah to Potiphar's Wife* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1990), 53.

⁶ Mary Donovan Turner, "Rebekah: Ancestor of Earth," *Lexington Theological Quarterly*, April 1985, 44-45.

⁷ Jack W. Vancil, "Sarah—Her Life and Legacy," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Carroll D. Osburn (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1993), 2:60.

⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol 5, *Joshua to Esther* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 17.

Deborah and endowed her with wisdom that attracted people from far and near to seek her judgment. The talented woman counseled Barak the king on how God would grant the forces of Israel the courage to overcome their enemies.

Another remarkable character who attracted the attention of the Bible authors was Hulda in 2 Kings 22:14. How she was nurtured in the early stages in her life is silent in the Bible, but she comes as an authority at the time of religious revival. As a result of the skills embedded in her, she was consulted concerning the meaning of the discovery of the Book of the law. According to Ellen G. White, the king chose her because of his respect to her and the gravity of the situation.

In addition to the above, the account in 2 Kings 5:2-3 concerning the young lady who informed her mistress on healing mercies in Israel. The training given to the young lady yielded dividends in Naaman's life and contributed to inter-country unification.

The sad account in Genesis 34, concerning Dina, the only daughter of Jacob and Leah leaves much room to be desired. Jacob's inability to develop the skills of this Young Lady robbed him of his dignity. His reputation was tarnished when the daughter was defiled by Shechem, but the plot and execution of Simon and Levi were enough to disgrace the Patriarch.

The book of Esther crowns the importance of Young Ladies Skill development from the Old Testament. The account is recorded in Esther 2:5-18:

Mordecai, a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin, lived in the citadel of Susa. He had taken in his cousin, Hadassah (Esther), as his own daughter after her parents died (verse 5). Mordecai had been exiled from Jerusalem along with King Jehoiachin of Judah during Nebuchadnezzar's reign (verse 6). Esther was a beautiful young woman, and Mordecai had raised her as his own daughter Verse 7. King Xerxes ordered many young women to be brought to the citadel of Susa, including Esther. Hegai, who was in charge of the harem, took care of them (Verse 8). Esther pleased Hegai and gained his favour. He provided her with beauty treatments and special food, along with seven female attendants from the king's palace (Verse 9). Mordecai instructed Esther not to reveal her

nationality or family background (Verse 10). Mordecai checked on Esther every day, wanting to know how she was doing (Verse 11). Before going to King Xerxes, each young woman had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments, including six months with oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and cosmetics (Verse 12). Esther had the opportunity to bring anything she wanted from the harem to the king's palace. She would spend the evening with the king and return to the care of Shaashgaz, the eunuch in charge of the concubines, unless the king specifically summoned her (Verse 13). Esther would not return to the king unless he was pleased with her and called her by name (Verse 14). When it was Esther's turn to go to the king, she followed Hegai's suggestions and won favour from everyone who saw her (Verse 15). Esther was taken to King Xerxes in the tenth month of his seventh year of reign (Verse 16). King Xerxes was particularly attracted to Esther and favoured her more than the other women. He crowned her queen in place of Vashti (Verse 17). To celebrate Esther becoming queen, King Xerxes held a great banquet for his nobles and officials and declared a holiday throughout the provinces, distributing gifts generously (Verse 18).

Even though the Old Testament of the Holy Bible contains contributions of many young ladies and women, this research paper would concentrate on the book of Esther, which contains accounts parallel to the purpose of this research. According to the passage, Esther was not a biological daughter to Mordecai. Mordecai took it upon himself to nurture the young lady after the demise of her parents.

Mordecai took care of Esther because she was a blood-related daughter, similarly, the church can take care of these deprived young Ladies because they are children of God and they are supposed to be taken care of by the church. As Mordecai took a special interest in developing Esther across the board, physically, spiritually and psychologically, the church can walk in the foot-print of Mordecai and develop the newly converted Young Ladies joining the church physically, spiritually and psychologically. Mordecai took it upon himself to monitor events in Esther's life even while the Young Lady was taken to the palace. Now the holistic investment that was inculcated into the life of Esther by Mordecai can be emulated by the church at Agona Akrofonso. The role he played in redeeming the image of the young lady restored her

waning confidence in life and the effort of the man was crowned by God when though the young Lady (Esther) and the entire nation of Israel were redeemed by God.

This account in the Old Testament authenticates the fact that when the deprived and the less privileged Young Ladies at Agona Akrofonso are considered and accommodated, and their skills are developed by the church as Mordecai did in the life of Esther, these young ladies will become pillars in the church and the community. They will contribute with their newly acquired skills to grow the church at Akrofonso. Social vices, initiative as shrine priestesses, giving them into early marriages, pressure on the limited resources of the church and community will be drastically eradicated or can be reduced.

Young Ladies Skill Development in the New Testament

God promised that He would see to it that women would do something unusual in the last days (Joel 2:28-29). The prophecy manifested in the lives of a lot of women in the Old Testament, but it was explicitly evident in the New Testament.

The New Testament is bound with activities of women including young ladies. Each of the Synoptic Writers records on many occasion roles played by women including Young Ladies in the New Testament. Matthew 1:18-25 opens the New Testament on how God selected a virgin to give birth to the Messiah. Both birth of John the Baptist and that of Jesus tell of how God treated women in the New Testament. Having set up the atmosphere, the ministry of women including Young Ladies in the New Testament parallels that of their counterparts in the Old Testament. Women including the young ones played roles in Jesus' ministry. Some of them ministered to Jesus' personal needs, travelling with Him and His disciples, even following Him even to the cross. Jesus, during His time, eschewed the Jewish time

conditioned cultures against women (Young Ladies) by treating them as human beings. He respected their intellectual and spiritual capacities.

In Luke 1:41-55, three females, Anna, Elizabeth, and the mother of Jesus, Mary were enlisted as females who drew the attention to the city of Jerusalem about the birth of Jesus Christ. Much is not given concerning how they attracted the attention of the Bible writers. News about their age and how they were nurtured was not disclosed but it is an undeniable fact that the majority of the women in the study were Young Ladies embedded with unique skills that accelerated the growth of the church.

In John 4:7-30 the gospel includes impressive portraits of Jesus Christ dealing with the woman at the well. The Bible was silent on her age and how she was nurtured, but Jesus honored her. She was familiar with current theological issues. According to the Bible, she was the first known woman witness who brought a group of people to believe in Jesus (John 4:39-42).⁹

She was an effective agent of evangelism. The woman might have been rejected by the community because of her moral decadence, but her encounter with Jesus brought spiritual renewal into the life of the woman. As Jesus tolerated her vulnerability and nurtured her to become gospel ambassador to her community, the church at Agona Akrofonso can tolerate the vulnerable Young Ladies joining the church by nurturing them to be effective tools for the growth of the church and the community.

Jesus in the house of Lazarus at Bethany took his time and taught a supposed Young Lady Mary (Luke 10:39-41). Jesus taught Mary to accept Him as the Messiah.

⁹ L. C. Denise *Biblical Women: Contemporary Reflection on Scriptural Test* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 106.

He lauded her for spending quality time with Him. Unusually, she was at the feet of Jesus to listen to Him. In the New Testament times, a rabbi did not instruct a woman in the Torah. So, Jesus commended her.¹⁰ When Lazarus died, Jesus taught Martha to accept Him too as the Messiah, and the resurrection into life (John 11:25-27). Jesus left this legacy to the current generation that we as a church should leave no stone unturned in nurturing their skills especially, the Young Ladies at Agona Akrofonso for church growth. Those Jesus taught became knowledgeable in the realities in life and followed Jesus, meaning when the intellectual skills of the Young Ladies at Agona Akrofonso is nurtured using the word of God, the Young Ladies can be convinced to become ambassadors of the Church.

Jesus rescued a woman at the temple one early morning, when the woman was summoned and accused of being caught in adultery (John 8:1-12). Jesus who knew the plot of the perpetrators saved the woman and treated her like a human being. Her age was not provided in the Bible, neither her upbringing nor her profession was accounted for, but this discourse makes it explicit that she was not grown up and was supposedly a Young Lady.

What happened in the house of Simon in Luke 7:36-50 tells that Jesus accepted public demonstration of love and gratitude by that woman. She appreciated what Jesus did for her (John 8:1-12). She might have been nurtured on how to render quality services to personalities like Jesus. How she was accepted by Jesus restored her waning confidence in life, also of being given the privilege of being the first to see Jesus after the resurrection (Mark 16:9-10). As the first person to see the resurrected Jesus, she was also the first evangelist to announce His resurrection.

¹⁰ Jeansone, *The Women of Genesis*, 53.

Jesus who knew the importance of ladies' development and understood the prophecy in Joel 2:28-29, invested massively in the life of women. Among the women who followed Jesus to the cross were those whose embalmmment skills have been developed. In Matthew 27:59-61, it is written that some women had wanted to express an appreciation to Jesus by embalming His body with spices and ointment, but time did not permit them to do so. Jesus' parable of a woman mixing leaven in flour Matthew 13:33 indicates His endorsement for the development of the skill of women including Young Ladies for their future earthly journey. A Young Lady whose economic skill has been developed was quoted by Jesus when He elaborated on the perseverance of the woman who lost her coin and the premium placed on the coin through searching in Luke 15:3-10. While talking about perseverance in prayers, Jesus quoted a woman in Luke 18:1-8. The woman confronted the judge for arbitration. This is an indication that the woman knew something about legal issues. So, she looked for legal practitioners instead of taking the law into her hand and act ignorantly.

The narration though on prayers, can also be considered when talking about Young Ladies' skill development on legal issues. For when Young Ladies' legal intelligence skill is developed, when they encounter difficulties, they will not cast insinuation on their opponents, curse them and use other means to get rid of them; rather they can seek for arbitration to get the problem solved. Candidly speaking, women's interest, including developing the skill of Young Ladies is dominant in the New Testament. In Acts 2:17-18, Peter affirmed a prophecy in the book of Joel on the Pentecost. The content in the quotation refers to Young Ladies that God has a special earthly assignment, so they are supposed to be nurtured that their God-given gift will not go waste.

With the above fresh in the mind of the disciple called Philip, her four daughters were developed to prophesied in Acts 21:9, an indication that some of the ladies at Agona Akrofonso can be developed skillfully to prophesy.

Acts 9:36-39 accounts on Tabitha (Dorcas) with her kind works in making clothes for the poor. The narration endorses the fact that the woman might have been developed in her early years and the investment became profitable to the community and the church, an indication that when our Young Ladies skills are developed, they will become great assets in extending helping hand to the needy as Tabitha did. Tabitha's attitude as a God-fearing woman attracted the attention of heaven when she died and was brought back to life through the prayers of Peter. When our Young Ladies are given the requisite training, their acquired trade will go a long way in bringing relief to the needy.

The apostolic church was with Young Ladies like Rhoda in the book of Acts. In Acts 12:13-15, the role played by Rhoda shows that young Ladies were recognized and accommodated with their embedded skills. Many other Young Ladies participated actively in the growth of the church during the time of the New Testament. Even Paul included them in his ministry and entourage.¹¹

The Spirit of Prophecy and Young Ladies Skill Development

The church has been commissioned to evangelize and do humanitarian work. The church has a mission to do in favor of the poor and disadvantaged through literacy, education, healthcare, and orphanages. The Holy Spirit has placed in the

¹¹ John Scott, *Roman: God's Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: Intersarsity Press, 1994), 394-396.

church the gift of Prophecy to guide the church in the application of what the Bible teaches in specific situations in the practical life of the church.¹²

The Adventist Church believes Ellen G. White has been gifted, and that “her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth.”¹³ She is considered as the most effective female writer of all times, her writings are very potent in dealing with women issues, including young ladies and they continue to be a valuable asset in the Ellen estates, in the libraries of Adventists Institutions and local church libraries.

From her younger age of 17 until her death, Ellen White conducted her ministry of preaching, encouraging, guiding, and even warning the church. In spite of her call by God, she had to face the social prejudices of the day vis-à-vis women in the public sphere.

One of Ellen White’s brothers provides an example of the current thinking concerning women preachers. In an 1889 sermon, Ellen White referred to an incident that occurred in her youth in which her brother had written to her to not disgrace the family in becoming a preacher. Ellen wrote back to say that even if she was given all the gold, she would not give up her witnessing.¹⁴ According to her, the church is redundant for the accomplishment of its earthly assignment and the result is “a church full of intellectuals who are hesitant toward witnessing for Christ.”¹⁵

¹² Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952), 33.

¹³ General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, *Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1990), 28.

¹⁴ Ellen White, “Looking for That blessed Hope,” *Signs of the Times*, June 1889, 2. (Sermon preached in Washington, DC, on 26 January 1889)

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1946), 579.

In a letter of encouragement to S.M.I Henry, Ellen White expressed her desire to see young ladies to become educators and help those who were discouraged. In doing so, God would bless their works.¹⁶

James White, the husband of Ellen White on January 2, 1879, reiterated his position that Joel's prophecy indicates participation of women in preaching.¹⁷ Young ladies' skills can be developed to promulgate the gospel, and grow the church.

In review and Herald, Mrs. White said that the church must intentionally train young people, thus preparing them for the various branches of the great work.¹⁸ The rationale behind this is that irrespective of how the disciples were nurtured, after inviting them, He took His time in nurturing them before He dispatched them for the assignment He entrusted into their care. In the same say, the newly converted Young Ladies at Akrofonso, if well trained by the church, will be very skillful to and empowered for the benefit of the church and the community.

In *Testimony for the Church*, Volume 2, Mrs. White said that sisters (young ladies) were generally having a hard time to face the challenges in the growth of their families, so they should be educated for themselves and for other women who needed encouragement.¹⁹ This implies that developing the skills of the young ladies benefit the individuals, and the community who will join hands for the translation of the dreams of these young ladies.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *To Be Like Jesus* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004), 274.

¹⁷ James White, *Women in Church* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1879), 172.

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimony Treasures* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1949), 2:465.

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), Vol. 2:114.

In her book *Education*, Ellen White reiterated that one needs to be taught that life requires earnest work, responsibility and caretaking.²⁰

Ellen White's advice proves to reduce poverty and even today if the church including Agona Akrofonso SDA Church will reflect on the advice and relate to it accordingly. Majority of the young ladies within the church and the community will not become surplus to requirement and slaves to social vices, but effective agents of growth and partners in development of the church.

History of Young Ladies Skills Development

This chapter reviews the historical account of Young Ladies Development.

Over the years, contributions made by women in all spheres of life have been recognized. In this study, the attention is on how these women have been developed while they were young.

First, there was the School for Young Ladies of Dio Lewis, an American private school for young women. It was founded in 1864 and located at the Lexington House, at Lexington Massachusetts. Lewis's objective was to illustrate the possibilities in the physical development of girls during their school life. Lewis said that investing in Young Women's economic empowerment and skills development was one of the most urgent and effective means to the progress on gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth.²¹

The World Bank, between 2008 -2015, supported the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI). The program was conducted in Afghanistan, Jordan, Liberia, Haiti, Nepal and Rwanda. AGI was a public-private partnership to promote the transition of

²⁰ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 215.

²¹ "Dr. Dio Lewis's School for Young Ladies," Wikipedia, accessed August 20, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Dio_Lewis%27s_School_for_Young_Ladies.

adolescent girls from school to productive employment through innovative interventions. The interventions were tested, and if found successful, they were replicated.²²

Anna Knight was an Adventist female who contributed to the course of the church. She was an African American from Mississippi. Her mother was a former slave. She taught herself how to read and got acquainted with Adventists through mail or literature. She struggled to buy a Bible and took her time in studying the Bible. Baptized in Graysville, Tennessee (1893), Anna was appointed the first President of the National Colored Teachers Association of Seventh-day Adventists in 1922. In her close to about fifty years as a leader of the Association, she solely sponsored scores of students' education, she established a lot of schools, and she improved Oakwood facilities. She was an advisor to a lot of elementary and high schools in the south. She was a speaker at a lot of conventions and to numerous school administrators.

In another development, Maud Sisley Boyd (1851-1973) served the church for more than 60 years. At 15, Maud was serving at the Adventist Publishing house. She was the first unmarried lady called into mission service. She also became one of the first Adventist missionaries, entering South Africa in 1887.

Kit Watts²³ lists several young women who served and assisted in the development of the Church's Publishing Ministry. Notably among them was a Young Lady Mary Kelsy White (1857-1890). At the age of 13 years, she worked for Review and Herald Publishing Association, first in the bindery, then composing, and the

²² The World Bank Group, "World Bank Adolescent Girls Initiative Email Archives," accessed on August 27, 2019, <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs180/1115765405504/archive/1122920441553.html>.

²³ See Kit Watts, "Ellen White Contemporaries: Significant Women in the Church," in *A Woman's Place: Seventh-day Adventist Women in Church and Society*, ed. R.T. Banks (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1992), 41-74.

pressroom. Later, Kelsy worked as an assistant editor of the *Signs of the Times* under Willie White. Her contribution and the legacy left at the publishing industry for the church is something emulating by our young ladies in our churches throughout the world.

Historical Contribution of Young Ladies in Ghanaian Society

This section of the study investigates the contribution of Young Ladies in Ghanaian society, especially their contribution to the growth of the economy in the communities in Ghana. The contribution of the Young Ladies to economic activities and participation in numerous activities in the communities within the country deserves to be looked into.

This section throws light on the contribution of Young Ladies in some sectors of the Ghanaian economy and the problems they face in carrying out their activities. In the religious sector, the Adventist Church in Ghana has done a lot in mobilizing and inaugurating the young ladies' department throughout the country. All the directors within the two unions in the country were encouraged to draw programs and prepare the young ladies to contribute to the societies in Ghana. Not long after the inauguration, some women leaders within the two unions organized workshops for the young ladies. The young ladies were taken through projects like tie and dye cloth, liquid soap preparation, Parazone preparation, preparation of fruit juice, soft drinks and plant medicine. The young ladies were also taken through food processing and preservation, fashion designing and baking of bread and pastries.

This initiative by the Adventist Church, including the establishment of institutions, has enhanced the life of young ladies and are contributing in diverse ways to the growth of the societies within the country.

Historically, women have made a great contribution to the development of Ghana, in the areas of business, education, etc., although they were sometimes ignored in the narratives of nation-building.²⁴ During colonialism, women founded organizations such as the Ladies Mutual Club, the Native Ladies of Cape Coast which addressed the plight of women to liberate them from the tentacles of patriarchy.²⁵

Women in Ghana head one-third of all households, especially in urban areas. This suggests that women are the bread winners of many families. This shows also that participated economically and socially in the growth of the country.²⁶ Many young women are active bloggers on social media. According to Kajsa, there are training programs which aim to increase women's access to social media.²⁷

Data from UNESCO also indicate that women and young ladies have contributed immensely in the education sector from nursery to the universities, for available data confirm that even at the senior high schools over 24% of teachers in Ghana are females.

In the Agriculture sector, information available indicates that young ladies have contributed and continue to contribute to the growth of the sector both in the urban and rural areas. Their contribution is found in cultivating, harvesting, processing and the distribution of farm products to the communities and in the market

²⁴ A. N. Anyidoho and K. Asante, "Truly National? Social Inclusion and the Ghana@50 Celebrations," *Ghana Studies* 11 (2008): 146.

²⁵ Usman Abass, "The Position of Women in the Social and Political History of Ghana," *Journal of Turkish World Studies* 17, no. 2 (2017): 153.

²⁶ Ghana Statistical Service; Ghana Health Service and I.C.F. International, *Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2014* (Rockville, MD: GSS, GHS, and ICF International, 2015), 54.

²⁷ Social Media for Development, "Empowering Women in Ghana and Zimbabwe through Social Media," accessed on February 14, 2016, <http://social-media-for-development.org/empowering-women-in-ghana-and-zimbabwe-through-social-media/>.

places. Young ladies have also contributed to the preservation of farm produce in some selected warehouses in the country.

In a survey by Ghana statistical service, more than half of the population in Ghana are females (51.2 %, that is 12.6 million, according to the 2010 census), making the 70% of the economically active population in Ghana. The above information does not take care of their contribution to domestic and household chores that needed more attention.²⁸

Apart from the above, young ladies' contribution within the health sector far-outweigh the contribution of their male counterparts in the sector. In hospitals, clinics, health centers, and maternity homes, they perform creditably than males. Irrespective of their contribution in some sectors in the country, they are less represented in technical or machine operation work. Besides this, their low level of education, marginalization and cultural barriers tends to retrogress their development in societies.

Historical accounts over the years have confirmed that young ladies without skills training and resources end up in prostitutions. The majority of them serve as house helps to careers and professionals in Ghanaian society. Some are shop attendants, others are Kayayo (a Hausa term meaning helper at market circles), while a sizeable number of them sell anything that comes their way by the roadside, on the highways, under traffic lights, toll boots areas and at the market, centers to make ends meet. So, at all historical junctures, young ladies in Ghanaian societies have contributed and continue to contribute immensely toward religion, social and political life from the period of independence to date.

²⁸ Ghana Statistical Service, "2010 Population and Housing Census: Women and Men in Ghana," accessed on February 14, 2016, www.statsghaana.gov.gh.

Historical Contribution of Young Ladies in the Church

The section below traces historical contribution of young ladies in the church.

From 1834 to 1997

1. Martha D. Byington Amadou (1834-1937)
 - First Dorcas Society, President, taught in one of the first church schools.
2. Maud Sisley Bayd (1851-1937)
 - Bible Instructor, Colporteur, educato.
 - First single missionary to Europe served also in Africa and Australia.
3. Nellie H. Rankib Druillard (1844-1937)
 - Financier, treasurer.
 - Helped found Riverside Sanatorium Madison College and Emmanuel Missionary College.
 - Missionary to South Africa.
4. Maria L. Huntley (1847-1937)
 - President, Tract and Missionary Society which later became church ministries and publishing department.
 - Addressed the 1888 General Conference Session.
5. Katherine (Kate) Lindsey (1842-1923)
 - Physician Founder of first nurses training school at Battle Greek Sanatorium Missionary in South Africa.
6. Anne Rebekkah Smith (1828-1855)
 - Early hymn writer and editor

- While James White travelled; she published the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald.

7. Gertrude Brown (1866-1948)

- Physician, worked with J. Harvey Kellog.
- Pioneered Medical Work in British Isles.
- Established Sanatorium, Crieff, Scotland.

8. Ellen Gould White (1827-1982)

- One of the leaders and prophetess of the Adventist Church.
- Author of 126 books and compilations.

9. Ai Araki (1890-1982)

- Bible worker and church leader in Japan,
- Though blind, she led and preserved her church throughout World War II. The only congregation in Japan to remain intact.

10. Georgia Burrus Burgess (1866-1948)

- Educator and Frontier Missionary in India for 40 years ministering especially to Women.

11. Lora E. Clement (1890-1958)

- Associate Elder and editor of Youth's instructor for 41 years.

12. Lottie Blake (1876-1976)

- First Afro-American SDA Women Physician established school of Nursing at Oakwood College.
- Helped to treat Ellen G. White.

13. Eva Dukes (1893-1986)

- Musician and educator.
- First Seventh-day Adventist woman to receive a Ph.D. in the USA.

14. Sarepta Myrenda Irish Henry (1839-1900)

- Temperance activist personal evangelist and writer.
- Established first women's ministry. The General voted to give her a ministerial license.

15. Anna L. Ingles Hindson (1862-1933)

- Editor, Union Youth Department Secretary, treasurer and Missionary in Australia.

16. Louise Kleuser (1890-1976)

- Bible worker, Pastor, evangelist, editor and seminary Professor.
- Conference educational secretary and Associate in the G.C. Ministerial Association.

17. Anna Knight (1874-1972)

- First Africa-American Woman missionary served in India and U.S.A. as educator, nurse, conference and Union department Secretary.

18. Ana Stahl (1870-1968)

- Nurse and Educator, Missionary in South America.
- Instrumental in starting Indian Church Schools. She worked in India with her husband for 29 years.

19. Marinda (Minnie) Day Sype (1869-1956)

- Pastor, evangelist, licensed minister for 54 years conference departmental director.

20. Ana Rosa Alvarado (1946-1994)

- Cuban Pastor, evangelist, educator and musician for 45 years.

21. Chessie Harris (1906-1997)

- Educator and humanitarian, more than 1200 children have received care at the Harris Home

From 1997 to Present

22. Jerusha Muga

- Evangelist, Writer, Union Director for Women's Children's Ministries.
- Sabbath school ministries to dignitaries in Kenya.

23. Olga Murga

- Evangelist, Preacher, Church Planting.
- Women's Ministries Pioneer in Russia under her evangelist programmes, 3038 people were baptised.

24. Ingrid Nanmann

- Evangelist Motivator, mentor, pioneer in establishing Women's Ministries in Europe, especially in German speaking Countries.

25. Esther Diaz Sablun

- Cuban Educator, first woman President of Cuban Adventist Theological Seminary.

26. Elizabeth Sterndale

- Registered nurse, division field secretary.
- First Women's Ministries Director in North America Division.
- President of the Association of S.D.A. Nurses. Served in many areas, especially to women.

27. Hong Xian Mei

- Pastor and Evangelist. Raised up large church congregation with training facility for Adventist leaders in China.

28. Miriam de Azevedo Berg

- Educator and Frontier Missionary in Mozambique, under persecution; teacher, mentor, children's ministries pioneer in South American Division, she dedicated her life to empowering women to serve.

Seventh-day Adventist Position on Young Ladies Skill Development

The history above demonstrates that the church had many women contribution to its growth and development since its beginnings. As a matter of fact, it aims for wholistic development, part of which is to enhance humanity's quality of life.

Women's activities including the young ladies kept attracting the attention of the World body of the church, but little was done to let their voice heard. Irrespective of the fact that the voice of the women and young ladies were hardly heard in the 19th century, the full renaissance of the role of women began in the 20th century.

The committee met for the first time in 1973, in Ohio.²⁹ At the meeting, papers were discussed among Bible teachers and church leaders. In 1975, the Bible Research Institute (BRI) at the General Conference published the proceedings of the camp meeting.³⁰ Another committee known as Women Ministries Advisory Committee was formed by General Conference on October 15, 1985, to champion the role of the women including young ladies for the growth of the church and Mrs. Betty Holbrook was appointed to chair the committee. Karen Flowers presented the findings of the

²⁹ Nancy Vhymeister, *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 218-229.

³⁰ General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, "General Conference Annual Council Minutes" (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference, 18 October 1973).

role of women in the church, which were conducted in Georgia between July 12th-17th, 1989.³¹

In October 1990, the Annual Council accepted General Conference President Robert S. Folkenberg's recommendation to establish a body responsible for women affairs at the General Conference including Young Ladies in the world church. Rose Otis was named director of this new Ministry.

The church has the department of Women's Ministries. It aims to encourage, challenge, equip, and nurture Adventist women as they participate in the gospel commission. The department caters for the spiritual, emotional, physical and social needs of women.³² It provides support for those who are hurting and are facing issues in and out the church. The department has a scholarship program to meet academic needs of women.³³ Once trained academically, women are empowered to strengthen families, improve communities, and build the church globally.³⁴

Apart from the above, the Adventist Church manual talks about empowering the under-privileged process of skills training.³⁵ The information provided indicates that women including young ladies' interest have been a priority of the Adventist Church because the church sees the women (including young ladies) as the beginning and the finishing of the gospel.

³¹ In 1995 the papers were republished and widely distributed. See General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, *The Role of Women in the Church* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1995).

³² Cape Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Department, "Women's Ministries," accessed September 10, 2019, <https://cc.adventist.org/womens-ministries/>.

³³ Karen Flowers, "The Role of Women in the Church," *Adventist Review*, September 1989, 15-18.

³⁴ Ghana Union Conference, "Membership Statistics, 2011," accessed July 20, 2018, http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_summary.asp?Firls/nst ID=2105099.

³⁵ General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Working Policy*, 2014-2015 ed. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015), 379-380.

In addition to the above, the primary purpose of the Ministries Department is to nurture, facilitate and support women including young ladies in their Christian lives as disciples of Jesus Christ and members of the World church. Furthermore, the department shares the responsibility for developing a global evangelistic strategy and provides training to equip the women (young ladies) of the church to uplift Christ in the church and the world.

Moreover, the department also focuses on six critical issues that have been identified as barriers preventing women (young ladies) from reaching their full potential; they are illiteracy, poverty, risks, health, abuse, length of workday and poor working conditions and the need for training and mentoring for greater involvement in the mission of the church.³⁶ And to fulfill the purpose of Women's Ministries, eight objectives have been identified by which the women in the church may be empowered to share the good news within their families among their fellow believers and in ever-expanding circles in the unsaved world. They are;

1. To elevate women as persons of inestimable worth by their creation and redemption.
2. Enable women to deepen their faith and to experience spiritual growth and renewal.
3. Underscore the broad spectrum and needs and concerns of women across the life span from a multicultural and multi-ethnic perspective.
4. Liaise and co-operate with other specialized departments of the church to meet the needs of women.

³⁶ Women's Ministries Western Highlands Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Women's Ministries of Statement of Purpose, Quarterly Report," accessed August 13, 2019, <https://whm.adventistconnect.org/women-s-ministries>.

5. Build networks among women in the world church that encourage bonds of friendship, mutual support and creative exchange of ideas and information.
6. Mentor and encourage young Adventist women, creating paths for their involvement in the church as they reach for their full potential in Christ.
7. Bring women's unique perspective on issues facing the church to decision making bodies.
8. Seek expansion avenues of dynamic Christian service for women challenging each Adventist woman to use her gifts to complement the talents of others as they work side by side to further the global mission of the Adventist Church.³⁷

Other Religious Authors on Young Ladies Skill Development

Many religious authors have talked at length on the issue under the study.

Among the author, a Ghanaian born Minister of the gospel, Pastor Emmanuel Dickson Poakwa, talks about the training skills of young ladies in disadvantaged situation. In doing so, these women would be enabled to deal with own concerns and participate fully in the community.³⁸

On the negligence of the church in reflecting on core mandate and its adverse effect, an Adventist author John G. Beach said that “the gospel has never gone as it ought to have gone because our brethren (young ladies) skill have seemed to be

³⁷ General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, “Philosophy and Mission,” *General Conference Women's Ministries Handbook*, 14, accessed August 6, 2019, <https://studylib.net/doc/7691083/general-conference-department-of-women-s-ministries>.

³⁸ E. D. Poakwa, “The Indigenous Factor in the Development of the Seventh-day Adventist in Ghana 1888-2003” (Unpublished Thesis, Department of Studies of Religions, University of Ghana, 2006).

crippled.³⁹ There seems to be something not discernible upon the surface, which has hindered the progress of the gospel; and I (the author) want to tell you (the leadership of the church) that if everything was all right in the homes which are represented by these people (young ladies), the gates of hell could not prevail against you. Meaning if the leadership of the church including those at Agona Akrofonso will but consider the hardship our young ladies experience in their various homes and come to their aid, how their liberation will affect the church and the community at Akrofonso will be unfathomable.

In 1970, the General Conference commissioned a careful study of scripture and the spirit of prophecy concerning the role of women in the church. Perhaps the most comprehensive book compiled on the subject of the developing women for Ministry is the role of women in the church 1995. This book was birthed during the council on the role of women in the Adventist Church, Camp Mohaven Ohio; (September 16-19, 1973) and was published originally as a symposium on the role of women in the church (1984). The book is written by different authors; articles from each member address different aspects leading towards understanding the potential of women everywhere. Each article addresses a particular topic relating to the development of women from a Biblical Perspective. The work was done under the direction of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of Adventist Church.⁴⁰

Kit Watts, Ellen G. White contemporary records; when Ellen Gould Harmon received her first vision, and after her death in 1915, she called women within the

³⁹ John G. Beach, *Notable Women of Spirit: The Historical Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1976), 92.

⁴⁰ General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Research Institute Committee, 1984).

sound of her voice and the influence of her pen to invest their talents for the kingdom by taking up the work at hand. Hundreds and thousands did.⁴¹ The sound of her voice can be heeded to today and invest in the young ladies by the church for its mission to become possible.

Not all, in viewing the giftedness of Christ's followers including the young ladies in the church, another religious authors Clinton and Clinton extensively emphasized the need that leaders have to learn about their giftedness to develop themselves and others like the young ladies in the church. According to the author, "giftedness is an important part of moving toward a focused ministry that included deliberateness, intentionality, and development toward optimum potential"⁴², therefore if this gift embedded in the young ladies at Agona Akrofonso Adventist Church is developed, its adverse effect in the life of Akrofonso church and the community will be scaled down.

Furthermore, another religious author Una J. Underwood, warns that as in the parable of talents, the tragedy that fell upon the man who hid the only talent given to him may be experienced at the end of our spiritual journey when the master requires of the talent, he has given women (young ladies). The author perceives "women who do not use the talents God has given them experience the tragedy of losing their talents when they fall in the trap of not cultivating their God-given talents."⁴³ Now the

⁴¹ Watts, "Ellen White Contemporaries," in Banks, 41-74.

⁴² J. R. Clinton and R. W. Clinton, *Unlocking Your Giftedness* (Altadena, CA: Barnabas, 1998), 18.

⁴³ Una J. Underwood, *Women in their Places: Does God Call Women?* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Foundations, 1960), 364.

question is, “must the talent (skill) endowed in our young ladies go waste?”⁴⁴ It goes waste to the detriment of the progress of the church especially the Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso.

In another development, on the occasion of the Marian Year on August 15, 1988, Pope John Paul II, issued a letter on the dignity and vocation of Women (young ladies). In the letter, the pontiff stated that the hour coming has come when the vocation of women is being acknowledged in its fullness. In the opinion of the pontiff, the gift of God, Creator, and Redeemer are that which is entrusted to every woman and only in the spirit of Christ is she able to make a gift of herself to others and rediscover the true nature of the womanhood of her own identity. The pontiff’s letter to develop young ladies did not conclude the accounts, for another book, *A Woman’s Place* edited by Rosa Taylor Banks, was written to help the church (Agona Akrofonso Adventist Church) in nurturing and mobilizing its female membership for greater service in the church and its mission.⁴⁵ The book takes a historical look at changing relationships between the Adventist Church, as an institution, and its female membership. It begins by accessing principles and arguments on both sides of the question of Women from the theological to psychological and sociological perspectives, something which is a major preoccupation of the Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso.

⁴⁴ John Paul II, “Apostolic Letter: Mulieris Dignitatem of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year,” accessed July 17, 2016, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html.

⁴⁵ Rosa Taylor Banks, *A Woman’s Place: Seventh-day Adventist Women in Church and Society* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1992).

Secular Authors on Young Ladies Skill Development

Interest in Young Ladies skill Development is hardly given any attention by Secular Authors. The limited information on Women's interest by the secular authors is centered on the role of women in the church/society, women's emancipation, equality and women empowerment and not how the skill of Young Ladies who outnumber their male counterparts can be developed.

On January 1, 2013, an author and activist in Women Interest in addressing women issues said that “Society needs to make sure they are investing time and energy to developing a future generation of women for leadership.

Hardworking and perseverance bring women to the top of their field irrespective of their position on the academic ladder. So, they should be advised to behave like that. Every opportunity afforded women are supposed to be grabbed and create opportunities for themselves. There is a need to increase sponsorship programs that can pair women with senior-level advocates so that they will be groomed for management positions. In the opinion of the women, mentorship programs which are networks often of female peers can also help women act as role models for each.⁴⁶

According to B. Ruth Ellen-Before the 19th Century, Young Women lived under the economic and disciplinary authority of their father until they marry and pass away under the control of their husbands to secure a satisfactory dowry.⁴⁷ In the wealthier families, daughters receive their dowry from their families whereas the poorer women needed to work to save their wages to improve their chances to wed.

⁴⁶ Lucy P. Marcus, “On Young Ladies Skill Development,” accessed June 20, 2017, <https://www.bsr.org/lour-insights/blog-view/how-can/13-11-16>.

⁴⁷ Ruth E. Joeres and Mary Jo Maynes, *German Women in the eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social and Literary History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986).

Under the German laws, women had a property right over their dowries and inheritances, a valuable benefit as high mortality rates resulted in successive marriage.

Even before 1789, according to the author, the majority of women including Young Ladies lived confined to society's private sphere, the home. Not all, in the newly founded German state, women of all social classes were politically and socially disenfranchised. The code of social respectability confined upper class and bourgeois women to their homes. They were considered socially and economically inferior to their husbands. The unmarried women were ridiculed and the ones who wanted to avoid social descent could work as unpaid housekeepers living with relatives; the ablest could work as a governess or they could become nuns.⁴⁸ Only invest money, time and passion to empower Young Ladies, rather they should be socially responsible to Young Ladies that they should be not left out.

According to her, promoting Young Women's economic empowerment and skills development is a key pillar in the UN, Women's Youth, and Gender Equality Strategy. The Global Coalition of Young women entrepreneurs will enable action and innovation in the area through a partnership with Young Women leaders and entrepreneurs, the private sector philanthropist, academia, UN agencies, and others. To increase access to decent employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, the UN started provided vocational training to young out of school ladies. The world body provided training in computer skills to girls and Young ladies around the world

⁴⁸ Joeres and Maynes, *German Women in the eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*.

including internally displaced person's camps in South Sudan and not community girls in India.⁴⁹

Furthermore, the world body also works with governments to introduce police reforms for education and skill development for young women. Not all, between the years of 2008 to 2015, the World Bank supported the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI), a public-private partnership to promote the transition of adolescent girls from school to productive employment through innovative interventions that are tested and then scaled up or replicated if successful. Each program was individually tailored to the country context and the menu of interventions included business development skills, training, technical and vocational training targeting skills in high demand, as well as life skills.

According to research by UNESCO in 2010, literate, educated women have fewer and healthier children and better health themselves than those with little or no education. Moreover, the higher the education and skill level of the mother, the more likely it is that her children will stay on to complete their formal education and perform well.⁵⁰ In addition to the above by UNESCO, poor families are concentrated in nations and communities caught in what Sachs calls the "poverty trap". The key problem is that when poverty is extreme, the poor do not have the ability by themselves to get out of the trap.

⁴⁹ Angellah Mandoreba and Filip Andersson, "Internally Displaced Women and Youth Receive Training on Income Generating Projects," June 20, 2023, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/internally-displaced-women-and-youth-receive-training-income-generating-projects>.

⁵⁰ Lakshmi Puri, "Promising Innovation, Skills and Young Women's Entrepreneurship," On World Youth Skills Day, Tuesday, July 19, 2016, accessed Tuesday July 12, 2019, www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/7/Promoting-innovation-skills-and-Young-women-entrepreneurship.

In particular, girls and women in most poor parts of the world are looked into a cycle of poverty and early marriages with illiterate mothers bring up illiterate daughters who are married off early into yet another cycle of poverty, illiteracy, high fertility, and early mortality. And in breaking the cycle according to the research requires more than educational interventions; it demands comprehensive development programs that transform the basic conditions of rural and slum community life. Learning through life and especially literacy, needs to be part of this transformation, but providing other basic infrastructure elements like water, wells, fuel supply, health clinics, roads, etc. is also necessary, not to speak of micro-credit, improved employment, and income-earning opportunities.⁵¹

Previous Researchers on Women Development

Researchers and Scholars have done a lot of research work on Women (Young Ladies) interest. But the major part of the research work centers on women's equality, women's emancipation, discrimination against women, women empowerment, women in leadership and women ordination.

In this study, the researcher takes readers through previous research on women's development. The nature of the Development and how it has impacted the lives of women and how their development has influence society is the concern of this section.

Development according to encyclopedia Britannica “is the process of developing new ideas and women are also defined as an adult female person. Scholars all over the world are at a dilemma as to whether women’s development is a separate

⁵¹ N. C. Power, “Achieving Universal Primary education and EIU,” *Journal of Education for International Understanding* 3 (2006): 106-128.

issue to that of development in general, this is because, in the opinion of activists, women have not benefited from development processes, programs and projects to the same extent as men had. From the research works consulted, women were often not included in the planning, implementation, execution, and evaluation of development programs and projects. Development sometimes undermines the role, status and position of women in society and it affects women and men differently women's health, education, economic opportunity, and human rights are fundamental in achieving successful economic growth and stable societies.

In the opinion of Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman, women are rated as excelling in taking initiative, acting with resilience, practicing self-development, driving for results and displaying high integrity and honesty. According to them, women at younger ages rate themselves significantly lower than men but their ratings climb and eventually supersede those of their male counterpart as they grow older; furthermore, women make highly competent leaders, according to those who work with them and what is holding them back is not lack of capability but a dearth of opportunity and when given those opportunities, women are just as likely to succeed in higher-level position as men.

Notwithstanding the above, it is a universal fact that women's experience of human development over the decades has yet to deliver on the ultimate goal of gender equality. They continue to experience multiple oppression and intimidation in all spheres of their lives across all continents, therefore there is a need for an organization like the Adventist Church to give more encouragement to women and invest "can-do spirit" in them so that their out-put will influence the church positively. The two researchers advise leadership in organizations like the Adventist Church to

assure the women in the church of their competence and encourage them to seek promotions earlier in their careers.

In another development, World Bank on defining gender in the 21st Century confirms that African Women produce almost three-quarters of the continent's food, they are still among the poorest of the poor. They are workers in the home, in the fields, and the market places. Irrespective of this, women continue to depend on men for their upkeep due to lack of access to capital or credit or control over household resources and due also to patriarchal practices and traditions including those that relate to the economic position of women lacking power or control over household or communal resources, many women subservient to men and relatively powerless in negotiating decision and it is through acquisition of skills training and educational development that can emancipate them, also of adding value to their creation.

Concerning women and their relationship with development, three distinct models stand tall and they are the “Women in Development (WID)”, the “Women and Development (WAD)” and GAD: The “Gender and Development”. Women in Development (WID) is an approach that emerged as a result of the waves of feminism which were concerned in the women's condition. The approach emerged in the early 1970s when it became apparent women were not benefiting from development due to their exclusion from developmental programs. So, the approach helped open a door to women being incorporated in the workforce and also improved their productivity to better their lives.

The approach did not call for fundamental changes in the overall social structure or economic system in which women were to be included but focused on women exclusively and almost outside of the mainstream of development. The Women and Development (WAD) approach of the late 1970s focused on the

interaction between women and development, rather than purely on strategies to integrate women into development. It appeared that neither men nor women were benefiting from development due to class inequalities and the unequal distribution of wealth. It focused strongly on class, in practical project design and implementation, it tends to like women in development, WID, to group women irrespective of other considerations such as class divisions.

In addition to the above, Gender and Development (GAD) is also regarded as one of the key approaches. It emerged in the 1980s from a coming together of many feminist ideas and lessons learned from the limitations of women in development (WID) and Woman and Development (WAD). The approach focuses on the social or gender relations between men and women in society and emphasizes the productive and reproductive roles of women. It goes beyond seeing development as mainly economic well-being, but also the social and mental well-being of the individual. Among the three approaches, Gender and Development is considered to be the best approach. This is because it examines all concerns of life especially concerns of women. It also buttresses what Philip Dutton wrote in his support to the approach that, Development can be said to be; higher living standards, a rising per capita income, increase in productive capacity, mastery over nature freedom through control of man's environment, economic growth. But not mere growth but growth with equity, elimination of poverty, basic needs satisfaction, catching up with the developed countries in technology, wealth, power, status, economic independence, self-reliance, the scope for self-fulfillment for all liberation, the means of human ascent

Having got the co-operation of all concerned, previous research on women's development has been carried out over the years to eliminate constrain that retrogress the progress of women especially young ladies, there is still much room for

improvement. This is because the outcry by women activists to opinion leaders and stakeholders to remove cultural barriers that impact women (young ladies) negatively is yet to be heeded to. Furthermore, because of how women have been developed and the majority of them not developed at all, they suffer a lot of abuse and many challenges.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING

Economic Activities of the People

Commerce in Ghana, so Akrofonso, is dominated by open-air markets and a lot of traders offer both local and imported goods for sale. Ghana heavily depends on primary products for export especially cocoa, gold, and timber to position itself on the international economy. The international trade accounts for one-third of gross domestic product (GDP). Agriculture is main source for domestic economy.

Religious Setting of the People

The majority of the population of the Ashanti Region is Christianity (77.5%). It is followed by Islam (13.2%). The Adventist Church, with its missionary agenda, began the propagation of the gospel for expansion, growth, and development landed at Agona, the capital of the Sekyere South District, which is one among the 27 districts within Ashanti Region of Ghana. The Church was well established at Agona and within the go after the propagation of the Adventist Message and increase the membership touched the soil of a village called Akyempeman the present-day Agona Akrofonso. Consistent with information available, Evangelist R.K. Antwi from Agona visited Akyempeman (present-day Agona Akrofonso) and initiated house to deal with campaign to determine an Adventist Church at the village in 1947. The house to deal with evangelism centered on the gospel commission in Matthew 28:18-20 led some key figures within the village to simply accept Adventism for the primary time.

Notable among the convert was Nana Kwame Owusu (Daniel Owusu Ansah) the then chief of Agona Akrofonso. The chief with the importance of Adventist education fresh in his mind donated a parcel of land to the newly religion to start out a faculty in 1949.

Before this point, the new converts composed of tons of young ladies were previously meeting at the premises of 1 Peter Kusi, so once they were ready to raise a four-unit classroom, they moved their forum from the premises of Peter Kusi to the classroom in 1950. The people within the community who weren't comfortable that their young ladies be initiated into shrine priestesses embraced the new faith and joined the church in their numbers.

The church's youth department did what they could in stopping the people within the community in giving their young ladies to the old men to marry not to the will of these young ladies. The new converts embraced the stewardship program of the church and shared with the members within the community an indication that the dream of the church was realized but not without opposition from the fetish priest and priestesses within the community.

The church according to interviewers transformed the lives of the people within the community also of restoration of the waning confidence in life. The church at the early stages through Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) taught the men some agricultural methodologies to improve their Agriculture practices to boost their farm yield and women including the young girls were also taught how to learn a trade. They were taken through soap making, bread making, soya drink preparation, vegetable cultivating, dressing making, etc. So, by this, the Adventist Church became a center of redemption to the people at Agona – Akrofonso.

The church with time suffered a setback as a result of the migration of the youth of the village to the cities in search of greener pastures. The strength of the church became weak and the evangelistic programs lost its bite. Hence the need to revisit the part on how the church was started; review the soul-winning strategy and implement it to add value to the lifestyle of the young ladies at Agona Akrofonso who are currently initiated into shrine priestesses in modern ways and also being pushed into early marriage.

The Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso is located on the outskirts of Agona Akrofonso. The church is on the right-hand side on the main road between Agona and Asamang. The church is nearby of the chief's palace. Established in 1947, the Adventist Church has restored confidence to many youths at Agona Akrofonso creating the possibility for self-actualization.

Since the establishment of the church at Agona Akrofonso, the youth who joined the church with limited means have climbed the social and economic ladder. The list of young ladies from Agona Akrofonso who have achieved social/economic primarily through their association with the SDA Church is impressive.

By far the largest number that has been assisted by the church are young ladies from poor backgrounds and climbed up, thanks to their affiliation with the church. By hard work and commitment of the leadership and members, the church has been growing from strength to strength. Because of the growth rate at its inception, the church moved from its already worship place of R.K. Antwi's house to an old primary classroom block in 1968. Not all, the church again acquired a plot to build a church in 1970. The company church hosted its first annual camp meeting in 1979 with a lot of the members being youth (especially Young Ladies). The church was organized in 1985 under the leadership of Benjamin Boakye Ansah.

The fatherly role played by Elder Benjamin Boakye Ansah led a lot of young ladies into the church. He tolerated the vulnerability of the young ladies. The women in the church its organization did a great job by putting a lot of mechanism in place to nurture the young ladies and prepare them to attract good husbands and acquiring a good job. Notable among the women was a deceased lady, though without children, as a devout Adventist Woman showed special interest in the young Ladies at the community and led them to the church. Another young lady, skillfully resourced but from a deprived home, helped the young lady to acquire a trade and married a responsible Adventist elder and drive. An elder of the church at Akrofonso with a passion to develop the Young Ladies at the community is now helping a lot of Young Ladies to learn a trade through tailoring. A young lady from a Non-Adventist home has been attracted to the church because of the church's interest to develop Young Ladies within the community. As of now, the leadership has helped her to get admission at Asante Mampong Midwifery training college. Not all, the church has also helped another Young Lady to complete her studies at Withrow University College at Asamang. Another lady, who was nearly giving to a man in marriage without a trade and academic training has been trained as a seamstress. With the church not enthused with the situation of Young Ladies at Agona Akrofonso has acquired a plot to establish a skill development center to attract Young Ladies who are from broken homes and are jobless to be enrolled, nurtured physically and spiritually to become a responsible adult. Candidly speaking, the church with its leadership currently is leaving no stone unturned in using skill development methodology as a soul-winning tool in bringing a lot of Young Ladies into the church.

At a camp meeting in 2018 at Apaah, a suburb of Agona, the leadership met all the Young Ladies in one evening after church and reasoned with them on their

plans in helping them acquire a lot of skill to augment their already existed one to aid the growth of the church. The response was highly positive in that many of the Young Ladies expressed special interest availing themselves to be nurtured skillfully to grow and become a responsible adult.

In another development, the church at Akrofonso organized a week-long sensitization program to conscientize the mind of the church members on how the ideas of Young Ladies skill development will help alleviate poverty from among the Young Ladies and help them acquire a trade and other training so that they can contribute their quota spiritually and physically for the growth of the church.

At a night vigil, the funds were raised to start the proposed training center. The program took place in February 2019. The vigil was attended by a lot of young ladies and many of the women folks also came out with what they are endowed with to assist the Young Ladies.

To endorse the already established plans and programs within Mountain View Ghana Conference which is the parent conference of the church at Agona Akrofonso, the leadership of Women's ministry has organized a day workshop for the Young Ladies within the conference and reasoned with them on the importance of skill training development and the dividend that it will yield to themselves and the church. The program was attended by 70 Young Ladies, with some of them from Agona Akrofonso. The program took place at Agona Central church, the headquarters of the district. The ladies who attended the well-packaged programme expressed special interest in what they were taken through and promised to do what is best in their capacity to sustain the project.

To the admiration of the Director of Women's Ministry at Mountain View Ghana Conference, many adult women attended the workshop and made the skills they are endowed with available to the Young Ladies.

Presentation of Results and Analysis of Data

Data Collection

Akrofonso was purposively selected as the study area for this research. Politically, Akrofonso is under Afigya Sekyere South Municipality but in the Seventh-day Adventists organization, Akrofonso is a district headquarters. Akrofonso is close to Agona, a town in Ashanti Region where the Seventh-day Adventism seed was first planted. The target population in the study comprised the young ladies of Akrofonso SDA Church (who were between the ages of 18 years and 40 years) and the major church leaders, comprising the Elders, Secretaries, Women Ministry leaders, and Youth Leaders of Akrofonso churches of the Seventh-day Adventists.

A sample size of 95 from the database of the church records of Akrofonso churches was selected for this project. This comprised five Church Elders, four Clerks, six Women Ministry leaders, fifteen youth leaders, and seventy young ladies in the Akrofonso churches. A structured researcher-administered questionnaire containing open-ended questions based on the objectives of the study was employed to elicit information from the respondents. The researcher employed researcher-administered questionnaires because majority of the respondents could not read and write. The whole data collection process took two months to completion. After a short meeting with the Officers of Mountain View Ghana Conference about the researcher's intention to undertake the project, a letter of consent was sent to the Church Board of Agona-Akrofonso Adventist Churches to seek approval for data

collection from the respondents. Three research assistants were employed to help facilitate easy data collection.

Demographic Information

The demographic information in the study was based on sex, age, marital status, education qualifications, occupation and position in the church. Table 1 revealed that overwhelming majority of the respondents were female (86.3%), which is not surprising because the study is about young ladies, hence majority of the respondents were female. In terms of age, over three-fourth of the respondents (87.3%) was within the age range of 15 and 30 years; with the modal age being 21 to 25 years (58.9%).

Table 1. Demographic Information of Sample Respondents

Demographic variables (N – 95)		F	%
Sex	Male	13	13.7
	Female	82	86.3
Age	15 – 20 years	17	17.9
	21 – 25 years	56	58.9
	26 – 30 years	10	10.5
	30 and above years	12	12.7
Marital status	Married	23	24.2
	Never married	67	70.5
	Divorced	1	1.1
	Separated	2	2.1
	Widowed	2	2.1
Educational qualification	No formal education	29	30.5
	Primary school education	32	33.7
	JSS/JHS education	15	15.8
	SSS/SHS education	11	11.5
	Diploma	5	5.3
	Bachelor's degree	3	3.2
	Master's degree	0	0.0
	Doctorate degree	0	0.0
Occupation	Teaching/lecturing	8	8.4
	Farming	47	49.5
	Trading	31	32.6
	Driving	3	3.2
	Masonry/carpentry/welding	6	6.3
Position in church	Elder	5	5.3
	Clerks	4	4.2
	Women Ministry leader	5	5.3
	Youth leaders	9	9.5
	Young ladies	72	75.7

From Table 1, majority of the respondents had never married (70.5%), with only 5.3 percent were either divorced, separated or widowed. As regards to the educational background of the respondents, over two-thirds of the respondents (69.5%) had tasted formal education before; with 27.3 percent obtaining junior high and senior high school certificate qualification. Respondents who had obtained tertiary qualification were eight, representing 8.5 percent. Majority of the respondents were into farming (49.5%) and trading (32.6%), with only 8.4 percent being in formal employment (i.e. teaching/lecturing). With regard to their position in the church, over three-fourth of the respondents were young ladies of the church, with those holding official church position being 24.3 percent.

Project Study Analysis for the Questionnaires

Project study analysis for the interviews within the church. This section presents the analysis of the responses from the interviews/questionnaires conducted within the church.

Q1: How long have you been an Adventist? The results of the study indicated that about 74 percent of the study were born in the Adventist faith, whilst 26 percent joined the Adventist Church through other means. The implication is that majority of the church members are enjoying the Sabbath worship because they inherited it. They need to be nurtured carefully and developed well in order to be assured of continuous stay in the church.

Q2: What are variables that influences young ladies' skill development for church growth? To develop the skills of the young ladies in the church, certain variables are necessary. According to the respondents in the study, the basic variables expected of young ladies in the skills development program were that the young ladies should be committed, available and teachable (CAT). Aside these variables,

some factors to be considered in the skills development program include participant's age, marital status, educational and professional background, and so on.

Q3: Does your church have formal mechanism of developing the vocational skills of young ladies for trading? One hundred percent of the respondents during the interview revealed that there was no formal mechanism available in their church to develop the vocational skills of the young ladies. To the respondents, all those who are trained or have undergone vocational, technical or apprenticeship training have done so in other centres outside the church circles, using their own resources.

Q4: Does your church have a policy or vision to either develop or help develop the skills of young ladies in the near future? 90 percent of the respondents indicated that their church had no formal policy or vision to develop or help develop the vocational skills of young ladies in their church. To the respondents, neither their local church nor the higher organization had a formal policy to develop their young ladies now or in the future. 10 percent of the respondents revealed that their church had shown a sign of trying to help some young ladies develop their vocational skills through workshops and retreats.

Q5: Does your church have enough resources to develop the skills of young ladies in the church? About 65 percent of the respondents revealed their church have enough resources to develop the skills of young ladies in their church, but their churches had no plans about youth development. Thirty-five percent, however, indicated that their church does not have enough resources to develop the skills of the young ladies. This finding is in consistent with the earlier finding that churches in Akrofonso have no policy or no vision to have the skills of the young ladies developed.

Q6: Do you agree that developing the skills of young ladies in the Adventist Church should be the primary responsibility of the church? There were mixed responses as to whether development of skills of young ladies in the church should be the responsibilities of the church. About 74% of the respondents indicated that developing the skills of young ladies in the church should not be primary responsibility of the church, even though the church can play a role. Twenty-six (26%) of the respondents however, asserted that the development of skills of young ladies for a living is not the primary responsibility of the church but the individual and their families. Analysis of statistical test was conducted to find relationships. The test results indicated that there was no statistical relationship among the respondents surveyed and the responsibility of developing the skills of the young ladies. Most of the respondents, including the young ladies, agreed that developing the skills of young ladies should not be the primary responsibility of the church because the church has a core mandate. They however suggested that the church should try and play a role in helping the members since the members use the skills to help the church grow.

Q7: Do you agree that the inability of your church to develop the skills of young ladies is the result of organizational factor? 80% of the respondents indicated that the inability of the church to develop the skills of the young ladies is purely organizational problem. According to the respondents, the church has all the available resources to help in developing the skills but it's unable to do so because church leaders have no interest to do so. Only 20% of the respondents revealed that the church organization does not contribute to the inability of the church to develop the skills of the young ladies in the ladies.

Q8: What do you think are some known problems the young ladies in your church who are unemployed create for the church and their families? The study

revealed that there were a lot of problems that the young ladies in the church who are unemployed create for the church and their families. About 72% of the respondents, who were usually young ladies, indicated that the unemployed young ladies are easily enticed by their male counterpart into fornication, and this usually bring about unwanted pregnancies and other diseases. This further lead to overdependence on the few family members who are employed. On the part of the church, this behaviour brings the name of the church into disrepute and as their neighbours who are non-Adventists point's figures to them and to the church. According to the church elders, clerks and young ministries leader respondents, the church usually loses these young ladies because these unemployed young ladies' resort to other activities that would earn them a living. In the process, Satan finds something for them to do, and that lead to high attrition rate.

Q9: What are some of the known organizational problems involved in developing the skills of the young ladies in the church? According to the respondents, the major factors that hinder churches to develop skills of young ladies are “lack of qualified leaders” and “not a priority”. 58% and 17% of the total respondents respectively indicated church lacked qualified leaders and that vocational skills development was not a priority to the church. The respondents asserted that the vast majority of church ministries are task-focused versus team-focused. To them, “It’s easy to get so busy doing ministry that we fail to devote attention to developing others. Yet, the development of people is the church’s real job—even more than accomplishing the tasks.” Another important factor that hindered skills development of young ladies in the church was “lack of designated person to handle it” and this represented 12% of the total respondents. To most of the churches, skills development is everybody’s business. Another top issues the church noted as hindrances to skills

development was “lack of time” (5%). This is closely connected with “not a priority” issue. It is the age-old chicken or the egg syndrome. The current leaders were too busy doing the ministry to develop the ministry. They were on a ministry treadmill! This leads back to the number one identified hindrance to skills development in the local church, lack of priority! Given that majority of these same churches stated that developing the skills of young ladies is a critical component of their church, identifying lack of priority as a hindrance seems to be a contradiction. The respondents of the study indicated that other factors that hindered skills development of the young ladies in the churches were “not part of our mission” (4%) and “not necessary” (4%). The fact that respondents indicated “not necessary” as the last hindrance shows that most churches know how to effectively develop the skills of young ladies in the church and that it was actually important to do so. This supports the earlier points made that skills development of young ladies in the church was not a priority in the churches (17%) and that there was no time for that (5%).

Q10: On soul winning, what is the best Methodological approach to Win and sustain young ladies for growth by the church? The respondents indicated that to win and retain the young ladies for growth by the church, the church needs to adopt the Christ Method.

Responses from the interviews within the community. As part of designing the program for developing the skills of young ladies in the Agona-Akrofonso Adventist Church for church growth, interviews were conducted within the Akrofonso community to gather information that will of help in designing the skills development program. Within the community 80 respondents were sampled for the study. The respondents comprised 60 young ladies and men, 13 adults and elders in the

community and 4 chiefs and the 3 assembly members in the community. The responses from the interview are presented below.

Q1: What is the perception of young ladies' skills development and it's significant by the community? 90% of the respondents in the study interviewed had a positive perception of developing the skills of young ladies in the community. According to the respondents, skills development goes with development in the community – the more the vocational skills of the youth (i.e. young ladies) are developed, the more they are able to contribute to the decisions and the work in their community. Only 10% of respondents revealed that skills development of the young ladies had no relationship with development in the community, and that whether the young ladies will contribute to the development of the community or not did not depend on the skills development of the youth. To these respondents, altitude of the people was the major factor as far as contribution to the community was concerned.

Q2: How do members of other denominations within the community respond to question of developing the skills of young ladies? Eighty-five percent of the respondents indicated that some denominations within the community, apart from the Adventist Church, take interest in the development of the vocational skills of the young ladies in their church. According to the respondents, these denominations either have programs for developing the skills of the young ladies or sponsor them to other institutions to learn apprenticeships. About 15% of the respondents revealed that other denominations in the church at Agona-Akrofonso, just like the Seventh-day Adventists, do not take developing the skills of the young ladies seriously.

Q3: Has the policy within the community by the state any significant relationship with young ladies' skills development? One-hundred percent of respondents in the community revealed that even though the state has a lot of policies

of skills development, the policies do not have any significant relationship with the young ladies' skills development. State leaders usually do not take interest in investing in the skills development of young ladies in the various communities. According to the respondents, skills development of young ladies is usually left with individuals, families or churches.

Q4: Has the community any role to play in developing the skills of her young ladies, and in what form? About 80% of the respondents indicated that the communities have a role to play in developing the skills of her young ladies. According to these respondents, the communities have the best resources to have the young ladies developed. Inquiring further from the respondents to state the forms of role the community could play in developing their young ladies, the respondents indicated that the leaders of the various communities can establish vocational institutions by which the young ladies can have the opportunity to be trained for living. Again, the community can establish a women development fund, upon which young ladies who are eager to develop themselves in vocational activities and qualify can assess the fund for the purpose. This will go a long way to help those who are financially handicapped and are actually interested in vocational activities to have some means to develop themselves. Amid this, about 20% of the respondents stated that the communities have no role to play in the development of skills of young ladies. To these respondents, each individual must take responsibility in developing their skills without the help of the community or the state.

Q5: What benefit will the community derive from developing the skill of her young ladies by the church? One-hundred percent of the respondents revealed that the community as a whole stand to benefit if the young ladies in the communities are developed in vocational activities by the church. Whilst some respondents indicated

that developing young ladies help them to earn a living generally, other respondents revealed that specifically, crime rate in the communities reduce as these illegal activities are usually undertaken by the youth. Even though women are not usually involved in various criminal activities such as robbery and stealing, few evidence show that young ladies have involved themselves in robbery cases in Ghana. In addition to the above, some respondents indicated that the community stand benefit in revenue generation if the vocational skills of the young ladies in the communities are developed by their churches. By this, the young ladies can contribute some amount to any activities in the activities if they have any economic activity as a result of their skills development.

Summary

This chapter presented the setting of the area under the study in terms of geographical position, climatic conditions of Agona-Akrofonso, economic activities of Akrofonso, and the culture of the people of Akrofonso. The rest are the religious environment of Akrofonso and the political set-up of the people. The next chapter deals with program formation, program implementation and program evaluation for developing the skills of young ladies of Agona-Akrofonso for trading.

CHAPTER 4
PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION,
AND EVALUATION

This section centers on designing programs that can impact developing the skill of young ladies at Agona Akrofonso positively the Bible-based systematic road map set for the hypothesis for the designing of the program.

**Sensitization of Stakeholders on the
Significance of Developing the
Skills of Young Ladies**

Pragmatic Young Ladies' skill development programme cannot take place in a vacuum. It needs proper planning, spirit-filled preparation and collective effort from the church members and the leadership of the church to let the dream be translated to reality. Sensitization of church members and the leadership of the church, in this case, is paramount because they have to understand the importance of the programme so that they can support the programme wholeheartedly through planning and execution of the programme and its sustenance. The church members and the leadership of the church at Agona Akrofonso can be convinced that developing the skills of the young ladies is a soul-winning methodology to prepare souls and place them on Gods' agenda. When they are convincingly educated, they will contribute physically and spiritually in support of the programme.

Young Ladies Skill Development as an Evangelistic Tool

Young Ladies' skill Development is to be seen as an evangelistic weapon to the mission -for God. Not all, it is supposed to be understood as part of the gospel commission in Matthew 28:18-20. Furthermore, it is to be understood as part of the promulgation of the Three Angels' Message in Revelation 14:6-12 as enshrined in the mission of the Adventist Church on healing and restoration in *Ministry of Healing* page 143. In Matthew 25:40, it is written that "And the King will answer and say to them, assuredly I say to you as much as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me (NKJV). Now as Mordecai took care of orphan Esther in the life of the hopeless Samaritan Woman at the well in John 4:1-26, He is expecting the church as His body to win and restore the waning confidence of the young ladies at Agona Akrofonso who are prone to be enticed by Satan and his Babylonian world be redeemed and placed on God's agenda. The rationale of the above is that the church is full of young ladies' intellectuals who are reluctant to do a mission for Christ because of their limitations, but the Lord will surely ask us "where is the flock that was entrusted to you, the sheep of which you boasted?" (Jeremiah 13:20). What training did we give to them, who formed their character or shaped their lifestyle? How did we develop them to the glory of God?

Young Ladies Skill Development: Major Pre-occupation of the Church

In service to God and humanity, God expects the church to emulate the footsteps of Jesus Christ to seek for the lost and restore them to the creator as did to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:1-26 and John 8:1-12.

The humanitarian service carried out by Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) is woefully inadequate to meet the desire of the deprived young

ladies trooping into the church for salvation. The demands from the established training institutes of the church in itself barred potentials to get enrolled to be developed for future use.

Meanwhile, the physical and spiritual development of the skills of these young ladies is to be a major pre-occupation of the church. The idea to be embraced not only the church at Agona Akrofonso but the rest of the Adventist Churches throughout the world. The young ladies outnumber their male counterpart in the church, so when developed will limit undue pressure of the limited resources of the church and reduce the mass exodus of the young ladies from the church to their Babylonian world.

Young Ladies Skill Development: A Responsibility of Everybody in the Church

Jesus Christ came to the world and embarked on a rescue mission to save those who are perishing. As a result of the significance of this earthly assignment, He chose twelve disciples and nurtured them to do a mission for Him.

Christ with the idea of human frailties tolerated the shortcomings of the disciples and invested in them and placed them on God's agenda. Since developing the skill of the Young Ladies at Agona Akrofonso is a collective effort of all church members, they, both male and females within the church are to be educated on the need to vary our style of soul-winning which is time conditioned and embraced new ones for a finished job for the Lord.

Soul-winning is a collective responsibility of everybody within the church, so periodic orientation to members on the need to vary our style of Evangelism and try other methodologies will help the church to have varieties to fall on when the need arises. It is therefore expected from the strategic department of the church to carry out

periodic strategic soul-winning programme within the church to sharpen our tools to do a mission for Christ. Means are to be budgeted on for this accomplishment yearly.

Making Young Ladies Skill Development Biblically Appropriate and Culturally Relevant

It is written that when one soul repents, heaven rejoices, that is when the proper mechanism is put in place to win souls for Christ, it brings happiness to the individuals in the church and the community. The Jews according to 1 Peter 2:9-10 were selected by God to be special people to lead souls to God. Their methodology was saturated with their tradition. The tradition that was anti-feminism was a hindrance to the progress of women's activities. But Jesus in the New Testament outshined all cultural prejudices that retrogress the development of women's activities. Now if Jesus had a special interest in nurturing women including young ladies, then it is undeniable fact that the scripture endorses the development and nurture of young ladies for church growth.

The research, therefore, expects that church policies devoid of culture barriers, based on scriptures and in line with the Gospel Commission should be established in the church to add value to the creation of women. The policy should antagonize relevant cultural practices of the people rather Biblically appropriate and culturally relevant.

The Expectation from the Leadership of the Church on the Sustenance of the Programme

Much is expected from the shepherds and the under-shepherds to play leading roles for the sustenance of the initiative. They are supposed to ensure that, all stakeholders that can develop the skill of the young ladies are contacted. Not only

those who have the capacity but those who can also serve as role models to influence the young ladies positively.

Besides the above, expectations are that the leadership should pay routines to visit to the parents and guidance of the young ladies and canvass them on the significance of the programme and why they have to allow the young ladies to get enrolled. When that is done, chances are that the stubborn ones among them can be exposed and mediation can take place to iron out the differences between them and their parents so that they can enjoy their peace of mind to concentrate on the programmes. Not all, much effort is expected from the leadership to get relevant materials that can aid the programme available to enable the programme to move smoothly convincingly and productively.

Program Formation

This part of the paper presents the sample skills development program for young ladies in Agona Akrofonso SDA Church on vocational skills. The program was design based on the literature of available on developing vocational skills of young ladies and women as well as the results of the survey conducted at Agona-Akrofonso SDA Church in 2021 to 2022 church year.

Step One: The Program Focus

Even though church leaders expect that all members work and earn a living so that Satan do not find work for them, this program is specifically designed for young ladies and women of Agona-Akrofonso. The major reason for this decision is to cater for the needs of these young ladies who in one way or the other are easily carried away by the devil to find other means for survival.

Step Two: Developing a Strategic Plan and Programme to Attract and Sustain Participants

A strategic plan has time-bound so on top of the strategic plan will be the duration of their training. The duration of the project should be a minimum of one year and a maximum of two years in working to attain the desired goal for the project. A road map will be put in place and followed systematically. The programme for the project will be in phases. The phase one of the programme will include learning of different skills and topics which will take them to about a month or two to understand how they will go about things. They are reading and writing, record keeping, leadership skills, how to handle implements, stress management, communication skills, nature of diseases and its prevention. How to acquire investing and saving skills will also be taught. On top of the strategic plan will be plans put in place to take care of the spiritual needs of the young ladies. The phase two and phase three of the programmes will be the practical aspect of the training. This time, after the observation of the instructors in phase two of their development, phase three will be the opposite. The instructors will supervise the young ladies to put into practice what they have acquired from their instructors. The phase two and three of the training which will be composed of fruit juice preparation, soap making, soft drink preparation, baking of bread and pastries, dye preparation will be enough to adequately resource the young ladies and sustain them in the church. The sharing of their experience with their colleagues will also attract them to come and enroll in the programme.

At the beginning of every programme, the pastor if available or in his place the church elder or his representative will pray for the young ladies and their project before they start the day. Now if the above is well supervised the project will be

sustained and breed products capable of helping the church to grow physically and spiritually at Agona Akrofonso and the community.

Step Three: Faith-based Programme Boosting Participants' Spirituality

Health is an integral part of our church programme. The church as part of its evangelistic strategy is supposed to arrange for an Adventist paramedic to come and give orientation to take care of the health needs of the young ladies. The ladies can be encouraged to invite their other colleagues to attend this important meeting saturated with the Three Angels Messages in Revelation 14:6-12. This strategic evangelistic programme can take place at least twice within the week, to be specific Monday and Thursday between 5 pm and 7 pm. The young ladies can be taken through Bible studies and how to share Adventist message on health. Since “prayer is the key in the hand of the believer that unlocks heaven treasure house full of good things, the young ladies shall be encouraged to let their wants and wishes made known to God during meeting periods to boost their spirituality and restore their waning confidence in God. This important faith base strategic programme, apart from the core programme to develop their skill, can win and sustain them in the church. Furthermore, as they place a premium on their spiritual needs before God during meetings, their experience will help them by ambassadors and win souls for Christ.

Step Four: The General and Specific Needs of the Program

Skills development program of this nature usually requires some needs. Provided below are the general and specific needs of the vocational development program designed for Agona-Akrofonso SDA Church.

Program leadership. One aspect of making the project operational and sustainable is the project leadership. This approach has to be embarked on to get the young ladies registered to start the programme. The project will be under the overall supervision and leadership of the Stewardship Ministries Department. However, a seven-member committee will have to be formed to manage the project effectively. In addition, a three-member trustees made up of the District Pastor, the District Women Ministry Director and one Elder of Akrofonso church will have to be established to see it that the project becomes fully governed and operational. Apart from the above, each of the seven-member committee members will be tasked to play a particular role to move the project forward.

Participants of the program. The basic qualification of our vocational skills development program is that participants should be committed, available and teachable (CAT). Participants should be homogenous in age group and social status. Groups with heterogeneous participants may be formed except on special circumstances. The program would be organized for young ladies who are within the working age but because of one or two reasons are unemployed in the church or those who actually desire vocational training but who cannot afford to enroll in the formal vocational educational institutions in Ghana and beyond.

Group size. The program should be organized ideally on a small group basis. Basically, the group size would be determined based on the type of course, as well as the nature and demographics of the participants. Large groups may be formed if there is the need to teach general skills and principles. The size will also be regulated by the training leader's preferences. Each trainer may feel comfortable with differing sizes of groups.

Fund raising. Besides the above, seed money will have to be solicited through fundraising to be made available to purchase materials that could be used to get the project operational. Measures will be put in place to give awards to those young ladies who will be outstanding to boost their morale to stay in the project.

Materials and costs. The instructor, in consultation with the program committee, is responsible for getting all books, materials, and notebooks into the hands of the group members. Funds raised for the purpose of the project will be used to bear the cost of all materials and other necessary expenses including cost of the instructor and any scholarships that the instructor may suggest.

The program activities. The Program is a one- or two-year program that begins in the month of January. It includes a variety of different activities. Each activity is designed to promote specific learning and development.

Group meetings. The weekly group meeting is the core of the program. It is here that the group is taught leadership lessons and principles. Discussions concerning various related topics will draw participants to interact with the materials. The group will gain a sense of unity as it meets each month.

Projects. The group will have several projects to work on together throughout the year. The projects will be based on the purposes of the church. Each group will discuss and choose their projects.

Prayer partners. Each participant will be paired with a partner. The partners are to make contact with one another once each week between group meetings. The purpose is to make sure that both individuals are keeping up with their reading and accountability areas.

Fellowship events. Three times during the year (January, August and December) the group will get together with their spouses (if any) for a fellowship event.

One-on-one meetings. The instructor will conduct one-on-one meetings with each of the participants three times through the year.

Step Five: Motivational Measures to Sustain the Project

Among the many measures to motivate those to be enrolled were as follows:

- ❖ To provide meals during every meeting period to the young ladies so that hunger will not be an excuse for absence.
- ❖ Giving stipends to the young ladies when their product attracts a ready market was also considered as a motivator tool.
- ❖ Periodic pre-marital counselling programme was also earmarked to take place during a meeting to take care of the social needs of the young ladies.
- ❖ Furthermore, management and planning will be introduced to shape the young ladies to enable them to know how to manage their limited resources to avoid waste.
- ❖ In addition to the above merry-go-round, an activity can be introduced so that the young ladies can collect money from one another and give it to one of them every week. This in Akan setting is known as (Susu) and when this is introduced, it will help them boost one another economically.
- ❖ The instructors will be asked to make friends with the young ladies and pay a routine visit to them in their various homes to ensure that they are putting their experience into practice. Plans are that, after training the young ladies will be given logistics to start something of their own.

Programme Implementation

This section envisages the strategies and sustainable measures for the implementation of the subject under review. Workshops conducted in support of this project will be assessed.

Church and Young Ladies Sensitization and Participation

To effectively implement the project, the first step was to undertake sensitization among the church members and young ladies of Akrofonso Adventist Church. This took various forms such as sermons, Bible studies, seminars and workshops to create awareness. Firstly, sermons on the subject were written and preached at Akrofonso. Not all, Akrofonso preachers' roster was structured such that a presentation on the topic is delivered once every quarter in 2018 by the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher addressed the church members especially the young ladies using the bible on Sabbath afternoon on the importance of young ladies' skill development.

In addition to the above, the researcher met and researched women's front liners with passions in women's interest. The rationale was that they are women and understand the situation better, besides their experience was enough to help redeem the image of the young ladies.

Teachings on young ladies' skills development at Agona Akrofonso was also conducted by the researcher. The teachings were solely on the significance of developing the skills of the young ladies at Agona Akrofonso S.D.A Church that outnumbered the young men at the church. The brain behind the teachings was that the stakeholders will see the need for developing the skills of the young ladies and help them to become responsible in the church and the community. Demonstration of what

some of the young ladies were capable of doing was allowed and encouraged and church members became convinced that when the initiative was given the needed attention, the dividend to both the church and the community would be overwhelming.

Seminars on the significance of young ladies' skill development at Agona Akrofonso Adventist Church was organized to sensitize participants on the importance of the research on church growth. The seminars targeted young ladies at Agona Akrofonso S.D.A Church Young Ladies and some young ladies within the Agona District of the church. Members during the recess of the seminar shared experience on how they had benefited through the seminar liked that. Not all, majority of the participants gave accounts on how they had been able to make ends meet through the organization of such seminars. As a result of mechanisms, put in place during the seminar, members became convinced about the importance of developing the skills of the young ladies in our churches and our communities. The seminar sensitized participants once again on the soul-winning of young ladies into the church.

Those who attended the highly resourceful seminars were taken through the following topics:

- a. Biblical Theology on Young Ladies Skill Development
- b. The root of Young Ladies Skill Development in the church
- c. The impact of the unskilled presence of young ladies in the church
- d. Making Young Ladies Skills Development Biblically appropriate and culturally relevant
- e. How the spirituality of Young Ladies can be boosted by developing their skills.

- f. Shaping Young Ladies' Skills through Skill Development for the promulgation of the end-time message.
- g. Role of undeveloped Young Ladies in the great controversy.
- h. Contribution of skilled women to the growth of the church
- i. Measures to remedy the stigmatization of Young Ladies' Skill Development.
- j. An in-depth approach to the sustainability of Young Ladies Skills Development.

The seminar helped participants, especially those from the surrounding communities of Agona Akrofonso to have this broader picture that:

- a. Young Ladies' Skill Development originates from the bible i.e. From Genesis through the time of Jesus and during the apostolic era. Furthermore, participants become convinced of the contribution of young ladies at the foundation of the Adventist Church, especially the role of Ellen G. White at her tender age. And how she could not be stopped by circumstances because God invested in her.
- b. Seminaries understood that the call to develop the skills of young ladies are supposed to be the collective efforts of all stakeholders and limited to individuals.
- c. Participants realized that developing the skills is an evangelistic tool that tends to nurture and place young ladies on God's agenda.
- d. Members became convinced that young ladies, as progenitors of the cosmic conflict, if the effort is not instituted to win them for Christ, the devil will count on their vulnerability, invest in them and win them back to their already Babylonian empire.

- e. Those who attended the seminar understood that developing the skills of the young ladies tends to offload pressure from the limited resources of the church, also to help the young ladies contributing financially to the growth of the church.
- f. In the opinion of participants, the outcome of the seminar is the key to juvenile delinquencies and teenage pregnancies menace solution.
- g. Challenges such as early child marriage, poverty, health-related problems among ladies and abuse of young ladies in all forms are all human fabricated and can be eradicated through developing their skills.

At the end of the seminar, participants came up with some recommendations to the leadership of the Agona Akrofonso church about how to make to project successful and to sustain the initiative. In their suggestion, there could be an action plan to let the young ladies meet at least twice a week to keep them on track with pragmatic measures to solidify their interest in the programme.

Community Sensitization and Participation

Developing the skills of the ladies at Agona Akrofonso is a collective effort of both the church and the community. The researcher did all in his capacity to contact some individuals at Agona Akrofonso to solicit for their concern toward the project. So, in collaboration with the leadership of the church at Agona Akrofonso, a decision was arrived at to meet the chief of Akrofonso, the assemblyman of Akrofonso and the District Chief Executive of Sekyere South District Assembly who was a native of Agona Akrofonso and to reason with them.

The first person the researcher approached was the Assemblyman of Agona Akrofonso, Honorable Philip Awuah Acheampong. According to the Assemblyman, young ladies' skill development was a social intervention program that had the

capacity to transform the lives of the young ladies within the community. He also said that the initiative should have been in place a long time ago as this could to have reduced the unemployment problem within the community and all forms of juvenile delinquencies. To him, the Seventh-day Adventist training is a wholistic training saturated with God sent messages to redeem perishing souls including the young ladies at Agona Akrofonso. He embraced the idea and advised the church for its early implementation and sustainability measures to protect the project. Furthermore, the Honorable assured the leadership of the church for his unflinching support and promise a cash donation for the project.

Not all, the Assemblyman promised the leadership of the church to do everything possible to reach the Sekyere South District Chief Executive who was a native of Agona Akrofonso and to reason with her on the project. He added that the chief of Akrofonso, who was a member of the Council of State in Ghana was also contacted to reason with him on the nature of the project and how important it was to the church and to the community. The Honorable Assembly member encouraged his people to welcome the initiative and relate to it to redeem the image of young ladies within the community.

As part of the sensitization of the project to the community through a recreation programme organized by the church, the young men at Agona Akrofonso expressed their willingness to support the initiative by attending communal labor to support the project to reduce cost. While the young men assured the leadership of the church on their readiness to support the initiative, the young ladies were not left out.

To whip their appetite and to get the young ladies in the church and the community ready to register for the project, a week-long evangelistic programme in support of the project was conducted after camp meeting in September 2019. The

researcher organized the sensitization week-long programme. The young ladies within the church and in the community attended the meeting in their numbers and were highly appreciative of the organizers of the programme. Registration to that effect started immediately after the evangelism. Funds were raised during the evangelism and people contributed without reservation to get the project on track.

Project Leadership and Financing

To make the project successful and fully operational, project leadership had to be defined. The vigorous approach was embarked on, to get young ladies registered to start the programme. Even though all business development projects are catered for by the Stewardship and strategic planning leaders of the church, a seven-member project committee was formed to manage the project effectively. Three-member trustees composed of the District Pastor, the District Women Ministry Director and one Elder of Akrofonso church was formed to see it that the project becomes operational.

Apart from the above, each of the seven-member committee members was tasked to play a particular role to move the project forward. Besides the above, seed money was solicited through fundraising and was made available to purchase materials that could be used in getting the project operational. Measures were put in place to give awards to those young ladies who would be outstanding to boost their morale to stay in the project.

Suggestions in favor of the smooth operation of the projects were solicited. The leadership of the project was advised not to abuse the participants verbally and to treat them with love. They were also tasked to make their output attractive to get more young ladies enrolled. Short term, medium-term and long-term measures were considered in getting the project operational. Remuneration to those voted by the

church to manage the project were also considered. Another factor considered and related to was a ready market for the product from the project. All these were steps put in place for the smooth operation of the project.

Program Activities of the Project

As part of the requirement of the project regulations, three important workshops on skills development for young ladies were organized in 2019 and 2020. The workshops were organized separately for the young ladies in separate periods. The first workshop was organized on April 1, at the forecourt of the District headquarters of the Adventist Church building at Agona. Thirty-five (35) young ladies attended the workshop. The researcher, who was the District Pastor at that time gave words of exhortation and after that, the programme got started. After the words of exhortation, Mrs. Regina Debrah, the resource person on that occasion who was one of the women coordinators within the district demonstrated to the participants to prepare pomades especially hair creams. A variety of hair creams were prepared on that day.

The workshop which lasted for about three hours was highly productive because some of the products were sold to some church members and members within the community. Those who attended the workshop were mostly young ladies from Agona Akrofonso. The programme started at 8:45 AM and ended at 1:00 PM. The young ladies expressed their joy on what they were taught and promised to prepare some for their family to use and to sell some to generate income to sustain their family. The prices for the creams they prepared ranged between Five Ghana Cedis and Two Ghana Cedis respectively.

The income generated after the workshop was given to the District Women Ministries leadership to invest to attract interest and Open Avenue to access loan

facilities to start the major project at Agona Akrofonso. The young ladies who attended the workshop were appreciative of the researcher and the resource person and promised to put their acquired skills into practice to elevate their standard of living.

Another important skills development workshop for the young ladies was organized for some selected young ladies from Agona Akrofonso to resource them for the project at Agona Akrofonso. The headline of the workshop was a day's Workshop in skills training for Ladies at the District Headquarters. The theme of the workshop was empowering the young ladies to be resourceful. The workshop took place on May 25, 2020, at 8:00 AM and ended at 1:00 PM. The three hours workshop was organized purposely for specially selected young ladies from Agona Akrofonso. The resource persons who were contacted for the workshop were Madam Hannah Oppong, the Women Ministries Co-ordinator at Agona District of Adventist Church, Madam Regina Debrah, an associate Women Ministries Co-ordinator from Agona District. The third person and the youngest among them was Ms. Abba Boakye.

Participants who attended the workshop were taken through the following;

1. Preparation of Powder and Pomade
2. Preparation of assorted fruit drinks
3. Preparation of Parazone, liquid soap, and some other detergents.

Madam Hannah Oppong, the main resource person took the young ladies through the preparation of fruit drinks using a citrus-like orange, lemon, and lime. She also used other fruits like pineapple, banana, "prekese", Samia, mango and ginger to prepare some other drinks. The woman followed step by step demonstration to convince the participants. There was no preservative added to the demonstration but

natural spices were added to improve the flavor of the drinks. The resource tasted the drinks and it was good.

Madam Regina Debrah was also assisted by Ms. Abba Boakye to prepare the detergents, para zone, and the liquid soap. The products from the workshop could not meet the demand of church members and people from the community. The cost of the product was affordable so people patronized it in their numbers. The participants were highly impressed and appreciative of the organizers of the workshop and requested that more of such workshops be organized occasionally to prepare the deprived young ladies within the District especially those at Agona Akrofonso for the future.

Abba Boakye a participant, after the workshop in partnership with her sister Esi, a young lady and jobless embraced the methodology of the workshop and continued with the production of the liquid soap and the para zone to earn a living. Their products were the choice of the church members and some other people during the market period at Agona the district capital. When the other young ladies saw that the workshop has yielded the deserved dividend, they pressed the organizers of the workshop to organize such skills development programmes for them.

The orientation received at the workshop touched the heart of the participants. They came to realize that they are embedded with a lot of qualities that when identified and developed can help in the future. The District Women Ministries Co-ordinator after the workshop arranged to meet the leadership of Agona Akrofonso Adventist Church to be in a hurry for the preparation towards the inauguration of the project at Agona Akrofonso.

In their response, they showed their readiness by showing the researcher and the co-ordinator the roadmap leading to the beginning of the project. Programmes to authenticate their readiness were shown to the researcher and the coordinator. The

District also came up with measures that had been put in place to assist Akrofonso church for the commencement of the project.

The third and last of the three workshops were organized in a form of mini camporee at Agona Akrofonso, the center of attraction for the young ladies at Akrofonso to familiarize themselves with all that young ladies' skill development is about.

The three days skill development mini camporee brought together fifty-five (55) campers and ten (10) facilitators drawn from the District and outside the district. The programme took place on the evening of Friday the 30th of June 2020 and ended late on Sunday, July 2, 2020. But campers left the campsite on Monday, July 3, 2020.

Campers were welcomed by the leadership of the Agona Akrofonso Adventist Church. Since the campers were dominated by young ladies, they were given preferential treatment to convince them of what was in store for them. A prayer meeting was organized for them to prepare them spiritually to enjoy the sound programme, in addition to allowing them to place their petitions before God on the occasion.

The Sabbath which was July 1, 2020, was saturated with a lot of activities in young ladies' interest. The sermon on the Sabbath centered on the significance of Young ladies' skill development captioned "Saved to serve". The sermon was delivered by a career counseling expert Mr. Sarfo Danso Kenneth from Agona Central Church. Tracts and magazines on young ladies' interests were distributed to the people of Agona Akrofonso. Orientation on how to keep the Sabbath holy was organized for the campers on that occasion.

The campers started the Sunday, July 2, 2020 activities with keep fit programme followed by the Sabbath school lesson study. After breakfast, they started

the skill development programme which was the main focus of the mini camporee. Campers were divided into three groups with each group learning a particular skill. Among the things they learned were the production of footwear, making of shower gel, liquid soap and hair food pomade.

That particular day, they made sales of the products to campers and people of the Akrofonso community. The campers were astonished to see that there were a lot in them that when developed can help them, their family members and their siblings. The programme which was the center of attraction took almost the whole day. The campers expressing their appreciation told the organizers that they never regretted attending the programme.

Meeting took place immediately after the workshop on plans to launch the project. Though the majority of the campers were students from some Senior High Schools, they expressed willingness to get themselves enrolled during a vacation to learn more to take care of their future needs. Those from the community who witnessed the programme lauded the organizers of the programme and expressed their readiness to get enrolled when the programme takes off.

Consecration service climaxed the three days activities and certificates were given to outstanding young ladies who performed creditably on that occasion. In his parting words an elder from Agona Akrofonso church, a fashion designer advised campers, skill is a destructive weapon that can make life miserable to the individual so the young ladies should take the workshop seriously because Satan finds work for idle hands. In the end, all participants witnessed that indeed young ladies' skill development is an evangelistic tool.

Evaluation

This section deals with the evaluation of the programmes designed and implemented on young ladies' skill development by analyzing information provided by the people. The programme was successful but not devoid of some challenges. The congregation at Agona Akrofonso was appreciative of the organizers of the programme. To sustain the initiative, the church board at Agona Akrofonso in August 2020, voted for the commencement of the initiative.

Participants were appreciative of how the seminaries were organized but not without a reservation. Some seminarians were of the view that, Ghana abounds with a lot of training and vocational institutions and thus it is the responsibility of the parents of these young ladies to enroll them in these institutions and not the church, for the churches major pre-occupation is sounding the second advent of Christ to the perishing world.

There were also comment on the funding of the project, for in the opinion of some participants, the financial strength of the church at Agona Akrofonso S.D.A church is nothing to write home about, so it will be difficult for the church to make funds available for the commencement of the project. Irrespective of the utterance, others denounced the outburst that it is irrelevant at the period.

Although, the seminarians embraced the outcome of the programme as laudable, many harbored preconceived motives that previous assistants to deprived and needy individuals attracted no appreciation and thus it will be a waste of time and resources in taking responsibility of carefree and irresponsible parents in the community. But others; “Yesterday is gone, another day has come”. Even some elders declined to voice their concern whether in support or against the initiative, this is because they too understand that human development is also an evangelistic tool to

win and sustain souls especially the young ladies. Moreover, those who attended the seminar expressed concern that, because the seminar was organized in the working periods of the week, some of the facilitators invited could not show up. Not all, the time allocated to the presentations was not enough for the facilitators to exhaust their presentations and the questions that followed the presentations answered.

There were also some concerns that why some of the young ladies have not been developed can be attributed to lack of co-operation with either their parents or guidance. Not all, some seminarians were embittered as a result of their encounter with some notorious young ladies within the community, with the attempt to reason with them on how they can manage their future life.

More so, some participants thought that, some of the young ladies are in the state of not being developed, not start they are from broken homes not because of lack of resources for their upbringing but for their refusal to comfort themselves under the care of their parents.

The seminarians in addition to the above reasoned with the organizers of the seminar on the need to conscientise the mind of the beneficiaries of the programme to eschew excuses in all forms, complains, pointing accusing fingers on learned offenders, laziness and playing to sustain the program.

Irrespective of the concerns above, something concerns came up that campaign of birth control within the community and issues that lead to unwanted pregnancies are supposed to be intensified so the people within Agona Akrofonso could give birth to children that they can take care off.

Among the challenges, was that the targeted group was deprived of their participation because of time and space because the place where the seminar took place was not spacious enough to contain the stakeholders and a lot of the young

ladies. The timing was also not conducive for parents/guidance to release their wards for the programme.

In the opinion of Mad. Grace Anokye, a participant to the sensitization programme and a native from Agona Akrofonso, the initiative is very laudable because it will reduce teenage pregnancies, drug intakes in the community and improve living standards of the young ladies in Agona Akrofonso.

According to Maame Grace Pomaah, another participant, the initiative is very good in the sense that, it will reduce unemployment among the young ladies Agona Akrofonso, it will also increase their knowledge and help them to manage their homes in the future. Not all, she also said that the project, when started, will increase the working force at Agona Akrofonso and bring advancement in the community. She also advised on sustainability measures to protect the project from collapsing.

Another young woman, Adwoa Serwaa, who is a native from Akrofonso said that the initiative is economically viable because it will empower the young ladies and move them along in life in the future even if they are without spouses.

According to her, the initiative is not supposed to be the sole responsibility of the church, because the dividend that the investment will yield will benefit both the church and the community. She, therefore, suggested that the stakeholders within the community be approached and make means available for the commencement of the project. She also assured the leadership of the church, her willingness to move from house to house to promote the initiative and canvass the young ladies on its significances and help them to get enrolled.

According to some of them who were at the recreation center, the initiative is a dream come true for they have long been waiting for an establishment like this to enroll them and add value to their creation. They assured the leaders of the church that

they can contact them whenever their service is in need of the translation of the dream.

Some respondents from the community suggested that churches within the community can also be contacted by the leadership of the S.D.A. Church and reason with them to support the project either in cash or in kind. There were also some suggestions that the indigenes who have traveled abroad be contacted by the leadership of the S.D.A. Church and solicit for assistance to support the project. The above and many concerns showed by the community was enough to convince the researcher that indeed the initiative has a future because of community participation.

Although the evaluation of the programme was on Agona Akrofonso Adventist Church and some selected female individuals from Agona District of the Adventist Church awareness were created to the women ministries Director of Mountain View Ghana Conference on the significance of using young ladies' skills development as an evangelistic tool to win young ladies and sustain them in the church. To the surprise of the seminarians, the Director gave her unflinching support to the project.

Notwithstanding the challenges on the sermon style and delivery on the theology of the topic, the congregation embraced the idea that rendering quality services to the needy and the deprived as enshrined in the book Esther is ultimately services. God demand from His followers to prepare souls for His soon coming.

In another development, the few young ladies attended the programme pleaded with the stakeholders to eschew the canker of procrastination and do all they could for the smooth running of the programme “for a stitch in time saves nigh”. There were also some suggestions that, during vacations, some of the young ladies should be encouraged to enroll in the programme to acquire new skills to their

intellectual skills for the future. Apart from the seminar, five members were interviewed within the church and within the community on their concern about the project. All those interviewed, both within the community and the church expressed their unflinching support of the idea without reservation.

Not all, the workshop organized for young ladies as a stepping stone for the project yielded positive dividend, in that, all the 50 young ladies who attended the workshop. The leadership of the church also commended the organizers for a job well executed. On the questionnaire, 100 questionnaires were distributed to 100 responses within the church and the community, 98% responded in favor of the idea, but 2% was with a reservation.

Summary

Skills development among the young people, especially the young ladies who are easily enticed by the devil to follow worldly pleasure, is regarded as vital to all society and the Adventist Church is of no exception. In this view, this chapter presented a carefully designed program that could be used to develop the vocational skills of young ladies of Agona-Akrofonso in Mountain View Ghana Conference of Ghana. The chapter also dealt with how the program designed was implemented as a test case. The last part of the chapter dealt with the evaluation of the program.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

The study so far has embarked on developing the skills of young ladies at Agona Akrofonso to help them to understand the trend lines of the church and its challenges and how their skills when identified and nurtured can reduce the challenges and impact on church productivity. This chapter therefore concludes findings.

Summary

The Seventh-day Adventist at Agona Akrofonso in responding to the gospel commission in Matthew 28:18-20 has led a lot of young ladies into the church. The methodology on winning and relenting these young ladies continue to be a headache to the leadership of the church at Agona Akrofonso, because, the work to win young ladies to Christ and sustained them requires and women who are tried, tested, dedicated and nurtured for evangelism to accomplish that. Notwithstanding, the skill endowed in these young ladies is hardly developed by the church, prepare them and place them on God's agenda. The project emphasizes that irrespective of information available on women issues from Seventh-day Adventist circles, little is said to convert young ladies on church productivity. For there is the need for the church to reflect on who they are, what they have done before and what they can do to move the agenda of the church.

The work has reiterated on some aspects of the bible both Old and New Testament and available information of the church that is significant to the study of this work. It highlights on History of young ladies' skill development and its importance to the church. The study took into consideration the extent to which the leadership of the church is favorable to the development of the skill of young ladies in our churches for the growth of the church.

The research takes into consideration the roles young ladies play to the growth of the Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso and factors that motivate them for the accomplishment of the task. The research is on the building block based on the development of the skill of newly converted young ladies at Agona Akrofonso to the sustenance of the church. The young ladies' skills development is used to establish the contribution of young ladies in Agona Akrofonso S.D.A church. After due diligence, it has come to a limelight that Young Ladies in the church, when encouraged, will travel along to produce skillful women to the church in areas such as planning and facilitating programmes such as workshops, seminars, retreats and do their best in elevating women ministries department in the church.

From the research, women since the establishment of the church have in some diverse ways contributed immensely to the success of the church. The areas that they have contributed including nurturing the little ones in the children department, supporting the church financially, preaching, counseling, praying for the church, organizing public campaigns, organizing workshops to add value to their creation. Not all, they also organize retreats programmes for their colleague women. The women are also effective in giving lectures to women and the church to increase their life expectancy.

But according to the study, these women were once young ladies that have been either nurtured by some individual who was from dysfunctional homes or some parents from the church. Now if the skills of these women were not developed, while they constitute the majority of the church, where will they be today?

The study, therefore, reveals that there are future resourceful individuals' young ladies in the churches, including those at Agona Akrofonso who can easily be won back to the world, if their skills are not developed. Therefore, there is the need for pragmatic measures on young ladies' skill development to develop the young ladies, add value to their creation, restore their waning confidence in life, prepare them and place them on God's agenda.

Conclusion

Detailed interpretation and in the depth-Biblical application of the Bible endorses Young Ladies Skill Development for church growth. Developing the skills of young ladies at Agona Akrofonso is dependent upon a paradigm shift making deliberate changes in the way young ladies are treated and involved in church activities.

The Holy Spirit endows spiritual gifts to people from all walks of life devoid of class, race, gender, age, and denominational affiliation. The gift which is given to the members of Christ's body as He wills. The world church of the Seventh-day Adventist has it on record several young ladies that have contributed immensely toward the growth of the church from different angles.

The skills that were endowed in these Young Ladies were detected by the caring leadership of the church. The leadership with the church at heart, saw a bright future within the young ladies, took their time and developed their skills for the growth of the church. Concerned women groups within the Adventist Church at

Agona District and Agona Akrofonso as a matter of urgency open avenues for the young ladies, encourage them, motivate them and assist them in using their God-given potential, gifts, and skills in the Adventist Church at Akrofonso.

More so, apart from the above, the appropriate skills strategy is a key component for a successful organizational policy. However, some denominations such as the Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso despite prioritizing skills development for church growth, are yet to ensure adequate harmonization of skills and training policies and organization policies.

Specialized strategies for skills development would help the growth and increase employment prospects for young ladies in all churches. When that is accomplished, it elevates the standard of living of Young ladies, restored their waning confidence in life and convincing the individuals within the community e.g. (Agona Akrofonso) on the major pre-occupation of the church.

In conclusion, therefore, suffice it to say that denomination with a youthful demographic profile like the Adventist Church needs to consider strategies that would improve job prospects for young ladies and solidify their faith in the church to new converts especially the young ladies. The skill development policies also need to be augmented with the labor market and social protection to redress the problem to workforce participation, increase employment, offload pressure of the limited resources of the church, improve church finances, decrease moral vices within the community and reduce the vulnerability of employment.

Recommendations

The recommendations from this project were as follows;

1. It is recommended that Facilitators within the church are to have the ability to communicate effectively with the young ladies.
2. There should be strong interpersonal skills and a high level of maturity to manage interaction with the young ladies.
3. Someone with conflict resolution management skills should be contacted to educate the young ladies and how to manage crises in their marriage life in the future and among their peers.
4. It is recommended that an all-inclusive individual can function independently as a caring mother and can take care of the Young ladies as hers.
5. It is recommended that, Role Models highly knowledgeable and understanding who will tolerate the nervousness of the young ladies be contacted to help them on how they can live and depend on their limited resources. These individuals must be people whose influential track record is worth emulating.
6. Furthermore, people who are spirit filled with strong interpersonal skills and a high level of maturity be contacted to run programmes for the young ladies on how they can manage their egos.
7. It recommended that the leadership of the church should bring people endowed with managerial skills to the church and help the ladies on the importance of how to manage their limited resources effectively.

8. It is recommended that the leadership of the church should establish career counselling and guidance units in the church establishments to provide career counselling and guidance to our young ladies.
9. It is recommended that the young ladies in the church, are Biblically obliged to serve and may be encouraged to take key roles in the church.
10. The church must educate young ladies through workshops and seminars to realize that, increasingly, Young Ladies are becoming more spiritually and intellectually developed to occupy important roles in the church.
11. The church must educate young ladies through workshops and seminars to realize that, increasingly, young ladies are becoming more spiritually and intellectually developed to occupy important roles in the church and society.
12. It is recommended that all the indigenous, young ladies in the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be encouraged by taking them through some training to acquire creative/entrepreneurship skills.
13. It is recommended that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, will take inspiration from the biblical examples and give young ladies the needed role in the church.
14. The young ladies could be taken through some skills training activities to enable them effectively attract good husbands, good work and a great asset to the church.
15. This encouragement may also be championed by the women entrepreneurs of the church who are already engaged in the activities of the church.
16. It is recommended that family members of indigenous young ladies may consider giving the needed assistance in their domestic duties.

17. The young ladies need assistance so that the young ladies can organize themselves and perform these roles effectively.
18. It is also recommended that the church may consider emphasizing the relevance of women in the church and society. This may be done through their speeches and actions like involving them in all church businesses, other church activities, and decision making. By so doing, they may see their worth and put up much effort in contributing to the growth of the church.
19. The researcher wishes to recommend that further research in this area could be done to look at the major challenges that serve as a detriment to the involvement of young ladies in the church. The churches including Akrofonso Seventh-day Adventist Church are supposed to expand avenues of dynamic Adventist Christian Service for the young ladies within the churches that they are motivated to use their God-given know-how to complement the know-how of others as they work side by side to further the global mission of the World Church.
20. It is recommended that education and nurturing to the new converts (young ladies) within the churches, be saturated with strategic planning and wealth creation to eradicate the concept of poverty of Akrofonso Seventh-day Adventist Church.
21. It is recommended that efforts should be in place, first to deepen the faith of the young ladies, second, help them to experience spiritual growth and renewal through daily bible reading plan and effective prayer programmes.

22. Elevation of the status of young ladies within the churches including Agona Akrofonso is to be given a priority so that they may become convinced of the inestimable worth by their salvation.
23. It is also recommended that the leadership of the young ladies within the Adventist Churches like Agona Akrofonso should build a network among other Adventist established bodies on women interest that encourages bonds of friendship, mutual support and creative exchange of ideas and genuine information.
24. It is recommended that opinion leaders on women's interest be brought on board within the church's perspective on issues facing the young ladies to decision making bodies.
25. It is also recommended that Young ladies be encouraged to mentor highly established women in the churches including Agona Akrofonso and create paths for their involvement in the churches as they reach for their full potential in Christ.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

PROJECT INTERVIEW GUIDES

**Research Topic: Developing the Skills of Young Ladies at Agona Akrofonso
Seventh – day Adventist Church for Church Growth**

PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Age [] 15 – 20; [] 21 – 25; [] 26 – 30
Gender [] Male [] Female
Education [] Certificate; [] Diploma; [] B A Degree
 [] MA Degree; [] Doctoral Degree; [] Others
Marital Status [] Married [] Single [] Divorced
Position in the church

**PROJECT STUDY QUESTIONS FOR
INTERVIEWERS WITHIN
THE CHURCH**

1. How long have you been an Adventist?
2. What are variables that influences young ladies’ skill development for church growth?
3. Does your church have formal mechanism of developing the vocational skills of young ladies for trading?
4. Does your church have a policy or vision to either develop or help develop the skills of young ladies in the near future?
5. Does your church have enough resources to develop the skills of young ladies in the church?
6. Do you agree that developing the skills of young ladies in the Adventist Church should be the primary responsibility of the church?
7. Do you agree that the inability of your church to develop the skills of young ladies is the result of organizational factor?
8. What do you think are some known problems the young ladies in your church who are unemployed create for the church and their families?
9. What are some of the known organizational problems involved in developing the skills of the young ladies in the church?
10. On soul winning, what is the best Methodological approach to Win and sustain young ladies for growth by the church?

**PROJECT STUDY QUESTIONS
FOR INTERVIEWERS WITHIN
THE COMMUNITY**

1. What is the perception of young ladies' skills development and it's significant by the community?
2. How do members of other denominations within the community respond to question of developing the skills of young ladies?
3. Has the policy within the community by the state any significant relationship with young ladies' skills development?
4. Has the community any role to play in developing the skills of her young ladies, and in what form?
5. What benefit will the community derive from developing the skill of her young ladies by the church?

APPENDIX B
CORRESPONDENCE

The Church Board
Seventh-day Adventist
Agona Akrofonso
August 20, 2018

Dear Church Elders,

RE: Request for Assistance in Project Work

Grace to you and mercy from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
The purpose of this letter is to request that the church board assist me with the information that I need toward my thesis of my Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology. You are kindly requested to fill in the questionnaire accompanying this letter by answering all the questions. All the information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality for the research project only.

Once completed, you can contact me on the following numbers for collection: +233557571350, +233202029147, +233274062402 and I am looking forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your assistance and support.

Yours in His Service,

Emmanuel Kwaku Amoako
MAPTH Participant, AUA

APPENDIX C

SERMONS

Adventist University of Africa
Theological Seminary

Skill Development worth Emulating

A sermon
Presented in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

By
Emmanuel Kwaku Amoako

June 2023

SERMON TITLE: SKILL DEVELOPMENT WORTH EMULATION

OPENING HYMN: SDAH 327

KEY TEXT: *“And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncles' daughter for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his daughter. (Esther 2:7. NKJV)*

HYMN OF MEDITATION: SDAH 281

Introduction

The book of Esther is effective and educative in the Old Testament on young ladies' skill development. The account of how Mordecai a Jew brought up her niece Esther

(Hadassah) is worthy of emulating. Esther is one of the books in the Bible named after a woman. The book provides useful information that is relevant in dealing with issues on young ladies' skill development. It restores the waning confidence of the hopeless and the deprived in our world today. The story contained in the book of Esther gives a true picture ¹of a life of faith in God and respect for the dignity of all human beings, to build character akin to that of the creator to nurture thinkers rather than mere reflectors of others thoughts; to promote loving service rather than selfish ambition; to ensure maximum development of each individual's potential; and to embrace all that is true, good and beautiful".

Though there is no account in the book of Esther on how God selected the young lady to fill the vacuum created by Queen Vashti, yet it can be deduced from the sacred pages in the Holy Scriptures some character trait and principles in the life of the young lady that might have accounted for God's choice of her for the accomplishment of His earthly assignment on behalf of His children (The Israelites). The choice of Esther, while the Israelites were in exile from human perspective, is a mystery but God chooses the best earthly instrument to perform specific duties on earth. Esther was the choice of God, but the unflinching support she received from Mordecai was worth emulating.

Body of the message

Esther is one of the two books in the Bible named after a woman. They are Ruth and Esther. Esther is named after the main character of the book. The book occupies the seventeenth position of the author log in the Old Testament out of the 39 books. The book can be found between pages 435 and 442 in the Old Testament. The title of the book is Esther and it is written in Hebrews. The author and date of the written of the book are unknown but the events in the book took place while they were in exile in Shushan in the Medo-Persian Empire.

Esther is not just a romantic story because it has very significant religious lessons in it worthy of emulating. The name of God is not mentioned in the book, His provision is noticeable throughout the book. In addition to the above, the story in Esther reminds the reader of the great results of combining divine power with human effort. Both

¹ West-Central Africa Division, *Working Policy*, 240.

Esther and Mordecai played roles in partner with God to deliver the Israelites from destruction.

Per the account in Esther 2:7, 15. Esther was the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai. Her Jewish name in Hadassah. The young woman was lovely and beautiful but was without father and mother. Mordecai took her as her daughter and brought her up after the demise of her mother and father.

Mordecai charged Esther not to disclose her identity when she was picked as one of the contestants during a beauty pageant contest to select a candidate to replace Queen Vashti in Esther 2:10. Mordecai, as a caring father also paid regular visits to Esther in front of the court of the women quarters in the King's palace to learn of Esther's welfare and what is happening to her in Esther 2:11. In Esther, 2:20, it is written that "Now Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him.

As indicated earlier, Esther was a Jewish slave orphan who became queen in the Persian Empire. Her parents were taken into captivity during the Babylonian Empire regime in 597 BC. This happened during the conquest of Jerusalem during the reign of Jeconiah the King of Judah. Both Esther and Mordecai's Parents were born in captivity.

After the assumption of Esther into the office as a queen, there was an attempt by Haman to exterminate the Jews from all Media and Persia Empire in Esther 3, but Esther and Mordecai partnership backed by their faith in God overturned events in the rest of the book and the Jews were delivered.

Lessons from the message worth emulating in terms of young ladies skill development for church growth

There are a lot of lessons in the presentation worth emulating. They are as follows:

The young lady was an orphan but because she was obedient, she won the heart of her uncle Mordecai and Mordecai took care of her.

In the presentation, it is learned Mordecai took care of her and brought her up, an indication that Mordecai nurtured her.

Because Esther stuck to the instruction of Mordecai, he followed her and monitored all the events that took place in her life.

Mordecai and Esther's teamwork in partnership with God led them to win the battle over their enemies.

Life Application

Mordecai should have chosen to disown Esther since she was not a biological sister or daughter, but the love of God constrained him to take care of Esther. In following the steps of Mordecai, the Adventist Church like the one at Agona Akrofonso is abound with young intellectual ladies who are undeveloped skillfully and are neglected. They are hesitant toward witnessing for Christ and with very little values to stand for in time of trial and temptation. But the Lord will surely as the church, including the SDA Church at Agona Akrofonso “where is the flock that was entrusted to you, the sheep of which you boasted? (Jerimiah 13:20).

As it is written in Proverb 22:6 that “train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it”. The risk Mordecai took in shaping the life of Esther, she did not depart from it. The training took care of her and she became a public responsible figure, whose effort led to the deliverance of her people from destruction by Haman.

Now as Mordecai gave holistic training to the orphan Esther, God intend the church to develop the skill of the undeveloped and the under-developed young ladies in the church and the community because, “Adventist development or training seeks to develop a life of faith in God and respect for the dignity of all human beings, to build character akin to that of the creator, to nurture thinkers rather than mere reflectors of others thoughts to promote loving service rather than selfish ambition to ensure maximum development of each potential and to embrace all that is true, good and beautiful.”²

In Hebrew 11:6, the Bible says that “But without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for him that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Esther typifies the quotation for she had faith in God and stuck to the instruction of Mordecai. The attitude of Esther won the heart of Mordecai and he gave unflinching support to the young orphan lady. The same way, the church according to Paul is supposed to be to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing” (2 Corinthians 2:15 NIV). The young ladies who are the majority of the youth at Agona Akrofonso are to heed to the counsel from Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12 which states that, “let no man

² Ibid.

despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity, to convince the leadership of the church to render unreserved and quality services to them.

Like Esther and Mordecai, teamwork and their partnership with God battle for them and their people the Jews, the Lord expects teamwork between the Young ladies at Agona Akrofonso SDA Church and the leadership to team up and work to win souls for Christ. The predicament of the young ladies is not supposed to be a barrier to deny what the church can do for them. Considering Esther's role in her partnership with her uncle Mordecai; it can be said that, whatever position our young ladies wish to arrive at in the future demand. That they ignore all social gratifications that will be stumbling block in the course they pursue. Nothing happens in human life for that sake, for decisions determine destiny and a little sacrifice today will make a great impact tomorrow.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, the young ladies in the Adventist Church at Agona Akrofonso and within the community are the property of God. "Whether their lives shall be a blessing or a curse depends upon the choice they make. They belong to Christ. They are the purchase of His blood, the claim of His love. They live because He keeps them by His power. Their time, their strength, their capabilities are His, to be developed, to be trained and to be used for Him."³ So what Mordecai did in shaping the life of Esther is a development worth emulating by the church to develop the skills of our young ladies at Agona Akrofonso in the Agona District for church growth.

AMEN.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1999), 217.

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2003-2004 Student Pastor, Madina West - SGC
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