

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: A STUDY OF THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY COUNSELS ON
CONSTRUCTING AND MANAGING CHURCH FACILITIES**

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The Spirit of Prophecy, a term that refers to the writings of Ellen G. White, has guided the Seventh-day Adventist Church since its inception on critical issues including doctrinal purity, church organization, outreach, education, and health. A critical assessment of the Spirit of Prophecy shows that it also offers several counsels on the construction and management of church facilities, which include land acquisition and documentation, church facility construction, maintenance and general church facility management.

Adopting a historical and case study approach, the study dived into the writings of Ellen G. White to unearth her counsels on the built environment and its

usefulness in the Church of God. Questionnaires were administered and interviews were also conducted in selected churches within the Mid-North, and Mid-West Ghana Conferences to understand how Elders and Pastors knew the availability of the Spirit of Prophecy counsel on church estate management, as well as its relevance in managing the built environment of the church.

A program was developed and implemented for two years by conducting training workshops for church leaders on the importance of the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy and the need for Church leaders to consult it in their decisions with regard to the construction and management of church facilities.

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Dedicated to my father-in-law, Pastor James Kweku Adu-Mintah

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The construction and management of church facilities have become an essential issue in the life and experience of every congregation. Church facilities which include church buildings, schools, hospitals, parsonages, and other movable and immovable hereditaments¹ are to be cared for and monitored, and those in charge should be held accountable for their usable life and condition.

In the Old Testament, temples were primarily considered as the abode of God or a deity and secondarily as a place of worship.² The temple in Jerusalem, which was constructed by Solomon, for example, became a place of assembly for the people as well as an arena where God met and revealed Himself (1 Kings 6:14).

Joe Marlow has noted the crucial role church buildings play in the accomplishment of the Gospel mission and the need to keep church facilities in their proper perspective by maintaining them.³ The church building, therefore, plays a vital

¹ These are generally the estates or properties that the church has right of ownership or through direct acquisition. They include land (building plots, farmlands), mission stations, residences for denominational workers, hospital/clinics, church offices, publishing houses, school buildings and other assets including equipment

² Siegfried H. Horn, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* (SDABD), re. ed. (1979), s.v. "Temple."

³ Joe D. Marlow, "Sacred Space: Toward a Theology of Church Buildings," *Search* volume 1 (Fall 1991): 3.

role in the life and experience of a church because it is the physical as well as the spiritual home of the congregation."⁴

Church facilities play a significant role as far as the Great Commission is concerned (Matt 28: 18-20). The provision of physical infrastructure is an integral part of not only the assimilation and acculturation of members but also the overall fulfillment of the Great Commission. The care and protection of church assets are regarded as one of the critical functions of a church board or administration.⁵

Over the last few years, issues about safety, security, and ensuring building standards in denominational buildings have also become essential concerns among church leaders due to their high risk and vulnerability. Robert Welch was of the view that church administrators should be concerned about safety issues in church facilities by providing a safe environment during and after every worship service.⁶ For example, on Sabbath day, 3rd March 2018, lightning struck and killed 16 people, and injuring an additional 140 worshippers at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Gihembe, Rwanda. Investigation revealed that that disaster could have been avoided if a thunder arrester had been mounted on the church building.⁷ In 2013, the Mission House (Parsonage) at Kokofu in the Ashanti region of Ghana was similarly struck by lightning, resulting in the destruction of electrical gadgets and leaving parts of the

⁴ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2009), 150.

⁵ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2015), 129.

⁶ Robert H. Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2011), 275.

⁷ Erick Oteng, "Lightning Kills 16 at a Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rwanda," *Africanews*, last updated 11 March 2018, accessed 12 March 2018, <https://www.africanews.com/2018/03/11/lightning-kills-16-at-a-Seventh-day-adventist-church-in-rwanda/>.

building severely damaged.⁸ Undeniably, these cataclysmic events could have been avoided if building standards and practices had been strictly followed.

The Spirit of Prophecy, a term that refers to the writings of Ellen G. White has guided the Seventh-day Adventist Church since its inception on critical issues including doctrinal purity, church organization, outreach, education, and health. During her seventy years of public ministry, Ellen White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, penned more than one hundred thousand manuscript pages on counsel, instruction, exhortation, and comfort. The messages of Ellen White, as Cindy Tutsch⁹ puts it, were also inspired by God as other biblical prophets.¹⁰ It is described that Ellen White, while in vision, sometimes saw buildings yet to be erected and was given specific instruction on how the projects would be executed.¹¹ Douglas in his classification of the various visions and dreams Ellen White received, classified one of them under the heading “Visions of buildings yet to be constructed.”¹² A critical assessment of the Spirit of Prophecy shows that it offers several counsels on the construction and management of church facilities.¹³ Thus, a substantial amount of the counsels in the Spirit of Prophecy is devoted to the built environment of the church, which includes: land acquisition and documentation, church facility construction, maintenance and general church facility management.

⁸ Observation during the Estate Office inspection on 12 March 2013.

⁹ Cindy Tutsch is an Associate Director of the Ellen G. White Estate at the General Conference of SDA in Silver Spring.

¹⁰ Cindy Tutsch, *Ellen White on Leadership* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 2008), 16.

¹¹ Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998), 138.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, 154.

Therefore, this, study seeks to dive into the writings of Ellen White to unearth her counsels on building management and its usefulness in the Church of God.

Statement of the Problem

The core mandate of every church is evangelism and the spiritual nurturing of its members. This mandate invariably should constitute the primary function of every church board, which serves as the supervisory committee of the Church. Discipleship delineates our Lord's order to the Church in the Gospel Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Aside from evangelism and nurturing, one of the critical functions of a church board is the protection and care of Church properties.¹⁴ Although Arthur White¹⁵ and Herbert Douglass¹⁶ have both attempted to present nine taxonomies on the visions and dreams Ellen White had, one of which is the construction and management of church facilities, it appears that little research has been conducted in the area of how the Spirit of Prophecy could guide the management of the built environment of the church. While other counsels in the Spirit of Prophecy on health, education, evangelism and eschatology are well known and several research works have also been conducted in these areas, it seems that the counsels on the construction and management of church facilities have not received the needed attention, and little research work have been carried out in that area to guide the churches within the Mid-North and Mid-West Ghana Conferences. Among other research questions that guided the work are: What does the Spirit of Prophecy say about land acquisition and

¹⁴ *Church Manual* (2015), 129.

¹⁵ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White, Messenger to the Remnant* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1959), 9-11.

¹⁶ Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 138.

documentation, maintenance culture and safety, locating and siting of church buildings, design, and financing the construction of church facilities? Does the current method employed in the construction and management of Church facilities conform to the directive principles in the Spirit of Prophecy? How can church facilities be treated with care and respect?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to examine relevant Spirit of Prophecy counsels that deal with the construction and management of Church facilities. As part of the study, a programme will be developed, and recommendations will be given as to how the provisions in the Spirit of Prophecy can efficiently help in developing and managing church facilities.

Significance of the study

The significance of the study lies in the fact that it would among other things provide guidance and direction to church members, elders, pastors, administrators on how to deal with critical issues such as land/property acquisition and documentation, maintenance of church facilities, and general handling of Church projects. There is lack of information with regards to policies in managing Church estates and projects. Thus, this study will serve as a guide and also as a training manual in the management of Church estates. Again, it would offer practical guidance to all church members to appreciate the need to be good stewards of the assets God has entrusted into our hands. Finally, the study has added to existing literature and provided insight on how to use the counsels in the Spirit of Prophecy to manage the built environment of churches within the Mid-North and Mid -West Conferences of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana.

Definition of the Terms

Church facilities are buildings or structures primarily intended as a place for public worship and related activities such as religious education, meeting halls, or places for personal devotion or meditation. They include parsonages, clinics and hospitals as well church offices and publishing houses

Construction is understood as the erection of Church buildings. According to Alfred Swenson and Pao-Chiang, it involves the techniques and industry in the assembly and erection of structures, primarily those used to provide shelter.¹⁷ Construction is a specialized area of work, which involves a host of theoretical and practical skills in its execution.¹⁸

Management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet stakeholder needs and expectations. Management of church facilities, therefore, examines the processes of initiating, planning, executing, controlling and closing church projects.¹⁹

Spirit of Prophecy is an expression in Revelation 19:10 that states, “The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit Prophecy.” The Spirit of Prophecy implies Jesus' witness to the Church through the medium of a prophet (prophecy). The term is used in the Adventist Church to mean the literary production of Ellen G. White, who is regarded as having been a recipient of the Gift of Prophecy in the Biblical sense of a duly

¹⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. “construction,” accessed 5 February 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/technology/construction>.

¹⁸ Fredrick S. Merritt and Jonathan T. Ricketts, *Building Design and Construction Handbook*, 6th ed. (New York: R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 2001), 1-5.

¹⁹ Joseph Philips, *PMP Project Management Professional Study Guide* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2018), 12.

accredited and authoritative spokesman of God.²⁰ Thus, the Spirit of Prophecy refers to the writings of Ellen G. White. In this study, the usages, "Ellen G. White writings" or the "Spirit of Prophecy" are used interchangeably.

Delimitation

This study is delimited to the writings of Ellen G. White as they relate to the construction and management of Church facilities. Her published works, periodical articles, and manuscripts are the subject of this study. Also, some of her published and unpublished works at the vault of E. G. White Research Centre at Babcock University are examined.

Methodology

This study presents a historical survey of the writings of Ellen G. White which deals with the construction and management of church facilities. Based on a mixed method research design, the work is divided into five significant chapters. The first chapter which is the introductory chapter provides an overview, scope, justification as well as the method employed in the study. The second chapter examines her published books, periodical articles, letters, and manuscripts about church building. Also, other bible passages, as well as scholarly works on church facility construction and management are also examined. The literature review will form the theoretical and conceptual foundation for the research. Chapter three presents the profile of the setting, focusing on details such as the local history, religion, literacy, employment as well as traditional nature of the local setting that constitutes the Church and then data

²⁰ *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed. Don F. Neufeld, (1976), s.v. "Spirit of Prophecy."

will be collected and analyzed. Chapter four will deal with the programme development, implementation, and evaluation. Chapter five will give the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Biblical Foundation for Church Buildings

Church buildings or temples are not ordinary structures. Not only are they sacred buildings, they also perform different roles in mission and project the image of the Christian faith. Their design and construction must be based on the scriptures, adopting architectural models which are embedded in imageries such as the Ark of the Covenant (Ex 35:34), Moses' sanctuary (Ex 25:8-9), Solomon's temple (1 Ch 28:12, 19, 9:8; Ezk 4:10-11) and the New Jerusalem (Revelation (21:10ff)).¹ Paul Evdokimov advocated that the designing, renovation or remodeling of church buildings should incorporate and convey imageries such as the sanctuary and the architecture prototypes in the book of Revelation in order to communicate and support the mission of the church.² Francis Mannion also equated the church building to the sacrament of the city of heaven, maintaining that its imposing nature creates a heavenly imagery in the minds of worshippers, thus bringing them closer to heaven.³

Writing on the liturgical role of church Buildings, McCumder re-emphasized this same notion by pointing out that church structures build visual thoughts in the minds of worshippers about the "imminence and transcendence of God" and their imposing

¹ Paul Evdokimov, *The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty*, trans. Fr. Steven Bigham (Redondo Beach, CA: Oakwood Publications, 1990), 144.

² Ibid.

³ Francis Mannion M. *Masterworks of God: Essays in Liturgical Theory and Practice* (Chicago, IL: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 250.

nature also enable worshippers to visually recognize that they are pilgrims on this earth, travelling to their heavenly home where they will finally find peace and rest.⁴ Because of their unique role and status, church buildings should be sited at prominent locations and the material for their construction should also be of high quality.⁵ The design and architecture of church buildings should also not be ordinary. They must convey a biblical message or express a unique thought. While recognising that architecture is the visible expression of ideas and the conveyance of meaning, Denis McNamara regarded church architecture as the “built form of theology.”⁶ Additionally, they are sacred buildings and as a result their design and construction should be uniquely different because of their missiological intention and in projecting the image of the Christian faith.

In erecting the Wilderness Sanctuary, God constituted a project team to oversee its construction and management. God filled artisans such as Bezalel (Exod 31:1-6 and chapters 36 to 39) with the spirit of wisdom, understanding and knowledge and in all manner of workmanship in executing the work. The building and its artifacts needed to be properly maintained after the construction to ensure that it would continue to serve the spiritual needs of the people. Levites were chosen to serve in the sanctuary and to manage the facility (Numbers 3:5,6). After the census of the Levites was conducted, each family was given a specific duty to perform. For example, the duties of the children of Gerson in the tabernacle of meeting included

⁴ William McCumber, “The Church Building as Image of Heaven: A Pastoral Guide,” (Thesis Project, The Liturgical Institute University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, 2006), 47.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Denis McNamara, “Liturgical Architecture as Sacramental Experience,” *Chicago Studies* 41, no. 3 (2002): 268.

“managing the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the screen for the door of the court.” (Num 3:25, 26). By placing great importance on the management of the facility, not any other person but the son of the high priest was chosen as head of the sanctuary management team. “And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest was to be chief over the leaders of the Levites, with oversight of those who kept charge of the sanctuary” (Num 3:32).

Like many construction projects in the bible, constructing a church building or purchasing an existing one requires huge capital expenditure and there is therefore the need to constitute a project team to manage the work. Professionals such as Architects, Building Technologists, Structural Engineers, Quantity Surveyors, Land Economists/ Real Estate Surveyors and Health, Safety/Security experts are available and could be consulted in this regard. In churches where the project committee is responsible for the planning and execution of building projects, the inclusion of these professionals is helpful in ensuring the successful completion of the project.

Although some worship services took place in homes of believers,⁷ Birkley has presented their unique socio-physical structure, including their theological and sociological ramifications for today,⁸ several temples and synagogues existed during Old Testament and New Testament times, which were used as arenas for worship.

Synagogues were widely distributed in the land of Israel and the Markan narrative extensively presented them as the setting for Jesus’ healing and teaching

⁷ Banks Robert, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 208.

⁸ Del Birkey, “The House Church: A Model,” *Missiology* 19, no. 1 (1991): 69-80.

ministry.⁹ According to Runesson et al., during the first century A.D., twenty-five Greek, Hebrew and Latin words were used to designate institutions that today we have only the single English word “synagogue.”¹⁰ This word and others such as *proseuche* (“Prayer Hall”) or *ekklesia* (“assembly”), were sometimes used interchangeably and were important institutions not only for the formation of Jewish identity but also for their social, religious and cultural activities and developments.¹¹ The synagogues were of two distinctive types: A public or municipal type and a voluntary association type. The public or municipal type was open to all – it had no restrictions to its entry as people entered to worship, irrespective of gender or age. They were commonly found in areas where municipal administration was in the hands of Jews. The voluntary association type, as the name suggests followed strict entry requirements and was the Jewish form of the Greco-Roman voluntary association.¹² Its running was in the hands of special groups. Although they were located in different places, each of them had their own rules for membership.¹³ Josephus has indicated that they were regarded as holy places where reading, expounding and teaching Torah took a centre stage in the activities within the association synagogues.¹⁴

⁹ Joel B. Green et al., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel* (Nottingham, England: Inter-varsity Press, 2013), 904.

¹⁰ A. Runesson, D.D. Binder and B. Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 C.E.: A Source Book* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007), 274.

¹¹ A. Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Social Historical Study* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 171-173.

¹² Ryan Jordan, “Public and Semi-Public Synagogues of the Land of Israel During the Second-Temple Period,” *El Pensador* (2013), 32.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel* (2013), 904.

Historical Overview of Some Biblical Building Projects

The bible shows a number of building projects and they give us an idea of the construction and management processes in biblical times. They include: The Tabernacle, Solomon's temple, Zerubbabel's temple, and Nehemiah's wall.

The wilderness building report. The architectural design, which included the dimensions and quantities needed for the construction of the sanctuary were developed by God Himself and He asked Moses to build it to serve as His dwelling place: “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. You must make it according to all that I show you, the design of the tabernacle as well as the design of all its finishes” (Exodus 25:8, 9). Davidson observes that God gave Moses a vision of the heavenly sanctuary and he was shown a diminutive standard of the heavenly as a pattern to guide him in constructing the earthly.¹⁵ The original sanctuary was an impressive tent-type building, (15 feet by 45 feet) composing of the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The courtyard precinct of the sanctuary was 75 feet by 150 feet (Exodus 27:18). Not only was Moses instructed on how it was to be constructed, he was also ordered to consecrate it, including its articles.¹⁶ In its construction, God filled artisan such as Bezalel (Exodus 31:1-6 and chapters 36 to 39) with the spirit of wisdom, understanding and knowledge and in all manner of workmanship in executing the work. The building and its artifacts needed to be properly maintained after the construction to ensure that it would continue to serve the spiritual needs of the people. The Levites were chosen to serve in the sanctuary and to manage the

¹⁵ Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 385.

¹⁶ Brevard S Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1974), 341,343.

facility (Numbers 3:5,6). After the census of the Levites were conducted, each family was given a specific duty to perform. For example, the duties of the children of Gerson in the tabernacle of meeting included “managing the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the screen for the door of the court...” (Numbers 3:25, 26). By placing importance on the management of the facility, not any other person but the son of the high priest, Eleazar was chosen as head of the sanctuary management team (Numbers 3:32). The sanctuary was a "copy of the true one." (Hebrew 9: 24). It was intended to remind humanity of the work of redemption. Our church buildings must, therefore, convey and reflect that same meaning.¹⁷

Solomon’s Temple Project. The Exodus story recounts that the Israelites continued to worship in the tabernacle until David sought to build a more befitting edifice for the worship of the God of Israel (2 Sam. 7: 2). Through the prophet Nathan, God announced to David that Solomon his son would be privileged to execute the project. The building was divided into two main sections, the holy place and the most holy place. When the structure was completed, the Ark of the Covenant was brought into it and deposited in the most holy place. And it was dedicated by Solomon (1 Kings 8:1-61; 2 Chron. 6:12-42).¹⁸ Solomon’s Temple, which is also known as the first temple was built in the 10th century B.C. Solomon’s father, David, who intended to undertake this project was instructed by God to rather focus on securing the peace and security of Israel (2 Samuel 7:10; 1 Kings 5:3). Mack Tennyson relates this experience to pastoral role in executing church building

¹⁷ Mack Tennyson, *Church Finances for People Who Count* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1991), 84.

¹⁸ Mark W. Hamilton “Solomon,” *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible (NIDB)*, ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2009), 5:317.

projects, maintaining that the restoration of peace within the church must be the focus and it must also proceed a church building programme.¹⁹ Several church building projects have not been completed due to disunity in the church. The building of peace within a church family, is a *sine qua non* as far the initiation, execution and completion of church building projects are concerned.

Zerubbabel's Temple Project. The closing verses of 2 Chronicles and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, reveal that when the Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem following a decree from Cyrus the Great (Ezra 1:1–4, 2 Chron. 36:22–23), construction started at the original site of the altar of Solomon's Temple. After the destruction of Solomon's Temple by the Neo Babylonian Empire in 586 BC, a new temple was rebuilt. The Jerusalem conquest by the Babylonians resulted not only in the destruction of the first temple which was built by King Solomon, parts of the population of the kingdom of Judah was taken into captivity in Babylon. The construction of a new temple became known as the second temple.²⁰ Schiffman has described the Second Temple period in Judaic history and its influence on the development of Rabbinic Judaism, stressing that this laid the foundation for all forms of modern Judaism.²¹

Nehemiah's Wall (Jerusalem Wall) Project. It is arguable that the construction of Jerusalem's wall was one in a series of events that indicated the end of suffering and exile for the Israelites. The dedication service indeed marked the beginning of a new life as God's people restored. The service was characterized by

¹⁹ Hamilton "Solomon," *NIDB*, 5:317.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

²¹ Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Understanding the Second Temple and Rabbinical Judaism*, (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2003), 48.

praise, worship, consecration and reading of the Law of God. Nissim and Mikhal maintain that Psalm 122 was a song performed at the ceremony of dedication at the end of the construction project.²² The rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem wall could be described as two projects that incited opposition and persecution. Because of fear of attack, the builders worked with one hand and held a sword in another hand (Ezra 4; Nehemiah 4). Despite the fierce resistance and opposition, the walling project was completed within 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15).

The Feast of Dedication. The Feast of Dedication has a rather interesting history. Known as Hanukkah, it is a Jewish holiday also known as the Festival of Lights. The story of Hanukkah is recorded in the First Book of Maccabees, which is part of the Apocrypha and the Feast of Dedication is mentioned in the Gospel of John 10:22. The Jews were ruled by Greek kings of Damascus prior to 165 BC. King Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greco-Syrian king, took control of the Temple in Jerusalem and forced the Jewish people to abandon their worship of God, their holy customs, as well as the reading of the Torah. In order to strengthen his authority and dominance over the Jews, he ordered them to worship the Greek gods. Indeed, the Jews were subjected to fierce oppression and persecution. Making reference to the historicity of the Feast of Dedication, Mary remarked that, King Antiochus IV defiled the Temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar and spilling its blood on the holy scrolls of Scripture. This vicious subjugation provoked four Jewish brothers led by Judah Maccabee who decided to raise up an army of religious freedom fighters. These men, who constituted a small army known as the Maccabees fought for the liberation of their nation. They

²² Nissim Amzallag and Mikhal Avriel, "Psalm 122 as the Song Performed at the Ceremony of Dedication of the City Wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 12, 27-43)," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 30, no. 1 (2016): 44-46.

fought for three years until finally they achieved a miraculous victory over the Greco-Syrians.²³

Horn remarks that the temple, which was the heartbeat of the nation of Israel was reclaimed and all forms of Greek practices which were sacrilegious were dispelled and the temple re-dedicated. Thus, the Feast of Dedication was celebrated as an occasion of victory and the re-dedication of the temple after it was desecrated for three years by Antiochus Epiphanes (168-165 B.C.).²⁴

The Role of Church Buildings in Mission and Nurturing

It has been observed that in the OT, Temples were primarily considered as the abode of God or a deity and secondarily as a place of worship. The temple in Jerusalem, constructed by Solomon, for example became a place of assembly of the people as well as an arena where God met and revealed Himself (1 Kings 6 :14).²⁵ Temples or Church buildings project the image of the Christian religion and Ratzinger described them as not only heaven's condescension on earth but they are visible fortresses "towering the Christian faith."²⁶ According to Mannion "The church building is a sacrament of the city of heaven and a sign of glorified humanity."²⁷

²³ Fairchild Mary, "What Is the Feast of Dedication?" *Learn Religions*, April 17, 2019, accessed 12 June 2019, learnreligions.com/feast-of-dedication-700182.

²⁴ Horn, *SDABD*, s.v. "Temple."

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1093.

²⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. by John Saward (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press 2000), 71.

²⁷ Francis Mannion, *Masterworks of God: Essays in Liturgical Theory and Practice* (Chicago, IL: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 250.

Writing on the importance of church buildings, McCumber (2006) perceptively remarked:

Entering a church should afford the faithful the opportunity to catch a sacramental glimpse of heaven where the heavenly liturgy is taking place. Even if a rite is not being celebrated at that particular time, the church building can be a wordless and unspoken witness of the heavenly reality. For what Sacred Scripture is for the ears, the church building can be for the eyes.²⁸

Temples or church buildings also play crucial role in the accomplishment of the Great Commission. Marlow maintained that church facilities play important roles in the nurturing process and they need to be maintained properly. The *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual* also recognizes church buildings as the physical home of the congregation and there is the need to treat them with care and respect. Temples serve the congregation and the community as both their physical and spiritual home. They offer people a sense of awe and reverence to God. They also serve as an arena for worship, nurture, fellowship and refuge for those in crisis situation. These facilities are sacred structure as divine services, prayer meetings and other church activities such as wedding, baby dedication services are held in them. They as both the spiritual and physical home of the congregation. They are also the abode of God and a place of assemblage for worship.²⁹

Church Building Architecture

Architect Ronald Lawrence Mace is noted for the development of the basic principles of universal design where he proposed that the design of all products in the built environment should be aesthetically appealing, accessible, user friendly, etc., to

²⁸ McCumber, "The Church Building as Image of Heaven," 10.

²⁹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2015), 150.

the greatest extent possible, by everyone, regardless of their age, ability or disability, size or status in life.³⁰ Locational, demographic and anthropogenic considerations are supposed to be integrated in the design and construction of church buildings. In addition, the main purpose or use with which the building will be used for is supposed to inform the type, pattern or choice of the architecture of the building.³¹

Designing Church Buildings

The architectural design for church structures should take the following seven rudiments into consideration:

Attractiveness of Design. The church building must be nice, attractive and appealing. While ensuring that aesthetics is achieved, extravagance in design must be avoided as this sends a negative signal to the people to be won for Christ.³²

Functionality of Design. Functionality in design for worship is simply ensuring that the facility is able to provide the needed worship service(s) for which reason it was built. In addition, the design should make provision for children, youth and both outreach and social needs of the church. Other worshippers such as the physically challenged should be considered in the design including other services or functions the facility will be used for. The provision of ramps is essential in making church facilities disability friendly. The construction of disabled ramps in church buildings for the physically challenge is a key requirement in the building code in order to provide equal opportunity for all to access public buildings. Article 29 (6) of

³⁰ Ronald L. Mace, *NC State University, College of Design*. Design.ncsu.edu.

³¹ Bryan Lawson, *How Designers Think: Demystifying the Design Process*, 4th ed, (Oxford: Elsevier/Architectural Press, 2006), 320.

³² *Minister's Handbook* (2015), 153.

the constitution of Ghana, under the rights of disabled persons, states, “As far as practicable, every place to which the public have access shall have appropriate facilities for disabled persons.”³³ This constitutional provision is supported by section 6 of Ghana’s Disability Act, Act 715, 2006 and article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disability, where it is required that buildings, roads, indoor and outdoor facilities including school buildings, church buildings, medical facilities and work places are made accessible to persons with Disability.³⁴

Flexibility of Design. This is when the design permits changes to be made or allows remodeling of the facility when it becomes necessary. The building must be designed in a manner that allows the pews and chairs or even the worship arena to be altered to suit a particular occasion or situation. When a small congregation worship in a large church auditorium, the enthusiasm of worship diminishes than when the room size matches with the congregation size. Flexibility of design is when provision is made for the opening and closing of portions of the worship arena depending on the size of the congregation.³⁵ Acoustics, sound amplification and video projector systems need to be handled properly as they add elegance to the setting and also enhance the atmosphere of worship.

Designed for Worship and Fellowship. While there are several functions for which church buildings are built for, chief among them is to provide space for

³³ 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 26.

³⁴ Section 6 of Ghana’s Disability Act, Act 715, 2006; and article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disability.

³⁵ *Minister’s Handbook* (2015), 154.

fellowship and liturgical worship.³⁶ Enough space should be created to allow for flexibility of mobility during congregational worship. The design should allow worshippers to fellowship by getting closer to one another, their worship leaders and more importantly, getting closer to God. It should be shaped in a manner so that worshippers would not block each other's view in the worship arena. The pulpit or platform should be visibly placed and centrally positioned. Several churches position the pulpit at the centre, facing the congregation in order to stress the centrality of the preaching of the Word and worship.³⁷

Designed against hazards. Buildings are not immune to hazards and other cataclysmic occurrences such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, lightning strikes, etc. Since these catastrophes pose a threat to them, designers and contractors have the responsibility of estimating the risks of the hazards, including the magnitudes of their consequences and incorporating them into the design and construction.³⁸ For example, with seismic design of buildings in earthquake prone areas, their main elements need to be built with ductility in them to withstand seismic loads.

Designed for Safety and Public Health. Designing and constructing church buildings to conform to health and safety standards should be a topmost priority. The health of worshippers should not be compromised. The global outbreak of coronavirus (COVID 19) is not only posing a public health challenge but also affecting and re-defining our social cohesion and interactions as many people are now aware of the social distancing protocol as one of the methods of containing the spread of the

³⁶ Gregory Wightman, *Sacred Spaces: Religious Architecture in the Ancient World* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2007), 17.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Merritt and Ricketts, *Building Design and Construction Handbook*, 3.1-3.3.

pandemic.³⁹ Medical experts tell us that the virus spread fast in large clouds or gatherings. This is the reason people are asked to self-quarantine or stay at home for some time. Currently several churches all over the world are closed and others are re-opening.⁴⁰ It appears that social distancing does not preclude face to face contacts and interactions, nor does it encourage the design of large and commodious buildings, but rather the creation of space (presumably seating arrangement of 2 meters apart) in meetings and engagements.⁴¹ When a vaccine is finally found to cure the disease, and churches and meeting places are reopened, social distancing and other health protocols are still expected to be incorporated in the remodelling of church auditoriums and meeting places including conference rooms and class rooms in order to safeguard the health of users.

While Fennelly observes that the virus causing COVID-19 can be spread by airborne transmission,⁴² the World Health Organisation (WHO) further explains that poorly ventilated places are considered to be high risk for the spread of the Coronavirus, and therefore on a precautionary principle, buildings are to be well ventilated as possible.⁴³ Sanitary areas with adequate washrooms for both sexes should be incorporated in the design of church buildings.

³⁹ Jerry Pillay, "COVID-19 Shows the Need to Make Church More Flexible," *Transformation* 37, no. 4 (2020): 266-275, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378820963156>.

⁴⁰ Łukasz Sułkowski, "Covid-19 Pandemic: Recession, Virtual Revolution Leading to De-globalization?" *Journal of Intercultural Management* 12, no. 1 (2020): 1–11.

⁴¹ Alexander Agyapong, "Temple/ Church Building Dedication Service: Biblical Historical Overview and Contemporary Relevance," *Asia -Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry* 22 (2020): 70-80.

⁴² K. P. Fennelly, "Particle Sizes of Infectious Aerosols: Implications for Infection Control," *Respiratory Medicine* 8, no. 9 (2020): 914–924, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600\(20\)30323-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600(20)30323-4).

⁴³ World Health Organisation, *COVID 19 Pandemic*, 2020.

Designed for Security. Church house burglary and robbery including stabbing are a recurring phenomenon. Ghana News on April 16, 2018 reported that armed robbers broke into the SDA Church in Pankrono, a suburb of Kumasi and made away with several items. The robbers forcefully detached the burglar proof from the wall, allowing them to enter the church and make away with properties amounting to about Twenty Thousand Ghana Cedis. A similar story was shared earlier by Ghana News on June 11, 2017 where during a watchnight service, masked men entered the church auditorium at about 3:00 am with pump-action shotguns, and two locally manufactured pistols, and robbed members of the congregation of their belongings at Adoato- Adumanu in Kumasi. Some items they took included, mobile phones, a laptop computer and cash. Also, Graphic Online News on December 30, 2018, reported that the head pastor of the Central Assemblies of God Church at Tema Community Four in Ghana was stabbed to death at the church premises where he was preparing to deliver a sermon. Apart from the installation of modern security gargets such as CCT cameras and alarm systems in and around church premises, doors and windows should be designed and properly secured in order to protect life and property and also prevent other intruders.

Constructing Church Facilities

The construction of church structures should take the following six (6) elements into consideration.

Centrality and Accessibility. A study of demographics will assess whether the land is centrally located among the people the church plans to win and serve, focusing more on the people to be won than on the present members being served. Issues to be considered include the growth patterns and stability of the neighbourhood

and the availability of public transportation and parking lot in the area. The right location might make the church facilities usable on weekdays as a day care center, medical center or a place for seminars, counselling or other programs.⁴⁴

Visibility. An attractive building, visible from a well-traveled access road, comprises a perpetual and positive advertisement for the church and what it stands for. Adequate safety measures must be put in place to assist worshipers and visitors conveniently cross to churches that are located at busy road intersections.⁴⁵

Affordability. While working within the range of what the congregation can afford is important, allowing costs to outweigh all other considerations incorporates a shortsighted method of planning. Churches built in poor locations because land was donated or purchased cheaply may ultimately be as expensive as one built on better property.⁴⁶

Quality and Durability. The material to be used for the construction should be of high quality and the specification must also be of high standard. This will ensure high quality work and longevity of the structure. The choicest of building materials were used for the construction of the sanctuary and other biblical building projects.⁴⁷

Size. Building too small leaves no room for expansion; building too large becomes expensive to maintain. The long-term plans of the congregation must be

⁴⁴ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2010), 152.

⁴⁵Ibid., 153.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamia and Northwest Semitic Writings* (Sheffield, UK: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, 1992), 310.

taken into consideration. The potential for other facilities on the site should be considered, such as a school, community services center and recreational facilities.⁴⁸

Restrictions. Zoning ordinances, covenants and building restrictions must be carefully researched and recorded. In Adventist policy, church properties must be held in the name of the legal association set up by the conference for this purpose. The transfer of property should be done with the assistance of an Attorney or other appropriate professional or entity as recognized by local law and licensed in the jurisdiction of the property.⁴⁹

Church Facility Maintenance

Every organization is faced with the intractable challenge of ensuring that its facilities are properly cared for and well maintained so they provide uninterrupted service during their lifespan. Maintenance is explained as work undertaken to keep or restore every facility (i.e., every part of the site, building, and content) to an acceptable standard and cost.⁵⁰ Maintenance, therefore, is all the necessary work done to preserve a building with its furnishes and fittings, so that it continues to provide the same or almost the same facilities, amenities and serves as it did when it was first built. Gouws and Trevelyan have indicated the high cost associated with maintenance of assets and the need to develop a comprehensive maintenance programmes for preserving assets to enable them provide the needed service(s).⁵¹ As

⁴⁸ *Minister's Handbook* (2015), 153.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ S. K Afrane. and E. Osei -Tutu, *Building maintenance in Ghana: analysis of problems, practices and policy perspectives* (New York: World Bank, 1999).

⁵¹ Gouws L. Trevelyan J. "Research on Influences on Maintenance Management Effectiveness," in *Asset Management Engineering*, eds. Mathew J., Kennedy J., Ma L., Tan A., Anderson D. (London: Springer, 2006).

we grow as humans we naturally deteriorate. This is an unavoidable reality of life, although by adopting some lifestyle improvement habits we can be kept in good shape during the process of natural wear and tear. The same can be said about church facilities. Like human, our church buildings and assets will not last forever. However, by adopting good management and maintenance practices, their longevity and efficiency could be improved considerably. In several places we find church buildings crying for paint for years, or some structures in deplorable and dilapidated conditions. Carrying out both regular and periodic maintenance activities such as mopping, sweeping, weeding, painting and replacing obsolete fittings, increase the life span of the facility and also send a positive signal that we are stewards of God's property. Joe Marlow remarks that while church buildings are needed to help accomplish the mission Christ gave the church, they should be managed properly maintained.⁵²

Maintenance Activities and Their Importance

British Standard 3811 defines maintenance as “Work undertaken in order to keep or restore every facility that is every part of a site, building or contents to an acceptable standard. It is the various activities undertaken to preserve and protect a building or asset so that it continues to provide the same function(s) when it was new.”⁵³ Church maintenance activities include:

- Replacing obsolete or old building components/ fittings
- Internal and external painting
- Repairs/refurbishment/ servicing assets
- Cleaning and weeding

⁵² Marlow, "Sacred Space," 12.

⁵³ British Standards Institution, Glossary of Maintenance Terms in Terotechnology.

While several suggestions have been advanced as to the importance of developing a culture of maintenance for church facilities, concerns about the safety of the users of the facility, enhancing the public image of our church, ensuring that the facilities continue to provide the same service and reminding ourselves we are stewards of God's property, appear to be the driving force for developing a maintenance programme. Although there is the need for the appointment of a maintenance leader or committee, every member of the congregation must embrace the culture of maintenance of the facilities of the church. Some churches have developed a duty roster – where cleaning, weeding and other duties are assigned to the various groups such as youth, choir, men's ministry at designated times. Under the direction of professional painters, church members can even assist by carrying out both internal and external painting of their church building.

There is the need to develop a maintenance programme so that:

1. Church structures, equipment, assets, operate at 100% efficiency at all time – preserve church facilities so they continue to provide uninterrupted service.
2. By repainting, changing obsolete fittings, cleaning, carrying out refurbishment and repairs, the life-span or longevity of the facility is safeguarded and enhanced.
3. Extra cost is not incurred.
4. The church property will maintain its good appearance.
5. The market value of church property is preserved.

Regulation 12 of the National Building Regulations of Ghana is on compulsory maintenance. It stipulates:

- (1) A District Planning Authority may, in respect of any building which has in its opinion fallen into a state of disrepair or neglect, and constitutes safety or health hazard to the public, or for aesthetic purposes serve notice in writing upon the owner of such building requiring him to carry out such reasonable repair or painting as may be specified in the notice and within such time as may be stated in the notice.
- (2) Where a person noticed under sub-regulation (1) fails refuses to carry out the repairs or painting within the stipulated period, the District Planning Authority may carry out the repairs or painting and may take legal action to recover the cost involved in the work.⁵⁴

Writing on the importance of caring and maintaining church facilities, Ellen G.

White revealed:

The house of worship should be scrupulously cared for, but not from tithe. The Lord instructed Moses, for Israel: "Thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." This was to be a continual offering, that the house of God might be properly supplied with that which was necessary for His service. His people today are to remember that the house of worship is the Lord's property and that it is to be scrupulously cared for. But the funds for this work are not to come from the tithe.⁵⁵

She again advocated that, "Those who have charge of our church buildings are to be supplied with the means that is necessary to keep these buildings in good repair. But this money is not to come from the tithe."⁵⁶ As the physical home of the congregation, the church building must be treated with care and respect. Poorly

⁵⁴ National Building Regulations 1996, (LI 1630), regulation 12, *Compulsory Maintenance*

⁵⁵ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1909), 9:248.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 251.

maintained facilities are unattractive to visitors and the surrounding, and negatively impact the outside perception of the church. Individual may easily become accustomed to the appearance of the building that care and maintenance needs are overlooked. Churches are often unattractive, not so much because they are old and poorly built, but because of poor maintenance. Neatness, cleanliness, and tastefulness in decorating must be carefully guarded. Deacons and church leaders should periodically view the building as though they were visitors experiencing their first impression of the facilities. Using a checklist in this review may help in the evaluation. Items to be considered include the yard, sign, exterior finish, foyer, interior decorating, restrooms, fire protection and others. Church facilities should be insured in accordance with conference policies.”⁵⁷

In churches where the responsibility for the care and maintenance of church property is not assigned to a building committee, deacons and deaconess have this responsibility.⁵⁸ Deacons and deaconesses must see that the church building is kept clean and in repair and that the grounds are kept clean and attractive. This also includes ensuring that janitorial work is done. In large churches where it is necessary to employ a janitor, the deacons should recommend a suitable person to the board, which votes to employ such work, or the board may authorize the deacon to employ a janitor. Board authorization should be obtained for all major repair expenses. All bills for repairs, as well as recurring expenses, such as water, electricity and fuel, are referred to the treasury for payment.⁵⁹ The *Church Manual* further states that

⁵⁷ *Minister's Handbook* (2015), 150.

⁵⁸ *Church Manual* (2015), 78, 79.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

“Deacons direct the care of the church building. While custodial and maintenance personnel may be employed to care for facility needs, the deacons must assume responsibility to oversee this work. Poorly maintained facilities are unattractive to visitors and the surrounding community and negatively impact the outside perception of the church. Churches are often unattractive, not so much because they are old or poorly built, but because of poor maintenance. Deacons and church leaders should periodically view the building as though they were visitors experiencing their first impression of the facilities. Using a checklist in this review may help in the evaluation. Church facilities should be insured in accordance with conference policies.”⁶⁰ According to Merwin Pickney, “The physical presence of the church in the community stands as a towering symbol of faith and hope. Though a well-maintained facility may be but window dressing, to those outside the community of faith, it may be the bridge that opens their hearts to the gospel.”⁶¹

Maintenance Strategies

Several maintenance strategies can be identified. The four main ones are preventive, corrective, risk-based and condition-based maintenance.

Preventive maintenance. As the name suggests, this type of maintenance is carried out at predetermined periods or according to recommended standards, aimed at reducing the failure risk or performance degradation of the equipment.⁶² It is sometime known as *Planned-Preventive Maintenance (PPM)*. It includes any work or

⁶⁰ *Church Manual* (2015), 168.

⁶¹ Merwin Pinkney, *Church Facility and Property Management* (Enrichment Journal, The General Council of Assemblies of God, 2004), 10.

⁶² R. Onanena et al., “Estimation of Fuel Cell Operating Time for Predictive Maintenance Strategies,” *International Journal of Hydrogen Energy* 35, no. 15 (2010): 8022-9.

activity carried out throughout the life-cycle/expected life of the facility. It is done to ensure its continued operation and function.⁶³ During the operation of the facility, maintenance could be carried out— this is called running maintenance. When maintenance is done only when the facility is out of service, it is called shutdown maintenance. Preventive maintenance lowers operational cost and while improving reliability of the assets or facility.⁶⁴

Corrective maintenance. Here, maintenance is conducted when an anomaly is detected in order to bring the facility or assets to its normal working condition. In the course of the working life of a facility, unforeseen breakdown or damage, emanating from external forces could occur. It is also known as *Unplanned - Corrective Maintenance*.

Risk-based maintenance. Analysis and periodic tests on the facility, plants and equipment are carried out. The risk is assessed and the appropriate maintenance activity is prescribed— they are replaced or refurbished in order to extend their lifespan. This is also known as predictive maintenance in the sense that the maintenance strategy is based on careful monitoring and evaluation of the condition of the facility or assets to determine the possibility of future failure. If the likelihood of future failure is determined, appropriate actions are taken to avoid the failure.

Conditioned-based maintenance. In this type of maintenance, the performance of the facility/equipment is critically monitored and corrective actions taken. Values are assigned to their performance based on recommended conditions of performance. Where the values fall short of the average recommended performance

⁶³ Joel Levitt, Complete guide to Preventive and Predictive Maintenance (New York: Industrial Press, 2003), 35-42.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 56.

parameter, it is a signal that the equipment is deteriorating and its efficiency is reducing and needs replacement.⁶⁵

First impression is always lasting impression. The physical presence of the church communicates to the community, and for first time visitors, and the community at large, what they see in and around the precincts of the church creates an impression in their minds about the message we preach—whether the *word* is exemplified in our action— how we keep and maintain the ambience of the church. The culture of maintenance approach must be participatory. It should not be left to deacons and ushers alone. Every member of the church is a steward and must demonstrate a high sense of responsibility by taking good care of God’s property. Creating a lasting first impression begins with a clean, well-kept church facility.

Ellen G. White and the Spirit of Prophecy

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has since its inception been guided by the Spirit of Prophecy on critical issues including doctrinal purity, church organization, outreach, education, missions and health. The literary production of Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is referred to as the Spirit of Prophecy. During her seventy years of public ministry, Ellen White, penned more than one hundred thousand manuscripts pages on counsel, instruction, exhortation, and comfort.

She received inspired messages from God although they were not as authoritative, when compared with other bible prophets.⁶⁶ She was a recipient of

⁶⁵ Andrew K.S. Jardine, Daming Lin and Dragan Banjevic, “A Review on Machinery Diagnostics and Prognostics Implementing Condition-based Maintenance,” *Mechanical Systems and Signal Processing* 20, no. 7 (2006): 1483.

⁶⁶ Tutsch, *Ellen White on Leadership*, 16.

numerous visions and the manner in which she received her visions and dreams varied. While Arthur White mentioned that she received her dreams and visions in at least nine different circumstances,⁶⁷ Herbert E. Douglass categorized them under nine (9) taxonomies.⁶⁸ These are:

1. At times she was seemingly present and participating in the events of the vision.
2. Some visions were panoramic, with sweeping views of the past, present, and future.⁶⁹
3. An angel or some other heavenly person such as (“my Guide” etc.) would observe the event with her and provide an interpretation.
4. Occasionally she saw buildings yet to be constructed and was given instruction as to her role in instructing those who were to work in that future building.
5. Her Guide either explained symbolic representations or their meaning was self-evident.
6. She often “visited” various institutions, committee meetings, families in their home, and persons who thought they were observed by “no one.”
7. Sometimes she was given contrasting developments: one will be the consequence of not following inspired instruction, the other, the results of following the counsel.

⁶⁷ White, *Ellen G. White: Messenger to the Remnant*, 9-10

⁶⁸ Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 138.

⁶⁹ Roger Coon, *The Great Visions of Ellen G. White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1992), 76-89.

8. Frequently, she has specific information for the benefit of her husband for themselves as parents, and for fellow leaders of the church and its institutions.
9. Often, she was showed sweeping principles that would integrate some advanced opinions of her day with additional insights on such subjects as health, education, and temperance.

It can be seen from the above classifications that, the construction of buildings to support the great commission and the Advent Message was a crucial component of the dreams and visions Ellen White had. It appears however, that this aspect of her vision and work has not been projected and given the deserved attention when compared with her other works. Her counsels on health, education, parenting, Christian service and numerous periodical and books on the lives of the patriarchs and prophets of old, as well as commentaries on the life and teachings of Jesus are well known. God revealed to her also physical structures that were to be built to support the Gospel mission. God sometimes showed her in vision the project team who were going to work on such future projects and her personal role in guiding the execution of the work. For example, she was shown a vision of a proposed large building in Chicago and was further instructed to stop the project because the Lord had pointed to her that large buildings should not be put up at that location. She received this vision during one of her missionary journeys in Australia and saw that a large building project was been planned to be constructed in Chicago. In the vision she was disoriented when told that no such building was erected in Chicago. This vision proved to be authentic when in the Summer of 1902, after her return to America, she was visited by Judge Jesse Arthur, who was an attorney and was connected with the Battle Creek Sanitarium. In their interactions, Jesse Arthur mentioned that her

testimony of the vision of a “large building in Chicago” was accurate because a building committee of which he was the chairman was constituted on June 26, 1902, to purchase land and erect a large building in Chicago. The timing of the vision prevented the construction of the building in Chicago because the location had not been chosen by God. This example, demonstrates the authenticity that she received visions of future physical developments and her role in their execution the projects.

Spirit of Prophecy Counsel on Church Properties

A review of aspects of the Spirit of the Prophecy shows a plethora of instructions and the personal involvement of Ellen White in the acquisition of landed property to enhance evangelism and the growth and future development of the Adventist Movement.

Land Acquisition for Church Projects

Several factors are considered as essential in land acquisition for development and in land use planning. They include: the purpose or the use to which the land will be put, location of the land with regards to zoning regulations, size and price.⁷⁰ A critical assessment of the writings of Ellen G. White that relates to land acquisition for church development shows that she was also concerned about all the above factors. The acquisition of land for future church development was dear to the heart of Ellen G. White. A review of her writings shows that she was particular about not only the purpose for the acquisition, but also the need to purchase landed property at strategic locations, while at the same time ensuring that the property was large enough to

⁷⁰ William Britton, Keith Davies, and Tony Johnson, *Modern Methods of Valuation of Land, Houses and Buildings* (EPP Books Services Edition, 2005), 4-11, 223-244.

accommodate future expansion works.⁷¹ Additionally, she was concerned about negotiating for fair and reasonable price. Securing land in a favorable and accessible location for the construction of church facilities is essential. Ellen G. White also advocated for church buildings to be constructed after every evangelistic campaign in order to make the whole exercise meaningful. She warned that failure to erect meeting places will eventually lead to the scattering and loss of the new converts.⁷²

The Effect of Building on a Small Land

The Purchase of land for a church building project must be large enough to include not only the space for the building itself but enough space for car park and other outdoor programmes. The provision of adequate parking space is as vital as the provision of comfortable seats in the church. A church parking lot should be designed with as much vision and creativity by considering the numerical growth and economic status of the congregation. Parking for guests, and the provision of walkways for the physically challenged, and the aged should be well designed.⁷³ The design of parking lots is subjective to each site and situation and must be incorporated during the design stage of the church building process. This should not be an after-thought as it would eventually pose a great challenge to the church as it expands in membership. Evans Ben-Joseph argues that whilst it is necessary to create a space for cars, not only do parking lots add up to the architecture and the aesthetics of the church environment,

⁷¹Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases 21* (Silver Spring, MD: White Estate, 1990), 93.

⁷²Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1995), 241.

⁷³ Pinkney, *Church Facility and Property Management*, 10.

they could also serve other useful functions such as public space for other events and a playground for children.⁷⁴

Importance of Constructing Church Buildings and Schools

Ellen White was particularly concerned about the erection of church buildings as places of worship and school buildings for the education of children. She advanced several reasons such facilities should be constructed. She believed that the provision of a place of worship after an evangelistic campaign gives “character to the work” while at the same time providing assurance of stable work. Ellen White explains “wherever a company of believers is raised up, a house of worship should be built and that the workers should not leave the place without accomplishing this.” She further explains that “In many places where the message has been preached and souls have accepted it, they are in limited circumstances and can do but little toward securing advantages that would give character to work. Often this renders it difficult to extend the work.” As persons become interested in the truth, they are told by the ministers of other churches, --and these words are echoed by the church members, "These people have no church, and you have no place of worship. You are a small company, poor and unlearned. In a short time, the ministers will go away, and then the interest will die down. Then you will give up all these new ideas which you have received."⁷⁵

Also, she identified the putting up of church buildings to be a memorial or monument for the truth. McCumder, affirmed this same position by pointing out that

⁷⁴ Evans Ben-Joseph, *Rethinking a Lot: The Design and Culture of Parking* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012), 72.

⁷⁵ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 374.

church buildings create visual thoughts in the minds of worshippers about the “imminence and transcendence of God” and their imposing nature also enables worshippers to visually recognize that they are pilgrims on this earth, travelling to their heavenly home where they will finally find peace and rest.⁷⁶ These monuments are to stand tall in many place as witnesses of the truth.⁷⁷ The erection of buildings to serve as church schools was also her concern. She remarked that workers in the new territory should not feel free to leave their field of labor till the needed facilities have been provided for the churches under their care. Not only should a humble house of worship be erected, but all necessary arrangements should be made for ensure the permanent establishment of church schools.⁷⁸ Ellen White also saw school buildings to be as important as church buildings:

The schoolroom is needed as much as the church building. This is the work to be done in America, in Australia, in Europe, and wherever companies are brought into the truth. The companies that are raised up need a place of worship. Schools are needed where Bible instruction may be given to the children. The schoolroom is required as much as is the church building. The Lord has persons to engage in the work of establishing church schools as soon as something is done to prepare the way for them.⁷⁹

Acquisition of Landed Property for the Establishment of Educational Institutions

Physical structures such as schools, hospitals, and food factories are important assets that connect the church to people to be won and thus enhancing the work of

⁷⁶ McCumber, *The Church Building as Image of Heaven*, 47.

⁷⁷ Ellen G White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1900), 6:100.

⁷⁸ White, *Evangelism*, 380.

⁷⁹Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1995), 239.

evangelism. The counsels in the Spirit of Prophecy guided the establishment of several educational institutions during the formative years of the Adventist Movement. These institutions included the Health Reform Institute/ Battle Creek College, Healdsburg College/Pacific Union College, Avondale College, Madison College and the College of Medical Evangelists/Loma Linda University.⁸⁰ The instructions in the Spirit of Prophecy did not only focus on the development of the curriculum for the educational institutions but also on how to initiate and provide the requisite physical space for their take-off.

The Health Reforms Institute that was founded at Battle Creek in the 1860s became the first denomination's health institution to be established with the objective of providing medical care for Adventists and to use the facility as a conduit in spreading the Advent Message. This was made possible because of a vision Ellen White had and her personal involvement in the project.⁸¹ Although there were initial struggles in building the facility due to financial challenges, members and the management of the Michigan Conference, led by J. N. Loughborough were determined to get the project completed.⁸²

In 1881 the California Conference recognized the need for a west coast college. By April 1882, property was purchased in Healdsburg with Sidney Brownsberger, former president of Battle Creek College, as its first president. The school did not become financially sound, largely because of low charges to students. Ellen White counseled schools against attempting to attract higher enrollment by

⁸⁰ Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 356.

⁸¹ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:489.

⁸² "Sketches of the Past," No.133 in Pacific Union Recorder, January 2, 1913, as cited in Dores Eugene Robinson, *The Story of our Health Message*, p. 335.

lowering fees, because of the —detrimentall effect this would have. Mrs. White’s involvement in acquiring the Angwin California property when the Healdsburg site proved to be inadequate revealed again how human effort plus divine affirmation leads to sound decisions. After purchasing the property, she wrote her experience: “Now this lesson given us at this time of our great necessity was one of the most remarkable adventures in our experience.”⁸³

Ellen White had much to do with the location and selection of the site for Madison College in 1904. She had been telling her colleagues that the school must be near Nashville, Tennessee. When a 400-acre property in Madison, seventeen miles from Nashville, became available and it was going to be sold for about \$12,000, she really wanted to inspect it. Though some were not impressed, she reported that it was a favorable location for the work and the site should be immediately purchased.⁸⁴

In addition, the establishment of Loma Linda University as a world-renowned medical institution would never have happened without the vision, courage, and continuing support of Ellen White. Richard Utt acknowledged the selfless dedication Ellen White exhibited at the time.⁸⁵

Ellen White also showed genuine concern and leadership at the time when land was needed for the establishment of the Avondale School and the need to have large tracks of land for the school farm. People were developing around the school land, and the attention of the school authorities was drawn on the need to secure the

⁸³Ellen G. White *Letters* 140, 1904.

⁸⁴ Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 356.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

land, stressing that a large farmland was needed to serve as lesson book in nature from which the teaches will bring object lessons to teach the students.⁸⁶

Erecting School Buildings Just as Church Buildings

The establishment of church schools was at the heart of Ellen White. She encouraged the building of classrooms just as churches were springing up. As the Gospel message was being proclaimed with renewed intensity in America, Australia and Europe at that time, the initial focus and attention was on providing church structures to accommodate and acculturate the new believers. Although this was laudable, Ellen White argued that the establishment of church schools, where biblical instructions would be presented to children was one of the best strategies in reaching more souls with the Gospel truth.⁸⁷

Acquiring City Property

Landed property is needed in the cities to help advance the gospel message there. One of the evangelistic burdens Ellen White carried was on how the gospel message would be proclaimed with convincing success to the people in the cities. She bemoaned that little attention was given to the cities where public officials, including upper class and influential people would have the opportunity to hear the gospel.⁸⁸ She believed as an evangelistic strategy, the acquisition of land for the construction of churches as well as the purchasing buildings at reasonable rates for the purpose of

⁸⁶ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1904), 6:181.

⁸⁷ Ellen G. White *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1995), 239.

⁸⁸ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9: 97, 98.

worship. For example, the city of Portland was at that time increasingly expanding and was assuming a metropolitan status. She encouraged her fellow believers and later commended them for securing a parcel of land at a strategic location between the Central Business District (CBD) of the city and the great park called *The Deerings' Oaks*, to be used for the construction of a large auditorium for worship.⁸⁹ Ellen White was pleased that the location of church properties in the cities and peripheries also took accessibility into consideration, where worshippers and visitors could easily locate or access the church facility."⁹⁰

Buying a small land and building on it will eventually pose a challenge to the church when there is growth in membership, which will call for remodeling or expansion. Ellen White was concerned about the disadvantages of building on a small land and the dangers it could eventually pose to the church particularly when others build around the church. She encouraged and counselled churches facing such situations or challenges to purchase the adjoining plots which would give them both privacy and security during worship.⁹¹

Putting up Pleasant Church Facilities

Church facilities play a major role in the overall mission of the church. Worshippers of today are not only craving for spirit-filled sermons to hear but a convenient and comfortable environment of worship that can connect their souls to God. Church buildings must be nice and aesthetically appealing. Ellen White believed that where the church building is neat, plain and has proper dimension of

⁸⁹ White, *Evangelism*, 377.

⁹⁰ White, *Pastoral Ministry*, 242.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 243.

construction, members have a sense of gratitude to be part of the church and her service and that encourages others not of our faith to attend and listen to the word of God. She again stressed on the need to keep the outside environment of the church clean at all time as it sends a signal to non-believers of who we are, the nature of the God we worship, the faith we express, and our position as stewards.⁹²

The Construction Process

Construction of church facilities requires huge capital expenditure. Ellen White advised that money should not be spent unnecessary during the construction process and contractors working on the buildings should not produce second-class work. In places where the topography of the land permitted the construction of a basement, she even encouraged the architects and contractors to include a basement to be used for children and youth church, so they will be prevented from the evil allurements around them.⁹³

The construction of the church at Cooranbong became a real challenge for members due to financial difficulties at the time. During a church council meeting, she proposed a plan to solicit both material and labour within the surrounding communities. Accompanied by her secretary, she visited several places and solicited for funds to the project, as people donated generously. Carpenters and other construction workers who lived miles away were contacted and they generously responded to work at a small wage and some offered to work for free.⁹⁴

⁹² *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, Jan. 28, 1893.

⁹³ Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, May 18, 1911.

⁹⁴ *The Review and Herald*, May 26, 1904.

Members themselves, including the newly converted ones were encouraged to own the building projects themselves by donating material and providing labour services. Under the leadership and direction of their minister who is also guided by the advice of other ministers and professionals, members are to put in their resources in erecting church buildings.⁹⁵

Compact and well-constructed buildings. Ellen White advocated that no haphazard construction is to be done. She also promoted that church buildings are to be thoroughly presentable, and that no extravagance is to be seen. The burden of reaching out and converting soul was dear to her heart that she was discouraged the putting up of costly and expensive structures when such resources could be directed toward winning souls. This does not mean that beauty and aesthetics were not her consideration. She counselled that money should not be spent on church building ‘merely for show’ while souls are dying in their sin.⁹⁶

Elements to consider in designing of church buildings. Ellen G. White recommended three elements that are to be considered in the design of church buildings. They are: beauty, Sabbath school facilities, and potential for enlargement. Beauty rather than stylish and the display of extravagance in church buildings was important to her because she understood that beautiful buildings attracted visitors to attend church. She advised that the design of church buildings should make provisions for Sabbath school facilities, where worshippers could comfortably break into classes as well as making provision for enough washrooms. In addition, the design should also make provision for expansion when the need arises, particularly in the event of

⁹⁵ Letter 65, 1900. 6.4

⁹⁶ Mrs. E. G. White, in a Letter of Instruction dated February 15, 1904.

growth in membership.⁹⁷ One important discussion on church building architecture is whether or not our church buildings should have a common design in every location. Those who support and articulate the view of uniformity of design do so on the notion of easy identification. Using an analogy of the breastplate of the high priest, which had different stones that radiated different colours and therefore had their unique significance and conveyed different messages, the Spirit of Prophecy advocates a diversity of architectural styles and explains that different designs for church building may be appropriate to different locations.⁹⁸

Furthermore, Ellen G. White strongly believed that the time was short for Christ to come and that the focus should be on soul winning rather than the construction of stylish and costly structures. In Oakland for example, a simple building was built and the brethren focused on preaching the message of the second advent of Christ and that anything worldly was not to be their preoccupation.⁹⁹

When Ellen White was taken to inspect a church in Washington, she made the following remarks which shows her deep understanding of church building construction and management:

We were taken to have a hasty look at the church. Its appearance is good, with frontage of stone. Within is a pleasant auditorium for the people to assemble. The windows and front doors are ornamented with stained glass, beautiful in appearance. Four chairs, such as are used in churches, are on the platform, which was well proportioned. The pulpit and high backed chairs harmonized. Seats and arms are covered with red velvet of the material used. I did not spend much time taking in all the advantages of that church building, but I praise the Lord that every debt is paid. Much means have been invested besides the sum of the building as it stood, to make it what it should be

⁹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*. Vol 5 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981) Releases, 119.

⁹⁸ Letter 53, 1900.

⁹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*. Vol 6 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981) Releases, 320.

complete in repairs. It is now all finished. There are several rooms. One opens from the auditorium and is seated with chairs for Sabbath school. If the house should need enlarging, the partitions could be removed and thus the extension easily made. Washington within a short distance of the Capitol is a victory gained, and it comes to us in the order of the Lord, who has looked upon the necessities that must be supplied. I wanted to praise God aloud for this nice building, all ready now to be rededicated to the Lord, in which His people shall serve Him.¹⁰⁰

Ventilation. Ventilation serves many benefits, chief among them is the control of humidity and condensation, thus creating a comfortable ambience for the occupants of the facility. Without proper ventilation gas can stagnate in the building where bacteria, virus and carbon can build up, making the indoor air poisonous or hazardous for the occupants.¹⁰¹ Church buildings should be designed with enough openings for proper ventilation. The health of occupants in poorly ventilated buildings are affected. Ellen White recognized the benefits of allowing constant flow of fresh air into church facilities and warned that preachers who preached in closed and ill ventilated church buildings will eventually suffer severe health problems. According to her, the message preached from the pulpit is not appreciated and made a deeper impression on the hearts of members because the church buildings are poorly ventilated. She also described poor ventilated bedrooms and classrooms as death traps.¹⁰² W. C. White narrated an observation Ellen White made on the need for proper ventilation in a church building during a Sabbath service:

Sabbath afternoon the beautiful and commodious meetinghouse in _____ was crowded to its utmost capacity. The day was warm, and abundant ventilation was needed. But the beautiful colored windows were not built to open. As a result, the congregation suffered intensely, and the speaker was so poisoned that she experienced great suffering for a week, and was barely able to fill one

¹⁰⁰ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*. Vol 5 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981) Releases, 119.

¹⁰¹ Merritt and Ricketts, *Building Design and Construction Handbook*, 13.27.

¹⁰² Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 30 September 1897.

of her three appointments in New York City. Why will a people having abundance of information on health, sanitation, and ventilation, allow wrongly built meetinghouses to stand year after year as closed reservoirs for poison air?¹⁰³

Financing Church Projects

The Spirit of Prophecy counsels that it is best to erect a church building without debt. Whenever it is possible, our church buildings must be dedicated to God free of debt.¹⁰⁴ Members must be committed to supporting the construction of their church facilities. The Spirit of Prophecy encourages members to own the building project by donating in cash and in kind in support of the project. Both old and newly converted members under the guidance of their minister, are encouraged to make this commitment by supporting the construction of the house of God to His own to the glory.¹⁰⁵

Borrowing to build. There are some occasions when a young church may not have the financial wherewithal to erect a house of worship. Members or churches that are well endowed are encouraged to support such struggling churches. When it becomes expedient loans, either without interest or at a low rate could be procured to support the church building project. Such debts are however, to be settled before the church is dedicated, if possible.¹⁰⁶

Supporting others to build. Because the putting up of church facilities is capital intensive, the Spirit of Prophecy counsels that financial assistance should be

¹⁰³ W. C. White in *The Review and Herald*, November 25, 1909.

¹⁰⁴ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*. Vols. 17 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 126.

¹⁰⁵ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 432.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

given support churches in need. Schools, church buildings are to be built not only in America and Ellen G. White advocated the need to spread more facilities all over the world by not concentrating and investing at one place. She was shown the dangers of over-concentrating structures and activities in Battle Creek and the need spread the facilities to other area in order to “give character to the work.”¹⁰⁷ The admonishment was followed and churches, schools and health facilities began to spread all over the world.¹⁰⁸

Church Estates in the Context of the Mission of the Church

The mission of the church, which is encapsulated in the Great Commission, focuses on evangelism (Matthew 28:18-20). Indeed, the core mandate of every church is witnessing, which includes the spiritual development of its members. This core mandate invariably constitutes the main function of every church administration or board. Discipleship therefore clearly delineates our Lord’s mandate to the church in the Gospel Commission. In addition to evangelism and nurturing, one other key function of a church board is “the protection and care of church properties.”¹⁰⁹ What this means is that anytime the church meets to plan toward evangelism and fostering the spiritual development of its members, it should also ensure that the assets of the church are not only protected and maintained, but are also expanded for the sake of posterity.

¹⁰⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1904), 9:49.

¹⁰⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Southern Africa* (Cape Town, South Africa: South Africa Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1977), 63.

¹⁰⁹ *Church Manual* (2015), 129.

The mission statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to “Make disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels’ Messages in preparation for His soon return (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Revelation 14:6-12).”¹¹⁰ The Church has been blessed with valuable land and buildings, often in prime areas with a high real estate value. Undoubtedly, our church buildings, offices, parsonages, schools, hospitals, farms, publishing houses, retreat centres, food centres and other hereditaments do not only project the image of the church but are avenues in the spread of the Gospel message. The parable of the wise and foolish builders offers some practical directions that must be taken into consideration in developing and managing church properties on the rock and protecting them from other risk (Matt 7:25). These properties are valuable assets and God expects the church to be good stewards in managing them. There is a moral and ecclesiastical obligation to prevent damage to church property and injury to man (Deut 22:8). Good estate stewardship involves safeguarding and maintaining properties adequately. The contemporary trends also demand that church facility management is carried out in a professional manner, following appropriate Estate/Property management practices. Estate Management can be defined as a generic activity and also as a specialized activity.

Estate Management as a generic activity is defined by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) as: “All the facets of the use development and management of urban land, including the sale, purchase and letting of residential, commercial and industrial property and the management of urban estates; and advice

¹¹⁰ This modification of the mission statement of the Seventh-day Adventist church was adopted by world delegates during their year-end meeting in 2018.

to clients on planning.”¹¹¹ Estate management as a specialized activity is defined by Thorncroft as: “The direction and supervision of an ‘interest’ in a landed property with the aim of securing the optimum return; this return need not always be financial but may be regarding social benefits, status, prestige, political.”¹¹² Estate Management practices can help reduce building cost, keep church properties longer and continuously in right conditions, prevent unnecessary lawsuits/litigations mainly relating to land, protect and project the image of the church and conform to land and property laws.¹¹³ Effective management of church facilities can enhance the work of evangelism.

Challenges of Church Estate Management

The church in recent years has witnessed tremendous growth which has also led to the continuous need to acquire and develop as well as maintain its landed properties. It is however confronted with challenges in the management of its estates. Although these challenges are many, only a few are identified:

Lack of professional estate managers in the various fields. Most conferences have not come to terms with the need to appoint full-time estate managers who are professionals in the industry. Several estate manager’s roles are therefore performed or pushed to the conference officers who may lack the competency or are constrained or saddled with other responsibilities. Other conferences appoint part-time estate managers who do not give full attention to the

¹¹¹ Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), *Policy Review*, 1974.

¹¹² Michael Thorncroft, *Principles of Estate Management* (London: Estate Gazettes, 1965), 8.

¹¹³ Alexander Agyapong, *Church Estate Management Practices: Protecting and Caring for Church Properties* (Kumasi, Ghana: Advent Family Press, 2012), 13.

numerous estate management activities. Some appointees also lack the requisite professional qualification and knowledge to spearhead the management of the church estates. Such persons work out of zeal for God's work but lack professional expertise which is very important but often neglected.

Acquisition and documentation challenges. Landed property acquisition is surrounded with issues of complexities and technicalities. Several parcels of land belonging to the church have still not been registered or proper lease acquired due to the cumbersomeness in the acquisition and documentation process. There are also situations where lands deemed to be registered contain errors such that they are no longer legally binding. For some, the process to correct them may either lead to losing the property altogether or the cost to incur can be equivalent to purchasing a new one.

Dearth of property data or information. There is little or no reliable record of the properties of the Church. This makes it difficult to cross check and monitor leases and their expiration periods in order to initiate processes for their renewal. Also, pain is not taken to properly register the various assets of the church and to properly dispose them. Additionally, there is no official and standardized document to use as a guide for the management of the properties of the Church. The paucity of property data affects estate management dealings of the church.

Indeterminate land boundaries and encroachment. Several lands which were acquired several years ago are without proper boundaries and documentation. Also few parcels with surveyed pillars or boundary monuments are lost over the years without measures to restore them. This has contributed to serious encroachment on such lands. The problems of encroachment are however not limited to only unregistered lands but also to some registered lands due to lack of proper measures to protect such lands. This has always resulted in several land disputes and conflicts.

Poor contract and project management. Some prerequisites, such as contractual agreements for some major works such as construction of churches, are ignored. Again, time is not taken to supervise works as and when they should to ensure compliance to building standards. This tends to increase costs which could have easily been avoided.

Land disputes and litigations. The church in recent years has been faced with litigations and disputes which have come about as a result of one or more of the above problems. This has brought the name of the church to the spotlight lately. In worse situations, the church would have to let go properties which it rightfully owns in order to make peace or protect the image of the church. A case in point is the Adventist-Moslem land conflict at Atebubu in 2015. It took the timely intervention of the Regional Security Council and the National Peace Council to resolve the dispute.¹¹⁴ The leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church took a rather compromising position by offering the disputed land to the Muslims community and also rejected the directive of the mediating team when they compelled the Muslims to reconstruct the mission house the angry Muslims youth gutted down. In the interest of peace and national cohesion, The SDA Church gave the disputed land to the Muslims and offered to rebuild the mission house by themselves.

The church is blessed with assets with high real estate value in several parts of the country. The complexities in the real estate sector requires that the church will have to engage people with the requisite qualification and training to spearhead the acquisition and management of its landed property. While it is impossible to totally resolve all the identified challenges confronting the church in the administration of its

¹¹⁴ Radio Ghana News, 18th February, 2015.

estate, the engagement of professionals in this technical area is urgently paramount if we really want to address them.

Promoting Church Facility Management Practices

On Sabbath 4th of March, lightning hit, killing 16 people, and injuring an additional 140 worshippers at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Gihembe, Rwanda.¹¹⁵ While we continue to mourn the dead and also commiserate with the families of the victims, the critical question that has been raised is whether or not this cataclysmic event could have been avoided if building standards and practices had been strictly followed?

In 2013, the Mission House (Parsonage) at Kokofu in the Ashanti region of Ghana was similarly struck with lightning, resulting in the destruction of electrical gadgets and leaving parts of the building severely damaged.¹¹⁶ What lessons can we learn and what facility management practices can we promote to avoid such occurrences?

Installation of Lightning Rods on Buildings

Lightning striking on buildings and destroying life and property is mainly a result of the absent of Thunder/ Lightning Arresters or Rod in the premises. If lightning strikes a house or building, it could cause considerable damage. Lightning looks for the most accessible path to travel and the installation of rods are good conductors of electrical currents. Lightning rods provide a safe passage to the ground.

¹¹⁵ Radio Ghana News, Tuesday, March 7th, 2018.

¹¹⁶ South Central Ghana Conference of SDA, Estate Office inspection on 12 March, 2013.

They are placed on the highest point of a building, and an upward leader from the rod connects from the downward stepped leader. The grounded rod then provides a safe path for the electricity to reach the ground. There is, therefore, the need to install lightning rods on all our buildings to avoid such disasters.

Provision of Insurance Cover for All Church Buildings

Another vital issue to be given priority attention is the provision of insurance cover for all church buildings. All Seventh-day Adventist buildings must be insured against fire, burglary and natural disaster with the Adventist Risk Management, Incorporated. Such buildings must regularly be valued for insurance purposes. General Conference Policy (WAD Working Policy 2014-2015), *S6015 Property Insurance*, stipulates that "Adequate insurance shall be carried on all denominational property for peril or fire, and extended courses or multi-peril coverage where applicable. It is recommended that the coverage be on the basis of replacement values on buildings and actual cash value *on content*. All building shall be covered from the commencement of construction." ¹¹⁷

This policy directive falls in line with the provisions of the Insurance Act of Ghana. The Insurance Act 2006, Act 724, requires that all private commercial buildings and individual commercial buildings under construction should be insured. The legal provisions of the act (sections 183 and 184) are compulsory, and all are expected to comply. A private commercial building under the law includes educational and medical premises, hospital facilities, shops and premises/offices for

¹¹⁷General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, *West-Central Africa Division (WAD) Working Policy* (Accra, Ghana: Adventist Press, 2014), 514.

the transaction of all forms of businesses. The compulsory insurance covers the following under-listed risks:

- A. Fire and allied perils (flood, earthquake, storm, etc.)
- B. Collapse of buildings
- C. Legal liabilities of the insured in respect of damage to properties of third parties and death/injury to third parties.

In 2016, there was a religious land dispute at Atebubu in the Bono East Region of Ghana that led to the burning down of the mission house belonging to the Seventh-day Adventist Church by a group of Moslems. An insurance valuation was carried out on the extent of damage and the report was forwarded to the General Conference for indemnification. Funds were released to reconstruct the mission house because the building had been insured. In a recent rainstorm in the middle belt of in Ghana, the entire roof of our church building at Sampa was ripped off. Inquiries made indicated that the church building had no insurance cover. And the implication is that the members will have to raise funds themselves in putting the building back into shape. The official insurance body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the Adventist Risk Management Inc., and it is expected that we ensure all our landed property.

Provision of Life Safety Systems in Denominational Buildings

General Conference Policy (WAD Working Policy 2014-2015), S6050 Fire Protection in Denominational Buildings, states in number 4, Fire Detection Systems and 5, Special Fire Protection respectively stipulate that “The installation of an approved fire detection system which signals an alarm to a central station should be considered. Such an installation greatly increases the fire protection of the building

and will also reduce the fire insurance premium,” and also “An approved hood and vent system with an automatic fire extinguishing system shall be provided for all commercial and institutional cooking equipment such as ranges, griddles, broilers, and deep fat fryers.¹¹⁸

All components of the Life Safety Systems must be inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with local laws, insurance requirements, and other applicable guidelines. Develop and implement a written program to address the inspecting, testing, and maintenance of the Fire Safety Systems, Fire Detection and Alarm Systems, Sprinkler and Fire Pump Systems, Thunder and Lightning arresters and Emergency Generators at all properties possible.

Regular Building Inspection and Maintenance

There is the need for a routine or periodic inspection of all church buildings to ensure they are well maintained. Ellen White instructed that those who have charge of our church facilities are to be provided with the necessary tools and resources in order to maintain them.¹¹⁹ Adherence to building standards, the engagement of professionals to handle constructional projects, the promotion of the culture of maintenance of our landed property and safeguarding our estates for our present use and that of posterity are vital requirements as stewards.

¹¹⁸ *WAD Working Policy* (2014), 518.

¹¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1904), 9:248-251.

Church Land Protection and Management

Land conflict is a recurring phenomenon in almost every part of the world. This is as a result of the high value and demand for land. Land cases are among the highest cases that are settled in both the regular and traditional courts. In many parts of the country, especially in our urban centres, it is common to find a piece of land being sold to three or four people (Multiple sales). As a corporate organization, and an ecclesiastical institution, for that matter, there is the need to protect and preserve our plots of land for our present use and posterity. Providing proper protection for our church land is a safe guide against litigation and encroachment.¹²⁰

As the church expands in membership, there would be the need to develop its facilities to commensurate with the growing numbers. Land is needed in this regard, to enable us to put up new church facilities. It is required when we want to establish a new school or clinic, or when we want to construct a parsonage for our pastor. Unfortunately, however, many of our churches have purchased parcels of land without going through the approved procedure for land acquisition and documentation. This has drawn the church in many parts of the country into protracted land disputes. The situation becomes complicated mainly when such plots fall under stool or family lands.¹²¹

Additionally, there are reported cases of some of our lands being taken over by other developers as a result of our failure to properly secure them. In other areas also, where there is potential for future church growth with its corresponding infrastructural changes, plans are not laid down to ensure that plots of land are

¹²⁰ Agyapong, *Church Estates Management Practices*, 13.

¹²¹ Ibid.

purchased for future development. The processes (and the institutions to deal with) for acquiring a parcel of land under the state/vested and stool lands are entirely different although they share common similarities. How can we as a church ensure that plots of land that have been handed to us by our forefathers are secured for our present use and posterity? How can we be proactive and embrace the concept of land banking to ensure that we purchase land for future use?¹²²

The following are a few methods of land protection and management:

1. Obtain proper title/document on the land

The title to a parcel of land indicates right of ownership. Always ensure that the papers (documents) covering the land are genuine. When purchasing from a stool/skin or family/clan, ensure that:

- a. The allocation note is duly signed by the caretaker chief or family head.
- b. Payment receipt is issued.
- c. Both the chief and surveyor have endorsed the site plan.
- d. A lease is obtained.

2. Documents covering the land must be kept well.

Hardly a day passes without an elder or a pastor calling at the Estates Department office to search for their lost land documents. There should be proper filling of all land documents.

3. Commence development on the land immediately the land is acquired.

- The acquired land should not be left idle. Put the land into use. When you have trip of sand on the land, or moulded blocks on the land or have excavated the foundation could all constitute development.

¹²² Agyapong, *Church Estates Management Practices*, 13.

Some of the conditions that are conspicuously spelled out on allocation notes/papers are the following:

- The allottee (the buyer of the parcel of land) will pay a grand rent.
 - The allottee will within one year commence and within two years complete the building on the plot.
 - The stool reserves the right to re-enter the plot if the above conditions are not complied with.
4. Where the land is relatively large, avoid concentrating the structure(s) in the middle or at one spot.
 - Start building on the boundaries/shoulders of the plot to prevent encroachers from entering.
 - Spread out the structures.
 5. Erect a wall around the land.
 6. Erect massive pillars with barbed wire affixed to them around the plot.
 7. Put the land into productive activity such as farming.
 8. Plant economic trees such as teak tree on the land and register with the Forestry Commission.
 9. Plant hedges to show the boundary of the land.
 10. Erect signpost, showing the ownership of the land.¹²³

¹²³ Agyapong, *Church Estates Management Practices*, 13.

Key Considerations When Buying a Parcel of Land

1. *Know the purpose of the purchase.* What is the need of the church? Is it a present or future need? The needs of the church will invariably determine the size of the plot to purchase.
2. *Ensure that the site and location are suitable for the intended purpose.*
The location or site must be ideal for the use to which the land will be put. Buying a plot of land in a waterlogged or flood prone area for a school building project means that the church will be faced with the problem of flooding, with its attendant repercussions.
3. *Ensure that the land is zoned for its intended land use.* The site plan must conform to the approved layout of the area, and zoning. Check on land use from the Town and Country Planning Department within the respective Assembly. It is a statutory requirement, as stated in the Local Government Act, (Act 462) section 49(1) that: "No physical development shall be carried out in a district without prior approval in the form of a written permit granted by the District Planning Authority."
4. Satisfy yourself as to the ownership and evidence of title to the land before effecting any form of payment. This will save the church from land disputes.
5. Search (background check) on the land to ensure that it is free from encumbrances.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Agyapong, *Church Estate Management Practices*, 15.

A Search report provides information on land at a given time. The Basic requirement for searches are:

- Two copies of a valid site plan (edged pink) should be attached to a written request.
- Payment of search fee is based on the land use and plot size.
- The applicant is informed when report is ready.

Safety and Security in Church Buildings

In the past, church buildings were opened 24/7 because they were regarded as sanctuaries where people could unrestrictedly enter to pray and to seek refuge. According to Merwin Pinkney, churches were historically not constructed with security in mind because we believed even criminals respected God's house and church leaders and designers were not concerned with protecting property.¹²⁵ Today, news about thieves breaking in and stealing valuable items in church buildings are on the increase. There has also been reported cases of handbags and mobile phones getting missing during worship times. Adequate security provision must be made before, during and after every worship service. The church house and its environs must be a place of peace and safety. It is important for worshippers to enter into the church arena and leave with a positive experience of God's protections and security. Under the leadership of Nehemiah, the walls of Jerusalem took 52 days to rebuild (Neh 4). During the course of the construction process, enemies worked to destroy the project by threatening to attack the workers. One of the interesting strategies Nehemiah employed was to station other workers with swords, spears and bows to

¹²⁵ Pinkney, *Church Facility and Property Management*, 4.

provide security for the workers behind the lower sections of the wall (Neh 4:11). The labourers worked carrying loads with one hand and held weapons with the other. The vigilance of Nehemiah should be our guide. Incidences of church house robbery, lightning attack, accidents, shooting or vandalization were uncommon in the past. Because such incidences were rare, churches were given the latitude regarding lawsuits in tortuous liability. The precincts of churches were haven for the community. Things have changed considerably today. There is the need to provide security, safety and ensure structural standards in church buildings. These are as important as feeding the congregation with the word of God.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING AND DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This section provides information about the current situation of the study areas, namely, Techiman, Brekum, and Dormaa within both the Mid-West and Mid-North Ghana Conferences of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Specifically, cultural and social structure and the economic situation of the areas are discussed. Techiman Central and Mount of Blessing were the two churches selected (which fall within the Mid-North Ghana Conference) while Brekum and Dormaa were the other two chosen churches (which also fall within the Mid-West Ghana Conferences. This Chapter will also analyze and evaluate the research questionnaire of the study. Also, the methodology adopted was a semi-structured interview guide questionnaire.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Profile of Techiman Municipality

The Techiman Municipality lies between longitudes $1^{\circ}49'$ east and $2^{\circ}30'$ west and latitude $8^{\circ}00'$ north and $7^{\circ}35'$ south. It shares common boundaries with four districts namely, Techiman North, Wenchi, and Nkronza Municipalities in the Brong-Ahafo Region and Offinso-North District in the Ashanti Region. The Techiman Municipality covers a land surface area of 649.0714 sq. Km, with a population density, of is 227.7 persons per square kilometer. This population density is very high and has implications for the socio-economic development of the Municipality. The Municipality covers a land area of 669.7 km² representing approximately 1.7% of the

land area of the then Brong-Ahafo Region. The topography of the Municipality is low lying and gently undulating. The Municipal capital, Techiman, is a nodal town, where roads from the five northern regions (Upper West, Upper East, and Northern, North East and Savanna Regions) converge. In addition, trunk roads from Sunyani, Kumasi, Wa, and Tamale all converge at Techiman, thus making it a bustling 24-hour commercial center. The dominant business activities are transportation, catering services, wholesale and retail trade, and mobile phone services.

Techiman has a lot of permanent resident ethnic groups, namely Akans/Bono, Gonjas, Dagombas, Sisalas and Mamprusis. Each group has its own local head and displays its own culture. However, the Bono are the natives of the land, with their own unique traditions and culture. The Techiman Traditional Council is the traditional authority in the Municipality. It is constituted by twenty-eight Divisional Chiefs including the “Omanhene” (Paramount Chief). The council is currently headed by the Omanhene and President of the Techiman Traditional Council, Oseadeyo Akumfi Ameyaw IV.

The major festivals are the Apour and Yam festivals. The annual Apour festival is celebrated between April and May. The major significance is that it gives the citizenry the right to come out openly to interact with those in authority. This promotes effective social cohesion and thus development.

This demonstrates democratization of the rule of law and good governance. On the other hand, the Yam festival is celebrated annually between August and September to mark the two farming seasons. It serves as thanksgiving to the Almighty God and the ancestral spirits for a bumper harvest.

It is believed that, the festival helps maintain the relationship between the ancestral spirits and the living. During these seasons, there is opportunity for investors

and other private individuals to engage in various economic activities. The Techiman Traditional Council and the local governance system basic role is to ensure peaceful co-existence among the various ethnic groups. It also promotes tourism and acts as the custodian of culture of the people.

According the Municipal Planning Co-ordinating Unit (MPCU) report “In Ghana, communities with 5,000 or more persons are classified as urban and rural areas have populations below 5,000.”¹ In addition to this, rural areas are usually characterized by poor housing, poor water and sanitation, poor road network, high poverty levels and predominant agricultural activities. Urban areas on the other hand have the features of high utility services like electricity, water waste management, better roads and telecommunication networks and the dominance of other sectors such as service, industry and commerce as opposed to agriculture.

Based on these definitions, only two (2) communities were found to be urban in the Techiman Municipality as of 2014. The remaining settlements (125) are considered rural. This implies that the urban communities take 58.4 % of the municipal population as against 41.6% in the rural areas. This implies that Techiman Municipality is urbanized in terms of population distribution. The distribution of the population is indicated in Table 1 below.

¹ Municipal Planning Coordinating Unit MPCU report, Techiman Municipality, 2014.

Table 1. Urban settlements in Techiman Municipality

Settlement	2014 Population Estimate	Percentage of Municipal Population
Techiman	85,514	51.3
Tanoso	11,805	7.1
Urban Population	97,319	58.4
Rural Population	69,311	41.6
Total	166,630	100

With respect to population in the district, the high-density areas are dotted around Techiman and the highways in the district. This is on account of the fact that people would want to enjoy higher and better social services and facilities offered by the capital. The capital alone takes 50.6 percent of the district population. This is due to the fact that a lot more people are relocating to Techiman where living standards are perceived to be better. Due to the flourishing economic, commercial, cultural and conducive political environment, a lot of people from different ethnic groups have migrated especial from Northern Ghana. The map of Techiman Municipality is indicated in Figure 1 below.

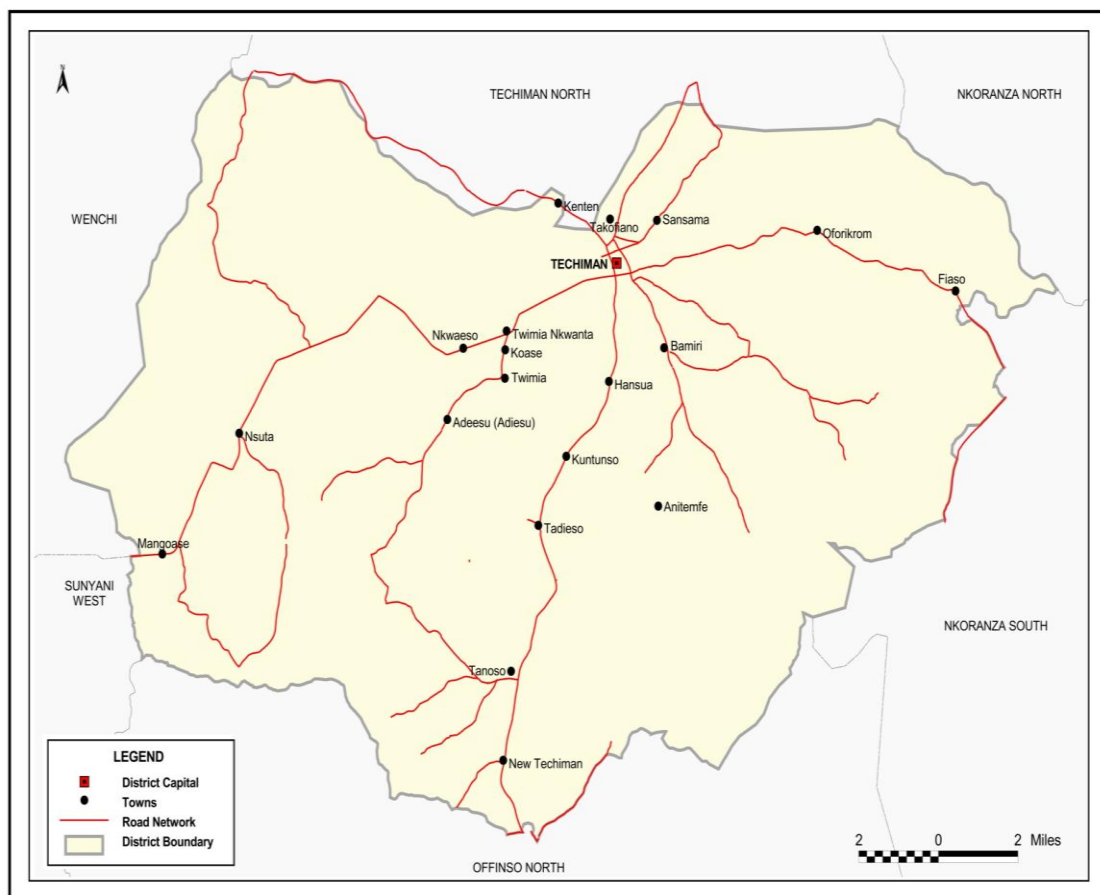


Figure 1. Techiman Municipal Map
 Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GIS.

Religious Affiliation

Available data on the religious affiliation of the population from the Ghana Statistical Service, based on the 2010 Population and Housing Census shows that about 95 percent of the total population belongs to one form of religion or the other. Out of the Municipality's total population, thus 147,788, about 69.5 percent are Christians. This comprises Pentecostal or Charismatic 21.7 percent; Catholics 18.5 percent; Protestant (Anglican, Lutheran, etc.) 14.1 percent and; other Christians 11.6 percent. A sizeable percentage of 27.4 of the population belong to the Islamic religion. The relatively high Islamic community is probably due to the high presence

of the people from the Sahelian region many of whom are Muslim. Also, 5.3 percent have no religion and traditionalists, and other religions constitute 1.3 percent.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Profile of Berekum Municipality

It lies between latitude 7°15' South and 8°00' North and longitude 2°25' East and 2°50' West. Berekum Municipality lies in the North-western corner of the Bono Region of Ghana. The Municipality covers a total land area of about 863.3q.km. It is bordered to the North-east and North-west by Tain District and Jaman South Districts respectively, South-west by Dormaa East District and to the South-east is Sunyani West District.

Berekum traditional area is made up of one paramountcy namely Asokore-Berekum with sub- chiefs such as the Kyidom, Akyempem, Apadwa, and Adonten. The dominant ethnic group is the Akan with Mole-Dagbani, Guan and other ethnic groups coexisting peacefully.

In the pre-colonial era, the Asante Kingdom, to secure its conquered territories as well as the kingdom itself, adopted a strategy of establishing security posts to act as a barrier between its enemies and the kingdom. This concept gave birth to the Asokore-Berekum state which later metamorphosed into the modern day Berekum. The name Berekum came from the Akan word 'Bere na wa Kum' literally meaning one gets game with difficulty. It was later corrupted to sound Berekum and eventually became the name of present-day Berekum (Nana Agyei-Kodie Anane – Agyei, 2012). The District map of Brekum is indicated in Figure 2 below.

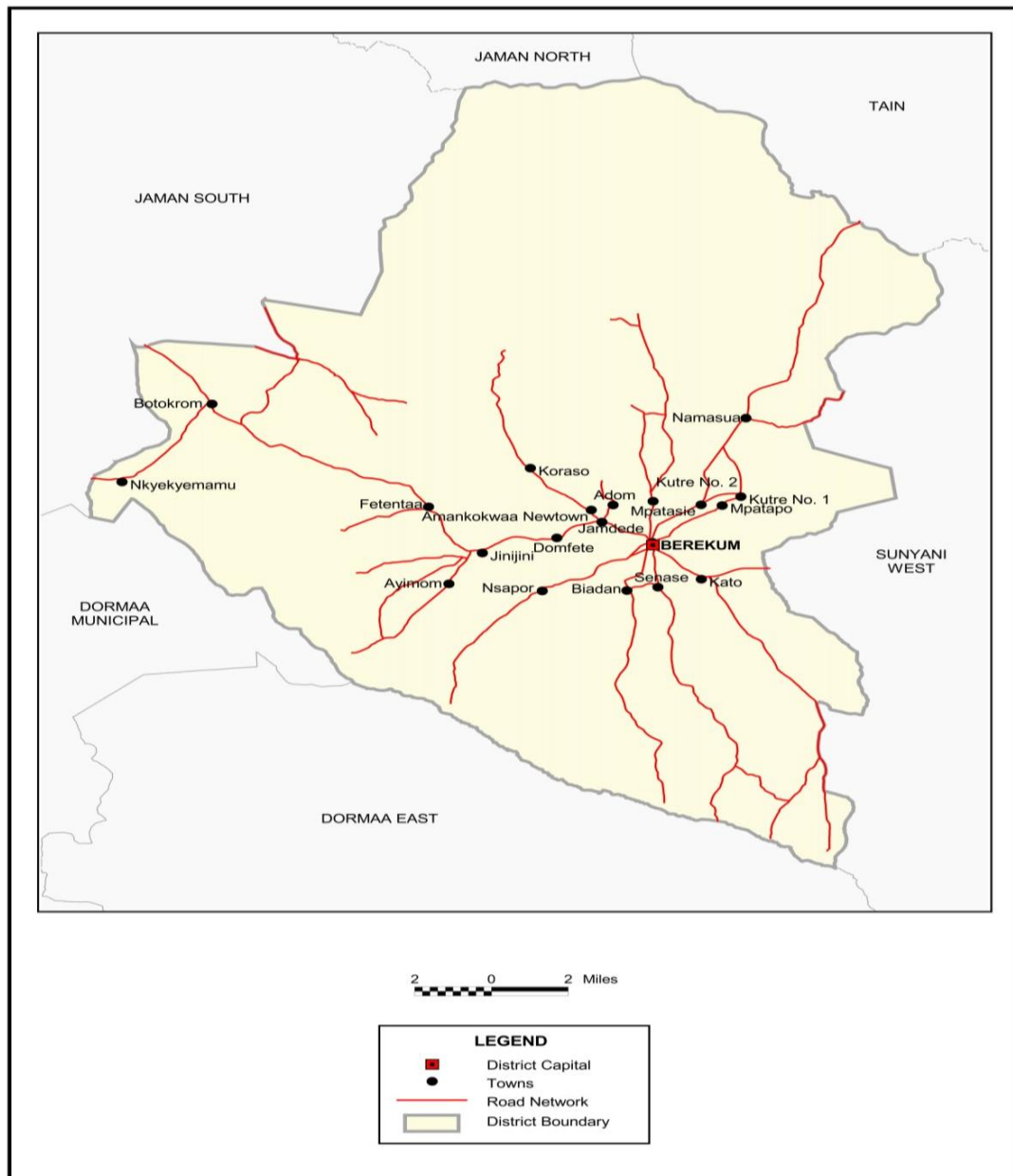


Figure 2. District Map of Berekum
 Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GIS.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Profile of Dormaa Municipality

The municipality is situated in the western part of the Bono Region. It lies within longitudes 3° West and 3° 30' West and latitudes 7° North and 7° 30' North. It is bound in the north by the Jaman South district and in the east by the Dormaa East district, in the south and south-east by Asunafo and Asutifi districts respectively, in

the west and south-west by Dormaa West and in the west and north-west by La Cote d'Ivoire. The Municipal capital is Dormaa Ahenkro, located about 80 kilometers west of the regional capital, Sunyani. The municipality has a total land area of 1,210.28 square kilometers, which is about three (3.1) percent of the entire land area of Brong Ahafo Region.

Dormaa Municipal is one of the twenty-seven (27) administrative districts within the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. It is one of the oldest Districts in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. As the population increased with associated development and expansion in necessary infrastructure, the District attained the status of a municipality and later 'gave birth' to two other districts, the Dormaa East and West districts. The district was created by the Local Government Act 1993 (Act 462).

The Dormaa Municipality falls under Dormaa Traditional Area with the paramount chief at Dormaa Ahenkro. The main festival of the people is the Kwafie festival. This festival is celebrated once in every four years (i.e., in November).

The Bonos dominate all other ethnic groups in the municipality constituting about 96 percent. Anyins are a little over two percent (2.4%), Northerners one percent and others, less than one percent (0.6) (Dormaa Municipal Assembly, 2010). The dominant language spoken is Bono-Twi. The municipality is well endowed with natural resources mainly tourists attraction sites, mineral deposits, forest and timber species, fertile soils and right climatic conditions. The mainstay of the municipality's economy is agriculture. Currently, it employs about 60% of the economically active labor force. Farming is mostly carried out on a small-scale basis. At the moment the poultry industry specifically, eggs production is operating on large scales. Livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats and grass cutters are also reared.

Available data on the religious affiliation of the population from the Ghana Statistical Service, based on the 2010 Population and Housing Census shows the distribution of the population in the municipality by religion and sex and various forms of religious affiliations. Pentecostal/Charismatic (38.8%) religious constitutes the largest group. Nearly ninety percent (88.4%) practice the Christian (Protestant, Pentecostal, and other Christian) religion. Islam recorded 6.5 percent of the population with the traditional religious affiliation (0.4%) having the least population. Both sexes have a similar pattern of association except the proportions for those without any religion that male (6.2%) far exceeds female (2.2%). The map of Dormaa Municipal is shown in Figure 3 below.

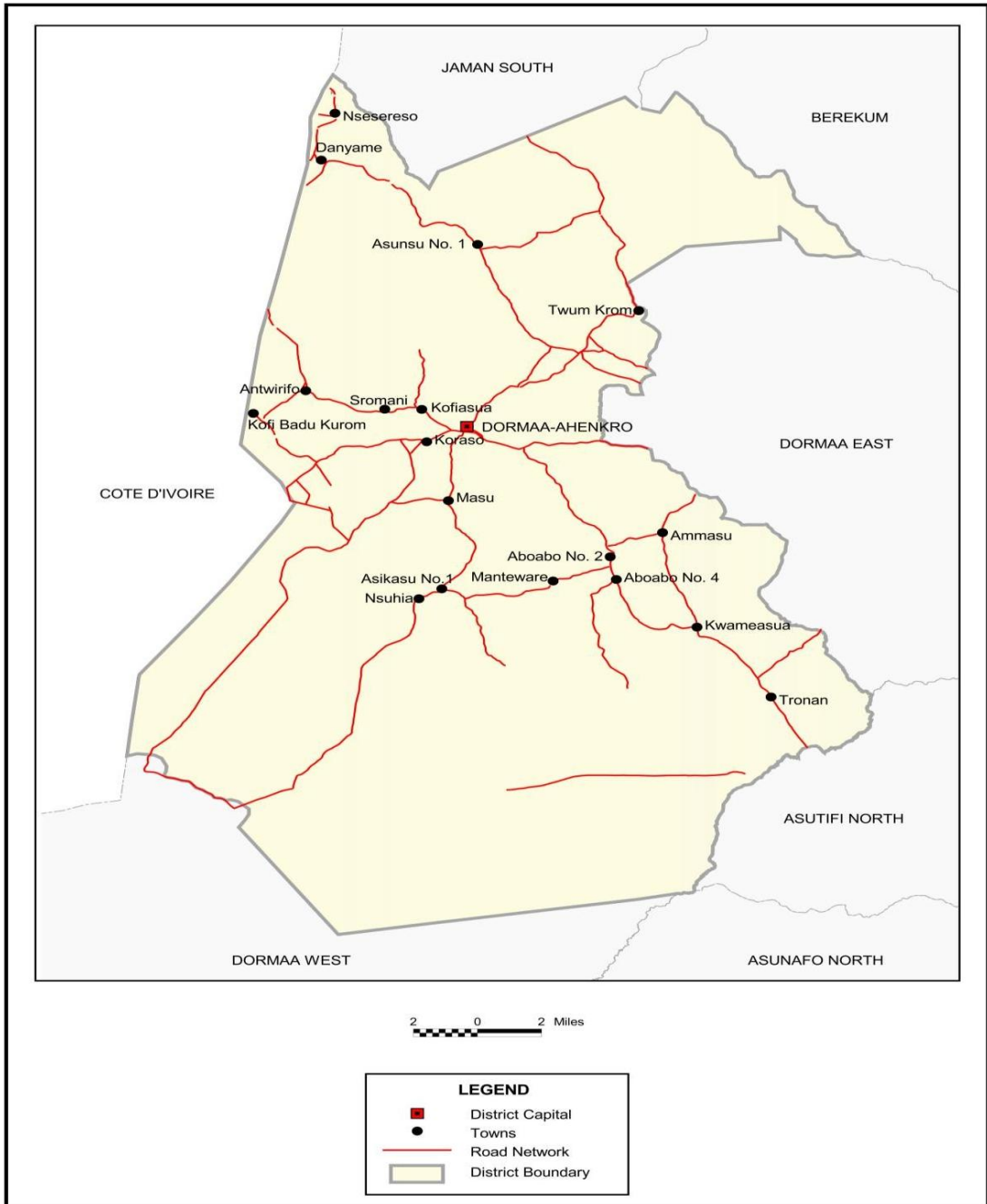


Figure 3. Map of Dormaa Municipal
 Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GIS.

Data Collection and Analysis

Religion is part of society. Human beings belong to one religious community or the other. Christians and for that matter, churches constitute the religious denominations in Ghana. Some churches including the Seventh-day Adventist Church have schools, hospitals, etc. Churches or church leaders demonstrating their stewardship in the management of church facilities are directed towards providing services to God.

Using a semi-structured interview guide questionnaire, views on the Spirit of Prophecy Counsel that deal with the construction and management of church facilities were sampled from elders and pastors from the Mid-North and Mid-West Ghana Conferences of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Bono and Bono East regions of Ghana respectively.

In all ten (10) pastors, each from the two conferences as well as two (2) elders each from Central and Mount of Blessing SDA Churches of Mid-North Ghana Conference and Berekum and Dormaa Churches of the Mid-West Ghana conference making a total of twenty-four (24) participants were randomly selected for the study. The selection of respondents for the study is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Selection of Pastors and Elders for the Study

Conference	Pastors	Elders
Mid-West Ghana	10	2
Mid-North Ghana	10	2
Total	20	4

In response to the question on the awareness of the Spirit of Prophecy (the writings of, E.G., White) which provide counsel on construction and management of church facilities, it came to light that, the pastors were aware that the Spirit of

Prophecy offers counsel on constructing and managing church facilities but the elders responded not in the affirmative. A total of 83.33% indicated “Yes” of their awareness while 16.67% indicated “No.” A pie chart is presented (in figure 4) below to illustrate the explanation above.

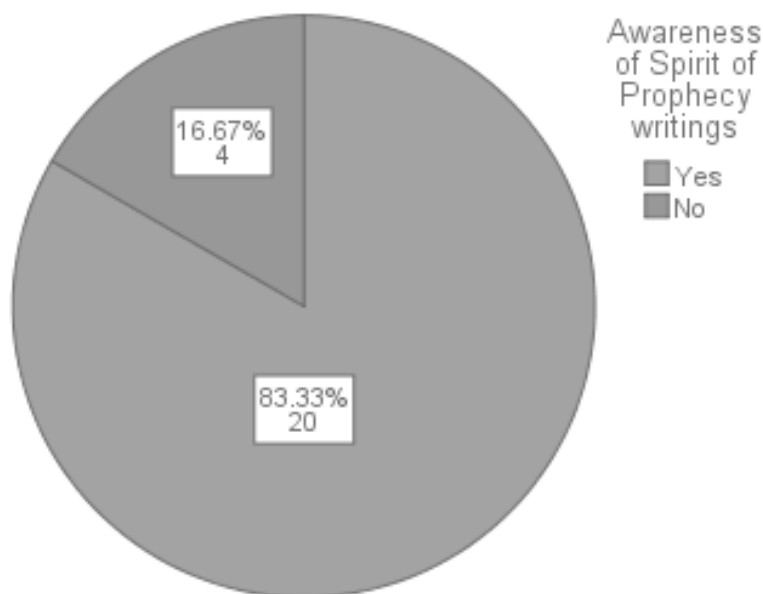


Figure 4. Survey of Awareness of Spirit of Prophecy Writings among Participants
Source: Survey data, 2018.

With most of the churches having their lands registered or well documented, a question was posed to ascertain the source of funding the construction of church facilities. In response to the question, church budgetary allocation was the primary source of funds for the construction of church facilities with some few donor support. Also, it was indicated that the local churches were responsible for the construction of their church facilities. The results are depicted in the table 3 below.

Table 3. Funding of Church Facilities

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Church budgetary allocation	22	91.7
Donor support	2	8.3
Total	24	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2018.

When asked about maintenance plan or policy for the church, the elders from the churches selected from the Mid-West Ghana Conference indicated of not having any document while the elders from the churches selected from the Mid-North Ghana Conference agreed to be having maintenance plan or policy in place. Periodic and routine maintenance were the types of maintenance arrangement employed by the churches. It was revealed that the deaconry department and project committee were responsible for the maintenance of church facilities.

In response to a question asked on the general condition of church facilities as at the day of the interview, the respondents rated the state of their facilities to be relatively good.

Seeking the opinion of respondents on factors impeding the effective management and maintenance of church facilities, the majority of them indicated inadequate funds to be the primary constraint to the effective management and maintenance of church facilities.

In respect to the level of awareness of the spirit of prophecy on the part of pastors, some questions were explicitly directed to them. The information presented below is, therefore, views from the pastors selected for this study.

There was an indication from the pastors that, the counsels on constructing and managing church facilities were so important in the church organization. The study brought to light that, the majority of the pastors did not take a course as part of

their pastoral studies on church estate and church project management although they have an option to take one semester course on Church Estate Management. In addition, it was revealed that the Pastors Manual contains information on church facility management but fortunately, the Elders Manual is silent on this. Therefore, Pastors are better placed as they have a document (policy) that guides them in constructing and managing church facilities in their churches and districts.

It was further revealed that the estate departments in the various conferences were responsible for supervising the construction and management of church facilities but are not adequately equipped in carrying out their responsibilities.

CHAPTER 4
PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION
AND EVALUATION

The purpose of this research project was to develop programmes and materials to train pastors and elders on how to employ the provisions in the Spirit of Prophecy and other church construction and management tools that address issues concerning the construction and management of church facilities.

Before the beginning of the programme, pastors were met during worker's meetings, and elders were also met during district general meetings to deliberate upon and plan for the program. The dates and times were agreed upon and a timetable was drawn. At the next meeting, the semi-structured interview guide questionnaire for the pastors were administered (See Appendix A). The researcher also administered semi-structured interview guide questionnaire to elders at the selected churches after worship as this was the suitable time most of the church elders could be reached for the exercise. (See Appendix B)

The responses given by the respondents to the questionnaires for both pastors and church elders have informed the preparation of the training materials and the timetable for the training program.

Objectives

The objectives are to:

1. Reveal to pastors and elders the Spirit of Prophecy counsel in the construction and management of church projects.

2. Introduce pastors and elders to current trends in the acquisition and documentation of land with the view to safeguarding the church from protracted land disputes and also embracing the concept of land banking for future development.
3. Examine the significance of promoting the culture of maintenance of church facilities and the need for insuring church assets.
4. Share strategies for Church building and parsonage construction and facility management.

Programme Development

An Overview of the Project

Ministers and elders have the responsibility of nurturing and fostering the spiritual growth of their members. They also are given the responsibility of protecting and caring for church facilities. This project is to develop tools and modules that enable them to care, protect and effectively manage the assets of the church, as they contribute to the growth of the church.

Programme Content

The program had four training sessions at different periods within a year. All the four pieces of training were organized during elders' and pastors' council for both Mid-North and Mid -West Ghana Conferences in Techiman and Sunyani respectively. The first training session started on the 9th of January 2016. The second training session began on the 22nd March 2016. The third started on the October 16th, 2016 while the fourth started on 4th December 2016 (see 4 Tables). The programme evaluation was done after 14 months of implementation.

Table 4. Time Table for the Implementation of Project

Date	Activity
9 th January 2016	First Training Session
22 nd March 2016	Second Training Session
October 16 th , 2016	Third Training Session
4 th December 2016	Fourth Training Session
January 2018	Evaluation of the Program

Training Pastors and Elders

In chapter two, the significance of employing the counsels in the Spirit of Prophecy as well as the need to be concerned of issues such as maintenance of church facilities, safety, security land acquisition, and management were explored. When pastors and elders are exposed to these teaching, they will be better equipped in managing the properties of the church. Additionally, pastors and elders are stewards, and this training will also assist them in understanding their role as stewards.

The second advantage is that after training the elders, they would be in a better position to train or transfer the knowledge gained to their church members.

Lastly, this training would significantly contribute to the evangelistic drive of the church, particularly in the areas of creating a positive image for the church as well as the assimilation of new members.

Delivery Methods

The methods to be used in delivering the lessons include lecture, group discussion, role play, and field practice.

Teaching and Learning Materials. The following materials are going to be used to enhance teaching and learning. They include A4 paper sheets, pens, and pencils, chalkboard, chalk, cardboard, felt pens of different colors, duster, and wooden pointer.

Some modules for training pastors and elders workshop on Spirit of Prophecy counsel on construction and managing church facilities (with slide presentation).

Workshop outline:

Introduction

1. Spirit of Prophecy and church properties: White's concerns about land for development and posterity: Loma Linda University, Madison College, Avondale etc. The concept of land, (traditional, statutory, economic perspectives) ownership, possession and occupation of land; Interest in land; land as a trinity of right; types of land and leasehold/freehold agreements; terms of leasehold agreements and expirations; Legislations affecting land transactions in Ghana; The acquisition and documentation and registration of land; methods of land protection (from land encroachment and litigation),

Case study: Atebubu religious land conflict involving Adventists and Moslems.

2. Critical considerations in buying a parcel of land; Avoiding land conflict and importance of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism in Land Transactions; the concept and significance of land banking.
3. Church facility maintenance. Importance of the culture of maintenance;

Types and procedures for maintenance of facilities

4. Planning and Building Church Building Facilities from the Prophecy perspectives

Key considerations; Design and the brief, making it disability friendly, funding, mobilizing and managing the project from start to finish; the concept of the

5. Insurance of church property. Key issues in the Insurance Act, 2006-Act 724; WAD Insurance Policy and Adventist Risk Management Inc.

Sample presentation on land acquisition and documentation

1. Know the purpose of the purchase. What is the need of the church? Is it a present or future need? The need of the church will invariably determine the size of the plot.
2. Ensure that the site and location are suitable for the intended purpose. The location or site must be suitable for the use to which the land will be put. Buying a plot of land in a waterlogged area for a school building project means that the church will be faced with the problem of flooding, with its attendant repercussions.
3. Ensure that the land is zoned for its intended land use. The site plan must conform to approved layout of the area, and zoning. Check on land use from the Town and
4. Country Planning Department within the respective Assembly. It's a statutory requirement, as stated in the Local Government Act, (Act 462) section 49(1) that: "No physical development shall be carried out in a district without prior Approval in the form of written permit granted by the District Planning Authority"
5. Satisfy yourself as to the ownership and evidence of title to the land before effecting any form of payment.
6. Search (background check) on the land to ensure that it is free from encumbrances.

A Search report provides information on land at a given time.

The basic requirement for searches

- Two copies of a valid site plan (edged pink) should be attached to a written request.

- Pay search fee which, on the land use and plot size.
- The applicant is informed when to report to search report.

Caution on Acquisition of Land

State and Vested lands: The Public is required to deal with the Lands Commission.

Stool lands: The Public is required to deal with the appropriate stools and elders.

Obtain a site plan from the proposed lessors/assignors and conduct a search to verify from Lands Commission whether it is State land, Vested land, Stool land or affected by any recorded transaction. Upon payment of drink money, allocation Note, site plan, receipt and other relevant documents covering the land must be collected.

Post-Programme Evaluation

Several methods such as inspection to churches, interviews of pastors and elders, workshop presentations were used to find out how pastors, elders and church members have embraced or understood the Spirit of Prophecy counsel in church estate management. (See attached pictures).

During the inspections, it was discovered that most of the churches are taking issues about security, safety, and maintenance seriously, as they have regular maintenance schedules. Other churches are taken steps to insure their churches against perils. Churches are also in the process of perfecting their land titles to have full ownership and occupational right to their church lands. Again pastors in training are being educated on the Spirit of Prophecy counsel on church construction and management. (See attached pictures). This is a positive development because these pastors will apply these principles and ideas when they finally go to the field.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The whole idea of church building originated with God himself who spoke to Moses in the wilderness and said: “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). It is good news for fallen men to hear that our God desires to live in our midst, to commune with us despite the entrance of sin into the world. The Spirit of Prophecy counsels that there should be a sacred spot like the sanctuary of old where God is to meet with His people and that “Churches should be built where every Sabbath, the people may assemble to worship God and to hear the gospel.”

It is reported that Ellen G. White, caught up in vision, occasionally saw buildings yet to be constructed and was instructed as to her role in instructing those who were to work in that future building. Moreover, Douglas, in his classification of the various visions and dreams Ellen G. White received, classified one of them under the heading “Visions of buildings yet to be constructed.” A critical assessment of the Spirit of Prophecy shows that it offers several counsels in the construction and management of church facilities. These counsels include land acquisition and documentation, church facility construction, maintenance and general church facility management.

The Spirit of prophecy warns the people of God that the force of truth loses much of its influence because of the surroundings of the houses of worship. The house

of God is to stand as a symbol of the respect due to God. Church facilities are silent witnesses to the truth. They communicate to others the character and symbol of our God. Therefore, they must be neat, tasteful and inviting. An attractive building, visible from a well-traveled access road, comprises a perpetual and positive advertisement for the church and what it stands for.

Conclusion

Church facilities are important assets that contribute immensely to the mission of the church. They are also the physical home of the congregation and must, therefore, be treated with care and respect. Also church Elders and Pastors should be given the in-depth knowledge for maintaining these facilities. The Bible shows four major building Examples; these examples demonstrate God's particularity in the construction of places of worship. The contribution of Church buildings to the Gospel Commission cannot be over-emphasized. Not only do these facilities provide a place of assembly for worship and an avenue for the assimilation of Church members, they are also the reflection of the presence of God in communities.

The Spirit of Prophecy provides counsel on the acquisition of land, by taking into consideration the purpose of the acquisition, the size of the land and the price. Ellen White was personally involved in the acquisition of land/property for the establishment of several churches as well as educational institutions. Other key issues that the spirit of prophecy provide guidance in the construction and management of church facilities are: design of the buildings, safety, culture of maintenance and financing their construction.

Recommendations

After carefully examining the Spirit of Prophecy counsel in this study, the following seven recommendations are made:

1. The Spirit of Prophecy offers a number of counsels including land acquisition, maintenance culture, location of church buildings, ventilation, design, and financing the construction of church facilities. Church leadership must consult the Spirit of Prophecy in their decisions with regards to the construction and management of church facilities.
2. As the church expands in membership, there would be the need to expand its facilities to commensurate with the growing numbers. Land is needed in this regard, to enable us put up new church facilities. The whole concept of land banking must be embraced, by buying and preserving land for future use.
3. The culture of maintenance should be promoted, ensuring that church facilities are visibly appealing and inviting. There is the need for the implementation of maintenance programmes for all churches. Clean-up programme inside and outside the precincts of churches must be organized regularly with full participation of members.
4. Consideration should be given to the location of church facilities, by taking into cognizance centrality and accessibility by members and those to be won.
5. The official insurance body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the Risk Management Incorporated and it is recommended that all church facilities should be insured. Addition, the policy provision on, security,

and safety of denominational buildings must be enforced by church leaders.

6. There is the need to involve professionals in the building industry to offer guidance and another services before, during and after the construction of church facilities. It was observed during visits to the churches and interaction sessions some churches had no building plans, structural designs other relevant documents to ensured structural integrity and architectural aesthetics of the buildings.
7. Periodic workshops must be organized to train pastors and elders on critical issues such as land acquisition and documentation and the need to embrace the concept of land banking for future development of the church. Additionally, pastor receiving pastoral education must take a course in estate and project management to adequately equip them to handle church building and facility management issues.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INSTRUMENTS

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES

Dear Respondent,

I am conducting a research project as part of requirement of my studies at the Adventist University of Africa (A.U.A). This questionnaire is designed to find your views on the **Spirit of Prophecy Counsel that deal with the construction and management of Church facilities.**

Your candid responses to the questionnaire below will be much appreciated. Your identity will not be disclosed whatsoever in the research process.

Thank you for sharing your ideas.

Research topic:

A study on Spirit of Prophecy Counsel that deal with the construction and management of Church facilities.

To be answered by Church Pastors/ Administrators

1. Are you aware that the Spirit of Prophecy (the writings of E. G. White) provides counsel on constructing and managing church facilities?
Yes No
2. In your opinion, are the counsels on constructing and managing church facilities a key consideration in your church organization. Yes No
3. Is there any department or unit responsible for the construction and managing church facilities? Please state _____
4. Did you take a course as part of your pastoral studies (seminary) on Church Estate Management and Church Project management?
5. Have you registered or documented your church lands? Yes No
6. Do you have a document (policy) that guides your organization in constructing and managing its buildings? Yes No

7. If there is an Estate department in your organization, does it undertake regular inspecting of the church facilities? Yes NO
8. If Yes, how long has it been in operation? Please specify
9. Is that department effective and efficient? Yes No
10. How is construction of church facilities funded by your organization?
11. **Organizational budgetary allocation :** **Church budgetary Allocation:**
Donor Support: **Others,** please
specify_____

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES

Dear Respondent,

I am conducting a research project as part of the requirement of my studies at the Adventist University of Africa (A.U.A). This questionnaire is designed to find your views on the **Spirit of Prophecy Counsel that deal with the construction and management of Church facilities.**

Your candid responses to the questionnaire below will be much appreciated. Your identity will not be disclosed whatsoever in the research process.

Thank you.

Research topic:

A study on Spirit of Prophecy Counsel that deal with the construction and management of Church facilities.

To be answered by church Elders

Name of Church: _____

The series of questions are designed to obtain responses from church Elders on the topic stated above.

1. Are you aware that the Spirit of Prophecy (the writings of E.G. White) provides counsel on constructing and managing church facilities? Yes () No ()
2. What are the ages of your church buildings?
Old age (above 50 years () Medium age 20 -50 years () young age ()
3. Have you registered/ well documented your church land? Yes() No ()
4. How is construction of church facilities funded in your organization?
Organizational budgetary allocation () church budgetary Allocation () Donor Support () Others, please specify _____
5. Who is responsible for constructing the church facilities?
Local church () Conference ()
6. Does the church have a maintenance plan or policy?
Yes () No ()
7. If Yes, does the plan extend beyond three (3) to five (5) years? Yes () No ()
8. What types of maintenance arrangement do you have in place?
Periodic () Routine () Periodic () None ()
9. Who is responsible for the maintenance?

Please specify _____

10. What factors in your opinion is impeding the effective management and maintenance of church facilities? Please tick as appropriate.

Lack of maintenance culture

Inadequate funds

Bureaucratic reporting process

Poor construction/defects in buildings

Non-response to maintenance request

11. How will you classify the general condition of your church facilities?

Good fairly good Bad Very Bad

12. Do you have insurance cover for your church buildings? Yes No

APPENDIX B

SUPPORTING/ATTACHED DOCUMENTS FOR TRAINING

A. SERVICE REQUEST

NO.

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SEVENTH –DAY ADVENTIST

NAME OF CONFERENCE/CHURCH:

ESTATES/PROJECTS DEPARTMENT:

SERVICE REQUEST			
	DATE IN:	TIME IN:	CHURCH:
REQ. BY	NAME:	SIGN:	POSITION:
PROBLEM REPORTED:			
SERVICE INVOLVED			
TAKEN BY:	NAME:		

B. JOB CARD

SEVENTH –DAY ADVENTIST

NAME OF CONFERENCE/CHURCH:

ESTATES/PROJECTS DEPARTMENT:

ESTATES/PROJECTS	JOB NO.
ITEM DESCRIPTION	DATE:
PROPERTY NO.	
LOCATION	INSPECTED BY
ACTIVITIES	
	WORK TYPE
	REPAIRS
	NEW CONS.

Conditions of Purchase

1. Definitions

Company: means the Purchaser.

Goods: means the supply and delivery of the goods, materials or equipment in accordance

With the company's order.

Seller: means the person, firm to whom the company's order is addressed.

Contract: means the agreement between the company and the seller for the supply of goods.

2. Payment: Net cash against other proof of delivery unless otherwise agreed

3.Prices: All prices are fixed for the duration of the contract and unless otherwise agreed on any price escalation.

4.Quality and description: The goods shall conform to the description, be of a sound material.

5. Indemnity: The seller shall at his own expense make good by repair or replacement all defect attributable to faulty design which appears in the goods within 12 months from the date of delivery.

6. Title to goods: Title to the goods passes to the company on delivery to the specified place of delivery as requested by the company.

7. Law of the Contract: The contract shall be subjected to the laws of Ghana.

Supplier Signature Purchaser Signature

E. PROJECT AUTHORISATION FORM

PROJECT AUTHORIZATION

Client.....

.....

Scope of work.....

.....

.....

Source documents.....

.....

.....

Project number (to be entered by accounts department)

Project

Title.....

Project manager

(name).....

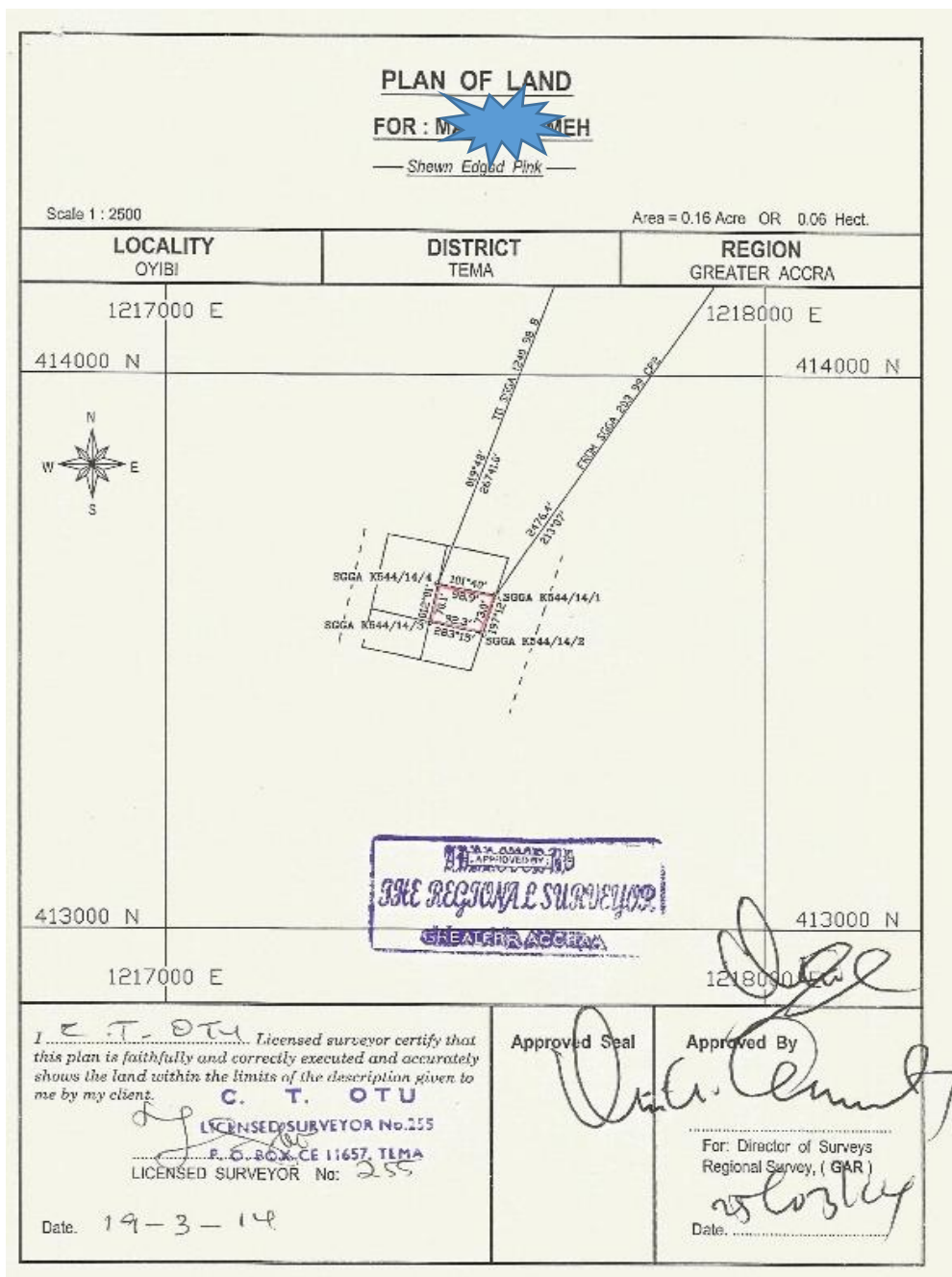
Signature..... Approved..... (Project Committee/Project Manager) (Accounts Dept./ Treasurer)					

G. MEETING SHEET

MEETING ACTION SHEET		Project reference number
Date..... Time..... Place.....		
Those to attend:		
Meeting called by (Chairperson):		
Purpose of meeting and agenda:		
Decision agreed:		
Actions agreed:	Action by whom:	Action by when:

APPENDIX C

CADASTRAL SITE PLAN FOR LAND REGISTRATION



APPENDIX D

PICTURES

PICTURES OF TRAINING WORKSHOPS AND PROGRAMMES



CHURCH BUILDING WITHOUT INSURANCE COVER



CHURCH BUILDING WITH INSURANCE COVER



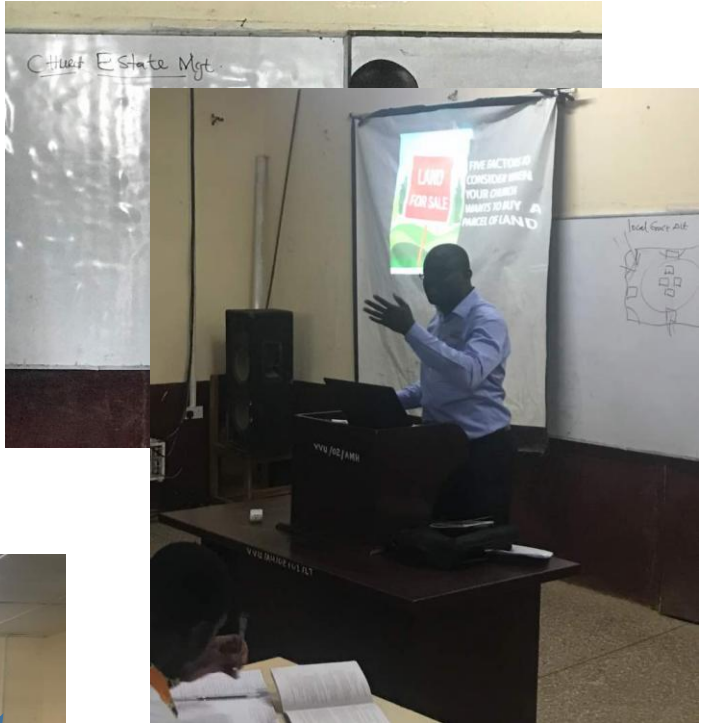
INSTALLATION OF LIGHTNING ARRESTER ON BUILDINGS TO PREVENT STRIKE



INVOLVING PROFESSIONALS ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT FOR TECHNICAL ADVICE TO CHURCHES



RESEARCHER DELIVERING A LECTURE TO PASTORS IN TRAINING



RESEARCHER ADDRESSING CHURCH ELDERS AND PASTORS ON CHURCH BUILDING AND MANAGEMENT
RESEARCHER ADDRESSING CHURCH ELDERS AND PASTORS ON CHURCH BUILDING AND MANAGEMENT



RESEARCHER EXAMINING ELLEN G. WHITE MANUSCRIPTS AT THE VAULT OF THE E.G. WHITE RESEARCH CENTER, BABCOCK UNIVERSITY NIGERIA



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2002 KNUST BSc. (Land Economy)
2006 Babcock University PGD Pastoral Ministry
2011 Institute of Commercial Management Diploma Project management
2012 University of Cape Coast MSc. Land Policy and Administration

OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE

2007 - Campus Chaplain (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, KNUST, Kumasi)
2008-2009: Acting Military Chaplain 4th Battalion, Kumasi
2009 – 2011: District Pastor, Obogu, Asante- Akyem South
2011-2014: Estate and Project Director (South Central Ghana Conference)
2014 - 2016: Assistant Chaplain/ Director of Works (Valley View University, Techiman Campus)
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