

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry
Emphasis in Mission

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: CONTEXTUALIZED FUNDRAISING FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS IN
ZONE B SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, ZIMBABWE**

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Varied methods of raising resources for special projects are a challenge in the Central Zimbabwe Conference. As a result of such approaches, there have been delays in completion of these projects. Just as an example, the church under this research has been trying to come up with a building for the past twelve years yet, they are still at foundation level. This has been compounded by the growth rate of membership in the Union that averages 45,000 baptisms per annum in the past ten years making it difficult to cope with providing houses of worship for the expanding membership. This challenge motivated the researcher to provide a possible solution to the problem.

The research method used was the qualitative approach with a focus group discussion. The focus group was composed of twelve members representative of the population under study. The Zone B church is composed of 345 baptized members.

This study confirmed the existence of the varied approaches to raising resources for special projects as practiced by Zone B church. This was a church established in 2003 and acquired a piece of ground to build a church in 2004 and yet up to September 2016 the building was still at foundation level. The research established approximately eight similarities between giving in the Shona and Ndebele religious experiences, which are similar to giving from a biblical context. Giving under that context is done consciously and unconsciously. The major differences being that in the traditional belief, giving had one of its objectives as the appeasement of gods so that they would favor their subjects. Yet from a Biblical point of view, God does not need to be appeased. He already loves His people and, in return, they respond to such love.

The study revealed that no emergency in the life of the church should be justification for raising resources through unbiblical means. Even during the building of the Sanctuary in Biblical Old Testament times, there was no manipulation for people to give to God; people were asked to bring freewill offerings according to what one had. One other component that was emphasized in the study was where raising resources for special projects presented an opportunity to raise member spirituality, which is essential to meaningful giving.

Coming to the intervention, the researcher used the information acquired through both the theological and literature review and the focus group to address the challenge of varied methods of giving in zone B church. The results of the intervention were that out of the 37 small groups that were formed; sixteen met weekly as was suggested by the researcher. The number of members who give without having to wait for special programs and appeals rose from fifteen to 49 out of a membership of 345 within a period of three months. Therefore, it can be concluded

that the intervention addressed the challenge of varied methods of raising resources for special projects in the Zone B church.

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SEVENTH – DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, ZIMBABWE

A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

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by

Micah Choga

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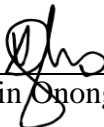
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
 CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Description of the Ministry Context	1
Membership	2
Institutions.....	3
The Nurture of the Church.....	5
Statement of the Problem	6
Statement of Purpose	6
Justification.....	6
Delimitations	7
Methodology and Procedures	7
Expectations	11
 2. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS	 13
The Concept of Giving in the Old Testament	13
Concept of Giving and the Feasts	14
Concept of Giving from David’s Experience	15
The Concept of Giving in the New Testament.....	17
Project Giving in the Old Testament.....	21
Giving for Special Projects in the Old Testament	21
Moses and Special Project Giving	21
Response of the Children of Israel to Special Project Giving	26
David and Special Project Giving	30
The king’s example.....	31
The people’s response.....	33
Worship and giving in David’s example.....	35
Giving and the Repairing of the Temple under King Joash	37
The Contributions for the Rebuilding of Jerusalem	38
The New Testament and Special Project Giving.....	39
The Response of the Macedonians.....	41
Paul’s View on Giving	45
Ellen White and Special Project Giving.....	48
Appeals for Giving	48
Popular Methods of Appeal	49
Effect of Popular Appeals.....	50
An Offering from the Heart	51
The Plan of Moses.....	52
Counsel on Raising Funds	52

Teachings from the Experience of David	54
Summary	54
3. LITERATURE REVIEW	56
The Concept of Giving.....	57
A Brief History about the Concept of Giving	57
Concept of Giving in Shona and Ndebele Cultures in Zimbabwe	60
Contemporary Authors on the Concept of Giving	63
Adventists and the Concept Giving.....	67
Varied Methods of Fund-raising.....	70
A Theological Approach to Fund-raising.....	77
Giving as Worship	82
Importance of Leadership Example in Giving	86
Goal Setting and Giving.....	87
Visitation and Giving.....	88
Regularity in Giving.....	89
Adventist Writers on Special Project Giving	90
Why People Give	93
Discoveries on Giving from this Review	95
Summary	96
4. DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE DESIGN	98
Description of the Macro-context.....	99
Zimbabwe Union Conference	99
Giving in the Traditional Context	100
Description of the Micro-context.....	104
Central Zimbabwe Conference	104
A Brief History of Zone B Church.....	105
Research Design	106
Type of Research.....	107
Appropriateness of Study.....	110
Population Sample.....	111
Selection of Participants	113
Criteria for Sampling	114
Instrumentation	116
Data Collection Procedures	117
The Procedure	117
The Focus Group Discussion	119
Presentation and Description of Findings	120
Analysis of Data.....	130
Designing of Intervention.....	134
Implementation of the Strategy	137
Limitations.....	138
Summary	139
5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION	140
Intervention Implementation	140
Objectives of the Research	141

Concept of Giving Implementation	142
Areas of Similarity	145
Merit Driven Giving	146
Spontaneous Giving.....	147
Voluntary Giving.....	148
Community	149
Worship.....	151
God as Provider and Protector	153
The Background of the Traditional Zimbabwean.....	154
Objective of the Seminars	157
Steps Followed in the Seminar Presentations.....	162
Questions Considered.....	162
Reaction of Members to the Questions.....	164
An Analysis.....	165
Intervention Steps Followed.....	165
Final Evaluation.....	166
Outcomes of the Intervention	171
Summary	173
 6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 174
Summary	174
Conclusion.....	178
Recommendations.....	180
Recommendations to the CZC	180
Recommendations to the Zone B Pastor.....	181
Recommendations to the Church	182
 APPENDICES.....	 184
A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	185
B. OUR RESPONSE TO GOD	186
C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.....	188
D. REASONS FOR CHOICE OF STUDY.....	189
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 191
VITA.....	197

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Ministry Context

The Zimbabwe Union Conference (ZUC) is the national administrative headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in Zimbabwe. The Union is composed of six Conferences namely, Central, East, North, North West, South and West Zimbabwe Conferences. The Central Zimbabwe Conference (CZC) had a membership of 253,048 by December 2013.¹ Its headquarters are in the city of Gweru. It comprises of mainly the Midlands, Masvingo, part of Mashonaland and part of Matebeleland North provinces. The CZC was the focus territory of this research.

The SDA Church started in Zimbabwe in 1894, and has been in operation since then. Members in this territory are very involved in the spreading of the gospel. All the six Conferences have grown to a level where it has become a challenge to have houses of worship for all the believers. The situation is compounded by the fact that approaches that are used in fundraising for special projects have contributed to delays in the completion of church buildings. Such approaches vary from manipulative approaches to designated days for raising resources just to name a few. Resulting in giving only taking place on special designated days for projects. Further, that some members may choose not to support projects that they do not appreciate. Hence some of the churches meet in rented apartments. The scenario creates a

¹ Dumisani Masikize, *Statistical Report*, Gweru, Zimbabwe: Central Zimbabwe Conference, December 31, 2013.

challenge to the leadership to give guidance in this critical area of the life of the church.

There is a total of 140 office workers distributed as follows: 27 in the Central Zimbabwe Conference, 46 in the East Zimbabwe Conference, 35 in the West Zimbabwe Conference and 45 for ZUC. In terms of academic qualifications, the office staff is composed of 45 persons who hold a bachelor's degree, 15 holding master's degrees and three doctoral degrees. There is a need to empower the workers to be able to service the territory more effectively through a qualified workforce. Thus, this staff is responsible for the work in the union territory.

Membership

From its inception to the year 2003, the church had grown to 300,000 members.² It took 109 years to reach the stated figure. Yet it has taken only 10 years to increase the growth with an additional 450,000 members. As of December 2013, the membership stood at 750,000³ out of a population estimated at 13,061,239 according to the 2012 census report.⁴ During the five-year period, from November 2012 to November 2017, the church aims to increase with an additional 300,000 believers, which represents an average of 60,000 baptisms per annum. With this rapid growth, it has become a big challenge to have adequate houses of worship, hence the challenge to use appropriate methods to raise funds for the construction of church buildings. In some areas churches are less than a kilometer from each other. With

² Zimbabwe Union Conference, *Statistical Report*, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, December 31, 2003.

³ Zimbabwe Union Conference, *Statistical Report*, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, December 31, 2012.

⁴ ZimStat, *Zimbabwe Population Census*, Harare: Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, Accessed 20 February 2017, http://www.zimstat.co.zw/sites/default/files/img/National_Report.pdf.

such statistics, it has become a challenge to sustain the programs of the churches through giving methods that do not promote the faith and trust of members in God. With the challenge of matching the growth with the need of housing the worshippers, the Church leadership has to negotiate with school heads and leaders of other denominations to rent their buildings so that the worshipers may have a place of meeting every Sabbath.

With this large membership and growth, there are only a total of 200 pastors out of which 157 are pastoring districts. This translates to a ratio of 4,777 members per pastor. With such a ratio, it becomes clear that the work of the Lord remains in the hands of the laity. This ratio is an indication that an intervention is needed quickly to empower the local church leadership in a way that will preserve the unity of the church.

Looking at the territory and how the churches are spread throughout the Union, it calls for good strategies to keep the church focused on its mission to all the people of Zimbabwe.

Institutions

In the area of education, there are a total of 91 primary and 44 secondary schools. These institutions employ 1,432 teachers at elementary level and 505 teachers at the secondary level. Solusi University has a staff compliment of 300 workers.⁵ This is the place where all the church workers across the Union territory get their training. One area that still poses a challenge is that with all the schools under the organization, there is no single college to train teachers who serve in these centers of learning. Regardless of having all these schools, the training of teachers is solely

⁵ Felix Njini, *Zimbabwe Union Conference Education Report*, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church December 2016.

dependent on government colleges to satisfy this need in the educational institutions. Consequently, this situation looks unhealthy in an environment where the church is growing very rapidly.

Coming to healthcare institutions, there are eleven clinics spread across the union territory. Two dental clinics, seven medical clinics and one orthodontic clinic with a staff compliment of 53 workers. The two dental practices have only six workers. With the large membership, the health institutions only serve a small part of the constituency. There is still a great need in the area of health to expand for the sake of the visibility of the church that believes and preaches the health message.

Coming to humanitarian work and the response to the plight of the communities, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) serves as a response agent to the needy. The work of ADRA is growing stronger in the Union, resulting in some donor agencies withdrawing their support from some of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in favor of ADRA. That is actually taking away the funding they had pledged for the other organizations and channeling it to ADRA to complete the identified projects.

In response to the plight of the orphans and children that are abandoned by their parents, there are two orphanages in the Union territory. The total staff serving the two institutions is 43. The two entities serve the orphans from birth to 9 years.

In the area of literature evangelism, the Adventist Book Centre (ABC) whose main office is based in Bulawayo (the second largest city in Zimbabwe) serves the territory. There are 13 sub-branches spread throughout the country that serve as outlets to provide an easy access for the members to spiritual materials. To support the ABC, there is a strong workforce of men and women who spread the gospel through the distribution and sale of Christian literature. A total of 527 of such men

and women, do this work on a full-time basis in the entire territory, supported by 201 who are still practicing and training to be full time evangelists of the spread of the gospel through literature. Through the spread of such writings in the Union, evangelism is enhanced making it easier to reach some difficult classes of people in society. The work of God in this territory is fairly strong, supported by a laity that has a desire to enhance the mission of the church.

The Nurture of the Church

The church is God's agent for the salvation of human beings. It is a representative of the kingdom of God on planet earth. The whole purpose of its existence is to proclaim to a dying world the risen and coming Savior. It is composed of those called from the world into joining the worldwide family of believers. It is a community of people that heralds the second coming of Christ, thus giving hope to the hopeless. Thus, the church has an ambassadorial function among the people of the world who surround it. It plays a reconciliatory role, that of connecting the world with Christ, thus connecting human beings with their fellow men. In fulfilling this purpose, the organization needs to remain focused on its mission.

The church in Zimbabwe is composed of different nationalities and people groups. It has a task to remain united under the leadership of Christ. Thus it becomes critical for the church not to compromise its doctrines that assist in maintaining the oneness that is essential to its survival. Such doctrinal harmony serves the purpose of uniting the church in its outreach endeavors. Hence the need for structures of worship that contributes to its effectiveness in the communities to be reached. The construction of structures when done from a spiritual angle can assist in the fostering of the unity of the church.

Statement of the Problem

Varied methods of raising resources for special projects are a challenge in the CZC, which has contributed, to delays in the completion of such projects. This has been compounded by the growth rate of membership in the Union that averages 45,000 per annum in the past ten years making it difficult to cope with providing houses of worship for the believers. As a result of this challenge some of the members have since chosen not to participate in giving while others complain about the approaches as being unbiblical. These challenges necessitate a research to respond to the problem.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to research and propose a sound Bible-based method of fund raising for special projects that unites the church in its mission. As a result, biblically based strategies for financing of special projects in Zone B church in Zimbabwe were developed, implemented and evaluated.

Justification

The CZC took a decision to implement a spiritually centered plan of giving in the whole Conference. The implementation of the plan will be according to the zones in this organization. That is why the researcher's motivation for this study was based on the desire of the CZC to see the special projects well-resourced through methods that enhance the generosity of church members.

Secondly, the researcher has witnessed churches struggling to raise funds for special projects leading the leadership to come up with varied methods of resourcing such programs. Therefore, this dissertation seeks to discover a method that considers the growth of the faith of members connecting the aspect of giving to worship. It also seeks to develop a spiritually based program to be implemented in the Zone B church.

The subject of giving for special projects is one that has not yet received adequate attention in the ranks of the church. It is for this reason that this research was a response to a need that remains unaddressed in the Zimbabwean SDA church. This is a challenge that demands a leadership response that is biblical based. Such a research provides guidance to the church on raising funds for special projects

Delimitations

While the challenge of raising money for special projects like church buildings is common in the ZUC territory, this study focused on one Zone B SDA church in Gweru. It took into account all the 345 members of the one church involved.

Confining the research to the one church assisted the researcher to manage the implementation of the program for effective results. It made the project manageable and easy to monitor. At the same time, it enabled the researcher to have adequate time to deal with each level of the local leadership that was critical for the success of the program. Follow up and assessments of the program were easily managed. Thus, it was easy for the researcher to interact with the membership of the church for better results and feedback.

Methodology and Procedures

Chapter 1 of the dissertation introduces the ministry concept so that the reader can be aware of the context under review. It allows the reader to appreciate the environment that is under research. At the same time, the researcher's understanding of the nature of the church is explored. Thus, providing the motivation for the researcher to pursue this study. The problem to be studied is stated in the first chapter as well as the methodology to be pursued in this research. The expectations of the researcher are included together with the benefits of the research to the Zone B church

and the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide where such challenges are experienced.

In chapter 2, the concept of giving both in the Old and New Testaments is studied. An attempt was made to briefly discover what the Bible says about giving before focusing on special project giving. The methods of funding for special projects in the scripture were examined together with the context under which such projects were undertaken. Exegetical and theological research methods were explored in trying to establish the link between giving and worship. Both the Old and New Testaments were explored to discover what the Bible says about special project giving. Along with it, the writings of Ellen White were reviewed to gain insights on benevolence and principles of giving in relationship to projects requiring huge financial backing. A summery was drawn from the findings both in the Bible and the writings of Ellen White.

In chapter 3, contemporary literature of Adventist writers was examined together with the writings of other Christian authors on the subject of giving. The concept of giving was also examined from different authors. Giving in the African Traditional religion was also explored. It will also examine giving in relation to special projects and the relationship between giving and worship. This included various writings of researchers from the (NGO) background, and successful methods in resourcing such entities were explored. The researchers whose works reviewed were put in conversation with each other and their studies compared and contrasted. Based on the findings from various authors a summery was drawn on methods of raising resources for special projects.

On the basis of the discoveries from the theological and theoretical research, the following actions were carried out in Chapter 4: a profile was given that describes

the context of the project task. An interview was developed that was based on the theological and literature review. A qualitative method of collecting data was applied and information gathered analyzed. The criteria for choosing the participants for this statistical report was a sampling of members according to age, profession, gender and the number of years one has been a member. This was done to get a fair representation of the membership for the acquiring of authentic information. A brief description of the research performed and evaluation of the findings was discussed. An intervention strategy was outlined and its implementation to the relevant church under this research.

The pastor and church members in Zone B were requested by the researcher to be used as students of the program that was being developed. The consent of these participants was critical for cooperation and the giving of information. No participant's name was made public for security reasons. Instead, pseudo names were used in an attempt to protect the image of the entities under study. The church board of the church and its business meeting was requested to give their consent for their church to be used as a model in this research.⁶

Based on the findings of the research, a program was developed for conducting four seminars on biblical methods of giving. Lessons were designed to teach members on the relationship between worship and generosity. Such lessons covered the Bible methods of raising resources for big projects. Relevant information gathered from the literature review formed part of the lessons. A visitation program was designed that ensured a visit to each member of the church once per month. This whole process took place within a period of three months. The chapter ended with a

⁶ Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 140.

summery that states the main points and acknowledges directions for further research and reflection.

Chapter 5 outlined a precise description of how the program was implemented in the church. The role of the local pastor and his involvement in the process was discussed in this part. At the same time, the role of the local church elders in the implementation was presented since they were part of the program. A brief description of the kind of seminars that were conducted was outlined together with the response of the members and attendance of the same. Assessment results of each seminar were discussed highlighting the positive or negative impact to the participants. The outcomes of the assessment were used to improve the approaches used in the program. Membership response was covered in relationship to their reaction to the program. That was its effects whether negative or positive. The method used to evaluate the program was outlined. The giving trends of the church was discussed beginning with where the church was in terms of giving to special projects and whether it grew in its giving or not. A feedback from the members of the Zone B church was reflected at the end of three months. This included the benefits to the church and whether the members now had a different way of looking and relating to special project giving. A summery of the chapter that briefly outlined the outcomes was drawn showing the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies used.

Chapter 6 compared the two fields of research that is one before the intervention and the one after the intervention strategy. It covered the period of three months for the internalization of the program by the members. It presented the material of the final evaluation, the dissertation summary, outcomes of the program implementation whether they were positive or negative. A conclusion of the research

summarized the outcomes observed. Based on the results, recommendations were made to the Zone B church for a way forward.

The analysis of this research was shared with the church including the pastor involved and leadership of the Conference concerned. The researcher made recommendations at the end of the dissertation for consideration by the church and the organization concerned. These recommendations include the steps that the entities may take in addressing the challenge of resourcing big projects. The effectiveness and weaknesses of the programs were shared with the concerned organizations.

Expectations

The expected outcomes of this research would result in a more spiritual church that considers giving as part of worship leading the Zone B church to follow biblically based methods of fundraising. The local church will have the resources that it needs to complete its church buildings. This will result in a church that is characterized by generosity and a systematic approach to giving. The projects of the church will be completed much quicker and with a unity of purpose. The local entities will be able to maintain their facilities by keeping them in acceptable standards. At the same time, the mission of the church will be enhanced because of a sound financial base at the local level. All the other aspects of mission will be supported in a balanced manner from generous gifts of the members. Local church evangelism will be financed in a way that leads the adherents to remain united.

At the same time the researcher's skills will be enhanced, and he will have acquired more knowledge on the subject that is believed will be a blessing to the ZUC territory. Churches in the union territory will benefit from the process of this study. Pastors and local church leaders will implement the same program in their churches. The other levels of the organization will be better funded through the proposed

method of giving. This will result in the pastorate applying biblically based methods of financing special projects. It is the hope of the researcher that the outcome of this project will bring a solution to the challenge of the varied means of raising funds. At the same time, it will assist the pastor of the church over the subject of fundraising. Thus, there will be a unified approach to giving that enhances the faith and trust of the members.

Looking at the church from a worldwide perspective, the research will lead the church in the other parts of the world to follow a method that will enhance membership faithfulness in giving of themselves and their resources to God. Worship will become part of the generosity of the believers. As a result of this comprehensive study the world church will benefit from it by implementing a similar program for financing special projects in other areas where similar challenges are experienced.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

The challenge of varied methods of giving for special projects is critical in the ZUC territory. Hence the need for a theological response to give guidance to the church on Bible based methods of resourcing such undertakings. Such methods simply refer to various approaches of raising resources for special projects.

This chapter begins by looking at the concept of giving both in the Old and New Testament. The researcher intends to establish a biblical basis for special project giving from a solid base in Scripture in order to see whether the Bible supports varied methods of giving in relationship to big projects. It also aims to discover whether there is a link between giving and worship. At the same time the writings of Ellen White are examined in relationship to giving for special projects.

The Concept of Giving in the Old Testament

This section of the research focuses on the concept of giving from the Old Testament perspective. While there are many references on the subject of giving, this portion is just going to deal with a few of such passages. It should be noted that this is not an in-depth study of the section but a brief review of the concept of giving. The researcher wants to discover what the Old Testament says about the idea of giving.

The fourth chapter of Genesis records the experience of Cain and Abel giving to God. Of the two brothers the record says, “Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on

Cain and his offering he did not look with favor” (Gen 4:3-5). It is clear from these verses that already an awareness to give sacrifices to God existed. Commenting on this passage Adam Clarke affirms, “Abel brought it also, i.e., a (*minchah*) or gratitude offering; and beside this he brought of the first born (*mibbechoroth*) of his flock, and it was by this alone that he acknowledged himself a sinner, and professed faith in the promised messiah.”¹

The element expressed in this comment is that faith made the difference in this offering. The giving was motivated by an acknowledgement of his sinfulness before God. According to the comment, the offering that Abel brought was a gratitude offering. The author of Hebrews (11:4) affirms that the offering that was brought was an expression of faith on the part of the giver. Establishing this, a need arises to look at giving in relationship to the Jewish feasts.

Concept of Giving and the Feasts

This section of the research focuses on the experience of the children of Israel in relationship to the feasts and giving. Reading from Deuteronomy 16:16, one finds the instruction that was given to Israel in regard to the feasts and giving. The emphasis was that no one should come empty handed before the Lord. Of this experience Nichol affirms, “The people should appear in the presence of Jehovah with such gifts as were worthy of the blessings received in their harvests.”²

The concept in this text, according to the comment, is that giving needs to be in keeping with the blessings received by the giver. The assumption is that since the

¹ BibleSoft, “Genesis 4:3-5” in *Adam Clarke’s Commentary*, Electronic Database, (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, 2006).

² Francis D. Nichol, ed., “Deuteronomy 16:16-17,” in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1953)

Lord had blessed His people, in turn they needed to bring gifts of gratitude. Such a gift has to be representative of how much the Lord has blessed the giver in the harvests. On verse 17 of the same chapter Nichol states, “Literally ‘according to the gifts of his hand.’ Though he should give liberally, according to the blessings received, he should not give to the extent of impoverishing himself and creating hardship for his family.”³

The same emphasis can be seen on the tenth verse of the same chapter where the children of Israel needed to bring freewill offerings in keeping with their blessings from the Lord. This concept of giving demonstrates the grace of God towards the giver. It also shows His fairness towards His subjects, where giving was not to be burdensome for the worshippers. Each one would simply give according to the blessings received from the Lord. God did not expect givers to give that which they did not possess. Thus, from the experience of the feasts, Israel learned to bring freewill offerings to God in keeping with the blessings each person or family received. The next section focuses on the experience of King David when faced with a plague.

Concept of Giving from David’s Experience

It is important to cite David as an example on his understanding of the concept of giving. After he sinned by counting the people contrary to the will of God, David was instructed to offer a sacrifice. Araunah the Jebusite offered to give the king the field, the wood and the oxen for the burnt offering, but King David responded, “No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing,” (2 Sam 24:24).

³ Francis D. Nichol, ed. “Deuteronomy 16:16-17,” in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953)

In this case the King had options regarding the offer made by Araunah, which would be an indication of his understanding on the concept of giving. The response of David demonstrates his convictions of the idea of making sacrifices to God hence his insistence on giving the full payment of the property. Adam Clarke affirms, “He who has a religion that cost him nothing, has a religion that is worth nothing. Had Araunah’s noble offer been accepted, it would have been Araunah’s sacrifice, not David’s; nor would it have answered the end turning away the displeasure of the Most High.”⁴

The principle expressed from this experience is that a cost nothing offering is not a gift at all on the part of the giver. In order for a gift to be meaningful, it has to cost something on the part of the one giving. It needs to be a kind of a gift where something is given away by the one making the offering. This passage is saying that giving has to come from that which the giver owns, not a substitute gift on behalf of the worshiper. It implies a living relationship between the receiver and the presenter.

On the same text, the *SDA Bible Commentary* states, “It was only right that David should purchase the threshing floor for money and not accept it as a gift. The principle under which David acted underlies all true service and sacrifice.”⁵ True service demands that the one presenting a gift has to do so from that which he/she owns. Contrasting Clarke and the *SDABC*, one finds that giving that does not cost the giver becomes a worthless gift. Sacrifice demands that the one giving has to give away something of value. This experience makes it clear that in matters of giving, individuals may not shift their responsibilities to other persons.

⁴ BibleSoft, “, 2 Samuel 24:24” in *Adam Clarke’s Commentary*, Electronic Database.

⁵ Nichol, ed., “2 Samuel 24:24,” in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*

The other passages in the Old Testament that talk about giving just to cite a few are Psalms 41:1-3; Proverbs 11:24-25; 19:17; 22:9. The concept that is emphasized in all of these texts is that of generosity towards the needy. The liberality of the giver is emphasized here. A situation where the one giving retains the right to determine what to give and how much, which implies that attitude has a role to play in presenting gifts to God.

From the passages cited above, the Old Testament's concept of giving is that where the choice lies with the one giving on the type and size of the gift. It is supposed to be according to the blessing the giver received from God. It is a concept that is based on the fairness of God towards His subjects, an expression of faith on the part of the one presenting alms. The emphasis is on the generosity of the giver. It is a concept that underscores the realization on the part of the giver that God is the source of all blessings. Hence His people give to Him in response to how much they have been blessed. Now the focus shifts to the concept of giving in the New Testament.

The Concept of Giving in the New Testament

This section of the research takes a brief look at the New Testament to discover the concept of giving. While there are a good number of texts that address the idea of generosity, the researcher briefly looks at a few of such passages.

In the book of Matthew, Jesus addresses the need for giving that excludes pretense on the part of the giver. "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men, I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full," (Matt. 6:2).

In this passage, Jesus addresses the malpractices of the Jewish believers that had adulterated the concept of presenting alms. Such pervasions had made giving to

be like an act to draw the attention of onlookers to the one presenting gifts. On this text Barnes suggests that it might have appeared that when such individuals were about to present alms,

caused a trumpet to be sounded, professedly to call the poor together to receive it, but really to call the people to see the proofs of their liberality and piety; or perhaps it may mean that they should not make a great noise about it, like sounding a trumpet.⁶

According to Barnes, giving is not something that is done to draw the attention of people to the giver. The passage advises that giving should not be an act of hypocrisy to attract people to the one presenting the gift. Alms should be done in a manner that glorifies God who is able to see what is done in secret. The concept advocated is one where the giver is driven by pure motives.

According to Gill, “Christ proceeds to give some directions and cautions about giving of alms, that they might be done aright, and answer some valuable purposes for the glory of God, the good of others, and their own.”⁷ Gill observes that Christ was addressing the issue of the correct attitude when it comes to giving. Thus, the concept of giving in this text is where there is no show off on the part of the one exercising benevolence. The passage shows that it is possible for a giver to present alms from impure motives. Jesus set the record straight by bringing to the attention of givers that alms needed to be presented in the right spirit. The concept that is alluded to in the passage that has been considered is one that addresses the motive of the giver.

Concerning giving, Luke states: “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your

⁶ Albert Barnes. "Commentary on Matthew:4 Overview" in *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament* (Gdansk, Poland: StudyLight.org., 1870)

⁷ John Gill, “Matthew 6:1,” in *The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible* (Gdansk, Poland: StudyLight.org, 1999).

lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Luke 6:38). The thoughts that are drawn from the passage are that the giver determines giving. In return, the blessing that comes from God is in keeping with the measure that the giver used. The passage makes it clear that the size of the gift to be presented remains the choice of the giver.

In John God Himself gives an example of what true giving is all about. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). The text alludes that the reason why God gave His son was the love He has towards His creation. The text puts into perspective the principle behind giving and the motivating factor on the part of the one presenting the gift. As a result, the gift was perfect and of inestimable value.

The passage makes it clear that giving needs to come from the heart of the giver. On the same text, F. B. Meyer states: “God’s love to us cost him something. Let us understand that where there is true, strong love to Jesus, it will cost us something. Love is the costliest of all undertakings.”⁸ Love for God is expressed through the presentation of gifts that demonstrate the relationship between the giver and the recipient, suggesting that love can overstretch itself for the sake of the one loved. On the part of God, love cost Him the best that He had to offer. The connotation is that compared with the sacrifice of Jesus, any gift given cannot be compared to the price that God paid for human salvation.

Quoting the words spoken by Jesus regarding giving, Paul states, “remembering the words of the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘it is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35). There are blessings that accompany giving. Contrary

⁸ Zondervan, “John 3:16” in *Stewardship Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009).

to the popular belief that blessings are just to the recipient of the gift, the text says the one giving receives the blessing.

Paul encourages the Corinthian believers to plan their offerings. “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come” (1 Cor. 16:2). The concept advocated in this passage is that where the givers plan their gifts. In the observation of John Gills, “for this ought to be a freewill offering, as a matter of bounty and generosity, and not of covetousness, or of force and necessity, but as a man, of himself has purposed in his own heart, and which he does with cheerfulness and freedom.”⁹ In the understanding of Gills, this text emphasizes that generosity should be from the freewill of the giver. It is not a matter of pressure or force, neither an issue of covetousness but of giving freely. The concept advocated in this text is that giving needs to be planned while at home not when one is faced with an offering plate in church.

From the New Testament, it has been established that the concept of giving is based on the generosity of the giver. God promises to bless the giver as he/she gives in support to the needy. The one giving is not to blow the trumpet to be seen by others but should seek to glorify God. The blessings to the giver are in proportion to how much he/she gives. Further, that generosity demands the freewill of the one giving.

Having traced briefly the concept of giving in both testaments, the focus shifts to project giving according to the Old Testament. The intent of this portion of the research is to discover whether there is a biblical support for varied methods of giving in relationship to projects.

⁹ Gill, “1 Corinthians 16:2,” in *The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

Project Giving in the Old Testament

Before discussing the special project offering, there is a need of an understanding of what this is all about. On special offerings Rodriguez notes, “A special offering is one brought to the Lord for a special purpose. The best example of this type of offering in the Old Testament is the one collected for the building of the tabernacle.”¹⁰ It is not part of the regular offering that is normally collected on a regular basis. It is something that demands more means than what is provided for by collections made during weekly worship services. By reason of the huge amounts of money required to meet the project or satisfy the emergency at hand, this venture becomes a special collection. It is different from other collections because it is done only to satisfy the need, after which there would be no necessity to collect resources since the project would have been completed.

Having briefly defined the special project offering, the focus of this research shifts to what the Old Testament says about special project giving. This section starts by looking at the experience of Moses when he was requested by God to tell the children of Israel to give to God for the construction of the sanctuary. It also covers the response of the children of Israel when the message from God had been conveyed to them.

Giving for Special Projects in the Old Testament

Moses and Special Project Giving

This section looks at the command of the Lord to Moses concerning the building of the Sanctuary and how the funds were to be raised for this major project.

¹⁰ Angel Rodriguez, *Stewardship Roots* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Stewardship, 1994), 0-5.

Concerning the structure, the Lord instructed Moses, “Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give” (Exod. 25:2). From the text itself a pattern can be established. God Himself initiated the process through His servant Moses as leader of the Israelites. The gifts to be given by Israel were not to be directed towards the project but towards God the initiator. In turn, Moses needed to convey the message to all Israel about this requirement.

The parameters for the acceptance of the gift were set out in this passage. It was not every gift that Moses was to accept, but those that were a result of the promptings of the heart. From this instruction it can be understood that the Lord was saying the kind of offerings that Moses was to receive needed to come from those who were prompted by their hearts to give. Thus, it is important at this point to define the word ‘willingly.’

According to Strong’s Talking Hebrew and Greek Dictionary, the call for a willingly offering (Exod 25:2) has “a primitive root, to impel, hence to volunteer (as a soldier), to present spontaneously-offer freely, be (give, make, offer self) willing (ly).”¹¹ The definition assists on the expanded meaning of the word ‘willingly’ and what it entails.

The word may mean impelling, which is pressure that comes from within and not from without, which suggests that when it comes to willingness, it is supposed to be a drive from inside and not outside the heart. There is also the connotation of volunteering on the part of the giver. From this meaning it shows that willingness means also a spontaneous response. This was a kind of response that was voluntary on

¹¹ James Strong, *Strong’s Talking Greek and Hebrew Dictionary* (Austin, TX: WORDsearch, 1890), <http://www.lifeway.com/Product/strongs-talking-greek-and-hebrew-dictionary-P005522827>.

the part of the giver. In its Hebrew form the word is *nadab* which is defined as, “willingly offered, willing, make offerings willingly, volunteered, offer, given as a freewill offering, volunteers, offered willingly, moved, give willingly, made offering, moves, freewill offering, offered freely.”¹²

In this case the word means that the act of giving is one that comes as a voluntary act from the giver. It is a situation where one is prompted by a desire to offer the gift. The two definitions are in agreement on the meaning of the word willingly. They lead to an understanding that the meaning of the word is a situation where one gives from a conscious choice. It is a situation where one voluntarily chooses to give. Having looked at the meaning of this word, the research continues to explore the immediate context of the verse.

The instruction was clear as to the requirement for giving to the Lord. Keil and Delitzsch state that, “The Israelites were to bring to the Lord a heave-offering (*taruwmah*), a gift lifted, or heaved by a man from his own property to present to the Lord.”¹³ There is an indication in this comment that the gift was that which should be brought to the Lord by the giver. The comment suggests that the offering was supposed to come from the property of the children of Israel. It follows that the Israelites were to give from their possessions not from what they did not have. Understanding that when somebody wants to present a gift to someone, they need to be the owners in order for the gift to be meaningful to the recipient.

The above comment also points out that the gifts were supposed to be given to God. While the offering was meant for the building of the Sanctuary, Israel was not

¹²StudyLight, “Bible Lexicon: FREE Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicons,” StudyLight.org, accessed February 19, 2014, //www.studylight.org/lexicons/.

¹³ Karl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, New Updated Edition, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996)

requested to give to the project but to God as has been suggested in the pattern above. Stuart affirms, “Note that the offering is ‘for me,’ that is, for God, and not merely for a thing, that is, the tabernacle. The tabernacle was symbolically God’s house, intrinsically his property, and not merely a place he and the Israelites would conveniently use”¹⁴ (Exod25:2). The comment from Stuart emphasizes the aspect of whose the offering was. It points out the fact that this was not just about a project but the owner of the undertaking. Sometimes it becomes easy when giving to forget the true recipient of the gift.

According to Rodriguez the word *terumah* is defined as “a gift dedicated to God and then brought to the Lord.”¹⁵ This seems to suggest that it was something that one before bringing to God had to set apart for the Lord. Clarke affirms that this offering was, “(*rummah*), a kind of free- will offering, ‘consisting of anything that was necessary for the occasion. It signifies property anything that was lifted up, to be laid on His altar.’”¹⁶

According to Clarke, a *rummah* is a certain type of freewill offering that was to be given from the willing hearts. It was an offering that consisted of that which the giver possessed. It also needed to be something that was of use for the purpose at hand. In other words, it was a relevant offering for the purpose to be accomplished.

This suggests that giving to God is not just about anything that the giver chooses to give, but about that which is relevant and usable for the purpose at hand. From the verse itself, the command is for Israel to give to the Lord for the purposes of

¹⁴ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus* Vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 563.

¹⁵ Rodriguez, 0-5

¹⁶ BibleSoft, “Genesis 4:3-5” in *Adam Clarke’s Commentary*, Electronic Database, (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, 2006).

building the sanctuary. Thus the giver would have to ensure that what was given was appropriate and useful for the project at hand. The expectation on the part of the giver was that of a willing response to the appeal to participate in the gathering of the materials needed.

Someone may raise a question that, since Israel was God's people, maybe He expected them to render a tax to Him to satisfy the requirement by having the house of worship? On this thought Barnes comments, "The public service of Yahweh was to be instituted by free will offerings, not by an enforced tax."¹⁷ The comment is an affirmation that God required His children to respond from willing hearts not as a people who were being taxed. This is in line with the character of God. Being the God of love He requires that His children respond from affectionate hearts.

The comment suggests that giving to God is not about some enforcement on the part of the giver where the one presenting the gift remains without an option whether to give or not. While the *SDA Bible Commentary* affirms that the requirement of the Lord to the children of Israel was for them to bring an offering that comes from the heart: "God desired only those gifts that came from the heart, not merely from the hands or purse."¹⁸ There ought to be harmony between the heart and the purse in order for the gift to be meaningful. The purse opens as a result of the heart that is open to God. This indicates that acceptable giving needed to be motivated by a desire to give and not a response to pressure or a mere fulfillment of duty.

One thought to consider might be that since the project had to be accomplished, there was need for some stipulations of the amounts that were expected from each giver. A prescribed amount would make it easy for the task to be

¹⁷ BibleSoft, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, 2006).

¹⁸ Nichol, ed. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, 635.

accomplished. In reference to this offering, Wesley states that, “It was not prescribed to them what or how much they must give, but it was left to their generosity, that they might shew their good - will to the house of God, and the offices thereof.”¹⁹ The comment is a pointer that the decision on how much to give was with the givers. It was left with them to decide as to how much to give. This comment is in harmony with the text where God instructs Moses only to receive offerings from willing hearts (Exod 25:2). In many places where offerings are called for in relation to special projects, sometimes there is a temptation to prescribe to the givers as to how much they need to contribute. The Lord who understands better the human heart left the responsibility with the individual in this regard as to whether one gives more or less. The qualification was on the willing response of the giver. Wesley and Barnes are in agreement that the gift was not to be a form of tax or one that was prescribed to the children of Israel. This was a gift where the choice of how much to give remained the responsibility of the one making the contribution. Having explored this text, the next section of the research focuses on the response of the children of Israel to the appeal from Moses.

Response of the Children of Israel to Special Project Giving

This section looks at Moses conveying the message from the Lord to the children of Israel. It also seeks to establish the method that was employed for the raising of resources for such an important structure that needed to be constructed. In Exodus 35 Moses appeals to the children of Israel concerning the gathering of resources for the Sanctuary. “This is what the Lord has commanded: From what you

¹⁹ Wesley, Exodus 25:2.

have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering of gold, silver and bronze;” (Exod. 35:4-5).

The request was extended to the children of Israel so that they would give to the Lord from their possessions. Just as what is stated in Exodus 25:2, the emphasis was on the willingness of the giver. Thus from the text it can be seen that Moses was still talking about the project of the building of the sanctuary. It was clear that the requirement was not for them to give what they did not have: they were to respond to the appeal by giving from what they possessed, as already established above. It implies that the people of God are required, when faced with a special project, to give from their possessions. From the text it can be noted that the giving was not from their income but from their assets. Implying that special project giving may require individuals to give from their investments. It is seen from the text that, the burden to respond to the appeal was left with each giver according to the promptings of the heart. There was no compulsion necessary for them to bring an offering to God.

On the rule in this text Matthew Henry comments, “The rule is, whosever is of a willing heart let him bring. It was not to be a tax imposed upon them, but a benevolence or voluntary contribution,”²⁰ It is clear that when it came to the gathering of the materials for this special project, willingness on the part of the giver was to be the requirement. The instruction was not one where the givers were left without a choice, it left them with an option to either respond or not.

Thus, it can be said that giving for special projects requires a willing response on the part of the believers without making it a burden on the part of the worshipper. Henry goes on to say that the government of God is one of fairness, where the

²⁰ BibleSoft, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, 2006).

subjects are left to make a choice because God does not rule with rigor. He further goes on to explain that there is no reason to complain because of His fairness. The worshippers have a right to make their choices.²¹ Henry's comment suggests that when Moses instructed Israel, each believer had a choice on whether to respond or not. Henry, Barnes and Wesley agree that the response expected from the people was that of willing hearts and not prompted by any obligatory requirement.

Commenting on the response of the children of Israel to this appeal, Keil and Delitzsch have this to say, "The people went from Moses, i.e., from the place where they were assembled round Moses, away to their tents, and willingly offered the things required as a heave-offering for Jehovah; every one 'whom his heart lifted up,' i.e., who felt himself inclined and stirred up in his heart to do this."²² Once more, there is affirmation from Keil and Delitzsch on the response of the children of Israel as stated in Exodus 35:4-5, which was not a result of manipulation, or one where people were just fulfilling a duty. It was one where they felt compelled by the love of God to do something for this structure. The response was driven from within and not from without.

In addition, Wiersbe declares that, "Moses had already told the people that God wanted their willing gifts so that the tabernacle could be built."²³ According to this comment, God clearly informed the people about how they were to respond in bringing the contributions for the construction of the tabernacle. Again there is agreement from the commentaries consulted so far that the willingness of the giver

²¹ BibleSoft, "Exodus 35," in *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

²² Keil and Delitzsch, "Exodus 35," *Commentary on the Old Testament*.

²³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*, (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 1993), Exodus 35.

was the requirement from God. The book of Exodus provides the guidelines for giving that is acceptable to God. The giver was to respond from a willing heart and not from compulsion. It was a kind of gift where the presenter determined the size.

The *Stewardship Bible* provides the pattern on the response of Israel, “And everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering”²⁴ (Exod. 35:21). The text points out that the motivation to respond from the children of Israel was prompted from their hearts. Thus giving needs a response that is internal and not external.

“All those who were willing, men and women alike...”²⁵ (35:22). The emphasis is on the response from all genders. Thus suggesting that the responsibility to give to God lies with every believer regardless of status.

“Those presenting an offering...brought it” (35:24) This portion indicates the action from those coming to present the gifts. Giving is not just about intentions, but doing.

“All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the LORD freewill offerings for all the work the LORD through Moses had commanded them to do”²⁶ (35:29). The emphasis in this pattern is on the willingness on the part of the worshipper. The appeal was directed to everyone, suggesting that giving is not just for males but also for females who gave to the Lord. The stewardship Bible further states that, “Do you feel the rising crescendo of enthusiasm for the cause? The principle is this: mission is more important than money; vision precedes provision.” Callahan continues to observe that there is “a connection between the congregation’s generosity

²⁴ Exodus 35:21, *Stewardship Bible*, 115.

²⁵ Exodus 35:22, *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Exodus 35:29.

and its sense of mission:” He further comments that life is lived best when “we give our strengths, gifts, and competencies in the service of God’s mission. We are called to serve not survive. Our giving makes a difference in our families, our work, our community, our world, and our church.”²⁷

To Callahan, such giving impacts both the givers and the recipient organization. It's a kind of giving that responds to a vision that is mission oriented. To him, giving is living.²⁸ With this idea in mind the focus shifts to the time of David when he was gathering materials for the temple later to be built by Solomon.

David and Special Project Giving

This section looks at David and how he approached giving for the special project that his son was later going to build. It seeks to establish whether there was a different method employed for the raising of funds and materials for this task. The background to the King’s desire to build a house for God will be briefly reviewed.

As a result of what God had done for the king in protecting him and granting him victory over his enemies, the Bible states that, After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet,

“Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.” Nathan replied to the king, ‘Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you.’ That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan saying: ‘Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says; Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? (2 Samuel 7:1-5).

²⁷ Kennon L, Callahan, *Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1992).

²⁸ Ibid.

These verses give a background of what led David to desire building a house for God. In appreciation of the blessings, protection the rest and security that God provided. David responded to the goodness of God by offering himself to build a structure to house the ark of God. It is important to notice that he dwelt in a house of cedar when God's ark was housed in a tent. That is why David resolved to build a house for the ark of the Lord. Comparing the conditions that he was dwelling in as opposed to the ark of God, David decided that he was going to do something about the situation. However, God through prophet Nathan restrained him from building the house, but mentioned that a son born from him would do this work for God. This did not discourage the king from his intentions about the project. In gratitude to the goodness of God, David would show appreciation by contributing the materials for the building. He then decided to give treasure towards the building of the temple. The following section looks at the king unfolding his plans in a practical way.

The king's example. The king himself began by setting an example in giving for this special and expensive project according to 1 Chronicles 29:3. He made it clear that he had given all these precious gifts from his heart.

Mathew Henry affirms that, "David offered not from constraint, or for show; but because he had set his affection to the house of God, and thought he could never do enough towards promoting that good work. Those who would draw others to good, must lead the way themselves."²⁹ Again, there is an affirmation that anything done for piety and charity needs to be driven from the heart. This was seen from David's response to the project. He was not giving in to pressure but was making a willing and loving response to His Maker. David consecrated himself to God before presenting

²⁹ BibleSoft, "1 Chronicles 29:1-9," in *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*

his gifts. His example affected the leaders and the children of Israel to respond to the appeal to give from willingness. It suggests that meaningful giving should be related to the spirituality of the giver.

In this act, the king carefully selected the materials to be given for this special project from that which was precious to him. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's commentary has this to say about the gift, "This voluntary gift was from the private fortune of the royal donor, and had been selected with the greatest care. The gold was "the gold of Ophir," then esteemed the purest and finest in the world"³⁰ (Job 22:24, 28:16, Is 13:12). Just because the king gave from his heart, he gave the best to His Maker. This suggests that when individuals give to God from their hearts, they are led to carefully select their gifts to God. The thought that is emphasized is that giving to God requires the best from the worshippers. This is the reason why giving ought to be a matter of the heart, it is hard to give the best if it is not from the heart.

After his own example of giving, he appealed to the children of Israel that all those who were willing to consecrate themselves were supposed to give materials for the building of the temple (1 Chr. 29:7). The example of the king triggered a positive response from the people, signifying that in giving, the example of the leader can be contagious in its effects on the worshippers. Wiesbe's *Expository Outlines* affirms that,

David knew that his people must have a share in the cost of the temple, so he asked the leaders of the nation to contribute, and they did so willingly. David had first set the example in giving, and he reminded the people that they were giving to the Lord (29:1). Their giving was an act of worship (29:5), and they gave generously.³¹

³⁰ Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset and David Brown, *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Unabridged Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*, Vol 1 (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott, 1866), 265.

³¹ Wiesbe, 369.

The emphasis is on the king leading the way in benevolence. He did not request them to participate in that which he was not part of.

While Thompson states that “Following his own sacrificial giving, David challenged Israel to do the same (v. 5).”³² From these comments it is clear that the king understood that the people also needed to have a share in giving for the project. It also suggests that the people responded and gave as a worship response. The above mentioned connects giving with the worship of the Creator. Just as in the experience of Moses, David appealed to the people through their leaders to contribute for this structure. He made it clear that the giving was a consecration to the Lord. The statement made by the king indicates that the response from the people was triggered by their willingness to dedicate themselves to God. The fact that the king himself was actively involved in the giving of the materials for the project inspired the leadership to act. According to Barnes, David made the act of giving “publicly in order to provoke others by his example.”³³ This suggests that giving also demands that the leadership leads by example. Leadership involvement was an encouragement to the people to see the importance of the project. In this act the King was demonstrating that giving to God involves even the leaders. The act of giving by the leader was not some secret thing but one that was open for others to learn from his example. Having seen the response of the king the next portion of the research will focus on the response of the people to the appeal of the king.

The people’s response. As was discovered in the experience of the gathering of resources for the special project during the time of Moses, the same practice is seen being followed during the time of king David in the preparations for the materials for

³² John Arthur Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 195.

³³ BibleSoft, “1 Chronicles 29:3” in *Barnes’ Notes*, Electronic Database.

the building of the temple. There is consistency from the Bible on the method that was followed in raising means for the important structures.

In both instances people were required to respond from loving hearts in support of the projects. The giving was also supposed to be directed to the God of the project. There was cooperation in both instances, and gladness on the part of the givers. In both occasions, people responded not because of pressure or manipulation. In the book of Exodus and Chronicles, people responded positively to the appeal to give.

This suggests that where a clear need is presented while at the same time respecting that people will respond to the promptings of the Spirit of God, the outcome becomes positive. In the two examples, the response resulted in big gifts being given for the task at hand. It should be noted that all this took place before the commencement of the projects. These experiences pose a challenge to those raising means for projects; many times leaders have the belief that people get motivated to give when they see the progress of the project. In both instances, there was no project that had commenced but a simple response to God.

Commenting on the appeal made by King David in 1 Chronicles 29:5, Barnes states that, “To consecrate his service literally’ as in the margin, ‘to fill his hand,’ i.e., ‘to come with full hands to Yahweh.’ The words contain an appeal to the assembly for voluntary offerings.”³⁴ Just as the king himself had given an offering that was intentional, he appealed to Israel to do the same with their gifts. Once more consistency is noticed in all these instances that God’s children would bring charitable offerings to Him. It was a question of consecration to the Creator.

³⁴ BibleSoft, “1 Chronicles 2953” in *Barnes’ Notes*, Electronic Database.

John Arthur Thompson affirms, “Thus David viewed these gifts for the temple as symbols of Israel’s giving themselves wholly to the Lord, pledging themselves afresh as ‘a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’”³⁵ The implication of the comment is that giving to God is a sign of giving of oneself to God. Thus proper giving impacts on the people’s relationship with God. Meaningful giving requires surrender on the part of the giver to the Creator. As the research continues, it moves to the prayer of David and the relationship between worship and giving.

Worship and giving in David’s example. David responds to the act of giving by praying to God who had moved His people to give generously. The prayer was a recognition that the act of generosity was not just by chance but that the Lord had moved His people to give to Him. To this Mathew Henry writes,

Instead of boasting of these large oblations, David gave solemn thanks to God the Lord. All they gave for the Lord’s temple was his own; if they attempted to keep it, death would soon have removed them from it. They only use they could make of it to their real advantage, was, to consecrate it to the service of Him who gave it.³⁶

The comment clearly presents that the king could not boast about what had taken place. He gave glory to the One who had moved the hearts of the people to give. He recognized the Lord as the owner of everything, suggesting that giving on the part of God’s children should be guided by recognition of God as the giver of all the blessings that His children enjoy.

It also shows that the givers have nothing to boast about after giving to God but to praise Him who enables them to respond to Him. Henry continues to say, “We must give God the glory of all the good that is at anytime done by ourselves or

³⁵ Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 195.

³⁶ BibleSoft, “1 Chronicles 29:10,” in *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

others.”³⁷ Again, the comment emphasizes the fact that for whatever good that is done, God should be glorified as the one who enables worshipers to do that which pleases Him.

In recognition that it is the Lord who can keep His people faithful to Him, David praised the Lord in prayer (1 Chr. 29:10-20). Commenting on verse 18 of the same chapter, Barnes calls to, “Preserve forever this spirit of liberal and spontaneous giving in the hearts of thy people, and establish their hearts towards Thee.”³⁸ From the above affirmation it is seen that David prayed that the Lord would help His people to retain the generous spirit within them. In addition, this comment confirms that giving and spirituality have a relationship that cannot be separated. While the *Commentary on the Holy Bible* on verses 12-14 states that “David in his prayer recognized that it was not in his, or any man’s power to add to God’s glory. The building of the temple could only manifest his and his people’s devotion and gratitude for the goodness which bestowed such wealth upon them.”³⁹

One reason why there was such a response was recognition on the part of David and his people that it was only God who could lead the people to such devotion to Him. The prayer of David is a statement that when it comes to giving, the givers need to remember that God owns all that they possess. It is interesting enough to see in this passage that even offerings are referred to as belonging to God. Giving then becomes an expression of gratitude to the goodness of God for the provisions He gives to His people. The aspect of devotion to God suggests that spirituality has a role

³⁷ BibleSoft, “1 Chronicles 29:13-14,” in *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*

³⁸ BibleSoft, “1 Chronicles 29:18” in *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database.

³⁹ *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 1 Chronicles 29:12-14.

to play when it comes to giving that glorifies God while leaving the giver with satisfaction.

Giving and the Repairing of the Temple under King Joash

During the reign of King Joash, there was a need to repair the temple hence the need to collect offerings for that purpose. Faced with this project of refurbishing the temple, the king came up with the method of gathering the means for the task. In 2 Chronicles 24:8-10, the emphasis is on giving from willing hearts:

At the King's command, a chest was made and placed outside, at the gate of the temple of the LORD. All the officials and all the people brought their contributions gladly, dropping them into the chest until it was full.

The text says that the people of Judah responded when the chest had been placed by the entrance of the temple by throwing in gifts for the repairing of the very temple. They did it with gladness of heart. The givers were joyful in bringing their gifts for the work of the repairing of the temple. There is consistency from the Word of God that while there was need for the work to be undertaken, the willingness of the members was at the center of the contributions made. It was not a case where because of the pressure to repair the temple they needed to collect money quickly.

On the same verse, Henry confirms that, "A great deal was thrown in and with a great deal of cheerfulness: they all rejoiced."⁴⁰ The comment from Mathew Henry affirms that the people brought their gifts with joy. This suggests that from their own volition they brought their contributions with gladness. While there was a need to repair the temple, this did not necessarily lead the king to pressure people to give but to appeal to their willingness. After this established foundation on offering gifts for

⁴⁰ BibleSoft, "2 Chronicles 24:10," in *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

the sanctuary and temple special projects, the focus of this chapter shifts to the contributions for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

The Contributions for the Rebuilding of Jerusalem

It is important to take a brief look at the contributions made during Ezra's time for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Concerning them the author of the book states, "The silver and gold are a freewill offering to the LORD the God of your fathers." (Ezra 8:28). The contributions made for this special project were a freewill offering. In this place again there is consistency in the Bible concerning gifts for the special projects. There was no compulsion or manipulation that was involved in the giving of the gifts. The givers did it from their generous hearts. Once more, even though the work for the rebuilding of the temple was great and required huge resources, this did not lead to methods of manipulation but to leave the responsibility with the people.

Summarizing the research on special project giving taken from the Old Testament, it is clearly seen that they did not lead the givers to give to the projects at hand but to give to the God of the project. It has been established that such gifts needed to come from willing hearts and not from that which people did not have. The participation of leadership in the giving led the followers to respond with joy. Further, it was established that before the act of giving, the givers ought to consecrate themselves to God.

The gifts that are acceptable to God ought to be from what the givers have and not that which they do not have. Such gifts need to be the best that givers have and usable for the task at hand. Giving is a part of worship, as is evidenced by David giving praises to God for leading His people to this act of generosity. There is a relationship between spirituality and giving. While the project may call for large sums

of money, the Lord still requires His people to respond freely and not as a people paying a tax to Him. The Lord expects those facing special projects to respond in gratitude to His goodness as the source and the owner of all that they possess. Thus from the Old Testament, there are no varied approaches to giving to special projects. Having looked at special project giving from the Old Testament, the next section of the research examines the New Testament on special project giving.

The New Testament and Special Project Giving

While the New Testament does not directly address the aspect of special project giving in relationship to building, it has principles that may be applied when it comes to giving. This section of the research seeks to explore some New Testament passages on giving to the Lord in response to emergencies.

This section of the research examines giving in the book of Acts that was necessitated by a famine that affected Jerusalem. To address this approaching challenge Luke states, “One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, each per his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea” (Acts 11:28-29).

In this instance, a shortage of food had affected Judea and there was need for the brethren to respond by sending gifts to their fellow believers. This was not a regular offering; it was a special one because it was caused by an emergency because of the hunger in Judea. Commenting on this text Clarke states that, “every man did this per their ability, i.e. He gave a certain proportion of the property with which the providence of God entrusted him.”⁴¹ The disciples responded not of necessity but

⁴¹ BibleSoft, “Acts 11:28-29” in *Adam Clarke’s Commentary*, Electronic Database.

according to what they were able to give. This suggests that there was no fixed amount for their donations but they reacted according to what each one was able to give. On the same text, Barnes observes, “that they rendered aid as they could afford it.”⁴²

The implication of the comment suggests that giving is not about how much one gives but about the heart of giving, the same as was established in the Old Testament. The givers were giving according to their ability; it was not a situation where one was fulfilling an obligation but an expression of love towards the needy.

To this Vincent states, that the followers of Christ as they were able decided to send aid to their fellow believers “in Judea. According to his ability (*kathoos euporeito tis*). Literally, ‘according as any one of them was prospered.’ The verb is from (*euporos*), ‘easy to pass or travel through;’ and the idea of prosperity is therefore conveyed under the figure of an easy and favorable journey.” He further points out that the same idea can be used in people’s farewell, wishing someone a prosperous journey. “Compare ‘God-speed.’ So the idea here might be rendered, ‘as each one fared well.’”⁴³

Each believer made a determination to assist the brethren in Judea, suggesting that each giver did according to what they were able as they fared. The comment from Vincent affirms that the giving was according to how they had prospered. There is an agreement between Barnes and Vincent on each one giving, as they were able. There was neither fixed amount to be given nor an attempt to request equal contributions.

⁴² BibleSoft, “Acts 11:28-29” in *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database.

⁴³ BibleSoft, *Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, 2006).

The Response of the Macedonians

Referring to the Macedonians and their response to the need, Paul states “For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings,” (Rom 15:26-27). The text suggests that it pleased those of Macedonia and Achaia to make contributions for the needs at Jerusalem. To support this Barnes says that, “For it pleased them of Macedonia. That is, they have done it cheerfully and voluntarily. See their liberality and cheerfulness commended by the apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 8:1-6.”⁴⁴

The comment indicates that those of Macedonia acted voluntarily in contributing for the need in Judea. To them it was a joy to contribute to the needs of their fellow believers. The lesson that is found in the response of the Macedonians is that giving that brings joy to the giver is one that comes as a voluntary act by the giver. Nichol observes that, “Their tendency was not to give too little, but too much. They gave spontaneously and without being urged or even reminded, as it seemed the Corinthians now needed to”⁴⁵ (2 Cor, 8:3). The believers in Macedonia were a different kind of believers; their dedication to God led them to give beyond their own capability. These were ready to participate without any pressure to the need at hand.

The Macedonian church was known for its liberality even against reality, they excelled in the grace of giving. About them, Paul declares, “for I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing” (2

⁴⁴ BibleSoft, “Rom. 15:26” in *Barnes’ Notes*, Electronic Database.

⁴⁵ Nichol, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol 6, (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 888.

Cor, 8:3, NKJV). The churches in Macedonia were outstanding when it came to generosity. Verse one gives the reason why they were willing to respond to the plight of others: their liberality was in response to the grace of God.

Concerning the response of the Macedonians, Barnes affirms that,

Acting from choice, self-moved; voluntary; of their own accord. They did not wait to be urged or pressed to do it. They rejoiced in the opportunity of doing it. They came forward of their own accord and made the contribution.⁴⁶

The members of the churches in Macedonia did not wait for anyone to pressure them to give, they responded out of their own choice as is affirmed by the comment. The contribution was voluntary on their part, which suggests that special project giving calls for members to respond from willingness to participate in God's work. Even though this was an emergency where those in Judea needed the assistance, there was no need of pressure because the Macedonian churches had a living relationship with their Creator. The disciples did not expect them to participate: but from their own insistence they were allowed to participate in assisting their fellow believers. Barnes and Nichol are in agreement on the response of the Macedonians, which was purely voluntary on their part.

In terms of the acceptability of gifts, Paul endorses that "For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have" (2 Cor, 8:12). The key word in this text is willingness of the giver. This suggests that giving requires keenness on the part of the contributor. It also is in accordance with what the presenter has, not what he/she does not have. The text proposes that giving is a matter of inward conviction of the one presenting alms. On this text Barnes has this to say, "If there is a readiness, a disposition to give, if the

⁴⁶ BibleSoft, "2 Corinthians 8:3" in *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database.

heart is in it, then the offering will be acceptable to God, whether you be able to give much or little. A willing mind is the first consideration.”⁴⁷

The emphasis that is put in the comment from Barnes is on the readiness of the giver to give. It is about the mindset and willingness to participate in giving. The size of the gift is not the issue but the motive behind the gift. Generous giving also involves the attitude of the one presenting alms. Barnes goes on to say that, “A willing mind is the first and main thing.”⁴⁸ What counts before God is the willingness first before the gift! This suggests that God is more interested in the giver than in the gift. He further observes that God desires willingness on the part of His children “without which everything else is offensive, hypocritical and vain.”⁴⁹ To Barnes, outside the willingness of the worshipper, everything else done loses its meaning before the Creator. He considers it to be an act of pretense on the part of the believer. This comment makes it clear that meaningful giving before God is motivated by eagerness of the believer to give.

Commenting on the same chapter (2 Cor 8), Dockery observes that “Paul taught that believers should give sacrificially and spontaneously, with spiritual motives. (His teaching emphasized on freewill offerings), for God values the eagerness to give, not necessarily the amount of the gift.”⁵⁰ Thus on the one hand, the zeal to give to God requires pure motives. Per Garland “it opens their (people’s) hearts and their purse strings to others.”⁵¹ (2 Cor, 8). Garland notes that the grace of

⁴⁷ BibleSoft, “2 Corinthians 8:12” in *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database.

⁴⁸ BibleSoft, “2 Corinthians 8:12” in *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ David S. Dockery, ed., “The Pauline Letters” in David S. Dockery, *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 564.

⁵¹ David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 365–366.

God did not change the circumstances of the Corinthians but made them able to give generously. Both Garland and Dockery emphasize a response that is from within the givers. There is an agreement from the commentators on the response of the people to the need at hand.

On the same verse, Barnes continues to say that the Lord desires a mind that is willing and a heart that is ready to obey Him. “He claims that our service should be voluntary and sincere, and that we should make an unreserved consecration of what we have.”⁵² What comes out of this comment is that God requires willing obedience from His children when it comes to giving. Service to Him needs to be characterized by sincerity of heart and intentionality. Giving requires consecration to God. Matthew Henry upholds that, “The willing mind is accepted (v. 12), when accompanied with sincere endeavors. When men purpose that which is good, and endeavor according to their ability, to perform also, God will accept what they have, or can do, and not reject them for what they have not, and what is not in their power to do; and this is true as to other besides the work of charity.”⁵³

God is interested in sincerity among His children. He accepts gifts that are coming from the ones with good purposes and those who give from what they have and according to their ability. Once more, there is an agreement between Matthew Henry and Barnes on the fact that willingness of the giver is a prerequisite for gifts to be acceptable before God. Thus it can be said that giving is not a matter of manipulation but a response of love for God.

Commenting on the same verse Adam Clarke confirms that each family ought to give according to that which they own and not take from the property, which

⁵² BibleSoft, “2 Corinthians 8:12” in *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database.

⁵³ BibleSoft, “2 Corinthians 12:8,” in *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

belongs to others in order to render gifts to God.⁵⁴ The implication of the comment is that giving should be from what someone has and not taking from someone's property. There cannot be true giving when the property involved does not belong to the giver.

What the Old Testament says concerning special project giving is also emphasized in the New Testament. Both testaments underline the importance of the willingness of the giver to present alms as affirmed by Barnes that anything that is not from love ends up being hypocrisy and an offence to God. There is a thread that connects the Old and the New Testaments when it comes to the aspect of giving to God.

Paul's View on Giving

This section focuses on giving that is motivated by gratitude and love for God. Paul states that "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

The text is suggesting that in giving, the decision on how much to give lies with the giver. It should not be an issue of compulsion but one that comes from a cheerful heart.

Commenting on this verse Adam Clarke has this to say, "The benefit of almsgiving is lost to the giver when he does it with a grumbling heart. And as he does not do the duty in the spirit of duty, even the performance of the letter of the law is an abomination in the sight of God."⁵⁵ Clarke makes it clear that meaningful giving is lost when it is from a groaning heart.

⁵⁴ BibleSoft, "2 Corinthians 12:8" in *Adam Clarke's Commentary*, Electronic Database.

⁵⁵ BibleSoft, "2 Corinthians 9:7" in *Adam Clarke's Commentary*, Electronic Database.

It should be noted that once there is complaining, benevolence loses its meaning. Any duty that is performed in a protesting spirit even to the letter of the law is an abomination to God. This aspect throws a strong challenge to giving that responds as a matter of duty. Alms giving should not just be an exercise to fulfill an obligation but to express love to God as the text implies.

On the same text Jamieson appeals that “the full consent of the freewill (should) go with the gift opposed to ‘of necessity,’ as ‘grudgingly’ is opposed to ‘a cheerful giver.’”⁵⁶ This author emphasizes the need of the consent on the part of the giver as opposed to the grudging spirit. This means that when it comes to alms, there needs to be a keen consent on the part of the believer in presenting acceptable gifts to God. Looking at the two commentaries on this verse, there is harmony as to the need for willing consent on the part of the giver. Just as was established in the Old Testament that giving demands the willing and voluntary consent of the giver.

On the same text Nichol affirms that of all that is required from believers, nothing “can be discharged with more cheerfulness than giving, particularly to projects designed to advance the kingdom of God on earth.” He continues to say that to be liberal is to be Christ like, while to be stingy is to be like Satan.⁵⁷ Thus the children of God ought to be like their Master in generosity.

While Barnes confirms that the act of giving should be voluntary and cheerful. “It should not seem to be extorted by the importunity of others (2 Cor, 9:6) nor should it be given from urgent necessity, but it should be given as an offering of the heart.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Unabridged Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*.

⁵⁷ Nichol, ed., “2 Corinthians 9:7,” in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* vol. 6, 896.

⁵⁸ BibleSoft, “2 Corinthians 9:7” in *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database.

Thus he emphasizes that giving ought to be a deliberate act. It should not be taken from the giver through some clever means.

The freedom of choice given to humanity at the creation still needs to be exercised when it comes to giving. Barnes also points out that giving needs to be from the heart. It is not supposed to be something that is irregular, or that is extorted from the giver. Such giving may not be dependable since it does not develop system into giving.⁵⁹

In the observation of Barnes, there is much of giving that takes place that is not from the heart. According to him such giving has no system and it cannot be regular hence it becomes spasmodic in nature. He points out that such giving cannot be dependable. Giving that results in spasms is not biblical giving; it falls short of meeting the requirement of true benevolence. The reason being that dependence cannot be found where the steady influences of a benevolent heart are missing. He further observes that, “But there is much obtained in the cause of benevolence that is produced by a kind of extortion.”⁶⁰

This observation confirms that much of the giving that finds way into the system of worship could be called extortion because of the process that is used in obtaining the means. God’s people need to be different from the world by not applying the same methods that the world uses in gathering means for their projects.

Thus from both the Old and New Testaments, giving is supposed to be a matter between the giver and the Creator. It should not be a matter of force or an exercise just to fulfill duty. It is supposed to be an expression of love and gratitude to God. The Lord has left it in the hands of His children to decide whether to give much

⁵⁹ BibleSoft, “2 Corinthians 9:7” in *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database.

⁶⁰ BibleSoft, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database.

or less. It is a voluntary exercise on the part of the worshipper. It has also been established that the givers respond to the grace of God who enables them to be generous. Having looked at the New Testament, the research now refocuses on what Ellen White says about giving for special projects.

Ellen White and Special Project Giving

Just a brief introduction of who she is. The researcher holds Ellen White to be a last day prophet of God whose writings give spiritual guidance to the children of God. Her writings shed light leading to a clearer understanding of Scripture. Having briefly introduced Ellen White the next section seeks to discover whether she gives some guidelines on special project giving. At the same time, it is an attempt to see if there is any harmony between the Bible and her writings, further to inquire on her understanding on the subject of giving. To also understand whether varied methods of giving are supported in her writings.

Appeals for Giving

It is normally a general practice that whenever there is a special project, those concerned wait for appeals from the leadership before responding to the need. Each time there is meaningful giving, it will be a result of the repeated calls. On the question of demands Ellen White advises that, God's people do not need to wait for calls for money, rather they need to get hold of the work making impossibilities possibilities.

She raises a challenging question to be answered by each member concerning the means entrusted by God, which are meant for His cause. She further points out that, "We ask you as the Lord's stewards, to put His means into circulation, to provide

facilities by which many will have opportunity of learning what is truth.”⁶¹ The people of God are expected to respond to the needs of His work without having to wait for a reminder.

Just as was the experience of the Macedonians who did not wait to be invited to participate in the need at Jerusalem, the children of God need to respond spontaneously. Normally God’s people wait to be requested even where the needs are obvious. This quote lays the burden of giving on the individual’s relationship with God. It is a statement that leads the members of the church to respond to God because of their recognition of God as a provider and owner of all their material resources. The servants of God have a responsibility to put up a house of worship where people of the community can learn about God.

Popular Methods of Appeal

There are popular methods of appeal that are used to lead people to giving means to the Lord. Referring to some of these popular methods of giving, Ellen White observes that, “We see in the churches of our day encouraging feasting, gluttony, and dissipation, by the suppers, fairs, dances, and festivals gotten up for the purpose of gathering means into the church treasury. Here is a method invented by carnal minds to secure means without sacrificing.”⁶²

This statement shows that the fact that money is being collected for a good purpose does not justify getting money without sacrifice. It is easy for one to justify an approach to giving because of the fact that it will serve a good cause. What the quote is saying is that even if means are meant for a good cause there is no

⁶¹Ellen G., White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1940), 44.

⁶² Ellen G., White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, 201.

justification for resorting to some of these popular methods. Perhaps these methods appear to yield results without much planning. Some of these popular methods are very easy and convenient to raise means for special projects, however they are not in accordance with the will of God.

Effect of Popular Appeals

Ellen White has something to say on popular appeals and their effects on the members. She points out that Christians choose to reject the plan of God in raising means for “His work;” she further raises a question as to their resolve to address the lack, highlighting that God sees the evil in the methods that are adopted where the places of worship are defiled in a bid to just raise a little money from those who love pleasure to support the work of the church.

She continues to point out that, “Many of these persons would not of their own accord pay one shilling for religious purposes. Where, in God’s directions for the support of His work, do we find any mention of bazaars, concerts, fancy fares, and similar entertainments?”⁶³

There is no need for the church to resort to methods that appeal to pleasure and feeding on selfishness of the members to raise means for the work of God. According to the statement, she raises a question that implies that it is not part of God’s plan to use such means. She continues to raise a challenging question as to whether the Lord would want His work to be supported through methods that are not sanctioned in scripture. Such methods that result in people being drawn “away from God.”⁶⁴

⁶³ White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, 204.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

The sentiments expressed need to be taken into serious consideration by both leaders and members in the gathering of means for special projects. The account makes it clear that God cannot sustain His work through methods that He has forbidden in His word. The sustenance of the work of God demands that the church follows His advice in the gathering of resources. It calls for the leadership to trust that the Spirit of God will influence members into action.

An Offering from the Heart

There are many reasons that push people to give: some respond to urgent appeals for means, and some respond out of sympathy, while others out of loving hearts just to mention a few.

Talking about offerings from the heart, God's prophetess states, "The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honor, giving it highest efficiency in service for Him." She continues to point out that where hearts have been surrendered to Jesus, the results are that, "Our gold and silver, our most precious earthly possessions, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us."⁶⁵

The emphasis is on the members giving their hearts to Jesus. Suggesting that true giving does not begin with the gift that is given but with a heart that is surrendered to God. When it comes to giving, normally the focus is on the gift, yet true giving begins with the right attitude. It is such benevolence that leads the believers to give their best to God. The amount of love in the heart of the believer determines the quality of the gift.

⁶⁵ Ellen G., White, *The Desire of Ages*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1940), 65.

The Plan of Moses

Ellen White comments about how Moses gathered means for the building of the tabernacle. “The plan of Moses in the wilderness to raise means was highly successful. There was no compulsion necessary. Moses made no grand feast. He did not invite people to scenes of gaiety, dancing, and general amusement.”⁶⁶

Moses followed the instruction from God in appealing to Israel to give for the building of the sanctuary. There was no need to compel people to resort to means of extracting money from those unwilling to part with their means. Yet the plan was very successful because the Spirit of God moved the hearts of the people to give willingly. A successful strategy is employed, by simply leaving the individuals to decide as to what to give for the special project. As a consequence, the strategy used led to an overwhelming response on the part of the children of Israel.

Counsel on Raising Funds

On raising funds for the work of the Lord, White affirms, “The Lord requires gifts to be made at stated times, being arranged that giving will become a habit and benevolence be felt as a Christian duty. I saw that God’s people must bring him a freewill offering; and the responsibility should be felt wholly upon the individual whether he gives much or little.”⁶⁷

Again the emphasis shows that freewill offerings should be given to support the work of God. This aspect also suggests that offerings need to be planned so that a habit is formed in the giving patterns of God’s people. Once a habit is formed, it becomes natural for members to respond to the need of raising church building funds.

⁶⁶ White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, 203.

⁶⁷ Ellen G., White, *Testimonies of the Church*. Vol 1 (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 237-238.

On the same note she also states, “Everyone is to be his own assessor and is left to give all he purposes in his heart.”⁶⁸

In other words, giving remains an individual decision from one informed from the word of God. The burden is supposed to remain with the giver as to whether they give more or less. It should be the giver’s responsibility to wrestle with the Spirit of God as to how much he/she should give.

Sometimes leaders feel that if members were left to themselves to decide on the matter of giving, then the projects of the church will fail. On this mindset she counsels that, “God wants no unwilling offering, no pressed sacrifice.”⁶⁹ From these quotations it has been observed that the Lord expects His children to bring freewill offerings. This is in agreement with what the Bible teaches about giving. On the requisites for the preparation to build White affirms, “In preparing a house of worship, there must be a great exercise of faith and trust in God. In business transactions those who venture nothing make but little advancement; why not have faith also in an enterprise for God and invest in His cause?”⁷⁰ Thus it is critical in the preparation stages of a special project for leadership to ensure that the members have a trusting relationship with their Creator. This leads to an understanding that giving is an individual matter between the giver and God. It is not supposed to be a matter of pressure or grumbling response on the part of the giver. Just as a parent may not be pleased by gifts from their unwilling children so is God. Therefore, leadership needs to assist its membership to respond out of the willing hearts.

⁶⁸ White, 4T, 469.

⁶⁹ Ellen G., White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, (Mountain View, CA: Review and Herald, 1948), 546.

⁷⁰ Ellen G., White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol 4 (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 76.

When it comes to the giving of offerings, it should be understood that the emphasis should be more on conversion than the gathering of money. Hence givers need to feel their obligation to give to God than to satisfy human demands. Thus love for God and the desire for the success of His kingdom ought to be the motivating factors behind giving.

Teachings from the Experience of David

On the experience of David and the gathering of materials for the temple later to be built by Solomon, she affirms, “A similar call to self-sacrifice was made when David turned over to Solomon the responsibility of building the temple.” She further points out that king David challenged the whole assembly to consecrate themselves to God. It is such “consecration and willing service”⁷¹ that needs to be preserved in the minds of those who desire to build a house of worship.

Hence, members need to sacrifice for the collection of means that are meant for the construction of a structure that represents God. The appeal was for the willing participants to consecrate their service to God through their gifts. This was one other experience where there was no manipulation of the givers but each one had a choice as to how much to give to God.

Summary

Concluding this chapter, from the review of the Bible and writings of Ellen White, the perspective emerges that giving requires an exercise of faith and sacrifice on the part of the givers. It has been indicated that giving that is acceptable before God is that which comes from cheerful hearts. The emphasis is on the willingness of the giver. The other fact that was established is that the leader needs to lead by

⁷¹ Ellen G., White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, CA: Review and Herald, 1943), 62.

example in the matter of giving. It was observed that means that are extorted from the givers are an abomination to God. It was also pointed out that popular methods of giving, rather than drawing members close to God, turn them away from Him.

This chapter also established the thought that there should be no justification for resorting to unbiblical methods for raising means. God is not pleased when His work is sustained through such means. Thus giving is supposed to direct the minds of the givers to God. In a worship response to the Creator, givers need to bring gifts that bring glory to His name. Having discussed project giving, the next chapter examines contemporary literature on the same subject.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

After the theological foundation for this research has been laid in the previous chapter, it is important to look at the theoretical research to see what other authors say on the subject under this study. This chapter focuses on literature review on special project giving. Some literature that was written a number of decades ago will be part of this review because its classic in nature. Some of it is literature from respected writers around stewardship.

Special project giving is a big challenge in the ZUC territory. The challenge demands that leadership responds in a manner that assists the churches to approach giving from a biblical perspective. It is for this reason that the researcher has undertaken to discover through literature from contemporary Adventist writers and other Christian authors on the subject of giving to provide guidance to the ZUC territory on biblically accepted methods of raising resources for special projects. Writings from the NGO perspective are also reviewed and contrasted.

The chapter begins by exploring the material presented by different writers on the development of stewardship. It moves on to examine the concept of giving from various authors including the concept of giving of the traditional cultural religion of two major tribes of Zimbabwe. Adventist authors are consulted on the concept of giving. A theological approach to giving is examined from the various authors and a contrast is made. Then it moves to the investigation of the works on the issue of special project giving done by a number of authors. It also presents the view of the

Adventist authors on special project giving and a few reasons that cause people to give. Then it makes a brief summary of a few key discoveries of the study. From the findings in this chapter, a conclusion will be drawn.

The Concept of Giving

This portion of the research begins by briefly focusing on the development of stewardship and the concept of giving. Then it moves on to examine the concept of giving from various contemporary authors. At the same time it briefly examines the concept of giving from the two major tribes in Zimbabwe. Other writers along with Seventh-day Adventist authors are consulted and contrasted. Understanding the concept of giving from different authors would easily lead to a discovery of the proper method of raising means for special projects.

A Brief History about the Concept of Giving

This section of the research briefly looks at the concept of giving during the medieval period. Analyzing the development of stewardship in the history of the medieval church, Thompson points out that giving was understood to lead to the forgiveness of sins as advocated by Cyprian Bishop of Carthage. On the other hand, Augustine and Chrysostom advanced the thought that alms giving were an effective way of “acquiring salvation.”¹

The concept of giving that was advocated in the medieval church was meritorious in nature. Through giving it was believed the worshiper would receive favor from God. In that understanding, giving would be of benefit to the worshiper. Thompson further observes, “Thus, the doctrine of the medieval church-salvation

¹ Thomas K. Thompson, ed., *Stewardship in Contemporary Theology* (New York, NY: Association Press, 1960), 79.

through merits-had a definite place in the church from as early as the second and third centuries, and alms giving was one of the most effective ways to gain merit.”² This was a kind of giving where the giver expected a reward from God. Thus under such an arrangement the worshiper relates to God like they do to humans who can be appeased leaving the believer with a distorted understanding of God. Such distortion leads believers to give from selfish interests.

Discussing about stewardship, Vallet observes, “that the word stewardship can regain its biblical usage when it is linked to a thirst for God rather than fundraising for the church.”³ In fundraising approaches, the focus is not leading people to a living relationship with God; it is just about raising the needed resources.

In the theological reflections of chapter two during the gathering of resources for the temple to be later built by Solomon, the act of giving was a consecration to God. In his observation, Vallet insists that the focus is supposed to be right in order to be able to have a proper perspective of giving. Referring to the Puritans and their concept of giving he further notes, “Among the Puritans, giving was motivated not by legal compulsion, but by a mission cause and the promise of what they would receive for a giving for the cause.”⁴

To the Puritans, giving was connected to mission. Their concept of giving did not apply pressure on the giver. Hence to them, giving was attached to advancing the work of mission. Thus for them their assignment shaped their concept of giving.

² Thompson, ed., *Stewardship in Contemporary Theology*, 80.

³ Ronald E, Vallet, *Stewards of the Gospel, Reforming Theological Education*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 9-10.

⁴ Ibid, 13.

Contrasting Thompson and Vallet, while during the medieval era the idea of giving was understood to be the quickest way of gaining salvation and the forgiveness from God, which was the motivating factor behind the giving of alms. However, it appears that there may not be similarities in the observation of these two. A closer look at the two concepts reveals some subtle similarities. While in the observation of Thompson, giving was a means to gain favor with God, Vallet in referring to the understanding of the Puritans notes that giving was voluntary with a tag attached to it, which was a promise of a reward from God. The difference between the two is that the other concept has an emphasis on merit while the other was voluntary. Puritans went a step further to expect a reward from God for their giving. Thus, the promise of some reward from God becomes a motivator for giving.

Tracing the concept of stewardship and the influences that kind of adulterated the understanding of the word of God, Hall observes, “Similarly, stewardship must be understood first as descriptive of being—the very life-of God’s people. Deeds of stewardship arise out of the being of the steward. It is no different here from what pertains elsewhere: the act is an expression and consequence of the life enacts it.”⁵

In the observation above, Hall puts emphasis on being as that which will enable the steward to respond to the demands of stewardship. The concept that he is advocating is one that has to do with the person than what the person does. He also points out that the reason why the emphasis was on deeds was because of the adulteration of the teachings of the word of God.⁶ The emphasis on giving is not supposed to be on the deed, lest it addresses the act leaving out the motive. Giving is

⁵ Douglas John Hall, *The Steward A Biblical Symbol Come of Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 242.

⁶ Ibid.

supposed to be part of who the believer is. The next section focuses on the concept of giving among the two major tribes of Zimbabwe.

Concept of Giving in Shona and Ndebele Cultures in Zimbabwe

In addressing the challenge of varied methods of giving in the ZUC territory, it is important also to consider the cultural background of the two dominant tribes in Zimbabwe. While there are other minority tribes, this section is only limited to the two major ones. The section is just a brief overview to understand the concept of giving for the people of Zimbabwe from their cultural religious understanding. Like any other African people the Zimbabweans in their cultural setting are naturally givers. Of the aspect of being religious, Gray also wrote: “The Bantu people have a religion that profoundly affects the whole of their lives”⁷ To the Shona’s and Ndebele’s of Zimbabwe, religion is not an event but a part of daily living. The culture of the people has shaped them in their understanding and practice.

On the practice of giving and the African people, Mbiti attests, “Sacrifices and offerings are one of the commonest acts of worship among African peoples; and examples of them are overwhelmingly many.”⁸ Among the African people, the concept of giving to a supreme being is not a foreign concept. Giving is part of who the African is. This religious system leads its adherence to practice giving in various ways.

⁷ S. D. Gray, “Chapter 1: Shona and Ndebele Traditional Religion,” *Zambezia*, last modified 1917, accessed August 31, 2016, http://journals.co.za/content/zambezia/1891-1945/1/AJA03790622_298.

⁸ John S., Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (Edinburgh, Scotland: Heinemann Educational Books, 1967), 58.

Regarding the concept of giving, and ceremonies for *Mhondoro*, meaning to spirit of dead ancestors, it is pointed out that, “Offerings have a prominent place in the ceremony. The Shona has no doubt that he has to make real effort to obtain forgiveness for his transgressions. He must do something tangible to appease the offended spirit.”⁹ The Shona people understand that offerings are a way to appease the ancestors as such it is an important aspect that they cannot overlook.

In their practice of everyday life, the Shona and Ndebele practice giving. A serious traditional person in both cultures will observe religion in the following manners, as they eat, the first piece is thrown to the ground for those under the ground. Before drinking water, a little is first poured out to the ground for those under the ground. To these cultures, giving is embedded in their system.

The researcher also knows that in the two cultures, the entertainment of visitors is spontaneous and they have sayings that encourage such practices. Referring to acts of hospitality among the Shona culture of Zimbabwe, Chingombe affirms, “The African spirit of communality is maintained through the extension of hospitality to others.” He further observes that visitors were received “generously” because they believe that those who are passer byes cannot exhaust your granary.¹⁰

Such statements were meant to encourage the Shona people not to be afraid of entertaining visitors because of fear that they will experience a scarcity of food. Chingombe goes on to say that among the Ndebele culture they also say that your foot

⁹ Michael Gelfand, “Shona Religion,” *Cape Town: Juta* (1962), accessed May 17, 2017, http://reference.sabinet.co.za/webx/access/journal_archive/03790622/327.pdf, 44.

¹⁰ Evans Mandova and Agrippa Chingombe, “The Shona Proverb as an Expression of Unhu/Ubuntu,” *Matatu-Journal for African Culture and Society* 41, no. 1 (2013): 357–368.

has no limits, you may find yourself in a place where you thought you would not be. In other words, giving was a way of giving yourself.¹¹

It was an emphasis that one is a beneficiary of generosity. Another saying in the Ndebele culture says that a visitor's stomach is just like a goat's horn it does not finish your food. Such statements were made to encourage the spirit of generosity. Some of the practices that confirm this issue of giving can be observed in their traditional worship, which is always accompanied by giving. From a traditional and cultural point of view, whenever a person visits a sacred place or shrine, they spontaneously give without being requested to do so. The worshipers from this background believe that if that is not done, the ancestors may not be happy with such a behavior.

Concerning the gatherings for rituals and the need for the contributions for such ceremonies, Kazembe observes, "No one will be forced to contribute. People contribute according to their will and ability."¹²

In the cultural understanding giving was voluntary on the part of the one contributing. In his observation he makes examples that if such a gathering had the purpose of removing a certain type of problem those who had not contributed would not enjoy the benefit. He also points out that if there were material blessings to be received it would not be sensible just to allow one individual to contribute and become the beneficiary of all the blessings.¹³

¹¹ Evans Mandova and Agrippa Chingombe, "The Shona Proverb as an Expression of Unhu/Ubuntu," *Matatu-Journal for African Culture and Society* 41, no. 1 (2013): 357–368.

¹² Takawira Kazembe, "'Divine Angels' and Vadzimu in Shona Religion, Zimbabwe," *Rose Croix* 8 (2011), accessed July 30, 2016, https://375b1364bab998f0d14f-9d7ce9244c1359862daf87d2617988df.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/vol8_89_98_kazembe.pdf.

¹³ Ibid.

Thus among the people of Zimbabwe from their traditional understanding giving happens spontaneously. With all the examples given above, there is one common motivator for such giving. Such giving is motivated by fear of the ancestors that when they get angry the individual may experience problems in life. One other reason that goes with the fear is the belief that when a traditional worshiper does that, he/she receives blessings from the ancestors. These are believed to be the protectors and providers of wealth and other blessings. The challenge is that since these people come from a very strong religious background where giving is central to their worship, it becomes confusing why the same people would have a challenge of giving when they become Christians. It appears that there is a gap that needs to be bridged when these become part of the church. It may mean that Christianity has failed to assist the believers to know that God is the source, owner and giver of all blessings. To the African, religion is a part of life. Christianity appears to be an event that takes place once a week during a special service. This poses a challenge to Christianity that needs to be addressed.

Contemporary Authors on the Concept of Giving

This section deals with the concept of giving from contemporary authors on the idea of giving. George Barna coined a term that is called “Theographics;” of the term he points out that, “I coined the term after spending countless hours studying people’s lifestyles, thought patterns, behavioral patterns and spiritual composure, arriving at the conclusion that we cannot truly understand people’s donor behavior until we understand their spirituality.”¹⁴

¹⁴ George Barna, *How to Increase Giving in your Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997), 4.

To Barna, giving can only be understood in relationship to the spirituality of the givers. There are a number of components that contribute to giving in his understanding. Barna makes a very pertinent observation on giving, the importance of understudying the people to understand their behavior and relationship to God first before coming up with a strategy for giving. It is difficult for a fundraiser to craft a strategy for a group of people he/she does not understand.

In addressing giving from manipulative approaches, Hall states that, “Instead of periodic or regular efforts at conjuring up deeds of stewardship; instead of financial campaigns and bazaars and garage sales aimed at making temporary stewards out of essentially slothful or self-centered people;” he further observes that, rather than coaxing “and harping” bothering members to be teachers “or parish visitors or members” of a board, there is need to be well instructed on effective ways of presenting “the gospel” and make the members to understand stewardship as part of the Christian’s life.¹⁵

Hall contends that in place of trying to come up with various methods to try and cause the selfish to be temporary givers, there is need for proper education that leads to members being able to respond not because of some cunning strategies used but through a proper understanding of stewardship. To Hall, giving is a matter of teaching the people in the correct manner that excludes methods of manipulation. The aim is not just to get money but the giver.

On the concept of giving, Hybels points out that it depends on the assumptions of the one who is supposed to do the fund-raising. He observes that, a leader who is responsible for raising funds needs to have proper assumptions that people are

¹⁵ Hall, 243-244.

favorable towards giving. If his/her assumption is that members do not want with their money, that informs his/her approach. A leader who is under the conviction that his work is to get money from those who are tightly holding to it “cannot help but come up with a fundraising strategy that is manipulative and that produces guilt.”¹⁶

Thus the strategy for fundraising is informed by the belief of the one raising the resources concerning his/her target group. To him a raiser of resources can come up with strategies that can be very destructive in line with his/her convictions. Such that the individual may come up with manipulative methods of trying to get means from those he/she believes are not willing to part with their money. Assumptions influence the way a fundraiser approaches resource mobilization. From this observation, it can be understood that the basis of varied methods of raising funds lies in the fundraiser’s concept about giving.

Talking about the view of the resource raiser, Rodin sheds more light by saying that the one raising money either has to be influenced by the worldly view of believing that everything depends upon him/her to influence people to give. He further points out that, “There is ample evidence in scripture to show that all of the decisions in our lives should be influenced by the power of God’s Spirit working in us.”¹⁷

Which means a fundraiser can make a choice of what influence to lead him/her in the strategy to raise resources. The alternative is for the fundraiser to allow the Spirit of God to lead out in the program of mobilizing finances. Contrasting

¹⁶ Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*: (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 111.

¹⁷ R Scott Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom, A Theology of Life in All its Fullness* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 209.

Hybels and Rodin, it can be noted that the two are addressing the same issue using different words.

Where Hybels says that the resource raiser needs to believe that people are disposed to give or resort to a manipulative approach, Rodin says that one should not take matters in their hands. There is need to allow the Spirit of God to lead the whole process of fundraising. The main point that these two are making is that the one raising resources needs to rely on the spirit of God to influence the givers than the individual taking it upon their shoulders to motivate the givers. Thus the resource raiser needs to have faith in God, that He will move people to respond by presenting their gifts.

Referring to God as a giver, Hinze points out that, “God, in Christ, continues to be known primarily as a giver, having given the son to the world (Joh.3:16) in a supreme gift of total grace.”¹⁸ To Hinze, our concept of giving derives from God who gave His only son for our redemption. To God it was not a question of pressure but love towards humanity. While Blomberg observes, the reason why Paul commands liberality is “simply because it honors God; the only guaranteed reward awaits in the life to come. Just like Jesus Paul, recognizes the danger of mammon as an idol and its potentially damaging effects. Christ must be served rather than money.”¹⁹ The writer advocates for a concept where Christ is to be served rather than the material blessings. The idea being advocated is one where Jesus is at the center of worship.

It has been established in this section that the medieval concept of giving was that which was based on merit, where the member would in exchange with his/her

¹⁸ Donald W. Hinze, *To Give and Give Again a Christian Imperative for Generosity* (New York, NY: Pilgrim Press, 1990), 30.

¹⁹ Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 22.

offerings receive forgiveness from God. While to the Puritans it was voluntary on the part of the giver. It has been said that giving is not supposed to be manipulative in that the goal of giving is not about money but salvation. While to the traditional cultural religion of the two Zimbabwean tribes examined, giving is part of who they are. Thus those raising means need to learn from God who gave His only son out of love. The next section deals with the concept of giving within Adventists.

Adventists and the Concept Giving

Discussing the practices of the early Adventists and giving, Reid affirms that, “early Adventist leaders encouraged believers to contribute freewill offerings for other projects, above and beyond the 10 percent tithe.”²⁰ Reid goes on to give an example of what transpired in 1876 where an additional “one third’ offering of the systematic benevolence quota) was suggested for the Tract Missionary Society.”²¹

While there was need to give for the project, the members still needed to give a benevolent offering as requested. From the example that has been given it can be seen how the early Adventists approached the subject of giving when there was a special need to do so. The special project did not lead to coming up with ways that were a departure from the acceptable practice of giving freely. While Rodriguez adds by saying, “The Macedonians gave their offerings ‘entirely on their own’ (2 Cor 8:3). Paul did not ask them to give; they gave on their own initiative. Giving should be a free decision of the heart (2 Cor 9:7).”²²

²⁰ George Reid and Raoul Dederen, eds, *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 666.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Rodriguez, 0-14.

Thus, Adventists authors advocate an offering that is from the conscious choice of the giver. The concept of giving among the early Adventists was that of freewill on the part of the giver. Those with a living connection with God do not need to be induced to give, they respond to Him out of love.

On the purpose for the offerings, Rees asserts, “The offering system, like the tithe, does not have as its primary purpose the raising of money (or its equivalent), but rather God’s concern for each individual. These can be classed under three general headings: protection, development, and privilege.”²³ The concept being advocated is one where giving is for the good of the individual. In other words, God is interested in the individuals not the things they bring to Him. In his understanding, alms are meant for the good of the ones presenting them.

On the issue of giving as a privilege, Pipim observes, “Indeed, giving is the privilege and responsibility of all God’s children. It is a part of worship—a joyful expression of praise, love and gratitude. It is an integral part of stewardship.”²⁴ In this observation, giving is inclusive for every child of God. It is the aspect that allows members to worship God through their means. It is an opportunity to openly express love and gratitude to God. The concept he is bringing in takes into consideration that as believers bring their gifts to God, they are led by a sense of expressing their thankfulness and love to Him.

²³ Mel Rees, *Biblical Principles for Giving and Living*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995), 31.

²⁴ Samuel Koranteng Pipim and Steve Bauer, *God is Faithful, Stewardship a Journey of Faith and a Test of Commitment*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Berean Books, 2006), 21.

While the SID Working Policy attests, “Bringing offerings to the Lord is a Christian duty with spiritual and moral implications.”²⁵ The concept advocated in the policy document centers on spirituality. “Our offerings are an expression of our self-offering to God. They are a deeply religious experience in that they are a token of a life wholly surrendered to God as our Lord (cf. Lev 1:4, 9).”²⁶ It is a departure from the understanding of Adventism to separate offerings from being a religious experience. Project giving is supposed to lead the giver to this sense that what they are doing is for the Lord.

This understanding in Adventism connects well with the findings of chapter two where giving is an indication of members drawing near to God. The challenge observed is that what is documented is not what is practiced when it comes to raising means for special projects.

Early Adventists understood giving to be based on the freewill of the one bringing an offering to God. Contemporary Adventist writers confirm the practice of the early Adventists of giving freely. The concept took into account that giving was to be viewed as an act of thankfulness and gratitude to God. It has also been pointed out that the one raising resources needs to trust in the leading of the Spirit of God in moving the hearts of the members to respond in giving to Him. Having examined the concept of giving, the next section of the research focuses on the varied methods of fundraising.

²⁵ SID, “Working Policy of the Southern Africa Indian Ocean of the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist Church” (Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division, 2016), 596.

²⁶ Ibid.

Varied Methods of Fund-raising

This section of the research briefly focuses on some of the varied methods of fund-raising. It is not exhaustive of such approaches because of the limitations of this research. The section points out some of these approaches and shows their strengths or weaknesses. It is always tempting to use popular methods of raising resources that may not be Bible based.

Addressing the issues on the how of fund-raising, Thompson warns, “In our stewardship emphasis we should never include anything which is not theologically sound, even if it promises to be temporarily effective in the raising of money.”²⁷ The admonition is for God’s people to employ methods of fundraising that are anchored on the word of God. While there are other methods that may promise to deliver, such should not be used by God’s people. To him, it is not about a method that yields outcomes, but about sound theology. He further affirms that, “And no emergency in the life of the church should ever be used to condone the resort to principles of the lottery as a means of raising money for church finances.”²⁸

In the quote above Thompson further strengthens his argument by pointing out that even immediate needs in the church should not be used to condone the raising of means using unbiblical ways. It is tempting at times to resort to easy means of raising finances in the face of emergencies that need a quick response.

Rees also points out that, some of the resources that find their way into the church may not qualify to be called an offering because of the methods used in collecting such resources. In his observation he points out that the challenge is that some of those methods used put more emphasis on the needs than on expressing

²⁷ Thompson, *Stewardship in Contemporary Theology*, 56.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 57.

gratitude to God. The approach that is used makes the difference on whether the resources are called a collection or an offering.²⁹

There is agreement between Rees and Thompson on the approach to be used in the raising of funds. While Thompson suggests that even emergencies, may not be justification for using unbiblical methods to raise resources, Rees is saying the focus needs to be correct, methods that are not biblical disqualify an offering making it just a collection because of the emphasis on needs. Both advocate a method that has the word of God as its basis not that which pushes needs ahead of scripture. In short, this section is putting an emphasis on a method that is theologically sound to be used in raising means for the church. It has shown that some of the approaches to giving are not in harmony with scripture.

Referring to some approaches to raising resources, Callahan observes, “This pattern of worry, fretfulness, tension, and anxiety is handed down from one leadership team to the next. The finance committee and the board become the resident custodians of the anxiety legend.”³⁰ The approach used does not draw members to God but leaves them reflecting the tension in the fundraiser. He further observes that such methods do not yield good results but just to raise a little money that paints a picture to make it appear as if the method used was right when the method does not produce sustainable results.³¹ It shows that even wrong methods can produce results that can mislead the fundraiser. This may be one reason why leaders continue to use approaches that are not rooted in scripture. From this observation, this approach falls short of yielding the acceptable results.

²⁹ Rees, 39.

³⁰ Callahan, *Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church*, 41.

³¹ Ibid.

On the kind of offering that the giver should not present Olfond observes, that “giving that is not spiritual;” the kind that has hidden agendas that may not be clear at the moment where one may be seeking “attention” to him/herself is not the right kind of giving.³² As what was seen in the second chapter where Jesus addressed the motive in giving that the one presenting alms does not need to be the center of attention. Olfond continues to point out that the Lord condemned such giving. He further points out the other form of giving that is not acceptable as, “bringing our offerings to God with ill will and reluctance.”³³

From the theological reflections of chapter two, it was established that God is not pleased when His children give to Him grudgingly. Olfond cites the text from Corinthians where giving is not supposed to be of necessity but from cheerful hearts.³⁴ This suggests that a method applied can get a response from an unwilling giver. This section is simply emphasizing that giving needs to be given in the right spirit for it to be acceptable.

To Nouwen, raising means is a call to conversion, “Fundraising is also always a call to conversion. And this call comes to both those who seek funds and those who have funds.”³⁵ Nouwen calls for a balance between the one raising means and those who have money. The approach that is advocated is where one approaches giving from a spiritual angle. To him fundraisers need to have the correct attitude about money. Nouwen further raises another important point about fund-raising. “People

³²Stephen F., Olfond, *The Grace of Giving, A Biblical Study of Christian Stewardship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2000), 49.

³³ Olfond, 49.

³⁴ Olfond, 49

³⁵ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *A Spirituality of Fundraising* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2010), 17.

have such a need for friendship and community that fundraising has to be community building. I wonder how many churches and charitable organizations realize that community is one of the greatest gifts they have to offer.”³⁶

Those raising funds need to go beyond looking for means to providing for new relationships and friendships in the community. Fundraising is a good opportunity for uniting people for a common cause. Thus, in a church setting, raising of means should cement relationships among members. It is supposed to give them a sense of belonging.

On the other methods used by fundraisers, Martin states that “Some church leaders today use emotional, unscriptural, and inappropriate methods in pressuring people to give money to the Lord’s work”³⁷ The challenge with this approach is that the leader takes it upon himself/herself to raise the means. It becomes the business of the fundraiser not God. From the findings of chapter two such a method is not in keeping with the word of God. There is no need for the one raising money to resort to methods that apply pressure as a way to manipulate givers.

Referring to building projects, Alcorn observes, “It’s increasingly common, especially in building projects, to bring in professional fund-raisers or canvassing directors from outside membership. No matter how well intentioned, these programs communicate a sad message: the church leaders cannot share a compelling vision that people will want to support, so they bring a ‘hired gun’ with an arsenal of ways to get money from people.”³⁸ Alcorn uses very strong words on the various methods used by leaders in raising resources. It is important for leadership to take responsibility

³⁶ Nouwen, *A Spirituality of Fundraising*, 49-50.

³⁷ Alfred Martin, *Biblical stewardship* (Dubuque, IL: ECS Ministries, 2005), 30.

³⁸ Randy Alcorn, *Money Possessions and Eternity* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2003), 247.

without delegating the task to mobilize resources. A clear vision sold by leadership can move the members to support a project.

Referring to Non Profit Making organizations and fund-raising strategies, Drucker proposes that, “The purpose of a strategy for raising money is precisely to enable the non-profit institution to carry out its mission without subordinating that mission to fund-raising. This is why non-profit people have changed the term they use from ‘fund raising’ to ‘fund development.’”³⁹

Drucker makes an observation that challenges Christian fundraisers to move away from a strategy that simply aims at raising money to one where there is a commitment for continual support. Fundraising hardens the givers to the proposition to give. It is event centered and does not lead givers to continue their support. It is interesting to note that even other organizations outside the church notice that fund-raising is not a good idea, hence referring to it as fund-development.

Drucker continues to define the difference between these two terms, “Fund raising is going around with a begging bowl, asking for money because the need is great. Fund development is creating a constituency, which supports the organization because it deserves it. It means developing a membership that participates through giving.”⁴⁰ Drucker points out that there is a need to create a constituency for continuous support of the organization. Meaningful giving should seek to introduce givers to be regular supporters of an organization. “In fund development you appeal

³⁹ Peter Drucker, *Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Principles and Practices* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2005), 57.

⁴⁰ Drucker, 57.

to the heart, but you also have to appeal to the head, and try to build a continuing effort.”⁴¹

In explaining the difference between the two, Drucker points out that in fund-raising the resource raiser carries a begging basket while fund-development is about appealing to the heart, it also seeks to make the givers participants for sustainable support of the organization. Any organization that raises resources needs a more dependable source of support hence the need to come up with a more sustainable method of support. While Nouwen confirms that, “Fundraising is precisely the opposite of begging. When we seek to raise funds we are not saying, ‘Please, could you help us out because lately it’s been hard.’ Rather, we are declaring, ‘We have a vision that is amazing and exciting.’”⁴²

Contrasting Drucker and Nouwen, the two are in agreement that a fundraising strategy should not be reduced to a begging strategy. It should be an opportunity to invite the community to be a part of the organization through participation in providing the needed means to accomplish the vision of the organization. It is an opportunity to sell to the givers an exiting reality that they need to be part of. The givers need to be assisted to see and appreciate the vision laid before them.

In reference to giving MacArthur states: “Giving is therefore an issue of believing His command and following through in faithful obedience. If you do, you demonstrate your trust in His promises. If you don’t, you sin against Christ in the sense that you have no faith in what He promised about the blessings of giving.”⁴³

The quotation above attributes giving as a response of belief and obedience to God.

⁴¹ Drucker, 57-58

⁴² Nouwen, 16-17.

⁴³ John MacArthur, *Whose Money Is it, Anyway?* (Nashville, TN: Word, 2000), 68.

Giving is not just about the presentation of alms; it is about one's relationship with God. It is a situation where trust in God is shown from a practical angle. In addressing the varied methods of raising resources, there is need for the givers to exercise faith in God in order to give in a meaningful way.

On the motivation for giving, Guinness observes that "Several fundamental motives are cited as leading reasons: compassion for the needy, self-interested altruism, community spirit. Most important of all, however, is reciprocity, the principle that we as 'passing on' a form of giving that keeps on giving."⁴⁴ Guinness alludes to a number of motivations towards giving which all fall short of what the Bible teaches about giving. The motives outlined above all point to the individual giver as the beneficiary. He further points out that that while "contract giving" is a way of keeping communities together, it is also based on a principle of benefiting the giver. He goes ahead to state that such methods of giving are not biblical.⁴⁵

From this section it has been observed that giving should not be manipulative even in situations where the church is hard pressed, both the givers and the one encouraging giving need to be converted to have the right attitude about money. Giving becomes an opportunity to build relationships, which are a need in the communities. The Bible is supposed to form the foundation of all giving. Thus givers need to exercise their faith and trust in God. There may be more other varied methods of giving that have not been explored in this section, which may call for further study of the subject. The next section of the research focuses on biblical giving.

⁴⁴ Os Guinness, *Doing Well and Doing Good, Money giving, and Caring in a Free Society* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2001), 89.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

A Theological Approach to Fund-raising

This section of the research looks at the theological approach to giving. It seeks to establish from different authors whether there is a theological support for varied methods of giving. At the same time it examines some of the components that contribute to giving from a biblical point of view.

The Macedonians exemplified biblical giving, referring to how they gave MacArthur points out that, “The Macedonians characterize biblical giving because they understood the promises of God, and thus were secure in their hope of the future that they willingly gave toward the present-day needs of others.”⁴⁶

The response of the Macedonians to giving sets an example of biblical giving. Their giving was a demonstration of their trust in God. The implication is that givers sometimes develop some fear that if they gave they would suffer want. Hence the need to have confidence in God that He will satisfy their needs. He continues to point out that “The grace of God is the primary stimulus to biblical giving. A heartfelt longing and earnest desire to give generously and sacrificially flows out of a transformed heart.”⁴⁷

Biblical giving is not about some scheming and inducing givers to respond, it is about a response to the grace of God. It is an indicator of a change in the heart just like what Hall said earlier on in the section that dealt with the concept of giving as part of being. Simply meaning that what the individual is in his/her heart. MacArthur further notes that, “The first characteristic of biblical giving is that it is motivated by the grace of God. That was the bedrock foundation from which the Macedonians operated.” He further points out that their response was not driven by human

⁴⁶ MacArthur, 82.

⁴⁷ MacArthur, 84.

sympathy, or some kind of charity towards the needy. “Something extraordinarily beyond what typically finds in human hearts induced Macedonians generous giving.”⁴⁸

In the observation of MacArthur in reference to the experience of the Macedonians, he points out that giving had its motivation from the grace of God. He emphasizes the fact that what caused the Macedonians to give in the way they did, was as a result of something beyond what can be found in the hearts of human beings. Taking into consideration that the natural man is selfish, it is on these grounds that he attributes the response to the power of God’s grace. On giving that is motivated by the Grace of God, Willard and Jim state that, “Our giving is to be motivated by the gospel of grace, not by expectation of getting something in return.”⁴⁹ The emphasis is about giving that is not benefit centered. The motivating factor for the children of God is supposed to be their love for Jesus.

Commenting on the liberality of the Macedonians, Rogers confirms, “The liberality of the Corinthians was due to the operation of the grace of God. The sacred writers constantly recognize the fact that the freest and most spontaneous acts of men, their inward states and the outward manifestations of those states, when good, are due to the secret influence of the Spirit of God.”⁵⁰

There is an agreement between MacArthur and Rogers; they both attribute the generosity of the Macedonians to the grace of God. They both agree that for human beings to respond in such a way it takes some power outside the human beings. They

⁴⁸ MacArthur, 83.

⁴⁹ Willard Chris and Jim Sheppard, *Contagious Generosity, Creating a Culture of Giving in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 64.

⁵⁰ Rod Rogers, *Pastor Driven Stewardship 10 Steps to Lead Your Church to Biblical Giving* (Dallas, TX: Brown Books, 2006), 40.

both acknowledge a higher influence led the Macedonians to this generosity.

MacArthur further affirms, “According to 2Corinthians 8 and 9, truly biblical giving that pleases God is dependent on His grace from start to finish. God’s grace enables us to give generously.”⁵¹

Giving that is pleasing to God is that which responds to the influence of the Holy Spirit. There ought to be consciousness of the need to allow God to influence the givers throughout the whole process of fundraising. To him, the Spirit of God has a role in the giving from the inception to the end. It takes a fundraiser who trusts in God to know that He is the influence behind true giving.

On the same matter of giving, Martin points to the fact that giving can be attributed to the grace of God. “We are recipients of his grace, and He creates in us a desire to be gracious also.”⁵² Martin, Rogers and MacArthur are in agreement that giving is stimulated by the grace of God. These three authors are in agreement with the findings in the second chapter where the giving of the Macedonians was attributed to the grace of God. The answer to the varied approaches to giving is allowing the grace of God and His Spirit to move the givers to benevolent generosity.

Martin further notes that “The first essential in giving, and all Christian stewardship, is the giving of self to the Lord. If one gives oneself to God, then it follows that everything one has belongs to God.”⁵³ Giving takes place where there is a connection with God. Members, who have this vital link, respond by giving their means to God. It takes someone who is dedicated to God to respond to giving in a generous manner. Rodriguez asserts that, “Hence, an offering is the embodiment of a

⁵¹ Rogers, *Pastor Driven Stewardship 10 Steps to Lead Your Church to Biblical Giving*, 47.

⁵² Martin, 30.

⁵³ Martin, 30.

disposition of the heart, of our willingness to surrender and consecrate our lives to the Lord.”⁵⁴

Biblical approach to giving aims at the heart of the giver. It is when the worshiper willingly surrenders to God wholeheartedly that giving becomes an overflow of the living relationship with God. Thus when members are not giving it maybe a sign of the state of their relationship with God.

While the Witts affirm that “In some mysterious way, such giving-motivated only by our love for God-ends up meeting our own deep spiritual needs and is intensely satisfying.”⁵⁵

Giving is supposed to be a result of a motivation from a commitment to God. When one has such connection with God, he/she does not regret giving to His cause. Such giving leaves the presenter of gifts with a sense of satisfaction. These three all point out the fact that giving has its source in what God does. It has a connection of the giver to the Creator that brings awareness that the one to present alms and what they possess belongs to God and that makes it easy for one to respond in giving. This observation takes into consideration that an understanding of God as the rightful owner of everything precedes acceptable giving. It also takes into account the aspect of the worshiper totally giving him/herself to God. These three authors are in agreement with what was discovered in the second chapter in the experience of David and the gathering of resources, where the response of the people was a sign of drawing near God.

⁵⁴ Rodriguez, 0-14.

⁵⁵ Jonathan and Amanda Witt, *Effective Stewardship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 61.

While Hinze affirms, “Jesus commands that we love with the totality of self in heart, soul, mind and strength-or in our giving, our doing and our being. The response of the creature caretaker is clearly to be a faithful steward of active love toward God and neighbor.”⁵⁶ In a way the emphasis is that before the worshiper presents gifts to God, he/she ought to give of self totally to God. The implication is that giving demands the surrender of the whole person to God’s will. This is in agreement with the findings of the second chapter where giving is about consecration to God. One of the answers to the challenge of varied methods of giving is total dedication to God.

Lane summarizes biblical giving as follows: “Giving intentionally, regularly, generously, first, proportionally and cheerfully will lead a giver’s heart to Jesus.”⁵⁷ Lane summarizes biblical giving as outlined in the book of Corinthians. It is an observation that confirms what was established in the theological review about giving. While on the other hand Herb confirms that, “A biblical, spiritual, and theological foundation is essential for high stewardship levels in local churches.”⁵⁸ Biblical giving is supposed to have its roots in both: a spiritual and theological foundation. There is a relationship between giving and spirituality. Approaches that are not Bible centered fall short of enhancing the spirituality of the member. Rather than drawing the member close to God, such approaches create a sense in the member that they are being cheated or robbed of their valuable resources. Hence they perceive God as one taking advantage over them.

⁵⁶ Hinze, 37.

⁵⁷ Charles R. Lane, *Ask, Thank, Tell, Improving Stewardship Ministry in your Congregation* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 56.

⁵⁸ Herb Miller, *New Consecration Sunday, Stewardship Program, Team Member Manual* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 54.

This section has led to an understanding that true giving is motivated by the grace of God. It is an act of a loving response to the Creator. As members recognize the place of God and His role in their welfare that they respond to Him in gratitude. A biblical approach is an answer to the varied approaches to giving. The next section of the research examines briefly some of the aspects that contribute to giving from a biblical point of view. The first section begins by examining the relationship between giving and worshiping God.

Giving as Worship

Commenting on the experience of Jacob and his dream of the ladder where the angels were ascending and descending, Jonathan and Amanda affirm, “Boiled down to its essentials, giving is worship.”⁵⁹ Jacob’s response was not a result of pressure but one that acknowledges God for His goodness. These two attach giving as a response to the graciousness of God as can be seen in the response of Jacob after his dream when he was running away from his brother.

On the other hand, the Witts observe, “When we give cheerfully, as an act of worship, the very act of giving moves us to lose interest in ourselves and to devote ourselves to God.”⁶⁰ The aspect of worship leads the members to change their focus from self-interest to the interests of God’s work. As the focus shifts from self, which is normally a hindrance to giving, the heart opens itself to the leading of God’s spirit. It is an exercise that enhances the relationship between the giver and God, a component that is critical for a meaningful response. The next section looks at the role of spirituality in giving.

⁵⁹ Jonathan and Amanda Witt, 69.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 61.

One of the elements that are required for a successful campaign for resources is prayer. McKenzie observes, “For the journey toward generosity to be successful, we need to experience and express gratitude for all God has given. While all elements of stewardship development are important, the element most often overlooked is prayer.”⁶¹ This is an important element that unlocks the hearts of givers to respond to the love of God. It is easier just to go ahead with the campaign without total dependence upon God. Fundraisers forget that they have no power to move hearts to action.

On the same note, Malphurs and Stroope confirm that, “The first component of a successful capital campaign is the important spiritual dimension, represented by prayer. Prayer is the most important part of the entire campaign. Its imperative that the leadership bathe the initial decision to enter into a capital campaign, the project itself, and follow-up in prayer.”⁶² Normally in fundraising, those in charge do not see the importance sometimes of dedicating the whole strategy in God’s hands. This is an element that reminds the fundraiser that they are limited in impressing upon members to give. It allows the fundraisers to depend upon the leading of the Holy Spirit to grant the success of the program. They continue to emphasize that, “Prayer provides the divine empowerment for the campaign.”⁶³ These two authors agree that prayer is the energy that drives the whole fundraising program. Yet it is one component that at times is not taken seriously.

⁶¹ McKenzie, 28-29.

⁶² Aubrey Malphurs and Steve Stroope, *Money Matters in Church, A Practical Guide for Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bakers Books, 2007), 165.

⁶³ Malphurs and Stroope, 165.

On the need for the leader to be prayerful Lafond affirms, “The church leader dealing with issues around money must tend his or her own spiritual garden. Regular discursive prayer, meditation, spiritual direction, time in silence and reflection and good self-care of the mind and body are all essential for anyone seeking to navigate the choppy waters where money and church flow together.”⁶⁴ A successful fund-raising program demands spiritual discipline from the one responsible for the campaign. One who takes care of his/her own spiritual well-being.

This section has made it clear that one of the requirements for a fund-raising program is prayer by the ones involved in raising resources. It is prayer that unlocks the hearts of the members to respond to God. The next section of the research focuses on the importance of involving members in the mobilizing of funds. Involvement leads the members to own the project.

One other important aspect in giving is the inclusion of the congregation. Aubrey states, “Increased congregational involvement is another important aspect of people contributing to the campaign. Research indicates that when people are involved they are more willing to support the church financially, because they get their fingerprints all over it to have ownership. The result is they believe in what they’re doing and are willing to back it up with their wallets.”⁶⁵ When something does not involve people directly, there is a tendency to think that it does not concern them and hence may not need their support. Yet when the same people feel they are recognized and can make a difference, they tend to accept responsibility and take ownership of the project. It is easy for people to identify with a project they are part

⁶⁴ Charles Lafond, *Fearless Church Fundraising, The Practical and Spiritual Approach to Stewardship* (New York, NY: Morehouse, 2012), 24.

⁶⁵ Malphurs and Stroope, 156.

of. The next section of the research focuses on the importance of visitation as a strategy for members to give.

On the need for spiritual growth, Malphurs and Stroope affirm, “The results are funding a need of the church as well as helping people to grow spiritually as they learn and trust God with their finances and the church’s finances. If people don’t grow closer to the savior as a result of the process, then the leadership has failed the congregation, or something has gone seriously wrong with the process.”⁶⁶ Malphurs and Stroope, see fundraising as an exercise that should impact the spirituality of the givers.

The raising of resources is not just about money; it is about a strategy that addresses the spirituality of the members. They continue to point out that spiritual growth should be the primary objective of raising resources. In their understanding this should not be left to chance but it should be a matter of intentionality. They further observe, “Increased giving is one of the signs of increased spiritual maturity.”⁶⁷

In the observation of Malphurs and Stroope, generosity and spiritual advancement go together. In other words, as the other continues to grow the other becomes a response to spiritual maturity. Whenever there is a challenge with giving, the leaders need to address the spiritual life of members and avoid the temptation to coerce them into giving. Spiritual growth needs to be the primary objective of any fund-raising strategy. Referring to raising resources as a spiritual exercise, Lafond attests, “The ministry of fundraising and the associated work, of planning and communications is holy not because it is called ‘stewardship,’ but because it helps

⁶⁶ Malphurs and Stroope, 144.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 155.

people to know how to live well. It is important because it reduces their fear and shame around money to God.”⁶⁸ It has been established that the gathering of resources is a spiritual exercise that calls for a spiritual approach. The outcome becomes an experience of joy in giving. It is one of the important aspects not to be left out in all fundraising activities.

Commenting on the importance of spirituality in giving, Robinson observes, “Churches exist to change lives. One of the core ways that churches change lives is by helping people to be and become more trusting, generous and giving. These are spiritual practices.”⁶⁹ In the raising of resources, the one leading the exercise needs to keep in mind that the church is there to transform people’s lives. As the lives change, the result will be more trusting and benevolent members. It is to lead them to have faith in God. All the authors consulted in this section agree that giving is a spiritual exercise that should result in members drawing closer to God. They agree that the plans that do not grow members spiritually are failing strategies. A worship experience leads members to lose interest in self-while their focus becomes the interest of the task ahead of them.

Importance of Leadership Example in Giving

One of the critical aspects that lead members to give is the example set by leaders. McKenzie affirms, “A person in a leadership role who has not made a financial commitment to support the ministry of your church will derail your vision

⁶⁸ Lafond, *Fearless Church Fundraising, The Practical and Spiritual Approach to Stewardship*, 10.

⁶⁹ Anthony B. Robinson, *Stewardship for Vital Congregations* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2011), 24.

and be a stumbling block at every turn.”⁷⁰ It may be difficult for followers to attach importance to that which leaders neglect. Leaders need to take part in what they are requesting members to participate in. McKenzie points out that there is need for leadership to support the ministry of the church as a way of motivating the members to give.

He continues to emphasize that “If your clergy is not a role model for Christian financial stewardship, you will struggle mightily to succeed. Stewardship is a spiritual matter and must be addressed by your clergy, or will be unlikely to ever leave ‘base camp.’”⁷¹ One form of motivation for the members is when leaders become role models to their followers. Leaders need to believe and act out their conviction. His observation is in agreement with the findings of chapter two where the involvement of leaders triggered a response from the followers.

This section has examined the role of leadership in the raising of resources. Leaders need to lead by example as what was established in the second chapter where David led in the contributions of the temple later to be built by Solomon. The next section focuses on goal setting as a motivator to giving.

Goal Setting and Giving

The setting of a goal is one of the reasons that lead people to give in a meaningful way. On the need to set a target that people should work towards, Malphurs and Stroope observe, “Some people fear setting the goal too low.” They point out that it is not the goal that determines how much money will be collected.

⁷⁰ Scott McKenzie and Kristine Milner, *Climb Higher, Reaching New Heights in Giving and Discipleship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 25.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 26.

“And a goal set too high (such as one based on what is needed) can be discouraging to the church if not reached. Ultimately, this is about managing expectations.”⁷²

Leaders need to remember to use a goal as a motivating factor. When members achieve something, they are motivated to do more. It is important for the leadership to set goals that are reasonable and achievable as a way of motivating the members. On goals Kiiru, Kiraka and Cuthbert attest, “Goals should tell us where we have to be, not what we have to do.” They continue to emphasize that it is such goals that assist the fundraisers with the bigger picture linked to their vision.⁷³ These authors emphasize the need to let people see the outcome in the fulfillment of mission. A goal becomes a pointer to the destination to be reached. The next section of the research will focus on the role of visitation in giving to God.

Visitation and Giving

Robinson discusses a number of strategies for giving that could be used interchangeably. On the aspect of member visitation, he suggests, “Generally you want people visiting people who have similar giving potential.”⁷⁴ The strategy is for members to visit those of their class. Such understand each other and reason from the same level. That according to him makes it easier for them to respond when visited by those who are at the same level with them.

On the importance of personal labor by the pastors, Ellen White affirms that, “Souls for whom Christ died are perishing for want of well-directed personal labor;” she goes on to say that a minister who neglects personal labor has “mistaken his

⁷² Malphurs and Stroope, p155.

⁷³ Macmillan Kiiru, Ruth N. Kiraka, and David L. Cuthbert, *Successful Fundraising a strategic and Practical Guide* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel, 2011), 77.

⁷⁴ Robinson, 68.

calling,” she points out that this is a ministry that the membership demands.⁷⁵ The work of the pastor is not just about the pulpit; it is also about being in touch with the flock. She continues to argue that, “when the word has been preached in the pulpit, the work has just began. There are multitudes who will never be reached by the gospel unless it is carried to them.”⁷⁶ The pulpit is just the beginning of the work of the pastor not the end. There are certain aspects of faith that may not be solved by just proclamation on the pulpit. There is need for the pastor to get to where the people are to be able to address their need. The pulpit may not address certain questions that personal labor may easily deal with.

Regularity in Giving

Addressing giving as something that should not be looked at in relation to specific situations, Blanchard, affirms, “Some people think of generosity as an event. They get behind some cause and participate in an annual fund drive. When their big splash is over, its back to business as usual. But generosity is an attitude. It has to be cultivated daily.”⁷⁷

The aim of raising resources is not just to develop situational givers who give once and wait for another situation that calls for giving. It is supposed to become a lifestyle. This is in agreement with what was discovered in the second chapter about being regular in presenting gifts. On regularity, Lane observes, “To be regular in your giving means to establish a pattern in your giving, and to follow that pattern.”⁷⁸ One

⁷⁵ Ellen G., White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 527.1.

⁷⁶ Ellen G., White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1900), 229.3.

⁷⁷ Ken Blanchard and S. Truett Cathy, *The Generosity Factor* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 2002), 51-52.

⁷⁸ Lane, *Ask, Thank, Tell, Improving Stewardship Ministry in Your Congregation*, 47.

reason why it becomes hard to give is because it is not in the habit of the giver to give. These two are in agreement on giving that is not event oriented. Their observation agrees with the observation of Drucker on coming up with a strategy that is sustainable. The next section reviews what Adventist authors say about project giving.

Adventist Writers on Special Project Giving

This section of the research deals with the aspect of special project giving from the Adventist writers. It seeks to discover what they say about special project giving. In reference to fundraising, Mack Tennyson observes, “With all these details, neglecting spiritual things is easy. A fund-raising campaign is best when Christ and His sacrifice is woven into every activity. Focus on prayer and make your visits spiritual times of building God’s kingdom. The building program will succeed if the giving is spirit led.”⁷⁹

The observation is that a successful program to raise funds needs to be approached in a manner that centers on Christ and His sacrifice. It is one that should include the visiting of the members and praying for them, to Tennyson this can be a successful program to raise funds for the special projects. This is an approach that takes into consideration the centrality of spirituality in the raising of resources for special projects. Such a strategy seeks to build the relationship of the givers with their Creator. Rodriguez affirms, “Giving should be a free decision of the heart (Corinthians 9:7). Giving from the heart means that the offering is not given reluctantly or under compulsion.”⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Mack Tennyson, *Church Finance for People Who Count* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991) 78.

⁸⁰ Rodriguez, 0-14.

Giving is not a matter of pressure. It is a voluntary act on the part of the one presenting alms. This statement leads to an understanding that from a Bible point of view, giving seeks no other motivation outside the spirit of God. Thus a successful strategy for fundraising is one that targets the hearts of the givers and not their means. It is a matter of conversion.

On the question of motivation Rees asserts that, “Jesus was the perfect example. He never manipulated anyone, but He was the master motivator.”⁸¹ Motivation is a challenging aspect to the one trying to raise means. There is a temptation in thinking that for members to be motivated it takes some scheming or painting a situation that leads them to give. Yet with the master motivator there was no scheming involved but leaving everything to the influence of the Holy Spirit.

On the prerequisites for the building of a house of God Rees points out that, “Devotion to God and a spirit of sacrifice were the first requisites in preparing a dwelling place for the Most High.”⁸² Fundraisers are advised to put first things in their proper place before the process of raising means. There is a need to ensure that the worshipers are devoted to God.

Devotion to God and a spirit of sacrifice need to be in place before the raising of the means for a church structure. The question could be why these two need to be in place before commencing on the raising of resources? Sacrifice leads members to give meaningfully even beyond their ability. Responding to why these two components need to be in place, Rees further advises, “These two divinely prescribed requisites would eliminate the problems associated with church building programs. Devotion to God would provide all the time, energy, and finances needed for the

⁸¹ Rees, 43.

⁸² Mel Rees, *God and Man Unlimited* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 122.

building. A spirit of sacrifice would permit a harmonious adjustment of personal likes and dislikes.”⁸³

A big project demands commitment on the part of the givers. Always when a church takes on a big project that needs a lot of money, there is bound to be challenges that may affect member relationships. He also mentions that when members are devoted to God, they will avail themselves and their time and means to the work of God. While sacrifice on the other hand may lead members to make some adjustments in their personal lives which may enable them to give in a bigger way.⁸⁴

A contrast of these authors leads to the conclusion that to them meaningful giving is to be Bible based. A kind of giving that is in keeping with the members’ relationship with God. Acceptable giving is attributed to what God does to the human heart. The grace of God cannot be effective on someone who is not devoted to Him.

This section simply pointed out that giving is not supposed to be subjected to pressure. It is supposed to aim at the hearts of the givers. Such giving is supposed to be from the free choice of the giver. Fundraising should not be subjected to manipulation as a way to motivate givers. It should be patterned after Jesus the master motivator. Hence the approach should be Christ centered.

Adventist authors reviewed do not advocate for varied approaches to fundraising. They advocate for an approach that leaves the giver with the free choice of how much to give. Having briefly explored what Adventist authors say about fund raising, the next section briefly looks at some of the reasons that cause people to give. This is not an exhaustive study of some of the reasons that cause people to give, but just a brief overview.

⁸³ Rees, 122.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Why People Give

This section of the research examines the reasons that move people to give. To address the challenge in the ZUC territory it is proper to have knowledge about some practices that lead to giving in a sustainable manner. Varied methods of giving may be fueled by a lack of understanding of what really motivates people to respond better to giving. It may not make sense for people who clearly understand what makes people to give in a meaningful way to resort to strategies that do not yield better results. The section begins by examining mission focus as one of the reasons that motivate givers to give.

On the reasons that lead people to give, Christopher suggests, “The number one reason why people give is a belief in the mission of the institution. People give when they can see a difference created that they value.”⁸⁵ This suggests that special project giving requires a link with mission. He gives an example of a society that loves young people, and points out that such a group may give to something that is done for the benefit of young people. Generally, people are interested in something that makes a tangible and visible difference.

When givers are convinced that such a difference will be made, they get motivated to support such a project. Christopher also affirms that, “I am convinced that Jesus went to Zacchaeus’s house to get his soul, not his money. But when Jesus heard the gift of money, he knew he had Zacchaeus’s soul.”⁸⁶ The emphasis is that giving is not about money but about the heart of the giver. Where a fund-raiser gets the soul, the money also comes with the individual. Which suggests that the aim of

⁸⁵ Christopher Clif, J., *Rich Church Poor Church Keys to Effective Financial Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012), 6.

⁸⁶ Christopher Clif, J., *Not Your Parent’s Offering Plate* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011, 2015), 44.

the one raising resources is to get the souls of the potential givers so that in turn they will give their means.

On the issue of the heart, Hinze affirms that, “Whenever we decide to invest our treasures of whatever sort—our gifts, talents, time, energy, interest, love, wealth and possessions—that is the place where our heart will be found. And for most of us, our treasure is in the wealth that we acquired or that we desire.”⁸⁷

Interests determine where one’s resources go. There seems to be a relationship between giving and one’s heart. The purse may not open when the heart has not opened first. This suggests that a fund-raiser needs to aim at the heart to get the means.

A contrast of Christopher and Hinze makes it clear that what makes people to give is the state of the heart. They both agree that in order for one to present alms, their hearts ought to be with that which needs to be accomplished. Suggesting that giving has more to do with the heart than the means that the individual owns.

Hinze continues to point out that “John Wesley said: ‘when I have any money, I get rid of it as quickly as possible, lest it find a way into my heart.’ We can be part of the church, but if our heart is not in it, it is probably because we have invested our treasure somewhere else.”⁸⁸

This statement is in harmony with what Jesus said in Matthew 6 about the relationship between the heart and treasure. Giving can be an indicator of the believer’s relationship with God. Where Christ is valued and His kingdom, the outcome becomes the support of that which is valued. Where members fail to give, it may be a sign that their hearts are not in their religion. The point being emphasized

⁸⁷ Hinze, 41.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

challenges the fund-raiser to go for the heart of the giver in order to have the gift. To Hinze, giving is a symbol of where the hearts of the givers are, if they love their organization, it will be expressed through their gifts. The next section looks at vision as a motivator.

A compelling vision is a motivator on the part of the givers. Nouwen advises that, “those who raise funds must show potential donors a strategic plan that convinces donors their money will help to increase the productivity and success of the organization.”⁸⁹ The point of emphasis is that givers may want to understand what the outcome will be after giving their money. The fundraiser needs to give the potential givers a picture that paints success as a result of the funds given. Thus it is important for the givers to appreciate that their contribution will make a difference.

Discoveries on Giving from this Review

The literature review has made the following discoveries about giving. The concept of giving in the medieval era was merit driven. It sought to earn a favor from God. The same could be said about the concept of giving in the African traditional religion where giving aimed at appeasing the ancestors in order to secure blessings. The difference with the African traditional religion is that much of the giving that takes place was just spontaneous. In this chapter it has been pointed out that giving to God is supposed to be spontaneous which is a practice among the Africans.

The other discovery is that where the Bible advocates for voluntary giving, the African traditional religion also practices voluntary giving. It was also mentioned in this research that the African traditional religion is community centered. The point made by Nouwen agrees with this concept where he points out that in fundraising the

⁸⁹ Nouwen, 51.

leadership is faced with an opportunity to develop a communal spirit, which is a need among the people.

In the Zimbabwean traditional religion, giving was part of worship. Both in the second and third chapters it was discovered that biblical giving is part of worship. It becomes a worship response to the goodness of God.

The other area of similarities discovered is that in the traditional religious setting giving was an acknowledgement of the spirit being both as giver and protector. In the theological and literature review, it has been established that meaningful giving acknowledges God as the owner and provider of all blessings.

With all these similarities, it becomes a bother to discover that the Zimbabwean Adventist faces a challenge of giving, when he/she comes from a background littered with giving. Which may suggest that there should be a missing link somewhere that needs to bridge the gap. It may suggest that the African Adventist may still not fully believe that God is, owner, provider, and protector of His people.

This may also suggest that the process of initiation to Adventism did not assist the African to appreciate that since they were giving to God through mediums, now they give directly to Him. The process of substitution from one power to the other might have not taken place. This is one area that needs further investigation.

Summary

This chapter explored the concept of giving from the medieval church period and how it affected the members understanding of giving to God. It also examined the concept of giving among the major tribes of Zimbabwe and the challenge that these people coming from a background of generous giving in their traditional religious practices yet fail to practice liberality when they convert to Christianity.

It also looked at some of the methods that are used in raising money for projects that are manipulative and at times coercive because of the hard financial times the church might be getting through. Reasons were given from different authors why some of the methods are not in harmony with the word of God.

The chapter also pointed out that giving that is acceptable should have its basis as the word of God. Such giving is not supposed to be of benefit to the individual but an expression of gratitude and thankfulness to God as the source of all blessings. There is need for leadership to lead by example in the area of giving. It also has been established that even under difficult conditions, the church has no justification to resort to manipulative strategies to raise money.

Begging is a failing strategy that does not yield permanent results. The chapter further pointed out that freewill offering is God's ideal even when the church is facing special projects that need a lot of resources. Thus from this review, it has been established that varied methods of raising resources are not in harmony with scripture. Whether in emergencies or where more money is needed, giving still remains an individual choice.

The next chapter provides a response to the theological and theoretical discoveries. It presents a field research and development of the intervention to address the challenge of varied methods of giving for special projects in the ZUC territory. It seeks to advocate for a Bible based approach to giving.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE DESIGN

The previous chapter looked at literature review on what the other authors say about special project giving. The focus of this chapter was a strategy to assist Zone B church in addressing the challenge of varied methods of raising funds for special projects. Informed by the findings of both the second and third chapters including the field study, a strategy was developed that aimed at assisting the Zone B church to use approaches to raising resources for special projects in a manner that is Bible based. The challenge of varied methods of giving for special projects is critical in the ZUC territory. This situation has contributed to the delays in the finishing of some of the building projects in the Union Conference. What compounds the problem is that even pastors do not have a unified approach to special project giving. This has necessitated this research to come up with a strategy to address the issue of giving for special projects.

This chapter focuses on the ministry context both macro and micro, the strategy, purpose, output, outcomes and activities that will be undertaken to address the challenge of varied methods of giving. It also outlines the method used for the sampling of the interview group. Including the criteria used for the selection of the questionnaire. At the same time, it discusses the strategy for intervention to address the challenge of varied methods of giving. The method of research that will be used in collecting data is the qualitative research method with a focused group interview.

Having outlined what the chapter is all about, the next section focuses on the macro ministry context.

Description of the Macro-context

Zimbabwe Union Conference

Zimbabwe Union Conference is situated in the country of Zimbabwe. Its headquarters are in Bulawayo, which is the second largest city of the country. It is comprised of six Conferences, namely: Central Zimbabwe Conference, East Zimbabwe Conference, North Zimbabwe Conference, North West Zimbabwe Conference, South Zimbabwe Conference and West Zimbabwe Conference. This is a country that is “land-locked of 242,700 square miles 390,580 square kilometers between the Zambezi River to the north and the Limpopo River to the south, it is bordered by Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia.”¹ The work of the church started in 1894. Thus, the church has now been operating in this territory for the past 122 years.

Per the United Nations Department of Economics, the estimated population of Zimbabwe by 1st January 2016 was 15,424,303.² The population of the country versus the membership still poses a challenge for evangelism to reach more people for Christ.

¹ Advameg, “World Culture Encyclopedia,” *Countries and Their Cultures* (Chicago, IL: Advameg, 2016), accessed July 31, 2016, <http://www.everyculture.com/>.

² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division, “Zimbabwe Population 2017 | Current Population of Zimbabwe,” *Countrymeters*, last modified 2016, accessed July 31, 2016, <http://www.countrymeters.info/en/Zimbabwe>.

Per the December 2015 membership statistics, the union has a total membership of 845,213³ that translates to a population membership ratio of one Adventist to eighteen Zimbabweans. These members congregate in 4,402 congregations with a total of 218 pastors translating to a pastor congregation ratio of 20 congregations to one pastor. The current growth rate of the membership in Zimbabwe has risen to an average of 50,000 baptisms per annum. By December 2015, the total baptisms for the union were 58,000 according to the December statistical report. The growth rate on its own demands that there be a way of raising funds for special projects that quickly addresses the need to house the newly formed churches. Continuing with the ministry context, the focus now briefly looks at how the traditional Zimbabwean looks at giving in general.

Giving in the Traditional Context

About the Shona and Ndebele people and their generosity, as part of the qualities identified by Prozesky, it is pointed out that, “In the case of the Shona/Ndebele communities in Africa where hospitality is given for free as when one provides accommodation and food to a stranger at his or her home, the magnitude is high.”⁴ The African people are traditionally characterized by generosity towards each other, including strangers.

In the culture of the people of Zimbabwe, giving is part of their worship style. During the period of socialization for the children, they are taught to be generous

³ Zimbabwe Union Conference, *Statistical Report*, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, December 31, 2015.

⁴ Fainos Mangena, “Hunhu/Ubuntu in the Traditional Thought of Southern Africa,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed February 1, 2017, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/hunhu/#H5>.

towards visitors because in their understanding, a passerby does not finish the granary.

Further analyses on the qualities as identified by Prozesky points to some of the proverbs of the Shona people in relation to giving such as “*Muenzi haapedzi dura* (A visitor does not finish food), *Chipavhurire uchakodzwa* (The one who gives too much will also receive too much),”⁵ These proverbs assisted the people to be favorably disposed to generosity. The sayings among the traditional people continued to encourage the practice of generosity as pointed out further, “*Chawawana idya nehama mutogwa unokangamwa* (Share whatever you get with your relatives because strangers are very forgetful), and *Ukama igasva hunazadziswa nekudya* (Relations cannot be complete without sharing food).”⁶ Statements like these contributed to the characteristic of giving among the African people.

Such giving to them is not prompted by any promotion, it is their lifestyle as it was pointed in the third chapter. The challenge is experienced when the same people convert to Christianity where they seek to be manipulated to give. It may be difficult to assist the members who come from such a background without getting to understand their behavior under their previous religion. The researcher knows that in the cultures of the Zimbabwe people, if someone finds people skinning a cow, the visitor joins by helping in the skinning. There is meat that is roasted at the place of skinning and some of it is cooked. At the time of eating the visitor enjoys the meat like any other family member. Upon leaving, the visitor is given a piece of meat to

⁵ Mangena, “Hunhu/Ubuntu in the Traditional Thought of Southern Africa,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed February 1, 2017, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/hunhu/#H5..>

⁶ Ibid.

carry to his home. This is just one example that demonstrates the generosity of the Zimbabweans.

The father of the researcher used to own a lot of cattle that he would just allow those without cattle to keep a number. Such people would be allowed to use them for cultivating their fields, milking, using the manure until they would start buying their own. At the time of collection of the cattle to be brought back home, the family that had been taking care of the cows would be given a cow for free. Through this system, they would empower those who were disadvantaged to be able to take care of themselves without having to be dependent on gifts from neighbors.

In other families, they would always keep a pot of food on the fire in anticipation that should there be a visitor he/she should be fed. It is the purpose of this research to assist the people to practice generosity to the Creator now out of love and gratitude.

Concerning the gatherings for rituals and the need for the contributions for such ceremonies, Kazembe observes, “No one will be forced to contribute. People contribute according to their will and ability.”⁷ In the cultural understanding giving was voluntary on the part of the one contributing. In his observation, he makes examples that if such a gathering had the purpose of removing a certain type of problem those who had not contributed would not enjoy the benefit.

He also points out that if there were material blessings to be received it would not be sensible just to allow one individual to contribute and become the beneficiary of all the blessings.⁸ Thus among the people of Zimbabwe from their traditional

⁷Takawira Kazembe, “The Relationship Between God and People in Shona Traditional Religion,” *Rose Croix* 6 (2009), accessed July 30, 2016, https://375b1364bab998f0d14f-9d7ce9244c1359862daf87d2617988df.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/vol8_89_98_kazembe.pdf, 67.

⁸ Ibid.

religious understanding giving happens spontaneously. One reason why they gave in this way was recognition that the ancestors were their providers and protectors.

Commenting on giving in the African religious context, Turaki affirms that, “Paying homage to the gods; bribing the gods with a gift so that they will act favorably to the donor; maintaining communion between the giver; feeding the gods who in turn will provide blessings and protection”⁹ to the worshiper.¹⁰ Turaki outlines several motivating factors for giving from the African religious context.

With all the examples given above, there is one common motivator for such giving. This kind of generosity is motivated by fear of the ancestors that when they get angry the individual may experience problems in life. One other reason that goes with the fear is the belief that when a traditional worshiper does that, he/she receives blessings from the ancestors. It is a system that seeks to manipulate the ancestors in favor of the worshiper. Turaki continues to observe that in this context the worshiper sought to establish and maintain “communication with the spirit world.”¹¹

The worshiper did not want a situation he/she lost touch with the spirit world. To them, religion was a daily experience, which called for seriousness on the part of the worshiper. These are among some of the reasons that drive the African religionist to give. In other words, giving is part and parcel of the African traditional way of worship. Such giving also sought to buy favors from the spirits so that things may go well with the worshiper. This was driven by a conscious acceptance that such spirits had power to bless and to cause harm.

⁹Yusufu Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview* (Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive, 2007), 79.

¹⁰Ibid

¹¹ Ibid.

One other prevailing practice in the context of the research is the practice of some denominations that promote giving among their adherents so that such givers may receive blessings from God. The prosperity gospel has some similarities with the traditional way of worship where the giver gives with the objective of receiving bigger blessings from God. In some of the indigenous groups, they require the worshippers to give what is referred to as seed money to God so that in turn the believers will receive blessings from God.

Referring to such practices of giving, Onongha argues that, while he agrees that there may be material blessings that come to the believer, he questions the spirit behind such practices. He continues to observe that “Often, Pentecostal preachers are heard encouraging the faithful to bring in a seed commensurate to the expected harvest.”¹² Thus it boils down to situation where one is motivated to give in order to get in return. It is one practice that has contributed to confusion as to the motive behind giving. Having described the macro context of the problem, the focus shifts to the micro context.

Description of the Micro-context

Central Zimbabwe Conference

Central Zimbabwe Conference is one of the conferences in ZUC with headquarters in Gweru. Its territory covers part of the Midlands Province and part of Masvingo Province. It has a membership of 147,047 as per the December 2016 statistical report.¹³

¹² Kelvin Okey Onongha, *Pentecostalism in Nigeria Phenomenon, Prospects and Problems to Mainline Churches* (Lagos, Nigeria: Jamiro Press Link, 2011), 107.

¹³ Enoch Chifamba, *Statistical Report* (Bulawayo, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Union Conference December 2016).

Just in 2015, per the December statistical report, the Conference baptized a total of 9,000 members. Observing the situation from a practical point of view, if the assumption is that an average church is composed of 500 members, it simply means that the Conference needs to build eighteen structures per year to house all their members.

Thus, with such numbers joining the conference, there is always a challenge to provide shelters for worship. Hence, the need for a method that will see the conference being able to complete houses of worship in a much shorter period.

In 2014, the ZUC executive committee took an action to divide all organized churches¹⁴. That action further contributed to the need for the conference to come up with a strategy that would address the challenge of houses of worship. The Zone B church has a membership of 345. It is a church that is trying to come up with a structure to house the new believers.

A Brief History of Zone B Church

The Zone B church was established in the year 2003 after an effort that had been conducted in that area. It got organized in June 2004 with a membership of 25. Eager to have a place to worship, it bought a stand in the year 2004. Serious work started in 2014, when six foundation holes were dug and filled with concrete. In 2015, ten more holes were dug and filled with concrete.¹⁵

It is self-evident that Zone B church is struggling to put up a house of worship. After all this period, the walls have not yet started going up regardless of all the

¹⁴ Zimbabwe Union of Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Minutes of the Zimbabwe Union Conference Executive Committee*, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Union Conference, 20 November 2013.

¹⁵ Rufaro Takawira, "Zone B Church History," interview by Author, September 16, 2016.

efforts over the years to raise resources for the building of the needed structure. Per the church clerk, the membership now stands at 345.¹⁶

Efforts to try and raise resources for the building of a house of worship are proving to be a difficult task to the church. The church has tried different strategies to raise the needed funds, like coming up with set days where funds are collected for the construction of the house of worship. Talented preachers are invited to come and preach to motivate the members to give in a bigger way. The other method that the church tried to apply was equal giving. This is a system where members are told that if each one could bring US \$10.00 a month, the building could be funded and construction could be enhanced. The collections realized are always too little to make any meaningful difference.

All these strategies have not led the church to a point where it has a reliable source of support that hastens construction. The researcher aimed to develop intervention strategies to assist the church to move at a faster pace in constructing the house of worship.

Research Design

Defining the qualitative approach Mays observes,

Qualitative research consists of a number of differently developed methods that are best suited to address questions of particular interest. It is an umbrella term that covers a variety of styles of social research, drawing on a variety of disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology.¹⁷

This research used a qualitative approach in the gathering of data. A focus group consisting of twelve members was conducted by a moderator to get information

¹⁶ Rufaro Takawira, "Zone B Church History," interview by Author, September 16, 2016.

¹⁷ C. Pope and N. Mays, "Reaching the Parts Other Methods Cannot Reach: An Introduction to Qualitative Methods in Health and Health Services Research.," *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 311, no. 6996 (July 1, 1995): 42–45.

about Zone B church. This process is administered through open-ended questions that are directed to the focus group. Information gathered is used to analyze the situation validating the research thereby crafting an intervention strategy to address the varied methods of raising resources for special projects.

Type of Research

To understand the challenge of the Zone B church, the researcher used the qualitative research approach in getting information about the real situation of the church through focused group interviews. Qualitative research is as an approach that “seeks to understand a given research problem topic from the perspective of the local population it involves.”¹⁸

In the case of this research, the researcher sought to discover from the local church members of Zone B church whether it was true that varied methods of raising resources were being used in their church. To understand the impact of these methods on their spiritual life. At the same time the researcher wanted to ascertain what caused the change of heart from generous giving to an extreme of not giving at all.

Qualitative research is “also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem.”¹⁹ It was the intention of the researcher to discover what the trends in giving were. At the same time, through interviews, the researcher sought to understand the church’s experience of diverse methods of raising resources.

¹⁸ Carole Hafner, “IS4800 Course Syllabus,” *Empirical Research Methods for Information Science*, last modified February 3, 2012, accessed August 2, 2016, <https://course.ccs.neu.edu/is4800sp12/>.

¹⁹ Susan Wyse, “Difference between Qualitative Research vs. Quantitative Research,” *Snap Surveys Blog*, last modified September 16, 2011, accessed August 2, 2016, <https://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/what-is-the-difference-between-qualitative-research-and-quantitative-research/>.

George Barna, as quoted in chapter three, emphasizes the need to understand people's behavior before talking to them about giving.

In the description of this approach to research, Johnson and Christensen authenticate that, "this means that qualitative researchers generally study phenomenon in an open-ended way without prior expectations, and they develop hypothesis and theoretical explanations that are based on their interpretations of what they observe."²⁰ They continue to point out that this method of research seeks "to study the world as it occurs, without manipulating it."²¹ They also emphasize the fact that in carrying the research, qualitative researchers do not draw attention to themselves.²² In seeking to understand the prevailing situation in the Zone B church, the researcher preferred the qualitative approach. This allowed the researcher to get to understand the situation of the Zone B church before coming up with strategies to address the challenge.

Commenting on the advantages of the qualitative approach, Mugenda comments, "Qualitative research is advantageous in that it permits research to go beyond the statistical results usually reported in the quantitative research."²³ He continues to point out that this research method provides a better opportunity to study human behavior. At the same time, it allows the researcher to observe attitudes and emotions of the interviewees.²⁴ Thus the qualitative approach in this respect gives the

²⁰ R. Burke Johnson and Larry B. Christensen, *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches*, 5th edition. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014), 418.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Olive M. Mugenda and Abel G Mugenda, *Research Methods, Quantitative and Qualitative Approach* (Nairobi, Kenya: Acts Press, 2003), 155-156.

²⁴ Ibid.

researcher the ability to get information that could not be easily obtained through a quantitative approach. It may be difficult through a quantitative approach to observe certain behaviors and emotions of the population under study.

Concerning the setting of the qualitative approach, Creswell affirms that “Qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. They do not bring individuals into the lab.”²⁵

This is an approach where the research takes place at the location where the problem is experienced. Per Creswell, the researcher gathers data through the observance of behaviors and the examination of relevant documents.²⁶ For the purposes of gathering data for this research, the researcher chooses to conduct the interviews at the location of the church. This will give time to the researcher to be acquainted with the environment where the challenge prevails. Such a decision is informed by the discussions in this section on the process of gathering data for a qualitative research.

The reason for choosing this approach in relation to the subject under study is, as it has been stated above, to get the feelings of the members about such approaches to resourcing special projects. Further, to get an understanding of the prevailing situation in the Zone B church and the challenge of varied methods of giving for special projects. At the same time, to understand the situation prevailing in the church.

²⁵ John W Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009), 175.

²⁶ Ibid.

Appropriateness of Study

This study was essential in the CZC for several reasons. There were many special projects in this conference in need of funding. In the case of the Zone B church, they had been trying to come up with funds for the construction of their church for a couple of years then, without any meaningful progress. The enthusiasm for the building of the house of worship had been lost.

Apart from the projects that were to be resourced, there was a need for spiritual growth of members that would lead to a better understanding of God. Among other things, the study sought to unite members in their approach to giving. One puzzle that this research had to resolve is the fact that traditional Zimbabweans are natural givers, yet the Christian Adventist Zimbabwean struggles to give voluntarily to God. Among other things the study seeks to discover the substitutes that results in the Adventist Zimbabwean giving voluntarily for the support of special projects.

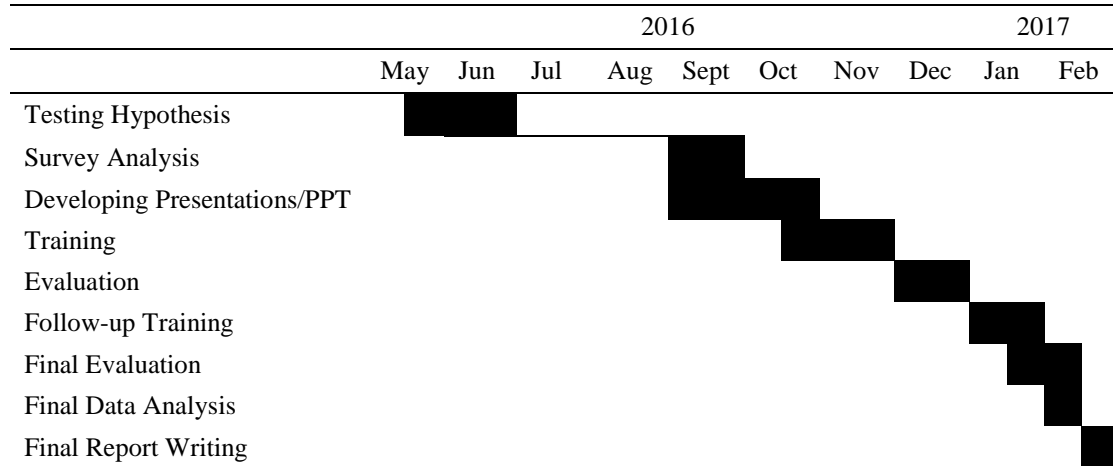
In the pursuit of this research, a Gantt chart is used that assists the researcher to follow certain timelines to carry the research and complete it on the allotted times. Per the Gantt.com website, “A Gantt chart, commonly used in project management, is one of the most popular and useful ways of showing activities (tasks or events) displayed against time. On the left of the chart is a list of the activities and along the top is a suitable time scale.”²⁷ A bar represents each activity; “the position and length of the bar reflects the start date, duration and end date of the activity. This allows you to see at a glance.”²⁸ The table below shows the Gantt chart and the set timelines for this research to be conducted and concluded. This research is conducted in accordance

²⁷ Gantt.com, “What Is a Gantt Chart? Gantt Chart Software, Information, and History,” *Gantt.com*, accessed October 5, 2016, <http://www.gantt.com/>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

to the timelines on this Gantt chart. It is the determination of the researcher to strictly follow the timelines set in the chart.

Table 1. Gantt Chart for Research Work



Population Sample

In this section of the research the criteria used for choosing of the participants is discussed. The section also gives the rational for selecting such a criteria above other criteria that are equally good. To begin with, the different approaches to sampling are listed, followed by a reason of choosing the approach above the others.

Coming to the types of approaches to the sampling of participants, it is noted that “The three most common qualitative methods, explained in detail in their respective modules, are participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups.”²⁹ While there are three methods, for the purposes of this research, the focus

²⁹ Carole Hafner, “Three Common Qualitative Methods,” *Empirical Research Methods for Information Science*, last modified February 3, 2012, accessed August 2, 2016, <http://www.ccs.neu.edu/course/is4800sp12/resources/qualmethods.pdf>.

group will be used for interviews. The name of this approach is derived from the fact that it is a guided research.

Per Burke and Christensen: “It is called a ‘focus group’ because the moderator keeps the individuals in the group focused on the topic being discussed.”³⁰ These two authors commented that, a moderator generates the discussions “as a facilitator of the group process.”³¹ As such, the researcher will be the moderator of the group in this process.

The reason for choosing the focus group is because of the nature of the problem to be addressed. Concerning the focus group Burke and Christensen affirm that focus groups “are very useful for providing in-depth information in a relatively short period. In addition, the results are usually easy to understand.”³² For the reasons stated by the two authors, the researcher prefers a method that provides relevant information in a short period.

Such a method assists the researcher to gather considerable amounts of information in a short duration of time. It is said to be able to generate “broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or sub groups represented.”³³ Hence the choice of the researcher is to work with the focus group in collecting data on the varied methods of giving as experienced by the Zone B church. Thus, information will be gathered directly from those who have relevant experience in the various forms of giving practiced. The next section focuses on the selection of the participants.

³⁰ Johnson and Christensen, 234-235.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid, 236.

³³ Hafner, “Three Common Qualitative Methods.”

Selection of Participants

This section focuses on the criteria used in the selection of the focus group. On the guidelines for the conditions to be considered in the formation of the group,

Henry affirms: “The first condition of group formation is selecting participants in such a way as to represent the target group at whom a particular activity is directed.”³⁴ He continues to point out that such a group may be composed of those “of the same socioeconomic background,”³⁵ status in marriage and levels of education.³⁶

Thus, from this statement, the group selection criteria may choose to put people together considering certain aspects that create similarities or same interests or standing in society. The pastor was requested to identify the group per specifications given by the researcher. The specifications sought to get a fair representation of the Zone B church.

One other reason for preferring this approach is the fact that such a problem demands that the participants be comprised of some senior citizens who are conversant with the African traditional religious practices. Of the experiences of participants Kumar asserts that, “In a focus group interview, you explore the perceptions, experiences and understandings of a group of people who have some experience in common regarding a situation or event.”³⁷

The guiding principle in the selection of the focus group was the knowledge people had about their prevailing situation. It would not make sense in the formation

³⁴ Timothy Henry Gatara, *Introduction to Research Methodology* (Nairobi, Kenya: Olive, 2010), 52.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology A Step by Step guide for Beginners* (London, UK: SAGE, 2005), 124.

of the group to leave out those who were knowledgeable in the African traditional religion and its practices.

In coming up with the group of people to be interviewed, the researcher used purposive sampling. Concerning this approach, Esterberg alludes that “purposive sampling is a sampling technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to objectives of his or her study.”³⁸ Thus the subjects are picked for the information they possess and such possess the required characteristics.³⁹ The researcher through the assistance of the local pastor spelt out the characteristics of people needed to form the focus group in order to have a fair representation of the church.

These issues highlighted among others led the researcher to prefer the focus group discussion as a better option in obtaining authentic information. Having discussed the selection process of the focus group interview, the study focuses on the method used for the sampling of participants.

Criteria for Sampling

This section of the research deals with the criteria used for the sampling of the participants. It discusses what informed the choice of the participants to the interview through a combination of two approaches.

While there may be other methods of selecting the participants, the method used is referred to as “quota sampling.”⁴⁰ This is an approach where the researcher decides on the size of the group that is required for the interviews. It also considers

³⁸ Kristin G. Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research* (Dubuque, IL: SAGE, 2001), 96.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰ Kumar, 51.

the “characteristics” that may be expected such as “age, race, residence, gender, class, profession.”⁴¹

For the reasons stated above this approach was selected. The criteria used for the participants in this interview is age, the number of years one has been a member of the church to benefit from the long experience with the practice of ways of raising means for special projects. Such experience would be beneficial when it comes to the trends in the church under study. The other criterion is that of gender, which is meant to create a balance among all genders. Since different genders are affected differently by programs hence the criteria to have the balanced perspective of the genders.

The other group of participants comes from the middle aged to represent the feelings of that age group in the responses. This is a group of people that normally is skipped in preference for the aged. Yet still the other contributing factor considered in the criteria was the involvement of the youth. This is a group of people that is normally very observant of behaviors in the church. Such a selection leads the researcher to get information relevant to the problem under study. Consideration was made on the size of the group for controllability.

Of the focus group Burke and Christensen propose that, “a focus group is composed of 6 to 12 participants who are purposively selected because they provide a kind of information of interest to the researcher.”⁴² The combination of the two approaches led the researcher to make a decision based on these suggestions for purposes of manageability of the group. The size assists in the maximum participation of group members without having to look to others as their spokespersons. Having

⁴¹ Kumar, 51.

⁴² Burke and Christensen, 235.

discussed the criteria for the selection of the group of participants, the research now focuses on the instrument used for the interviews.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this interview is a questionnaire that is administered by the researcher. Commenting on formulation of the questionnaires, Esterberg advises that, “in developing the interview guide, its often useful to brainstorm a list of questions and topics that you think might be useful to include.”⁴³ Brainstorming is important in that it leads the researcher to consider the critical areas to be covered around the question under study. Such brainstorming leads into consideration of a variety of questions that may be compared and chosen for suitability.

The need for questions that do not demand a one-word answer is important in this regard. Commenting on the open-ended questions, Creswell states that “It is a broad question stated to permit participants to share diverse perspectives about reading the literature.”⁴⁴ The questions used were crafted in such a way that the respondents would not just give one-word answers but would need to give a kind of a narrative response. This was done to get information that went beyond the questions raised.

In this manner, the respondents would feel that they are not just being led to respond in a certain manner but can express themselves the way they understand their situation. Such a situation provides the interviewer with hints that lead to asking other unstructured questions leading to acquiring more relevant information to the study.

The next section focuses on the procedures followed for the collection of data.

⁴³ Esterberg, 96.

⁴⁴ John W Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 132.

Data Collection Procedures

Before engaging in the process of officially gathering data, the researcher was engaged with two churches at different times just to test if the research problem was valid. It was also the intent of the researcher to gain experience in being a moderator with the intention of gathering information for the research. The first meeting the researcher had was with the church board members of a church in the presence of their pastor which met on the 9th of March 2016 and lasted for about 90 minutes.

The second of such a meeting took place in a church where eight members were engaged by the researcher at their place of meeting. This interview took place on the 28th of May 2016. It lasted for a period of an hour. The researcher engaged in such a process to acquaint himself with the process of gathering information and getting to work with members at a close range. It also aimed at assessing whether the interviews would yield information that would lead to a formulation of a response to addressing the challenge of varied methods of raising resources. Both interviews were recorded with the consent of the groups concerned. The questionnaires used in these two encounters are at the Appendix A.

The Procedure

This section outlines the steps taken by the researcher in the preparation of the focus group for data collection. It gives a summary of the preparation done to enable the members of the focus group to be ready for the interview process.

In the collection of data for this research, the researcher addressed first the interviewees and explained to them the purpose of the research. Such explanation covered the topic to be researched and the reasons behind pursuing such a study. It also included the reasons behind the choice of Zone B church as opposed to others facing the same challenge.

This was an attempt to assist the interviewees to understand the process before commencing the discussions. Permission was sought from the group to allow for recording to avoid a situation where the researcher would make assumptions on what the interviewees were saying. On the group of the people to be interviewed and their consent, Mark Israel explains voluntary consent as “a kind of autonomous action,” a deliberate action taken “with understanding and without controlling influences resulting either from coercion or manipulation of others or from psychiatric disorders.”⁴⁵

Such is described as a situation where the researcher does not seek to force or to try through subtle means to lead the interviewees into consent to be interviewed. With such thoughts in mind as pointed by other writers, the researcher sought for voluntary ascent from the group. Israel further observes that ethically it is important for those being interviewed to give their consent before the commencement of the research.⁴⁶ This step was followed as the first step before proceeding with the interview process; there was full disclosure of the intention of the research and informing the interviewees that their names were not even going to be mentioned. This process was done in the presence of the local pastor.

The researcher further made it clear to the group that they were not supposed to say what they thought the pastor wanted to hear lest the research be based on faulty information. At the same time, it was also made clear to them that the name of their church was not going to appear in the research but a pseudo name would be used. As such each one of them was expected to speak freely without fear or favor. On the

⁴⁵ Mark Israel, *Research Ethics and Integrity for Social Scientists*, 2nded. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2015), 83.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

aspect of maintaining confidentiality, Israel points out that at times those interviewed “negotiate terms for the agreement.”⁴⁷

He further observes that at times the participants consent on the basis that no name of theirs will be disclosed and further that the information obtained “will be used by the researchers and only in particular ways.”⁴⁸ He moves on to emphasize the point that on the part of the participant, information is viewed as private hence they offer it to the “researcher in confidence.”⁴⁹

The researcher took the advice on the importance of confidentiality as a way to allow members to express their views without fear. As such, the initial steps sought to instill confidence in the members of the focus group for the purposes of a meaningful discussion. Having discussed the initial steps in data collection, the next section deals with the how of gathering information.

The Focus Group Discussion

Referring to the method of gathering data through a small group discussion, Henry confirms that such a method “is an in-depth discussion by a small group led by a facilitator on a given subject of research and practical significance.”⁵⁰ He continues to point out that the effectiveness of such a group is on being able to discuss freely. He then goes on to enumerate some of the aspects that contribute to success where a group of this nature in its discussions is led by a facilitator.

The instrument to record ought to be available. This also includes the target group representing the population. There is also a need for a document to guide the

⁴⁷ Mark Israel, *Research Ethics and Integrity for Social Scientists*, 102.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 102.

⁵⁰ Gatara, 51.

discussion. Then a tape recorder is needed to ensure the capturing of all the critical information.⁵¹ The researcher sought to pursue this approach to get information from the experienced group of people in the African traditional religion.

The other reason for preferring this method of gathering data is that the discussion may easily lead to getting information that might have not been part of the interview questions. Thus, this process enables the interviewer to develop a relationship with the interviewees. In the process the researcher may be led to a discovery of the church culture that may be contributing to the prevailing situation.

Some of these categories of people are not keen in writing hence the need for a focus group interview. Another aspect of such a group is where expression becomes difficult in a foreign language hence the need to allow them to express themselves in their local language. By the nature of the dialogue with the selected group, some information that may not be easy to get through the closed questions may be obtained.

These were some of the motivating factors in preferring this process of the collection of the data. After laying the ground rules for the group discussion, the discussions began using open-ended questions. The next section focuses on the presentation of the data as collected through the focus group interview.

Presentation and Description of Findings

This section of the research focuses on the presentation of data as collected by the researcher. At the same time, it looks at the information supplied and responses given on each of the questions posed to the focus group. This analysis seeks to verify the existence of the challenge of varied methods of giving in the Zone B church. It begins by examining the responses to the first question. Below is a table for the core

⁵¹ Kumar 51.

questions presented to the focus group. It should be noted that such questions are excluding the ones that arose as a result of the responses of the interviewees.

Table 2. Survey Questions

Question Number	Participants	Respondents	Percentage of Responses
Have you participated in varied methods of giving?	12	12	100%
Africans are naturally givers in their background, “Can you remember some of the motivating factors for giving among the African people?”	12	10	83%
Can you name some of the methods you have personally been involved in?	12	9	75%
From your observation what impact have varied methods had on members in general?	12	11	92%
What fund-raising strategies can the church use?	12	10	83%

The following section provides details of the table above including the other questions that were posed to the panelists by the researcher as a result of information given which necessitated further understanding on the part of the researcher. Such information is supplied under the core question as part of the responses to that query.

The first question was just a general one to ascertain whether varied methods of giving were a reality with the churches concerned or it was just the assumption of the researcher. The question sought to establish whether the members of the group had participated one way or the other in varied methods of gathering funds. All the twelve interviewees responded by saying they had participated in the varied methods of fundraising for special projects. Such a response was an indication that the church faces the challenge of varied methods of giving in relation to special projects.

The next question born out of the response given was, “what was the response of the members to the approaches that were used?” The responses were varied from the group. Some pointed out that in their observation, the methods did not lead members to consistency in giving. Members only responded to giving when there was a special event and did not give until another event was organized. Some felt that such methods had kept the church going and fulfilling its objectives. The next set of questions is connected with giving from the traditional African religious beliefs.

Regarding giving from the perspective of the traditional religious Zimbabwean between the two dominant tribes, the first question was that, Africans are naturally givers in their background; “can you remember some of the motivating factors for giving by the African people?” As pointed out on the table above, ten members of the focus group representing 83% of the respondents indicated that giving was a heritage that was passed on through an oral tradition by the ancestors to the next generations. They emphasized the fact that during those days the younger generation would not question that which they received from the elderly in the society. Thus, that which was communicated by the elders was accepted without question as authentic. Unlike in the current days where the young people are prone to question what they are told by the elderly.

From the answer given by the respondents, another question emerged, which had not been part of the list. The question was that “what caused this religion to be so strong when in reality there were no written records for such a religion?” Nine out of twelve members, that are 75%, responded that they used to pass on their teachings through proverbs like *kupa kuturikira* meaning that giving is like laying something aside for yourself. Another of the proverbs associated with giving was *kandiro kanopfumba kunobva kamwe* meaning tit for tat. These teachings given to the younger

generations by the elders led to a generous society. They went on to explain that things are different when it comes to Christianity where the teachings are based on faith of those who are the adherents.

Further, they pointed out that those who joined the church from the African traditional religion discovered that the ones who were already members were not practical about their religion. Hence, they diluted the understanding of religion among the new believers who had come to join them. Christianity lacked role models. Ten respondents out of the twelve respondents representing 83% pointed to the fact that the first converts spoiled the new converts. Such believers did not order their practical lives according to what they believed leading the newly converted to look at some of these requirements as not of significance.

One of the issues raised by the respondents was that of donor fatigue where those who are givers get tired from the requests that require them to present gifts. Yet in the African context, giving was spontaneous. Compared to Christianity where the little resources of the giver are overstretched. What the respondents were pointing to was that under the Christian dispensation the appeal for money becomes too frequent being directed to the same giver. The request sometimes comes with an expected figure to be given by the worshiper. Yet to the African, giving is acceptable whether in small or bigger quantities depending on the one presenting the gift. While in Christianity, sometimes givers ought to go beyond their capacity. Thus, they said church giving is not in keeping with the African traditional religion.

This came from six out of the twelve interviewees, representing 50% of the focus group. Three out of the twelve respondents, representing 25%, pointed out that one other reason that has caused churches not to give is the diversion of funds from the purpose they are given for to do different things deemed more important by the

church. While in the African religious context there would be no diverting of gifts to do that which they were not intended for.

From this point the researcher understood the people to be saying that the church sometimes encourages and promotes project giving. When members respond, their expectation would be for the means given to support that project that has been promoted. Yet after such giving, the church board sits to decide to use the means given for other purposes than the project. That causes the members not to give. At this response, it emerged that some of the approaches used in the church to raise means become the very methods that discourage people from giving. Sometimes it has to do with the decisions the church comes with in the use of means through diverting funds for purposes they were not raised for.

The other points that the interviewees raised was that to the traditional African, giving was something taken seriously on the part of the worshipper. Yet Christians do not take giving with the seriousness it is regarded in the African religious context. They went on to say that believers know that when they choose not to give in church, nothing happens to them, life continues as normal. Unlike in the African traditional religion where there are threats that when you do not give, things may not go well for you; further, that when it comes to the church, sometimes giving is viewed as a way of oppressing members by the leadership. At this point they questioned why the Conference would not do its work with the amounts given to them through tithes and offerings rather than coming back to the local church, which might be having the least amount of the whole that was given? They continued to point out that the higher organization just receives and does not give back anything for the benefit of the work at the local level. The local church at the end of the day remains with nothing. Five out of the twelve respondents echoed these sentiments. This figure

represents 42%. Through such a response the researcher could read in between lines that part of the reasons members did not give was a dissatisfaction and lack of confidence in the system.

The group pointed out that in the African traditional religion what also contributed to the worshippers to find it easy to give was that gifts in kind were an acceptable form of giving. While in the Christian context if one tries to give in kind, there is fear of being laughed at and coupled with the rejection of the gift. This is one aspect that causes those from the other contexts not to give when they are Christians. Three members out of the focus group of twelve that represents 25% said these sentiments. They also pointed out that in the African traditional religion, giving was directed to God through the dead ancestors who were also believed to give blessings to the worshipers. While in the Christian context members may not fully believe that God blesses them when they give to Him. Eleven members of the group who said this represented 92% of the group. The number of respondents to this question indicates that there is need to assist members to understand the true source of their blessings. This is one area that may need further research to assist members to have an appreciation of God as the giver of all blessings.

In the African traditional religion, giving was not a matter of force, however the community had a way of dealing with those who were deviant. In their beliefs, they understood that one way or the other the one who was uncooperative would be challenged by either going through a difficult moment or at the displeasure of the ancestors hence the response before things got bad. They believed that apart from giving, one could not live well with others in society. Others in this context would continue giving in the hope that blessings would come their way.

In the same setting, there were found among them some who were known to be stingy. Yet the members in the Christian context say that there is no benefit in giving to God. The Lord does not kill those who do not give, further that the ones not giving appear to be more successful than the generous ones. The nine members of the group echoed these sentiments representing 75% of the participating members.

On the question concerning the varied methods the members of the panel had actively taken part in, the group came up with a few of those methods they had participated in. One of those methods was where the members were requested to make pledges they would later honor for the success of the project. This was believed to be one of those methods that would compel members to give through the honoring of such promises. The nine members of the panel witnessed such a method that represented 75% of the group. One of such methods was a sponsored walk, where a certain individual or individuals would be identified to sponsor members who would cover a certain distance in walking for the raising of finances to construct a special project. Members who were willing to walk such a distance would participate in such events. Three members of the focus group witnessed this approach, that is 25%.

One other method that was witnessed by the interviewees was the idea of a car wash. Members would be invited to bring their vehicles to church for washing and would pay a certain fee for the purposes of raising money for the project. This would ease the burden on the members for giving towards the special project. One member among the group, which is 8% of the participants, witnessed this approach, which appeared to be not very popular.

Another method witnessed by the group was that of equal giving. Ten persons witnessed such a strategy, which is 83% of the focus group. Still at other times a special day would be selected known as the building day where there would be a

special promotion in the church for the purposes of raising funds for the building project. This was at times done through the inviting of a good speaker who would preach on this particular day to motivate members to give for the special project. Ten members of the group, represented by 83%, had witnessed this method of giving used in their church.

Still the other method that the group pointed to was the one termed “the dollar day” this was a day where each member was requested to come to church prepared to give a dollar for the building of the church or for the special project that the church was facing. All twelve members of the group had witnessed this method of fundraising, which represents 100% of the participants. The few methods of collecting means for special projects mentioned above confirmed to the researcher that indeed the Zone B church had a challenge on the varied methods of giving.

The next question posed to the focus group sought to find out from their experience and observation the impact of the varied methods of giving on the membership in general. In other words, the question sought to find out how the members viewed such approaches to giving. Responding to the question, eleven out of twelve members, representing 92%, said the methods had both positive and negative impact on the membership. To begin with, they pointed out to the positive effects of such methods, which enhanced member participation to 75% of the membership in certain instances.

On the negative aspects of these varied methods, ten members of the interviewees, which is 83%, pointed out that such methods did not develop system into giving. Such methods were event oriented. Resulting in giving being practiced only when there was a special event. Two persons, representing 17% of the focus group, pointed out that at times the church that needed means would identify a

speaker from another sister church who had a lot of means and invite them to come and promote, knowing that such a speaker would also donate a significant amount of money to the church under construction. While the other negative factor identified by the group was that such methods destroyed the idea of giving freely. Three persons of the twelve, representing 25%, echoed such sentiments. The group indicated that such methods lead members to complain against the church. It creates some discontentedness among the members.

This was echoed by five of the members of the focus group, which is 42%. The other positive aspect pointed by some of the members was that such strategies succeed on the strength that they are in line with what members like. While the same approach has its negative aspect, where if such a project were not one that the members favored, it would then not receive the support of the believers. Six members supported this idea, which is 50% of the interviewees.

The other positive aspect that some members of the group identified was that such varied approaches lead to success of the projects at hand. While on the negative side, the approaches do not enhance the spirituality of the members. The seven members, which is 58%, of the panel echoed these sentiments. On the overall, ten members out of twelve, which is 83%, felt that it was not good to leave God's plan by sticking to ideas that were crafted by human beings. These members felt that it was important for believers to follow the right approach to raising means for the work of God.

Still other members of the group pointed out that there may need to retain all these methods for the purposes of progress, while systematically teaching members the right approaches so that eventually they discard the wrong methods. Nine members representing 75% of the focus group voiced this idea. They went on to point

out that special days designated for certain projects affected other offerings needed by the church where members tended to divert all offerings and channel them to the special offering.

Some still pointed out that sometimes members find it difficult to give for the simple reason that they may be required to give towards something they do not know. Leaders do not take time to allow members to have a buy in and accept ownership of the project. They just expect members to give blindly without having an appreciation of why they should give. This was said by seven of the persons, which percentage wise is 58% of the focus group.

The next question that was posed to the focus group was, “what fund-raising strategies can the church use?” in response the interviewees pointed out the importance of putting emphasis on God as the only one worthy of worship. Also, emphasizing the need for members to love God with all their minds. An example was given where at times those who appeared to have no money did wonders during birthday celebrations when giving gifts to their loved ones. They pointed out that such was a result of love. They went on to point out that there was also a need for genuine repentance among the givers. Eleven members, who represent 92% of the group, voiced these sentiments as indicated in the table above.

The members of the focus group noted that systematic giving was only effective if it was practiced by a majority of the members. Where a few practiced such giving, it was not effective. In other words, they cited the fact that the few who give systematically do not make a meaningful contribution to the church. They went on to point out that the Conference needed to live within its means while avoiding coming back to the membership to request for more means when they received their portion of offering through a combined offering plan.

A combined offering plan was introduced in the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division (SID) territory to reduce the number of collections on a given Sabbath. It also attempts to distribute offerings equitably between the local church and the higher organization. Such a system of giving was designed to make it easier for the members of the church to support the work of the Lord in a balanced manner. The focus group participants also emphasized the need to allow church members to give what they have. There was a need to assist them to understand the vision of where the church wants to go before asking them to give. Such a need to share the vision with the members was critical in enlisting their support.

Analysis of Data

This section of the research seeks to analyze the data collected in relationship to the question under review. It seeks to either authenticate the existence of the challenge or to dispel the idea that varied methods of giving are a challenge in the Zone B church. Burke and Christensen propose that, “the discussion section has the purpose of interpreting and evaluating the study results, giving primary emphasis to the relationships between the results and the hypothesis of the study.”⁵²

They advise that the discussion is supposed to begin by pointing out whether there is authentication of the existence of the problem that is under study or not.⁵³

While Creswell emphasizes that, “the final step in an experiment is to interpret the findings in light of the hypothesis or research questions set forth in the beginning.”⁵⁴

⁵² Burke and Christensen, 632-633.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ John W Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 167.

He points out that the interpretation needs to confirm the existence of the problem of the study or to refute the existence of such a challenge.⁵⁵

These authors agree with each other on the fact that the interpretation of the results need to affirm the existence of the problem or to declare that there is no such challenge in the area of the research. Having established this fact, the section begins by analyzing the context of giving in the African traditional religion of the Shona and Ndebele's of Zimbabwe. It moves on to analyze the varied methods of giving as identified by this research.

From the concept of giving in the Shona and Ndebele religious background, the research established through the focus group interviews that these two major tribes of Zimbabwe have a religious background that is littered with generosity. The difference between traditional religion and Adventism, when it comes to giving, is that in the African traditional setting lack of giving had known consequences to the worshipper. It was clearly known to the worshipper that failure to give meant no blessings from the ancestors coupled with problems in the experience of the adherents.

Yet from a Christian context there are no immediate consequences to the worshipper for not giving. Thus, from this section it can be seen that indeed there is a problem when it comes to giving among the traditional religionists and the Christian believers. It is like Christianity liberated people from fear leading them to be lax in their relationship to God.

The other strong factor identified through the interviews that makes a marked difference was that under the traditional religion, when the elders were handing down

⁵⁵ Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 167.

the teachings, there were no objections from the recipients, yet when it comes to Christianity, worshippers may object and challenge certain beliefs and practices. According to the focus group, this was one of the major reasons why members under the dispensation of Christianity failed to do that which was expected. The traditional belief was that giving was necessary so that the adherents would be granted prosperity and protection from the spirit world. This is one other point that creates a serious problem; it implies that while the one coming from a traditional religious background may be converted to Christianity, one may still believe that blessings and prosperity do not come from God.

The other challenge identified that possibly affects those who turned to Christianity to end up not giving was that as opposed to traditional religion where there was modeling, such was lacking in Christianity. It is the older Christians who discourage the newly converted not to give to God by their bad example. Yet to the traditional African religion, giving was something very serious. This was one other aspect where the traditional religion had an advantage over Christianity. There is need that Christianity is taken seriously by its adherents. The traditional worshipper was practical with his/her religion while the Christian is not practical. Thus, Christianity fails on the practical aspect as opposed to the African traditional religion that is strong in practice.

Concerning the varied methods and their effects to the Zone B church, the research established that indeed different approaches to giving are a reality in this church. The members interviewed confirmed one way or the other that they had personally participated in such methods; these methods have a common challenge of failing to lead members to a living relationship with their God. While there were some strong voices that were advocating for retaining such methods in order for the church

not to stall in its progress on special projects, they were equally strong voices that felt the right teaching was needed to replace such methods.

Among the other reasons why the members felt that such methods needed to be retained was that the church needed these in order to continue the progress of the work of God while, at the same time, teaching the right approach to giving to replace the unbiblical methods of giving. In a way, they advocate for a method that gradually introduces changes as opposed to a drastic approach. While the other strong voices felt that it was the right thing to follow the guidance of the word of God in giving. These sentiments are strong indicators of a need to assist members through biblical lessons to practice biblically appropriate methods of giving.

It was clear from the focus group that the varied methods of giving in a way affect giving both in positive and negative ways. From a positive point of view, member participation is increased through such methods. Such methods have contributed to the accomplishment of certain tangible projects. At the same time, these methods led the church to get donations from able promoters from other sister churches who might have not donated were they not invited to such programs. In such approaches, the church leadership becomes creative in the invitation of the ones to come and do their promotions in their churches. They deliberately invite those with means knowing that when they promote, they would also leave a contribution with the church that invited them.

The members of the focus group pointed out the negative effects of such programs, which vary from affecting other necessary offerings required by the church to also leading members to complain against the church. It was observed that whenever there were such programs for members to give to special projects, other important offerings that were supposed to be given were diverted in order for

members to respond to the urgent appeal. In other words, the strategies do not encourage system in giving but discourage systematic giving in that they are always event oriented. These are programs that will see people giving because of the special event and the ceasing of giving in the absence of the occasions. Such methods condition members to respond to giving as a response to a special program or appeal for gifts.

In conclusion, data collected from the Zone B church indicates that indeed the challenge of varied methods of giving for special projects is a reality. It also indicated that the approach falls short in assisting members in their spiritual walk with God. Such also affect the other offerings that are equally important when members divert their giving to the special day in focus. It also pointed out that indeed the traditional believer took religion seriously while Christianity is not taken seriously. The absence of modeling in Christianity was identified as one of the contributing factors for members not giving to the Lord as expected because of the bad example of the older members. Having analyzed the findings of this research, the focus of the study shifts to the strategy for intervention to assist the Zone B church to practice giving from a Biblical point of view.

Designing of Intervention

This section of the research focuses on the strategies of intervention. It begins by examining the similarities in giving under the African traditional religion and Christianity. Through contrasting giving under the African traditional religious practices and presenting of alms in the Christian context leading to a suggested substitute in the practice of giving. Thus, the strategy seeks to propose workable substitutes that replace the African traditional concept of giving with the biblical concept of generosity.

Concerning functional substitutes, Onongha warns

therefore, while it is imperative to seek to employ functional substitutes that will serve to reinforce the faith of African believers, in order to meet their needs and respond to their fears, lucid and consistent explanation needs to be given so that syncretism can be avoided.⁵⁶

In the suggestions of the substitutes to be implemented, the researcher kept in mind this warning to avoid syncretic practices in the church. The next section begins by looking at the African concept of giving.

The African concept of giving is voluntary and is based on the freewill of the giver. Hence to assist the African Christian, the church ought to allow the African to appreciate that the principle behind giving is the same in both systems. The difference is that now in Christianity giving is directed to God not through the ancestors as in the other system.

The same God that they worshiped through the ancestors is the one now they have direct access to worship without a mediator. To also point out that while it appears that the African concept of giving was voluntary, underlying was fear of the ancestors coupled with fear that one might affect the welfare of the community by not doing right. While in the Christian setting, the motivation is not fear but the love of God and the success of His kingdom. Biblical examples of giving voluntarily are to be given at this point such examples like David and his people giving materials for the building of the Sanctuary (1 Chron 29:3-9).

In the African context of religion, adherents give to God through the ancestors under the belief that these be the protectors of the people while at the same time they are understood to be the source of all blessings. In the Christian context, believers need to appreciate that they have direct access to God through Jesus Christ as

⁵⁶ Onongha, 130-131.

mediator. Further that God is the true source of all blessings as found in Deuteronomy 8:11-18. To also appreciate that God is their true protector (Ps 23). Stories of how God protected His people need to be told from a biblical point of view including incidences where God provided for the needs of His people. Such stories like the experience of Abraham, Hagar, the poor widow, and the widow of Zarephath.

The other point of similarity is that in the African traditional religion, giving is part of worship. From a biblical point of view, the African Christian needs to connect giving to the worship of God. Opposed to the traditional system where giving was motivated by fear, they need to appreciate that in the Christian context the motivation for giving is love. Conversion needs to take place among the Christians leading them to honoring God with their wealth. While in the other system, fear was the underlying motivator to giving; under Christ, love becomes the compelling factor to giving. The Christian needs to appreciate the freedom of choice that man was given by God that religion is not a matter of force but one of love. In day-to-day relationships, people do good towards each other without necessarily being forced to do such acts of kindness.

The other critical factor is that in the African traditional religion, giving ranges from small things to big things, according to what one has. This again is similar to the biblical approach to giving. In Exodus 25:2 God instructs Moses to request Israel to give to Him from what they possessed. God accepts gifts of His children from the small to the great gifts. For the small gifts, the example of the poor widow suffices in Luke 21. For the big gifts according to ability, the gift of David towards the building of the temple, later to be built by his son Solomon, is a good example. One such gift was that of the woman with an alabaster box in John 8. Again on small gifts and those given in kind is the example of the small boy giving his lunch to Jesus Matthew 14

and John 6. The African needs to understand that giving is a sacred responsibility for every child of God that is based on how much one loves God.

Implementation of the Strategy

Since the Africans in their context value community and communal solidarity, those called by God are called to a community of faith. This can be seen from the example of Abraham in Genesis 12, where God promised him to be the father of many nations. In chapter 3 Henri Nouwen was quoted pointing out that those raising funds have a good opportunity to build a community. To take care of the communal aspect, the members of the Zone B church are put in groups of ten to twelve. Such groups are each led by a church board member.

The aim of such a group is to pray for each other daily. Above praying for each other, the group meets at least once a week to encourage and pray together. The leader of each group challenges group members to be faithful to God and to remember monthly to set aside something for the special project per each one's ability. Further that, the researcher provides them with texts to read weekly for sharing whenever they meet.

This aspect takes care of what was discussed in Chapter 2 that spirituality is a key component in giving. At the same time, it addresses what was discovered in Chapter 3 that the objective of giving is supposed to contribute to the spiritual growth of members. It also fulfills what Chapter 3 established on the role of prayer in giving. It was pointed out that the aspect of prayer is one component that does not need to be neglected for a successful fundraising strategy. For this strategy to function effectively, the elder assisted by the stewardship director, checks with every church board member ensuring that all the groups are active. This becomes one of the backbones of the strategy.

On the details of the strategy, the researcher develops seminar materials to be presented to the members of the Zone B church that cover the concept of giving from the African traditional religious perspective, the biblical and Ellen White's concept of giving, and from other Christian writers on project giving. These presentations will at the same time expose the members to the varied methods of giving including Bible based giving. Such presentations are meant to expose the members to look at giving from various angles in a manner that would lead them through conviction to decide on the method that is Bible based. At the same time, the presentations have a component of questions that are directed to the membership to invoke their active participation. These questions also aim at assessing the level of understanding of the members and their ability to connect the questions to the presentations. The questions also aim at leading the members to a level where they do a self-assessment of their giving patterns. At the end of the discussion on the questions presented to the members there ought to be a feedback from the membership on their reaction to whether the questions contributed to their understanding or that they added no value to member understanding concerning the varied methods of giving.

Limitations

Due to the pressure of the year-end meetings and administrative responsibilities, the researcher did not get all the time needed to do a close supervision and follow up for the project implementation. At the same time, the church was involved in outreach programs that made it difficult for it to be accessible whenever the researcher was available. Despite these challenges, the researcher devised other means of accessing information from the Zone B church.

Summary

This chapter started by examining the macro ministry context where the traditional African religious experience in relation to giving was discussed. It became clear that the traditional Shona and Ndebele are givers in their traditional religious experience. The chapter also dealt with the micro context where the Zone B church find themselves. It further identified the type of research and covered the reasons that led the researcher to choose this type against the other types of research.

It also covered the population sampling and why this was preferred to other types including the focus group discussion. Then it further described the process of data collection and reasons behind the choice of such an approach.

Then it went on to outline the implementation strategy to address the varied methods of raising funds for special projects in the Zone B church. The strategy included the seminar approach in assisting the members of the church to have an appreciation of the method that could be used in raising finances for the special projects. Critical areas of similarities that were discovered in both Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 were part of the strategy that was used in addressing the varied methods of giving in the Zone B church. Having discussed the data collection process and the strategy for implementation in this chapter, the next chapter focuses on the details of how the strategy was implemented, including the evaluation of the same.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION

The previous chapter dealt with the research methodology, the collection of data and its analysis, leading to the development of an intervention strategy to address the challenge of the Zone B church. This chapter focuses on the details about how the implementation strategy was administered in the Zone B church.

At the same time, it discusses the objectives of the implementation strategies. To begin with, it looks at the concept of giving from the biblical perspective, the literature review and from the Zimbabwean traditional religious belief system. Then it further describes how the final evaluation was conducted in ascertaining whether the strategy addressed the challenge or not. It also gives details of how the data was analyzed leading to the summery and conclusions.

Intervention Implementation

Before the presentations were made to the Zone B church, the researcher made it clear to all the church members the intent of the strategy. It was further explained to the membership that the research intended to come up with a solution to the varied methods of giving. Such a problem did not just affect their church but affected the Union territory. Further, it was explained that the name of the church was not being used in the study but rather a pseudo name for the protection of the members. As such the members were requested to express themselves in a manner that was honest and genuine in relation to the problem being addressed.

The researcher went on to present the findings from the focus group as a way of assessing if the congregation was in agreement before beginning the presentations. This process was necessary to confirm whether the information gathered through the focus group was relevant to the prevailing situation in the Zone B church. Having described the initial process, the chapter now focuses on the objectives of the researcher in addressing the challenge of varied approaches to giving.

Objectives of the Research

The researcher sought through this research to come up with a strategy that would address the challenge of varied methods of raising finances for special projects in the Zone B church. At the same time, the study sought to lead members to a conviction of the method they could use to finish their projects on time. It was not a question of forcing the members to adopt a certain strategy but through the presentations that are Bible-based and observable behaviors of giving from other Christian writers on the subject of giving. To also produce lesson materials to be used by the members from an informed position. Such materials would include texts to be shared among group members on a weekly basis.

At the same time, the researcher sought to assist 10% of the members, of the Zone B church to move away from the practice of giving through approaches that at times sought to pressure or manipulate the givers. The presentations aimed to lead members to embrace a biblical approach to raising resources for special projects without waiting for certain designated days meant for such purposes.

Thus, the researcher sought to have all the members of Zone B church to have an appreciation of practicing methods of giving that enhance their relationship with God. It is the intention of the intervention for the members to have an appreciation of the relationship between giving and their relationship to God. At the same time, the

intervention aimed to allow members to appreciate the relationship between giving and spiritual growth.

Concerning the idea of community, it is the intention of this intervention to have 30% of the groups that are formed meeting regularly on a weekly basis. Such groups are meant to address the spirituality of the church, which is a key element in meaningful giving.

Concept of Giving Implementation

The researcher made it clear to the members that the concept of giving was going to be explored from three angles. Beginning with the concept of giving from a biblical point of view, second from writings by both Christian authors and those from the NGO background, and thirdly from the African religious background.

The first seminar was presented in the Zone B church at a time when the church attendance was at the maximum. Realizing that normally members shun programs that have to do with giving of means to God, the researcher deliberately decided to present the lessons on Sabbaths. The first of such presentations was done on the 10th of September 2016 for a period of five hours to a congregation of 345 in attendance. The next presentation was done on the 17th of September 2016 for a period of four hours. This session was attended by 500 members who included some from the Zone B company. Among the attendees were some who were versed in the traditional way of worship while some had on a number of times participated in projects for raising funds for special projects. Some were those who had been recently baptized and hence had not participated in the fundraising for special projects. A follow up seminar was conducted on the 26th of November 2016 for a period of three hours.

These seminars sought to have dialogue with members through the questions that were directed to them by the researcher as a way of reinforcing the lessons in a drive to lead them to a commitment. At the end of the session of questions, the researcher would then engage the members to get their reaction to the questions raised as to their relevance to the subject under discussion.

The presentation started by showing members of Zone B church what is the concept of giving from a biblical point of view and also from other Christian writers for an appreciation and exposure on the mind of the word of God on giving. It showed the members that from both the Old and New Testament, that giving is supposed to be based on the freewill of the giver. It went on to show that from the Bible giving is supposed to be the initiative of the giver without attracting attention to the other worshippers but to glorify God. This step was deliberately taken as a way of allowing the members to view giving from different perspectives, which could lead them to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each concept in its context.

As this presentation was coming to an end, the members appreciated the exposure that allowed them to have a broader view of giving from the word of God. Some commented that when the missionaries came to Africa, they advised people to leave everything that was traditional because it was associated with heathenism. Thus, Africans did away with some of the good practices they had through their traditional way of worship.

Regarding the writings of other writers on giving, the researcher made it clear that the presentations were simply aimed at assisting the members to understand how the other authors appreciated the concept of giving in their understanding. From the literature review, the presentation sort to reveal the adulteration of giving as was experienced during the medieval church. Such an influence contributed to a false

understanding of biblical giving. This was an era where giving was based on merit and a desire to appease God. This step was taken to expose members to an understanding that some of the practices then still influenced giving even during modern times. It was also designed to lead members to see some similarities that are presented in the different concepts of giving.

The other methods of giving were presented that were manipulative in nature as a way of causing the worshipper to give. Such approaches are a result of the one raising resources believing that his/her task is to get money for special projects without an appreciation of the effect on the givers. It went on to present that true giving needed to be an outflow of the being of the giver as opposed to duty. Just like what happens in the African religious background the worshipper practices giving as something that comes from within the giver.

At this point the presentation pointed out that in the Christian context, giving is supposed to be motivated by the love of God. Making it clear that biblical giving was that which had its motivation from the grace of God. Also it pointed out the importance of giving as a freewill act on the part of the worshipper. This is the very reason the Bible teaches about the importance of regularity in giving which leads members to develop a habit of generosity.

The presentation went on to deal with giving from the African traditional religious belief where presenting of alms was voluntary on the part of the worshipper. It was a concept where the worshipper gave because of the recognition of the ancestors as protectors and providers of wealth. There were some discussions on this point engaging the congregation to deliberate on this idea with a view to wanting to understand the challenge members were facing when it comes to giving to God.

The presentation highlighted the fact that underlying the giving in the African traditional context was fear of the ancestors. It was a system of giving that has similarities with giving in the medieval church where presenting of alms aimed at appeasing God as a way of gaining salvation on the part of the worshipper. Such giving in that context was also driven by fear that the dead could cause some misfortunes on the worshipper if they failed to keep them happy.

This portion of presentations sought to broaden the understanding of the members of the Zone B church to appreciate giving from the different understandings, which would easily make them see the difference between giving to God and other methods of giving that fall short of meeting the biblical standard of presenting of alms. The presentation made an emphasis on giving to God as something that should be motivated by love towards the Creator. Having presented on the concept of giving, the implementation strategy now focuses on the areas of similarities as summarized in chapter three.

Areas of Similarity

The intervention for the varied methods of giving in the Zone B church was implemented on the 10th of September 2016 with presentations presented by the researcher. The intention of the researcher was to address the areas of similarities as identified in both researches. In attendance was a congregation of 350 members composed of the elderly, middle aged, young couples, youth and children. Addressing the areas of similarities assisted in comparing the approaches and seeing their relationship to the Bible and where the similarities differed theologically with the word of God. This step was followed to be able to move with the congregation from the known practices they could easily identify with to make it easier to understand the transition to giving to the Creator.

The researcher began by explaining to the members that at any point they felt like asking questions, they were free to do so. These lessons were presented to the church at their usual place of worship. Realizing that the research had identified six critical areas that were very clear from chapter two and chapter three. Some of these critical areas were reinforced in the ministry context of the researcher. To begin with, point number one will be examined and how the research addressed issues that are related to the challenge.

Merit Driven Giving

The first point of similarity dealt with in the intervention that was both confirmed in literature and the ministry context is the following: The concept of giving in the medieval era was merit driven. It sought to earn a favor from God. The same could be said about the concept of giving in the African traditional religion where giving aimed at appeasing the ancestors in order to secure blessings.

In the intervention strategy, the researcher sought to deal with this aspect by leading the members into discovering that God is already interested in His people. He does not need to be induced to love human beings through what they do (John 3:16; Rom 5:8). The Bible makes it clear that God loved humanity while they were His enemies.

The researcher made it clear in the presentation that giving to God should not be driven by merit. God is the one who takes the initiative to reach out to humanity and He loved them before they loved Him. The segment of the presentation went on for an hour showing that human beings only respond to the love and goodness of God as opposed to the other system where worshippers do things to be acceptable before their gods.

Giving to God is not about buying favors or trying to appease an angry God. In the context of Christianity, God blesses His people before actually requesting them to give (Deut 16:17). The gifts requested by God are in keeping with the blessings bestowed to the giver. Here is one point of departure between giving in the African religious context and in the Christian context. An illustration was given to reinforce the point through the example of Abraham who was called by God to sacrifice his son as a sacrifice because God had already made a provision. Having dealt with the first critical point, the study progresses to point number two and the steps that were taken to address the challenge.

Spontaneous Giving

The afternoon of the same day addressed the second point of commonality between the African traditional concept of giving and Christianity was on responding spontaneously to giving. The presentation went on to remind the members of the practice in the African traditional religion where worshippers responded by giving whenever they came to a sacred place. In such instances, no one needed to be reminded that it was time to give.

The presentation went on to show that this aspect of response is the same under Christianity, under the motivation of the Spirit of God. Thus, the presentation emphasized the need for Christians to regard religion with the sacredness that goes with it. The researcher led the members to an appreciation from the Bible point of view as discovered in the second chapter that the response of the children of Israel to giving was spontaneous. The presentation sought to lead the members to a deeper appreciation of who God is in their lives.

The example of the magi from the east when they came to visit Jesus at his birth was used. These men did not wait to be reminded to give they came prepared to

present gifts to the new born king (Matt 2:11). Recognizing who Jesus was, they brought gifts to Him. This is one example where human beings out of a conviction without anyone requesting for a gift responded spontaneously to give. The next section focuses on the aspect of voluntary giving and how the research addressed the matter in the implementation process.

Voluntary Giving

This section examines the other area of similarity and how the implementation tackled it. As cited in the third chapter, this is one area that was addressed in the strategy to assist the Zone B church to have an approach that unites the members in giving. Such is the area of voluntary giving as advocated by the Bible. The African traditional religion also practices voluntary giving.

In harmonizing the teaching of the Bible and the findings from the focus group about the giving in the African traditional religious context, where the group pointed out that the two seem not to go along together. In the African traditional religion, giving has its known cycle and it is not demanded, while in the Christian context leaders often call for the need to respond to numerous appeals for offerings resulting in the confusion of the African in understanding giving from a Christian context.

The researcher presented lessons that lead members to develop a system of giving to God without having to wait for appeals (1 Cor 16:2). As was established in the second chapter that Paul encouraged believers to look at giving not as something that takes place at church but that has intentions that begin at home. The researcher challenged the members to plan their giving so that it becomes an intentional decision. Voluntary offerings flow from hearts that love God and the success of His work.

This section also pointed members back to the experience of the children of Israel where Moses had been instructed by God to call them to give willing offerings from their hearts (Exod 25:2). This was one good example where God's people responded to the appeal in a manner that was overwhelming as can be seen in Exodus 35 and 36. Driven by their commitment to God, they continued to bring offerings until they were told to stop bringing more because what had been brought was more than enough for the special project. Having discussed voluntary giving, the next point of similarities to be discussed is that of community.

Community

It was also mentioned in this research that the African traditional religion is community centered. The point made by Nouwen as quoted in the third chapter agrees with this concept where he points out that in fundraising the leadership is faced with an opportunity to develop a communal spirit, which is a need among the people. The researcher presented the idea of community to the members considering a number of ideas discovered in this research.

In the quest to address this need, the researcher met with all the church board members and challenged them to agree to be leaders of groups of between ten to twelve people. This was done on the 17th of September 2016 at the worship place of Zone B church with an attendance of 500 members in the presence of the church pastor. The researcher explained the role of the church board member in the group, which was to lead and encourage the group members. Such leadership included ensuring that adherents met at least once a week to pray together. Including encouraging them to pray for fellow members daily in their individual prayers.

Further, that where a group member faces challenges be they spiritual, physical, emotional or economic, they contact the group for support and praying

together. This aspect has the idea of the members of the group to operate like a family that expresses concern and support for each other.

The other reason for organizing the groups was to meet what the research established on the need to grow members' spirituality. Since this is a difficult thing to measure, the researcher put the groups together for a period of three months as a way of enhancing their spiritual growth, which is a need for meaningful giving to take place. These groups were meant to be part of the church life since human beings need constant reminders.

In the groups, the leader would take the opportunity to encourage the members to plan their giving in support of their special project. At the end of each month, the leader, without finding out how much each member contributed, simply finds out how many of the members of the group were able to remember the special project by setting aside an offering. Where some members failed to give, the leader assures them of support through prayer so that the Lord would enable them to be able to give for the success of the project.

To strengthen the idea of community, the story of Achan in (Joshua 7) was narrated to show the effects of the behavior of one individual on the whole nation. Africans from their tradition understand very well the cooperate responsibility in facing issues that have a potential to bring a curse on the community. The fact that according to Paul, the church is a body of Christ, as such all members need to cooperate and do their part for the good of the body.

As a way of ensuring that the groups were to continue to function as expected, the researcher met with the church board members at the Zone B church on the 29th of October 2016. An illustration was used to the members about a chain that is used with an ox drawn plough. Normally what happens is that sometimes when the ground is

fallow and there are roots, stumps and rocks, the chain breaks. When that happens, the farmer normally takes a piece of wire to join the chain so that the work will not stop. When that happens, the wire creates a weak link to the chain. As the process of friction takes place, the chain always breaks at that point. The leaders were thus challenged by the researcher to avoid a situation where they formed a weak link. Such a link is created when the leader does not see to it that his/her group is meeting at least once a week. It is also created when the leader him/herself is not participating in giving just to use a few examples.

This portion sought to marry the idea of community in the African context and use it in the Christian context. The example of Abraham who was called by God to be the father of all nations according to Genesis 12 suggesting that the idea of community is a biblical concept.

Above the idea of meeting once every week for a period of three months, the researcher provided a list of texts that members were expected to read. Each member of the group was expected to read one text a week so that when they meet each one would be able to share what they got from their reading. Such texts are attached in the appendix section of this research as Appendix B. Having discussed the implementation of the idea of community, the next point of similarities that the implementation addressed was one that is related to worship of a supreme being as experienced in both backgrounds.

Worship

The other idea that was used in the strategy to address the varied methods of giving was that of worship. In the Zimbabwean traditional religion, giving was part of worship. Both in the second and third chapters it was discovered that biblical giving is part of worship. It becomes a worship response to the goodness of God. Taking

advantage of the Zimbabwean's background of worship, the implementation strategy led members to appreciate the relationship between giving and worship.

On this aspect, the book of Exodus links giving with worship. As Pharaoh asked Moses as to who were going, the response of Moses indicates that they were also going to take their livestock as well because these were going to be used in the worship of their God (Exod 10:26). The implication of the statement of Moses to Pharaoh was that in the worship of their God, some of their livestock would be used for such purposes. As such the worship of God includes the giving of gifts to Him.

The wise men of the east understood that worship and giving go together, hence their presentation of gifts to Jesus (Matt 2:11). When these visitors got to the place of His birth, they did not just see the baby but also presented alms as a gesture of worship. The traditional belief of the African does not conduct giving outside worship. In the current age, people worship God; who they served in ignorance through ancestor worship.

This similarity in the systems is an indication that the devil simply adulterated a system copied from the true worship. At this point the presentation pointed out that God as the creator, deserves to be worshipped including the presentation of gifts as a sign of gratitude towards His goodness. Such gifts are not presented as a result of manipulation, but as a love response to Him.

David speaks of God as the one who takes care of the needs of His people (Ps 37:25-26). For what He is to His creatures He deserves the best through gifts to Him that come without any pressure from outside. An illustration was given where in the African context some traditional healers do not charge for their services, but when the one assisted realizes the benefits of the service, without being told how much to pay the healer, the beneficiary brings a thank you gift. This concept of bringing a thank

you gift that is unsolicited is not foreign to the African. The only difference is that now it is directed to God the real giver of all blessings.

The presentation went on to lead the members to appreciate the fact that a realization of God as provider of all needs leads to an appreciation of God. Paul also points out that God supplies all need according to His riches in glory (Phil 3:19). The next point of similarity that was dealt with in the implementation was that of God as both Provider and Protector.

God as Provider and Protector

The implementation went further to present another area of similarities as captured by the statement that follows. In the traditional religious setting giving was an acknowledgement of the spirit being both as giver and protector of the worshippers.

In the theological and literature review, it has been established that meaningful giving acknowledges God as the owner and provider of all blessings. Elaborating on the aspect of God as the one who is the true provider of all material blessings. The Bible points out that God is the giver of wealth as spelt out in Deuteronomy 8:18. It is easy to attribute success to good planning and good business ideas. True success comes from God as taught in the Bible.

The presentation went on to emphasize what the wise man says in Proverbs 10:22 that it is the blessing of the Lord that brings wealth. It is the Lord who blesses His people with wealth. It is for that reason that God's children need to express gratitude by presenting gifts to Him as the real protector and the one who adds blessings that lead to wealth. Thus, this presentation sought to make it clear that the true provider of the blessings of the people of God it is the Lord Himself.

On the aspect of God as the protector, some illustrations were drawn from the experience of Abraham when his wife had been taken to Pharaoh. The Lord intervened on behalf of His servant (Gen 21:1-14). One other passage that was referred to was from the book of Psalm 34:7 where the Bible points out that God sends His angel to protect and deliver those who fear Him. It went further to draw the example of the deliverance of the children of Israel from the land of bondage to a land flowing with milk and honey.

The presentation went on further to point out that protection from God does not mean that God's children may not encounter challenges. God leads His children through the challenges as expressed in Isaiah 43:1-3 and 1 Corinthians 10:13. This aspect was added to avoid a scenario where it would appear as if when people believe in God they are protected from all challenges that affect others in life. It was a way of striking a balance in relating to God. Just like other faithful people went through trials, God's children also face trials. The only difference is that they do not face these alone but God provides strength for them to go through the testing period. Having deliberated on God as provider and protector, the next section focused on the background of the religious traditional Shona and Ndebele.

The Background of the Traditional Zimbabwean

The critical part that the implementation dealt with was the one where while Zimbabweans come from a background littered with giving, it becomes a puzzle that members of the church fail to practice generosity. The researcher posed a question regarding members' struggle with giving despite tangible proof of generosity in their previous religious background.

There was some dialogue at this point for the members to pin point what was going on. This is the gap that needed to be closed if the Zone B church would find a solution to the varied methods of giving that are necessitated by the fact that members are not generous hence the resort to manipulative methods to induce them to give.

At this point the members agreed with the idea that was raised in the focus group that in the African religious traditional worship system, the adherents give from what they have from grains to beasts just to give an example. Coming to the church, gifts in kind are not acceptable making it difficult for those without money to participate in giving. This resulted in some members with intentions to give failing to present alms to their Creator since they did not have cash.

In responding to that challenge the presentation made reference to the experience of the children of Israel in contributing for the building of the Sanctuary, where they gave in kind. Thus, from the children of Israel, it can be said giving in kind is a biblical concept. During the reformation introduced by king Hezekiah where Judah returned to the Lord through the giving of tithes and offerings, as stated in 2 Chronicles 31:2-11.

The passage is clear that the gifts and tithe that was given was in kind. This is the reason why in Exodus 25:2 the Lord commanded Moses to appeal to Israel to give to the Lord from what they possessed. This illustrates that even today God's children can give in kind and their gifts can equally be accepted before God. In the presentation and discussions that ensued, it became clear that this was one of the challenges that made the members of the Zone B church appear as not willing to give to God. It was like one giving in kind was looked down upon as someone who was poor. At the conclusion of this presentation it was agreed upon by everyone that giving in kind is an acceptable form of presenting gifts to God.

The presentation on this section ended by making an emphasis that in contributing for special projects, as can be seen from the Bible, members can contribute from what they have. It may not be necessary for one to look for money in order to give. What is important is for the gift to be from the heart of the giver. There was agreement from the members that they would start giving to the Lord from those things they have as long as they are usable for the task.

With all these similarities, the question was paused to the members as to what caused them to have challenges giving as Christians when they used to be generous under the traditional religion? The responses from members indicated that one of the contributing factors was that Christianity condemned everything that the African people used to practice as heathenism that needed to be discarded. While other members pointed to the fact that under the traditional religion, certain types of gifts were not prescribed while in the Christian context the call to giving comes with a prescription.

At this point the presentation led the members to texts like 1Corinthians 16:1-2 that indicates giving to be a decision that is done at home. At the same time pointing out that biblical giving needs to be regular on the part of the worshippers. Deuteronomy 16:16-17 was cited where God instructs His people to give in accordance with their blessings.

The presentation went on to point out the fact that God's people respond to giving out of love and gratitude for who He is to His children. By virtue of the fact that He is the provider of all blessings He deserves to be worshipped through offerings. This is one area that needs further investigation. Unlocking this puzzle was needed in order to assist the African Christian to continue practicing giving in a manner that is in keeping with their religious background.

Objective of the Seminars

Looking at the challenge of varied approaches to raising resources for special projects, the researcher came up with twelve objectives to address the challenge of giving. These objectives were informed by the results of the research both the theological review, literature and the field study. The contributions from the focus group contributed to coming up with this approach. These objectives were formulated before the intervention as a guide in addressing the varied methods of raising resources for special projects.

The first objective of the seminar was to assist the members to appreciate the concept of giving from the biblical perspective in both the testaments including the literature written by Christian authors. It also sought to expose them to the concept of giving from the African Traditional religious experience. This part also sought to lead the members to be able to appreciate the understanding of giving from the different perspectives; at the same time, allowing them to realize strengths and weaknesses of each concept.

It also aimed to assist the members to be able to identify the similarities in these different concepts of giving. The rationale behind this approach was to ensure that the members of Zone B church appreciated the giving from a broader context. Understanding the concept of giving from different approaches would at the same time make it easy for the membership to compare and decide on the right approach to funding special projects.

The second objective was to present giving from the biblical point of view. At the same time, it was aimed at the members' understanding of biblical giving that is to be motivated by love. It also targeted to show that giving whether for special projects or for other purposes did not change the intent from Scripture to give as a worship

response. The other objective was to allow members to see from both Testaments that giving is not something that needs to be manipulated but that which should be a result of the conscious decision of the giver, and to lead the membership to appreciate that giving is a matter of repentance.

The third objective of the seminar presentations was to lead the church members of Zone B church to understand from the perspective of Christian authors the various methods of giving to God for special projects. It also aimed to lead members to appreciate differences between a biblical approach to giving and methods that are just aimed at extracting money from believers. Further, to lead the members from the perspective of these authors to relate to some of these methods from their experiences. The writings of the authors would also lead them to further identify similarities in the approaches to giving.

The fourth objective was to lead the members of Zone B church to understand what approaches to giving produced results and what approaches did not lead to the desired outcomes. The presentations aimed at leading the members to be able to make a conscious choice of what they would choose to do in response to their Creator. This portion of the presentations also sought to lead the members to an appreciation of giving from a theological background. Hence that would lead the members to see from this point of view how they could respond to the varied methods of giving without disturbing the unity of the church. This section also sought to allow the adherents to make their own analysis of the approaches deliberated on in line with biblical teaching.

The fifth objective of the seminar presentations was then to lead the church to an appreciation of the elements that were necessary in conducting a successful way of raising funds for special projects without resorting to manipulative approaches. This

aspect was aimed at directing the leaders and members to an awareness of essential components that were needed in raising funds for special projects.

While at the same time this aspect aimed to assist the members without pressure to decide on a method that incorporated all the needed ingredients for a successful approach to raising means for the special projects outside methods that ended up discouraging some of the members as a result of the strategies used. This was one of the turning points in relationship to members coming face to face with that which works and that, which does not work. Thus, presenting an opportunity for the members to be able to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy.

The sixth objective of the presentations was to refresh the minds of the members about their background, which has affected some of their practices up to this present day. An example can be made of the aspect of entertaining visitors, Zimbabweans learnt this practice from their religious traditional background and they have continued to practice the same habits regardless of the fact that they are now Christians. It also aimed at leading the members to appreciate that giving is supposed to be a matter of being as was discovered in the third chapter of this research.

The seventh objective of the seminar presentations was to expose the members of the Zone B churches to appreciate the reasons that contribute to members giving in a meaningful way. It sought to expose the membership to methods that were both supported from the results of the second chapter as well as the findings of the third chapter. As such the presentations sought by way of illustrations to make it easier for members to remember and follow the logic behind these approaches to giving to God.

The eighth objective of the seminar presentation was to ensure that all the areas of similarities between giving from a biblical point of view, literature from Christian writers and from the African traditional religious experience are covered.

These similarities were presented in the seminars to provoke the membership to appreciate that in both instances such was an indication that there was a common source of information on giving that informed the other sources. The researcher was convinced that presenting these similarities was one of the keys to addressing the varied methods of giving that are a challenge to the Zone B church. This aspect generated a lot of interest from the members because it was touching on issues that they could easily relate to from day to day experiences.

The ninth objective of the seminar presentation was to be able to establish from the members what really caused them to fail to give when their backgrounds were from an experience of giving from small to big gifts. At the same time, the presentation aimed to establish whether Adventism failed to assist its members to appreciate giving to God in a manner that left them satisfied. This was one of the key aspects in addressing varied methods of giving. The presentation sought to find out whether the process of substitution was not done properly to move the members from a background of giving informed by African traditional belief and one that is informed from the Bible.

The tenth objective of the presentations was to assist the members of the Zone B church by way of some illustrations that God was both the source of all blessings as well as the protector of His people. This was done to address the aspect in the African traditional belief where one of the motivating factors of giving for the African was an appreciation to the ancestors as both providers of wealth and protectors of the family. In a bid to assist the members to an understanding of this part of the study, the researcher pointed to the fact that God was the real protector and provider of all blessings to His people.

This was illustrated by the example of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednigo in Babylon when they refused to bow down to the golden image that had been set up by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3). The three young men were brave to remind the king that their God was able to protect them from the fiery furnace.

On God as a provider, an illustration was drawn from the example of the widow of Zarephath when she was supposed to feed Elijah (1 Kgs 17:9-16). God ensured that she had food to the end of the drought. One more illustration referred to God providing for the children of Israel throughout their pilgrimage to the land of promise (Exod 16:4-35).

The eleventh objective of the seminar presentations aimed at leading the members to an appreciation that giving was related to the spirituality of the giver as had been established in chapter two and three. It also aimed at leading the members to understand that giving was aimed at assisting members to grow in their relationship to God. Such that when the church was facing financial challenges, it simply was a symptom of a spiritual problem that needed to be addressed.

The last objective of the presentations aimed at assisting members to have an appreciation of the ownership of God. At the same time to lead members to know that as the Creator, God owns all created works. This one aspect leads to an understanding that even human beings do not belong to themselves but they belong to God.

This step was necessary as a reminder that it does not make sense for one to refuse to give the owner what rightly belongs to Him. This was affirmed in the prayer of David after the response of his people to the appeal to gather materials for the temple later to be built by Solomon. As seen in 1 Chronicles 29:14 where the king specifically points out that what they had presented was that which belongs to God. This was an acknowledgement that God owns the whole of creation.

Steps Followed in the Seminar Presentations

The first step in the seminar presentation sought to establish a relationship with the members as a way of getting the best contributions from within a trusting relationship. In this step, the researcher sought to make it clear to the members of Zone B church that the study was meant to reveal weaknesses and strengths of the intervention. At the same time, it led members to a trusting relationship with God. It also aimed at addressing the challenge of giving through methods that were not sanctioned in the word of God.

The initial seminar presentation was aimed at broadening understanding of giving from various approaches without pointing out a method that was preferred above others. Also, it aimed at leading the members of the church to an appreciation of how others view giving shaped by their religious convictions. This would lead the members to an appreciation of what informs various practices of giving in different contexts.

The second step of the presentations exposed the members to the findings in both the Bible and literature review. It was also meant to lead the believers to an appreciation of the biblical approach to giving. At the same time, it aimed to expose them to the writings of other authors on their understanding of giving towards the support of special projects.

Questions Considered

On the 26th of November 2016, the researcher had an opportunity to make one hour seminar presentations on giving from a biblical point of view which was presented to a congregation of 200 members of the Zone B church. This was followed by a few questions that were discussed for an hour and thirty minutes. These were presented to the members of the Zone B church as a way of provoking their thinking

in the area of giving. One such question was for the church to consider the consequences of following a method that is not Bible based. This question was raised as a way of testing the knowledge of the members as to the importance of doing the right thing.

Further, for the members to ask themselves whether the objective of giving was to please human leaders or it was to bring glory to God. A confusion on the true aim of giving leads at times to members just giving for the sake of being seen as participating in the work of God by their leaders. This aspect sought to lead members to have a consciousness that giving was aimed at pleasing God. One such question to consider was the real meaning of freewill offerings, whether it included inducement or manipulation on the givers to be able to get meaningful contributions from the participants.

The other question that needed to be answered was that of finding out if methods that aimed at manipulation led members to a closer walk with God. It was also important to understand whether giving was a matter that had spiritual consequences or just one of those matters that had nothing to do with the relationship of a member to God. The researcher further sought to find out from the members whether there was a relationship between giving and faith.

Finally, to find out if knowing and being closely related to the person one would like to give a gift affected the size of the present to be given. This was done to understand from the members whether gratitude and love had a role to play in giving. Further, to understand whether trust in God had a role to play in meaningful giving. The questions used are attached as Appendix C. Having raised the questions; the next section focuses on how these were addressed including the reaction of the members.

Reaction of Members to the Questions

On this step the researcher needed to establish effectiveness of the lessons through the reaction of the members if the questions were adding value to their understanding regarding the varied approaches to giving. At the same time, the reaction of the members was to be used as an assessment in terms of their understanding on the aspect of giving from different angles.

The response of the members was in support of the appropriateness of the approach used. Thirty-six of the members looked at the questions as not only pointing to one area but also providing a broader perspective leading to members thinking about the approach to giving. While nine members looked at the questions as contributing to a focused approach to the subject of giving thus uniting the elements of faith, spirituality, relationship and trust in God.

Based on the questions, they were able to identify where they went wrong in their approach confessing that they would have finished their building if they had the right focus. Members appreciated the questions as leading to each member to evaluate how they responded to giving.

On the aspect of relationships, one member commented that when it comes to a parent and child relationships, there is no need to instruct the parent as to what becomes an appropriate gift to present to their child at a wedding or birthday, all is guided by the relationship that prevails among them. Thus, when it comes to giving to God, if relationships are all right, the giving will also be meaningful.

The questions were very helpful to the researcher in trying to establish how much the presentations had contributed to their understanding on the varied methods of giving. It was like an evaluation of the effectiveness of the lessons that had been received. This was a necessary step to lead the members to a conscious decision of

giving in a manner that is biblical. This was a feedback process to the researcher to assess the effectiveness of the intervention and its weaknesses.

An Analysis

In the analysis of the researcher, the lessons revealed that the members had benefited from the intervention strategy. Normally members resent lessons that talk about money, they try to avoid such topics, yet these presentations were attended by most of the members of Zone B church. Further that the local leadership appreciated the presentations. While in general the members were expressing that they could now be able to appreciate the biblical approach to giving as opposed to other approaches that did not lead members to a closer relationship with their maker. At the same time the strategy led members to make individual decisions for their giving.

Intervention Steps Followed

This section discusses the intervention steps that were followed by the researcher in trying to address the challenge of varied methods of giving. The reason for following the steps outlined below was to ensure that the seminar presentations followed a participatory approach as opposed to a passive method. Realizing that some of the members were senior citizens, it was imperative for the researcher to choose an approach that engaged them so that they would move together with the presenter in affirmation or disagreement.

The results of the field research were shared with all the members of the Zone B church with the intention of affirming the authenticity of the information gathered through the focus group. Such sharing led the researcher to get responses from the participants that authenticated the results of the field research. After the sharing of the results, the researcher went on to give seminar presentations firstly on the concept of

giving from literature review, followed by the concept of giving from a biblical point of view.

To take care of the aspect of community as established in the traditional culture, the researcher led the members to form groups of eight to twelve members as a way of addressing spirituality and accountability of the members. As a result, 37 groups were formed and these operated for a period of three months. This step was followed by seminar presentations on the 26th of November 2016 at the place of worship for the Zone B church. These presentations were focused on the biblical approach to giving.

Thus, the results of the qualitative approach were shared with them as obtained from the focus group for an appreciation of how as members they viewed the challenge of varied methods of giving for special projects in their church. Such diverse understanding would lead members to appreciate their different levels of understanding the subject matter.

Thus, they would get to appreciate why they would sometimes argue over the right approach to giving. This would lead to members getting to discover the solution as opposed to being told about the solution to the challenges of varied methods of giving. Having discussed the steps that were followed in the intervention, the next section describes the analysis of the information from the Zone B church.

Final Evaluation

The final evaluation of the intervention strategy was conducted on the 5th of February 2017 at the worship venue of the Zone B church. Before the distribution of the evaluation forms to the members, it was made clear that only those who had attended all the presentations were the ones to participate in the filling in of the forms. Out of the 35 forms that were distributed by the elder, only 20 were returned. In order

to allow members to express themselves freely, there was no need for the writing of their names on the forms. All they needed was to simply answer the questions. Thus the following analysis is based on the twenty responses that were received from the members of the Zone. B. church.

Table 3. Final Evaluation Questions

Questions	Response Summaries
In your judgment, did the seminar address the challenge of varied methods of giving satisfactorily?	Partially.....Not convincing.....made issues clearer...14
From the various approaches to giving you have witnessed in the past, which ones do you prefer to retain?	Building day.....Dollar day...4...Sponsored walk.....Equal giving.....7..Any other...9.....
What impact have these lessons had on you as a member?	Nothing has changed in me.....I have gained in my understanding on giving to God...14..I have been drawn closer to God...6.....
What fund raising approaches can the church use in raising resources for special projects?	Bible based...11...non manipulative approaches...3.....Any method that yields results...5...
How did you view the discussion questions we went through together as a church?	Reinforced my understanding.....Made me to evaluate my relationship with God...9. Led me to make a decision on my giving to God...10.....
The groups that you have been assigned, how have they contributed in your spiritual growth?	I feel nothing.....They have been good to me...4... A source of encouragement and support to me...13...
Have you been able to pray for the members of your group?	Once a week...8..Twice a week...2. Every day.....7. Other State.....
Have you been able to read a verse every day as requested?	Every day 9.....Twice a week...3.....Five times a week...2..... Any other state.....
Finally can you say the strategy assisted you in your walk with God or not?	Yes...20. No.....

The table above is divided into four sections that are critical to the implementation strategy. These are mainly, varied methods of raising finances for special projects, the discussion questions that were dealt with in the church, the spiritual aspect as represented by the small groups and finally the response of the

members to the strategy. These four categories represent what the researcher wanted to achieve through this research.

Beginning with the first four questions that are related to the varied methods of giving, which is in harmony with the objectives of the research. The response of the members to the first question indicates that the strategy assisted them to have a clearer understanding of the issues behind the varied methods of giving. The response of the fourteen out of 20 members representing 70% of the respondents is indication of the impact the strategy had on the Zone B church members. It was the intention of this research for the members of the church to first of all have a broader understanding of the varied approaches to raising resources for the special projects before they could decide on the way forward which was to be from an informed point of view.

The second question which in a way was trying to establish whether the majority of the membership still wanted to retain the varied methods of giving indicated that as a result of the intervention, most of the members would prefer a method that that was not part of the varied approaches as expressed by nine members, representing 45% of the respondents. This was one indicator that on this category, the strategy had influenced the members to shift in their approach to the understanding of giving to God.

The third question related to the first objective had fourteen respondents, representing 70% of the total participants, indicating that their understanding of giving to God was enhanced through the intervention strategy that was used. While six respondents, representing 30% of the respondents, pointed out that the strategy had drawn them closer to God. Judging from these responses, it can be said that the strategy to address the varied methods of giving in the Zone B church was a success.

The fourth question sought to understand if most members had an appreciation of an approach that was Bible based as opposed to manipulative approaches, eleven respondents, a representation of 55%, pointed out that they would prefer a Bible based approach to giving as opposed to the other approaches. This was a strong indicator of how much impact the strategy had on the membership. Generally, it can be pointed out that through the responses to the first set of questions, the intervention achieved the first objective of the research. It can be said that the first objective was effectively dealt with as is shown in the results of the respondents.

Regarding to the second set of question that was trying to establish how much members had understood the intervention in relationship to the questions discussed as part of the objective of the researcher. The response of nine respondents out of twenty, which represents 45%, indicated that the intervention had drawn them closer to God. While ten respondents representing 50% indicated that the intervention had led them to making a decision to give to God without waiting to be manipulated. This was one other area in the objectives of this research to get the members to a point where giving for special projects becomes their conscious choice. Judging from the responses, the intervention strategy achieved its desired goal.

On the third set of questions which are also in line with the objectives of the researcher on the aspect of the spirituality of the members as seen in the formation of the small groups. The first question sought to establish whether the small groups were of any value in the experience of the members. Four respondents out of the 20 representing 20% of the respondents, indicated that the groups were good to them. While thirteen respondents representing 65% of the respondents, pointed out that the groups were valuable for their support and encouragement. This was one of the key

areas that would assist the church to nurture each other while encouraging one another to remain faithful to God.

The other objective of this set of questions was to determine participation in the groups as was assigned. The response showed that eight of the respondents representing 40% of the respondents prayed at least twice a week for each member of their groups. Yet seven respondents, representing 35% of the respondents, prayed for each member of the group every day as had been assigned. While this aspect does not have a strong response like the other sections of the evaluation, it is a positive indicator that the church is going in the right direction. This was one key objective of the researcher to raise the spirituality of the membership, which is key to meaningful giving.

On the same set of questions that dealt with spirituality of the members, there was a need for participants to read the Bible every day of the week. Nine respondents, representing 45% of the respondents indicated that they read a text everyday, as had been assigned group members to do in a way of enhancing their spiritual development. The response to the question suggests that the strategy led a good number of members to read a text a day as requested. Thus judging from the results it can be said that this objective was effectively addressed in the implementation.

The last section of the questions assessed the membership response in relation to the intervention strategy. On the first question that sought to establish whether there were still strong voices advocating for varied methods of giving for special projects, as was the case before the intervention. There were some members who strongly felt that the varied approaches to raising resources for special projects needed to be maintained.

Four respondents, representing 20% of the participants, indicated that the varied methods of giving were essential for the church to be able to make progress. In other words they are saying these varied methods contribute to the success of the work of God in the absence of Bible based methods. Reading in between lines, this group felt that these approaches were necessary for the church to continue with its programs and plans. While sixteen respondents representing 80% advocate for a Bible based approach in raising resources for the special projects. The response of the members indicates the impact that the intervention had on the adherents. A good percentage of the membership now appreciates methods of giving that are not manipulative in nature.

The last question on this section sought to find out from the respondents if the intervention had assisted them in their walk with God. Twenty respondents, a representation of 100%, indicated that the strategy had impacted their relationship with God. The research established that one of the reasons for a successful fund-raising campaign in churches was to enhance member spirituality. Judging from the evaluation instrument and the responses that were given, it can be concluded that indeed the intervention to address the varied methods of giving was a success in the Zone B church covering all the four objectives of the research.

Outcomes of the Intervention

This section describes the observed outcomes of the strategy. It begins by giving information of the Zone B church before intervention and the information after intervention. Then it moves on to the summery of the section.

The Zone B church has a membership of 345 adherents according to the report of the church clerk. Per the stewardship director of the Zone B church only fifteen members were currently supporting the project of the church without having to wait

for a special program to induce them into giving.¹ This suggests that there were some members who were conscious about the right thing to do even before intervention.

After the intervention, which lasted for a period of three months, on the 13th of January 2017, the observable outcome was that the number of members supporting the special project without having to wait for an appeal rose to 49.² This figure represents an increase of 10%, raising the percentage of giving to 14% of the membership. This percentage growth is exactly as the target of the researcher. Thus, from the achievement, the strategy was effective in addressing the challenge of raising resources for special projects in the Zone B church.

The other success indicator comes in the aspect of community that is being experienced in the church. Before the intervention, the church did not have even a single small group to act as a support and encouragement to the membership. As a result of the intervention, 37 groups were formed composed of at least eight members per group. The objective of the research was for these groups to meet once every week to pray with each other. It was also to have 30% of the membership meeting at least once a week. Out of the 37 groups formed, 16 groups meet once every week, which represents a growth of 43% that is 13% more than the target percentage. As shown by the results, this strategy was a success in addressing the spirituality of the membership.

The outcomes after the implementation show that the strategy was effective in addressing the challenge of varied methods of giving towards special projects. The

¹ Simeon Lunga, "Zone B Church Stewardship Director," interview by Author, January 13, 2017.

² Ibid.

response of the members to the questions discussed with them also points out to the effectiveness of the strategy.

Summary

This chapter addressed the critical areas that were identified in this research as a response to the challenge of varied methods of giving. At the same time, it addressed all the areas of similarities in giving between the African traditional religion and Christianity.

From the comments and reaction of members to the questions directed to them in a discussion, the intervention was a success. It led the members to be able to differentiate from approaches that are biblical and those that are not. It further led members to an appreciation of successful methods in fundraising. The intervention made it clear that giving is a matter of spirituality. In other words, it was made clear that whenever a church was facing financial challenges, the problem was spiritual rather than financial. The appropriateness of the study was discussed in this chapter. The next chapter focuses on the summery and recommendations to the Conference, the local church pastor of Zone B church and to the church itself. It also focuses on the conclusion of the whole research.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a comparison of the study of the two fields of study, one before the intervention and the other one after the intervention. It also presents the material of the final evaluation, the dissertation summary, outcomes of the program implementation whether they are positive or negative. It provides a conclusion of the research summarizing the outcomes observed. Based on the results, recommendations are made to the Zone B church for a way forward.

Summary

The challenge of the varied methods of raising resources for special projects is a task in the ZUC territory compounded by the rapid growth in membership, which now averages 50,000 baptisms per annum. It further was worsened by the decision to divide all the organized churches as a way to try and enhance the mission of the church. Thus it became more difficult to provide houses of worship to the new congregations. Hence the need for a research to address the problem.

The theological review established that whether faced with special projects the principle of freewill offerings still stands. God accepts gifts that are given as an expression of love and gratitude to Him. Meaningful giving calls for the consecration of the givers to the Lord first. It was further established that there was a connection between giving and the spirituality of the givers. While it came out clearly that the giver had a right to make a decision as to how much to give as one created by God

with a freedom of choice. Thus, God does not require His people to give to Him as a form of tax but voluntary gifts.

The literature review confirmed that in the strategy to raise resources for special projects, the assumptions of the one promoting the giving determines the approach used. Where if the conclusion is that people are hard and not favorable towards giving the resource, the raiser may decide to take matters upon him/herself to get money from the givers at all costs. Yet successful methods of giving are those that are Bible based that allow room for the working of the Holy Spirit. Such methods allow the giver to determine how much to give as a response to the Creator who is both owner and provider of all blessings.

The African traditional religion also practices giving in multiple ways. Such giving is motivated by fear and a desire to manipulate the gods to act in favor of the worshippers. Yet they are glaring similarities between giving in the African religious context and giving in the biblical context. This is one area that may need further study to assist members to make a transition from one system to the other.

The fourth chapter dealt with the intervention strategy to the varied methods of raising resources for special projects. It used the qualitative research approach that seeks to understand prevailing phenomenon through the people within the prevailing situation. It dealt with the areas of similarity to ensure that the implementation handles these areas that are critical in assisting members facing the challenge of varied methods of giving. The chapter also suggested strategies to address the varied methods of raising resources for special projects, while the field study confirmed the prevalence of the varied approaches to giving as witnessed by the members of the focus group.

Chapter five outlined the steps that were taken in the intervention process to address the challenge of varied methods of raising resources for special projects in the Zone B church. At the same time, it outlined the objectives of the seminar, which was to ensure that the membership had an appreciation from a broader perspective of the different approaches to giving, their appropriateness and inappropriateness as established in the study.

The intervention covered the critical areas of similarities between giving in the Shona and Ndebele cultures leading to a discussion on the challenges that are faced by the Christian who fails to give when he/she came from a background of giving in various ways. Varied methods of raising resources for the special projects were being practiced in the Zone B church resulting in projects taking too long to be completed.

Before the intervention, out of a membership of 345 in the Zone B church, only 15 members were supporting the building project consistently. These were those who did not need to be manipulated into giving, they had a regular schedule for supporting the church.

The expected outcomes of the intervention strategy were that the Zone B church would have 30% active groups that met regularly to encourage each other to support the special projects. It was also expected that 10% of the membership would be giving without waiting for a special program that would induce them to give. At the same time the aim was to assist all church board members to be the first ones to support the strategy of giving not from compulsion but voluntarily in keeping with the need for modeling.

After the intervention, there was a positive response from the membership in terms of support for the building project outside manipulative approaches. Out of the 37 groups that were formed, sixteen met weekly without fail representing 43%.¹

Regarding the members who now support the building project without waiting to be pushed, these represent 14% of the membership, which makes an increase of 10%. As pointed earlier on the members who were supporting the building project were 15 before the intervention and are now 49 after the intervention.² From the results it can be said that the intervention strategy was a success because the aim was to assist 10% of the membership to give without waiting for an appeal.

From the comparison of the two fields of study, it can be seen that the strategy used was a success in the Zone B church. The response of the members to the need of meeting once a week, which represented 43% of the groups, formed indicate the impact that the program had on the membership. Also, from the comments of the pastor of the Zone B church, the approach has made their task easy in the raising of resources. Likewise, the stewardship director of the local church commented that this made his work easier in assisting the members to be faithful. The elders of the church added their voice through appreciation of an approach that put emphasis on the spiritual growth of believers.

The research established that the varied methods of giving are a reality in the Zone B church, which led to the delays in the completion of special projects. It was noted in the research that such methods do not lead to churches having a regular system of presenting alms, but turn giving to an event which comes and goes. At the same time, the research established that varied methods of giving affect other equally

¹ Lunga, “Zone B Church Stewardship Director.”

² Ibid.

important projects of the church through members diverting their giving in response to the special appeal for means. The other weakness of the varied method approach was that members tended to support those programs they had interest in while those they were not interested in were left to suffer.

Conclusion

The first chapter crafted the roadmap for the research to address the challenge of varied methods of raising resources for special projects. At the same time, it presented the ministry context of the territory under study. It also highlighted the expectations of the research as the raising of the spirituality of the members leading to a method of raising resources that left the church united.

While the second chapter revealed that giving is supposed to be rooted in the word of God. It was emphasized that God blesses His people and in turn they respond to Him by bringing gifts as an act of worship. As discovered in the context of giving that presenting of alms is not much about the raising of money for the church but about the response to the goodness of God who does not seek to be appeased. It was also stated that giving did not have its aim at attracting attention to the giver but to give glory to God. Suggesting that giving is supposed to be an outcome of pure motives. The writings of Ellen White confirmed that God did not want forced offerings but only those that came from the heart. They emphasized the fact that the people of God did not need to wait for more appeals but were to respond in support of the work of God.

The third chapter stressed that the goal of all fund-raising was to assist the members to grow spiritually, of which failure to accomplish this goal became a sign of leadership failing the church. The emphasis was that giving is a matter of the heart, where purse and heart should be open to Jesus. Where the members put their money

becomes an indication of where their hearts are. Thus, there is need for both the one raising resources and those giving of the same to be both converted to have the right attitude towards money. Thus, this part made an emphasis on the fact that the Bible clearly points out that the decisions of the people of God need to be an outcome of the influence of the Holy Spirit and not otherwise. Thus, the fundraisers do not need to carry a begging basket to request for money, but to project a compelling vision that brings tangible and visible change.

While the fourth chapter informed by the discoveries of both chapter 2 and chapter 3, coupled with the field research designed an intervention strategy to address the varied methods of giving for special projects. To the Shona and Ndebele of Zimbabwe, giving is part and parcel of their worship system, which was regarded seriously by the adherents of that system. This is where the traditional system presents itself as a very strong system that has role models while Christianity lacks such role models.

From both the theological foundations and literature review, it was pointed out that the source of true giving is the grace of God working transformation in the heart of the believer. At the same time, the research identified some contributing factors to giving as spirituality, prayer, visitation of the members, belief in mission and a worship response to the goodness of God.

The intervention strategy was a success in addressing the challenge of varied methods of giving as evidenced by the response of the members through the discussion questions and through their giving patterns in relation to the support of their special project. This was also evident in the response of the membership to the final evaluation tool that sought to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Further, the rise in the number of members giving without having to wait for an

appeal from fifteen to forty-nine members is another sign of the impact of the intervention. While the number of groups that met every week as a result of the intervention represented 43% of the membership of Zone B church. Such results are a pointer to the impact the intervention had on the membership.

Recommendations

This section of the research deals with the recommendations first to the Conference, then the District Pastor. It also includes recommendations to the Zone B church on what it is supposed to do to retain the confidence of its membership.

Recommendations to the CZC

Based on the contributions of the members of the focus group and also the worshipers of Zone B church during the intervention the recommendations are informed by such observations. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the Conference should minimize instances where they go back to the members to request for more resources. To do so the Conference needs to restrain itself to using the available means.

As established in the research concerning the connection between giving and spirituality, the researcher recommends that the Conference needs to advocate for a method of giving that enhances the spirituality of the members. Such an approach that recognizes that lack of giving is a symptom of a spiritual problem within the membership.

The CZC is advised to capitalize on the background of the African people where community is highly valued through the use of small groups that encourage the members to be accountable to each other. Such groups need to be the place where the leaders challenge group members to remain faithful to God. These groups need to care

for each other through prayer ministry that uplifts members before God including the reading of the word of God.

The Conference is supposed to come up with a strong plan to accept resources given in kind and have a way of effectively marketing the same in a bid to accommodate those wanting to give in kind just as is taught in the Bible. The recommendation will address the cry of some members who feel that the church looks down upon those who give in kind.

To recommend to the Conference the need to share its vision with the constituency before embarking on any project that calls for the support of members. The sharing of such a vision allows members an opportunity to input and also to have a buy in for enlisting member participation. Thus, the membership is kept informed of the direction the Conference will be taking. Such a recommendation takes care of the complaint of the members who find themselves being requested to give money when they may be in the dark as to the direction the Conference will be going. It also takes care of the aspect of members being part of the success of the mission of the church.

Recommendations to the Zone B Pastor

The pastor of the Zone B church needs to lead his members into methods of raising funds that enhance spirituality. Such methods need to include prayer as one of the strategies to resource the church. At the same time, the pastor needs to regularly visit his members as a way of keeping them informed about the direction of the church. Further for the pastor to form groups of ten to twelve members to be able to encourage each other under the leadership of the church board members.

It is recommended that the pastor ensure that all those in leadership positions are faithful and are leading by example in the area of support for special projects. This was pointed out in both the theological and literature review as one of the essentials in

assisting members to be faithful. As was also established that in the African traditional religion, there were role models who were responsible for showing the others how things were done. This is one reason why the African traditional religion is strong. Paul speaks about the power of example. Also, that the pastor needs to avoid using methods that promise to raise a little money but that are not sustainable. That the pastor ensures that whenever there is a need to raise funds leaders need to lead by example.

Recommendations to the Church

The Zone B church needs to uphold a Bible-based approach in the gathering of resources for special projects. Further that when the church is financially challenged, they address the spirituality of the members to in order to experience meaningful giving.

For the church to gain confidence of the members, it is recommended that through its local leadership, it practices financial discipline by avoiding actions that divert the use of funds from their intended purposes.

Thus, it is recommended that the Zone B church follows the Bible based methods of gathering means for resourcing special projects in the church to avoid a situation where members get disgruntled. Since the gathering of resources is supposed to contribute to the spiritual growth of members, the elders need to ensure that all efforts to gather money are designed to enhance member spirituality. As a way of achieving this goal, the members need to continue the practice of the groups that were formed as has been established in the research.

It is recommended that the church elders through the support of the church board; avoid the temptation to take shortcuts in the gathering of resources.

Additionally, as supported by this study, it is vitally important that leaders lead by

example in the area of giving. Finally, there is a need for a deeper research to be done on this topic since this one is limited because of space.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many special projects have you participated in?
2. What methods were used in the fund-raising activities for those projects?
3. Were members happy about the methods that were used?
4. In your judgment, could you say that the methods that were used assisted members to have a close relationship with God?
5. Do you think it is a good practice for the church to continue using such methods for special projects?
6. In your own understanding how should the church raise funds for special projects?
7. Of all the methods you have witnessed, which one do you think is better than the others?

APPENDIX B

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Offer ourselves to God as Christ offered up his life.

Eph5:2, Rom.12:1-2

Be faithful stewards of all aspects

1Cor.4:1-2

Time Gen.1:14-19/Ecclesiasts3:1-9

Talents Matthew 25:14-30

Temple 1Cor6:19-20

Treasure Deut8:18,

In our daily lives (Pr 3:5-6)

Supplementary Studies

1 We should support the spread of the gospel 1Cor.9:9-14

2 We should be willing to share what God has entrusted to us with those who are in need 2Cor.8:1-15, Rom.15:26-27

3 We should give cheerfully and not grudgingly 2Cor.9:6-7

4 The heart, which freely gives, will constantly be blessed with more by our Lord. Prov.11:24-25/Luke6:38

5 Your experience with God should lead you into giving to God out of gratitude Psalm116:1-19

6 The real purpose of stewardship is that we may become more like God, whose very nature is to give John3:16

7 Failure to return tithes and offerings is robbing our Lord Malachi3:8-12

8 A tithe equals one-tenth Lev27:30:32

9 Jesus and the tithe Matthew23:23

a God is:

Creator Neh.9:6/Acts17:24

Sustainer/Provider Phillipians4:19/Acts17:28/1Chrn.29:12

Enabler Deut.8:18

Savior 1Tim.4:10

Owner Ps.24:1

He has no comparison Isaiah46:5

He is first Exodus20:3/Prov3:9

We are

To seek him first Matthew6:33

To be faithful stewards 1Cor4:2

Stewards of his substance Prov8:21
Stewards of his mysteries 1Cor4:1
To be accountable to him Rom14:12

APPENDIX C

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think that there are consequences of practicing unbiblical methods of giving?
2. In your understanding, if members were manipulated into giving, would such members develop a closer walk with God?
3. What is the meaning of freewill, does it also involve manipulative approaches?
4. In your understanding, do you think that there is a relationship between giving and faith?
5. If someone was giving a gift to someone he/she knows very well, would that knowledge affect the quality of giving?
6. Does trusting in God have a part to play in giving to God?
7. Does gratitude and love have a part to play in giving to God?

APPENDIX D

REASONS FOR CHOICE OF STUDY

The researcher was a stewardship director for 23 years. This was one area that always created challenges in the church when it comes to the raising of finances for special projects. The researcher would witness from time to time whenever there were discussions about raising funds for special projects, even among the clergy there would be no agreement as to the appropriate method to do so. One experience of the researcher was when he was pastoring some two districts. The researcher had been posted to these two districts towards camp-meeting time where there was need to give offerings for camp meetings. The popular practice during those days was that each district would receive a goal from the Mission Field. All districts would strive to reach the goal. With this ahead of the district, the researcher called a meeting for all the elders where there was a discussion that required elders to go and promote giving towards the camp meeting offering. As the district pastor, the researcher requested the elders to each go back to his church and request members to give according to their ability. Quickly a hand of one prominent elder shot up and reminded the new pastor that such an approach would not be successful in that it would result in members not giving meaningfully which would lead the district not to reach its given goal. The researcher then wanted to understand from the elders what the challenge of not reaching the goal was, they responded by saying that the district would not be perceived well if it failed to attain its goal. The researcher wanted to understand further what the implication of not attaining the goal would be. The elders insisted that the only method that would see the district reaching its goal was to tell the members how much to give.

Early Childhood Experience

From early childhood when the researcher was growing up as a son of an elder, he would witness this practice when it came to Sabbath School offerings especially the thirteenth Sabbath where even the Sabbath School superintendent would come up with a chart and mark destinations. Those classes that reached their goals were congratulated as a group that had made it to heaven. Those who had not reached their goals were painted as having failed to make it to heaven. This was such a big issue with the members. It painted a picture of a group of believers who were achievers while others were failures without even considering their different financial strengths. The same practice was practiced with districts at camp meeting time, where those who reached their goal had made it for heaven with their train reaching the destination. Those who had not made it would be made to feel bad while the ones who had achieved were made to feel good according to human judgment. Such an approach gave a sense of false satisfaction to the achievers as though they had given according to what God expected, while creating a sense of guilt to the non-achievers as those who had not given according to the expectation of God. These approaches to

giving distorted the whole idea of the proper mode of giving. Rather than God being the standard, human beings became the standard. All these experiences put together became motivators in the choice of the study. The next section examines another aspect that motivated the researcher from a strategic point of view.

Conference and ZUC Decisions

The other reason that motivated the researcher to choose the topic was the decision by one of the Conferences in the ZUC territory that decided to take a systematic approach to giving offerings to God. As a result, the researcher got motivated to do a research that would give guidance on the varied methods of giving. Together with this reason the growth rate of the church in Zimbabwe with the need to provide houses of worship contributed to the choice of the topic. Currently, the average baptisms for the union are around 50,000 baptisms per year. Such a rate of growth demands that something be done to assist churches to come up with a method that leads them completing houses of worship within a reasonable amount of time. One other contributing factor was the decision taken by the union to split all organized churches to enable the church to be strong in its nurturing approaches. The CZC took the decision seriously and divided some of its big churches into two or three congregations. As a result of the decision, all of a sudden the Conference found itself with many congregations without houses of worship. As a result of the decision the researcher chose this topic as relevant to the situation in the ZUC territory. The next section focuses on the departmental experience of the researcher as one of the motivating factors in choosing the topic.

Departmental Experience

As an individual who served in the department of stewardship from the Conference level, Union level and Division level, the researcher noticed that there was much emphasis on the returning of tithe and little attention to giving for special projects. As a topic that received less attention, the researcher was motivated to conduct a research in this area that remains one of the challenging subjects in the Adventist church. As division stewardship director, the researcher used to watch hot debates on the appropriate approach to giving even by leadership at that level of the church. It was always clear that there would be no agreement on the appropriate method of raising funds for special projects. These reasons among others led the researcher to choose this topic. This is one area that remains as a challenge in in the ZUC territory that demands leadership response and guidance. As leader in this union the researcher was persuaded to provide guidance on this critical subject.

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