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**A HISTORY OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN  
IGBOLAND (1923 – 2010)**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES, FACULTY OF THE SOCIAL  
SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D) DEGREE IN RELIGION**

**BY**

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**2014**

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## **Dedication**

**This work is dedicated to my wife, Ukachi, and my children, Tochi, Ozioma, Ogechi, Chidi and Uchechi for their concern, prayers, enormous assistance and understanding.**

## **Acknowledgement**

My gratitude and honour go to my Heavenly Father, the Almighty God. Great is your faithfulness O God. Thank you for the many favours and gifts and also bringing this intellectual exercise to a fruitful end.

I very much express my heartfelt gratitude to my Supervisor, Rev. Fr. Prof. H. C. Achunike, who gave me all support and encouragement, and generously guided this work with interest, patience, and care. You are indeed a Man of God.

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I salute my friends who gave me the moral support even when I wanted to stop because of distance and time: Victor Nwosu, Dave Nyekwere, Joseph Ukegbu, E.E. Uguru, Nnamdi Onyenweaku, and a lot of others too numerous to mention.

## **Abstract**

The Seventh-day Adventist church is a denomination that grew out of the Millerite Movement in the United States during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. By 1861, the group and those who were with them adopted the name Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1874 they sent their first overseas missionary to Europe by name John N. Andrews. He was sent to Switzerland. The Adventist message came to Nigeria in 1914 through David C. Babcock who began the work in Erunmu near Ibadan in Oyo State. Pastor Jesse Clifford came to Eastern Nigeria in 1923 to begin the Adventist work in Umuola, Ogbor Hill area of Aba. Today, several places in Igboland have the presence of Seventh-day Adventist Church. The methodology used in this work is the phenomenological method. It sees a thing as it presents itself. It does not judge or interpret things biassely and does not allow the subjective impression the object makes on him or her. Data were collected from text books, journals, private diaries, local church records, camp meeting reports, seminars, individual and public libraries, interviews, and internet sources. The findings in this work include: sometimes in the Adventist Church, due to the way Adventist youth have embraced Pentecostalism, worship has become so central that the doctrines of the church has become un-important, seen as being a divisive irritant. The church has interacted well with Christians of other missions since its inception in the areas of getting people Christianized, fighting against hostile rituals, planning for social, economical, political, and educational welfare of their villages and fighting against evil. The finding further reveals that the church, even though a conservative body has the problem of adapting her message to culture and finding an effective way to communicate the truth of each belief for each content. However, the church needs to galvanize all available methods including science and technology in presenting to the world relevant and biblically correct answers to life's uncertain questions. The work concludes that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, like the Roman Catholic, the Anglican and others made a lot of impact in Igboland in her attempt to evangelize the area. The facilities (education, hospital, welfare services, and more) which the missionaries introduced in Igboland became irresistible forces that undermined the traditional religion. Christianity, which the Seventh-day Adventists share with other Christians, became a useful instrument of agent to change Igboland to a happier and better society.

### **List of Abbreviations**

N. I. V.	-	New International
ADRA	-	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
C.MS.	-	Church Missionary Society
D.M.G.S.	-	Dennis Memorial Grammar School
P.T.C.	-	Preliminary Training Course
P.E.C.	-	Preliminary Evangelistic Course
Q.I.C.	-	Qua Iboe Church
ASTEC	-	Adventist Secondary Technical College
MACOS	-	Urban Management Consultancy
SDA	-	Seventh-day Adventist



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study:**

The history of the Christian church, as the body of Christ, could be traceable from the first century Apostles to the time it was inaugurated by the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost day. Cairns (1981) states that, Christian history originates with Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the God made man (John 1:1-3, 14). He is recognized as the founder of the church for which no other foundation can be laid. (Mathew 18:13-16). Following this fact, the church is said to be built upon Him as the immovable Rock. Concerning its expansion, the great commission, as recorded in Mathew 28:18-20 states that:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (N.I.V).

Jesus trained his apostles who also studied him in whatever He did and commissioned them to train others so as to continue his message in the world.

#### **1.2 Statement of the Problem:**

The very heart of Christianity and the theme of primary importance to the Seventh-day Adventist movement as shared by other churches is to “go into the entire world and to preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). In view of this assignment the first Seventh-day Adventist missionary from Michigan, Pastor Jesse Clifford, was sent to Igboland. He first came as a worker in the then Nigeria Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventist church, which had its headquarters in Ibadan and landed in Aba in 1923. He was connected to some Seventh-day Adventist Church believers from Sierra Leone who lived in Aba. From day to day Pastor

Clifford with his wife made personal visits to different people and gained their interest through Bible studies and giving of tracts on the Sabbath truth and other subjects, and Clifford source explains:

After Pastor Clifford and I arrived in Aba, East Nigeria, April 1923, we had to wait about 6 months before we could move into our newly built bush house on the mission land. The waiting time seemed long, but at last the church and the house were built and we could enthusiastically enter into the work which we had been called. (P.42)

Figure 1:



Source: Adventist Yearbook (1925)

It has been observed that most of the missionary works done in the spreading of the Gospel as preached by the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries and local preachers in Igboland (since 1923 till date) lack documentation. Many of them are found in private diaries, local church record books, Reports, seminar papers and minutes of meetings.

Curious members of the church are realizing the importance of their history and are asking: “how could the church after eighty-eight years of missionary endeavor in Igboland be without any documentation of her activities? In response to this question that is frequently asked by Adventists and even non Adventists who may have interest in the history of Seventh-day Adventist church, and the researcher’s interest to make a valuable contribution to Church history, this research intends to gather these fragments of the church’s history, as much as could be available to develop a more formal historical document for the church to fill this historical gap in church history.



This work may seem a little bit difficult because the ravages of the Nigerian civil war damaged most of the records and documents in most homes and churches. However, this research work shall explore every available means that shall include field work, oral interviews, and archival materials to get a proper documented up-to-date record on the history of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland.

### **1:3 Purpose of the Study:**

One of the major reasons for the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as a “Reformation Movement”, is said to be essentially that of the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mathew 28:19-20; Revelation 14:6-12) as stated earlier. Obviously, it seems Seventh-day Adventist Church has not made any impact in Igboland since 1923 to fulfill its acclaimed mission, and if it has, it lacks documented proof. Considering the population of the Igbo and the church’s membership in Igboland, it seems that the prophetic commission of the church which she claims is somehow buried, which makes the mission of Seventh-day Adventist church insignificant to most non-adherents or other Christian denominations in Igboland. Further more, the presence of other Christian denominations before it and their methods of evangelism may have diminished the presence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland. For these reasons, its gospel mission has not really succeeded in the area. Hence, this research will attempt to achieve the following:

1. To reconstruct the history of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland phenomenologically and as objectively as possible so as to give or provide its history in written form.

2. To explore the scarcely researched areas of the church's history, particularly with reference to the area of propagation of this Gospel as taught, preached, and lived by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
3. To inquire into some of the reasons why Seventh-day Adventist Church is not found in every nook and cranny in Igboland.
4. This research opens up avenues to knowing how to identify patterns of evangelization between Seventh-day Adventists and Christians of other denominations, in order to ascertain the level of receptiveness of Seventh-day Adventist mission, lifestyle and practices among the people in Igboland.
5. The work will go further to suggest possible ways and means to accelerate the growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland. One of such suggestions would include workable methods or approaches for the evangelization of the Igbo, considering its socio-cultural and religious situations.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study:**

This study hopes to satisfy the aspirations of some members of Seventh-day Adventist church, the wider public including people of other denominations in Igboland, Nigeria and beyond who desire to see, read, or have a documented history of Seventh-day Adventist church in Igboland. Furthermore, it shall answer the numerous questions that have been asked about the development and growth of the church in Igboland.

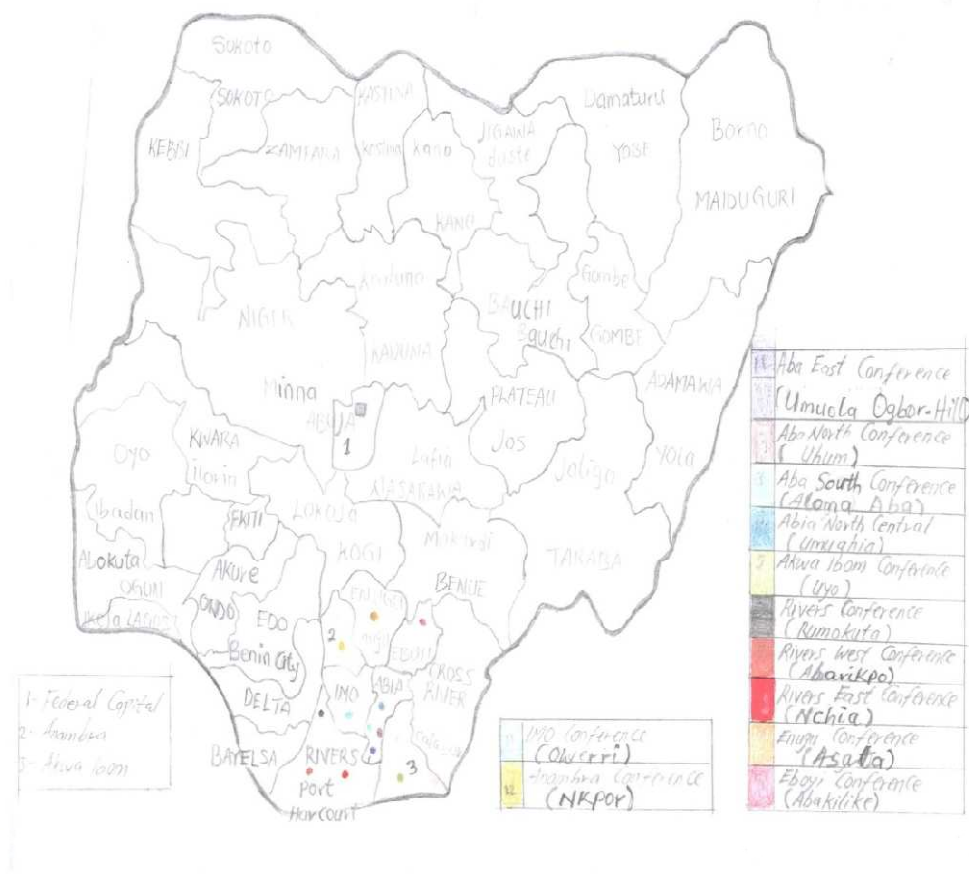
Generally, it is hoped that the study provides information on the socio-religious impact of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Igboland and serves as a reference work to the history of the church within the area concerned. It is hoped that this thesis shall serve as an eye opener as well as assist future researchers in related areas, and shall be a valuable contribution to church history.

Certainly, this research shall constitute a reconstruction of Seventh-day Adventist Church history in the Southeast geo-political zone of Nigeria.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study:**

There are five states in Igboland, but this paper shall focus on those towns where there are Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Indeed to attest to any church group requires sourcing out information from those who are acquainted with the church group, even if they are not members. The reason is that, those who have not had contact with Seventh-day Adventist Church may not give accurate information about the church. Hence information shall be sourced from Seventh-day Adventist Church members, ex-members, and others who associate with them who are not members of Seventh-day Adventist Church but are members of other denominations that may give relevant information. The work covers the formative stage of the church till the post war regional conference era (1923-2010).

## Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igbo Land



Source: Okoma (2014)

### 1.6 Research Methodology

The methodology in this research work is the phenomenological method. Phenomenological is an adjective from the word phenomenology, meaning a branch of Philosophy which deals with conscience, thought, and experience. It was founded in the early years of the 20th century by Edmund Husserl. In Husserl's conception, phenomenology is primarily concerned with the systematic reflection on and study of the structures of consciousness and the phenomena that appear in acts of consciousness. "Since bias is an inevitable part of human beings, phenomenologists deal with it by pulling it completely in the

situation, by attempting to become aware of their preconceptions and biases before beginning the study and while the study is in progress, and then “bracketing” or suspending them so as to be as open as possible to what the subject wants to share.”In this research work, the phenomenological method of research is preferred for the following reasons:

1. The method attempts to create conditions for objective study and documentation of the History of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland.
2. Phenomenology as a method of research enables the scholar to unfold the dimensions of the work to know what is distinct and common to the experience of groups of people who have shared the same events or circumstances.
3. The phenomenological method of research is preferred in this research work because it suspends or sets aside all biases, habitual modes of thought, and judgments to be as open as possible to get at what the subject wants to share.

Therefore, using the phenomenological method of research, the present researcher without biases, habitual modes of thought and judgements has explored every available means that included oral interviews and archival materials to get a documented up-to-date record on the history of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland.

### **1:7 Limitations:**

One of the set-backs in this research work includes the vast territory of Igboland. Igboland is a large territory, with few good motorable roads. This made it very stressful and time consuming to travel for collection of information. Another factor is the financial involvement. With the banning of commercial Motorcyclists popularly called *Okada* in certain areas, the tricycles known in Nigeria as ‘keke’ drivers became exploitative when providing conveyance for

one person. However information for this research work is not limited to Igboland but from all over Nigeria and beyond.

### **1.8 Definition of Terms:**

**Advent:** This means coming or arrival. To Christians this means the first or the second coming of Jesus Christ.

**Camp meeting:** Weekend spiritual revival of the church membership.

**Constituency:** A triennial meeting of the church where leaders are elected to work for the church. This meeting is attended by both Clergy and Laity.

**Company:** A group or persons that come together to worship in a given area without the capacity of leading themselves.

**Division:** An arm of the General Conference which embraces all the Union/Mission/fields in its assigned area.

**Dorcas:** An organization of Seventh-day Adventist Church Women, established to witness especially for those in need.

**East Nigeria Conference:** A territorial and administrative unit in Seventh-day Adventist Church polity that supervises the activities of the church in some parts of Igboland.

**Eastern Nigeria Union Mission:** An administrative unit, in Seventh-day Adventist Church polity, that supervises the activities of the church in South South and South East of Nigeria.

**General Conference:** The largest unit of organization of Seventh-day Adventist Church that embraces all church organizational structures in all parts of the world.

**Investigative Judgment:** A period of Judgment in the Seventh-day Adventist Church theology, when believers in Christ are judged; that is, the period when Jesus intercedes in the Most Holy place in heaven for his people and qualifies them for heaven. The Seventh-day Adventists

believe that this Judgment, which is announced in Rev. 14:6,7, started in 1844 and will end sometime before the Parousia.

**Church:** A specific group of Seventh-day Adventist members in a defined location that has been granted by constituency of a local conference/mission, in a session, official status of Seventh-day Adventist church.

**Conference:** A specific group of local churches, within a defined geographic area, that has been granted by the constituency of a union conference/mission in session, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist local conference/mission/field.

**Newbirth:** A spiritual rebirth

**Organized:** When a company of baptized believers is prepared to assume responsibilities to the growth of the church.

**Prospect:** Intending members of a church

**Sabbath day:** Sabbath is a Hebrew cognate for the word “rest”. The Sabbath day is biblically designated as the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the creation week, which corresponds with the present day Saturday. It is divinely allotted for worship.

**Sanctuary:** It is a dedicated place for executing of God’s plan of Salvation for His people. It has two apartments, namely: the Holy and the Most Holy. In heaven, it is believed by members that there is a Sanctuary where Jesus ministers in the New Covenant dispensation.

**Adventist:** This is a Christian Church denomination which upholds the validity of Ten Commandments of God, with special emphasis on Sabbath (Saturday) as a day of worship. They teach as part of their belief the imminent coming of Christ.

**Union:** A specific group of local conferences/missions/fields within a geographical area.

**Vesper:** Sabbath evening service

**West-central Division:** An administrative unit in Seventh-day Adventist Church polity, that supervises the activities of the church in Eastern Nigeria as a cross section of West Africa and part of the pacific country

**Working Policy:** Generalconference document that serves as a guide to Seventh-day Adventist Church workers



## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.1 Review of Related Literature

There is no known published literature on *A history of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland 1923-2010*. As a result of the paucity of literature on this topic, books on the history of other churches have been consulted to pave way for the actualization of the goal of this thesis. This is because history does not exist in a vacuum and other churches arrived Igboland years before the emergence of Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Concerning the founding of C.M.S. in Igboland, Anyabuiké, I. (1996) writing on “*The planting of the Anglican church in Eastern State of Nigeria 1857-1922*”, states that

In 1857 the British government in collaboration with Mac Gregor Laird sponsored another expedition under Dr. William Balfour Baiké. The expedition was significant for the history of Christianity in Igboland... on Monday, July 27, 1857 the first C.M.S. church in Igboland was planted, and on August 2, the same year the first church worship was held by Rev. John Christopher Taylor. (p. 24)

The event projected the town of Onitsha as the cradle of C.M.S east of the Niger. Assessing the early missionary work of the pioneers, the C.M.S made some impact and grew through the establishment of schools and a hospital at Iyieniu. Due to the troubles of the First World War, it became very difficult for the European foreign Mothers to organize fresh missionaries and the churches were led by the Igbo and activities were done in Igbo language. Another factor that easily enhanced an easy take-off of this church was the advantages of the Igbo language spoken by some of them who were of Igbo parentage.

Obi's (1985) account in his *A hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985* reveals that, the birth of Catholic mission in the Eastern part of Nigeria dates back to December 5, 1885, when the Holy Ghost Fathers landed at Onitsha wharf and painstakingly sowed

the seed of Catholicism in this part of the country. He believes and rightly so that the two factors that necessitated the birth of Christian missionary activities in west Africa were the efforts of England to end the slave trade, which he said, claimed about 20,000 lives among the Igbos (whether by transport to Europe and the new world or by death through the tortuous journey of the middle passage) and the colonizing efforts of the European countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

By 1835, the first Catholic chapel had been raised at Dahomey by a woman convert but this early seed remained feeble until the arrival of French catholic missionaries and the Portuguese Jesuits in 1887. Nevertheless, it was not until 1865 when the Holy Ghost Fathers arrived and Lyons Fathers in 1874 that the catholic mission had any appreciable influence in West Africa. Yet the work was retarded as seven Holy Ghost Fathers and three Brothers that were evangelizing the Gulf of Guinea died about the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and the retirement of Bishop Baron who was replaced by Monsignor Le Biere. As at 1848, there was no real catholic congregation at Onitsha save for few Catholics from Sierra Leone who were working with European Merchants as junior clerks, as Le Berre confessed his inability to extend his pastoral visits to Onitsha due to transport difficulties. Obi's report that the first successful attempt to plant Catholicism in the lower Niger began in September 9, 1885 when after the initial failures, Fr. Joseph Lutz, Fr. Horne and Fr. Jean Gotto left France for the lower Niger with a well defined mission, to plant the catholic faith in south eastern Nigeria. Even though they first landed at Sierra Leone with initial obstacles, they arrived Onitsha wharf on December 5, same year. Hence as reported by Fr. Celestine, these became the first catholic missionaries to come to Onitsha and to settle in Igbo land, eastern side of the Niger.

Obi noted certain factors that aided the survival of their attempt at planting a mission at Onitsha as follows:

1. Onitsha was thickly populated and seemed the gateway to Igbo hinterland
2. Onitsha had not been influenced by Islam
3. Onitsha had a good climate
4. The missionaries found favour before the Obi of Onitsha who was sympathetic with their mission
5. They had easy access to food stuffs available in the large market
6. They had an understanding with the Royal Niger Company - the administrative agent of British colonialists at Lagos, not to enter into any treaty arrangement with the Onitsha people (p.10).

With the above prevailing favourable conditions, the work of establishing a mission at Onitsha had a good start. Yet two major obstacles militated the efforts of these faith sowers. One was the death of Father Lutz, his companions and the early return of rainy season, which made the new mud houses to crumble. Other difficulties include language barriers, lack of funds and colonial diplomacy.

Nevertheless, by 1889, Obosi, Ossomari, Nsugbe, Umuoji, Atani, and Nkwelle, Odekpe had received missionary visit. A dispensary was opened and children had started receiving training at Mission schools. By August 29, 1886, the first baptism was conducted, signaling the establishment of the Catholic Church in Onitsha

The account of catholic mission as recorded by Nwosu (1985) considered less of its historical perspective but rather delved into the survival strategies of the newly established mission trying to contend with other missions that arrived before her in the area – the Christian Missionary Society (CMS), and the Royal Niger Company, the official British Administrative/mercantile agent in the area. (p.25).

Nwosu records that in the contending milieu, the Catholic Church found herself in 1885, the founding father, Father Lutz thought out a strategy that would ensure the growth and survival of the church. He introduced the Christian Village, reminiscent of French ‘Villages de Liberte’ in western Sudan. Christian village was a method of evangelism whereby new converts which comprised mostly of outcasts and traditional culprits were quarantined from the secularizing influences of the community for proper indoctrination of the faith. The first Christian village was built at the site of Holy Trinity in 1886. According to Nwosu, apart from the schools, the Christian village presented the most effective way of spreading the catholic mission in Onitsha.

The importance of this work lay in its study of the impact of the laity in the missionary work of the catholic mission in the lower Niger. This contrasts sharply with other works so produced in this respect as they concentrated on the role of the priests and founding missionaries especially the expatriates, as well as the strategies devised by the indigenous missionaries that guaranteed the survival of the mission in the face of oppositions from other contending missions during the colonial and post colonial era. Described as groups were teachers, women and chiefs. Nwosu (1983) in his book *The Laity and the Growth of Catholic Church in Nigeria the Onitsha story, 1903-1983* covered an important era in the history of catholic mission in southern Nigeria marked by the following developments. First the beginning of his date – 1903 – 1983 marked the tenure of Bishop Shanahan popularly revered as the Igbo Apostle whose activities affected most of Igbo heartland. The upper ceiling represents the era of indigenous leadership of the church following the exit of the expatriate leaders as a result of the civil war and most importantly the period covered the second republic in Nigeria history which ended in 1983 when the military returned to politics, and the church expressed herself in the politics of the country. The choice of

his scope – Onitsha was determined because Onitsha is the birthplace of Catholicism in the Eastern region of Nigeria.

Nwosu narrates the influence of chiefs in the missionary work of the Catholic Church in Onitsha within the period. Of particular reference was chief Anazonwu, who welcomed Father Lutz company warmly and donated a parcel of land though he was never converted to the faith. The next personality he mentioned was chief Idigo, a trader who became a convert and through his influence invited the church to Aguleri. Chief John Samuel Okolo Okosi who later became the next Obi following the death of Anazonwu was the next influential personality that joined the church and impacted positively the growth of the church in Onitsha. In fact it is believed that his popularity with the church facilitated his election into the position of Obi. He banned certain traditional rites that previously accompanied the obishop and became dedicated to the faith which he now belonged and donated land for the church to build school and chapel. Other chiefs worthy of mention who contributed to the growth of the church include Chief Ojiako Ezenne of Adazi, Chief Michael Muoyekwu Onyiuke II of Nimo, Chief Solomon Ezeokoli I of Nnobi. It is worthy of note that these men of influence were instruments of British colonial administration in the area, some of them were warrant chiefs who used their positions of authority to foster the work of the church in their areas. (pp. 1-3)

According to Nwosu the work of the church progressed in the following areas:

1. **Teacher-Catechists:** These were teachers and also functioned as catechists. There was yet another group, the bush-school teacher-catechist, who were less qualified and functioned at the remote villages where government and church influence was rare. Just like the colonial administrators could not have functioned without the artisans, clerks, and foremen, so also could the church not have made any headway without the services of catechists who also doubled as

teachers in the schools which became a veritable tool of proselytisation. The church made arrangement for the training of these teacher-catechists in order to catch up with the contending protestant churches which had established teacher training schools. And so by 1928, St. Charles Training College for boys had been established while the Holy Rosary Training College was opened for girls in 1935.

**2. The Church Committee:** The church committee was drawn from the local congregation and comprised of older church members. They assisted the catechist in general church administration including the disciplining of erring members. He was an ex-officio of the meeting of church committee.

**3. Women and Catholic Church Growth:** The factors that led to the rise of activities of women in the catholic church owed largely to events outside of the church than events from within. Not until the 1950s did women become prominent in the administration of the Catholic Church for obvious reasons as catalogued by Nwosu (p.96). He said this was attributable to the condition of women in the African traditional set up, lack of education by girl-children, lack of leadership among women and then the celibate priesthood of the church.

Nevertheless, the role of women in the growth of the Catholic Church before the 1950s was merely supportive and secondary to that of men. The Christian mothers, for instance organized informal training for young girls of marriageable age. Also the catechist and teachers wives did similar things though they too had no training for the work. Then there came St. Anne's Women association and the Universal Primary Education (UPE) crisis which saw the formation of the women wing of Eastern Nigeria Catholic Council (ENCC) which protested the government's plan to send their children to other church schools and the plan by the ministry of education to introduce a common religious syllabus, and a reversion to the eight-year primary

education system. Although they did not achieve their aim as government took over schools and the eight-year primary education was not reverted to, yet they succeeded in creating awareness of the potential power in them even in future years of the church.

**4 The Children's Apostolate – The Block Rosary Crusade:** Nwosu reveals that the work of this children's organization within the church started with night prayers among the shop keepers which later drew the membership of other children including girls. They pray for the church leadership and membership generally. To the activities of this group has been added a Parent's day in which special prayers are made for parents, plays and funfair as well as exhortations from older church members.

In his conclusion, he pointed out some changes that have reflected in the church since the 1970s such as the replacement of the church committee with parish and station councils. Recalling other writers, Nwosu reiterated the issue of cultural revival as one of the challenges facing the church in this century. He concluded his treatise by predicting a greater role that the laity would play in the continued existence of the church.

Agbodike (2008) in this book, *A centenary of Catholic Missionary Activities in Ihiala 1908-2008* looks at the strategies of growth of catholic mission in Ihiala from 1908 to 2008. Rather than delving into the historical perspective of the previous writers on the topic, he rather x-rayed the strategies of growth laid down by the various catholic missionaries and their indigenous successors since 1908. Beginning with Father Lutz, who introduced the Christian Village, subsequent missionaries especially Fr. Leone Lejeune, detested the Christian Village strategy and sought for an alternative which he found in establishing more schools and indigenization of worship. However Seventh-day Adventist Church has not really gone into

indigenizing their worship as they still go on with interpretation and other things as done by the missionaries.

The death of Lejeune in 1905 marked the end of French missionaries and the beginning of Irish missionaries which started with Fr. J.I. Shanahan, who became the first vicar of the church in the lower Niger Prefecture. The tenure of Shanahan witnessed a wide spread of schools and the penetration of the Church in Igbo hinterland. Fr. Shanahan died in 1943 and is revered as the father of Igbo Catholicism. His remains were transferred to Onitsha where it was buried in the Holy Trinity Cathedral. He was succeeded by Bishop Charles Heerey and during his tenure; the mission expanded which saw the splitting of the vicariate of Southern Nigeria administrative provinces of Calabar, Ogoja and the Prefecture of Benue. His regime which spanned between 1931–1967 marked the end of expatriate missionaries in southern Nigeria. It is important to point out here that Bishop Heerey revived catholic medical services which saw the building of hospitals, dispensaries, leprosy settlements, and schools. By 1967, Heerey was succeeded by Bishop Francis Arinze, the first indigenous catholic Bishop who tried to keep the flag of his erstwhile missionaries flying amidst the civil war and its destructive effects. These introductions were regarded as the ‘finest examples of Episcopal leadership’ of Cardinal Arinze which gave fillip to the growth of the catholic mission in Onitsha. He was succeeded by Monsignor Ezeanya when Arinze left for Rome for a higher apostolic appointment. By 2003 when his Holiness, Pope John Paul II made his second visit to Nigeria, Brother Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi was beatified which became a great landmark in the history of the church in Igboland.

In the struggle for the growth of the church in the lower Niger, the mission in Ihiala was confronted with some hydra headed secular problems some of which were compromised to



maintain the growth of the church. One of them was polygamy (which the church blatantly objected to) and the ozo title which the church conceded to with the conciliatory decree of 1961. (p.123). Oath taking is frowned at by the church while the outcast of the society – osu and ohu are welcomed into the warm embrace of the church. The church also preaches against taboos, killing of twins and other rituals. But the people were disorientated on the religious implication of certain traditional festivals such as Ifejioku, IdaJi, Ahia Mkpa, Obi Umuaka and Mmanwu. Agbodike records that members still celebrate such festivals nowadays for their social value of providing entertainment and recreation more than for their religious significance. (p.129).

Agbodike also records denominational face off between the catholic mission and Anglican mission in Onitsha. This conflict, he attributes to the superiority the catholic mission claims over the Anglican Church. At the height of this discord, the Ihiala Youth Association (IYA) was formed to broker peace among the two denominations. “Thus under the auspices and activities of IYA, the dangerous social divide which had hitherto characterized Catholic-Anglican relations in Ihiala began to be blunted and narrowed” (p136).

The infant church in 1908 had become a dominant denomination in Ihiala by 2008. Despite the conflicts both within and outside the church, it has grown with leaps and bounds. Evidence of the growth of catholic mission in Onitsha and Ihiala in particular is the many number of catholic priests it has produced. Agbodike records about 48 priests, 50 Reverend sisters, 2 reverend brothers and 3 monks. He recounts the problems facing the church in Ihiala such as encroachment of secularism among the members, the contemporary tendency among the clergy and the laity to commercialize religion, false ecumenism, and radical spirit of liberalism in the name of bogus charismatic movement and cultural revival.

According to Kalu (1978) *Divided People of God: Church union movement in Nigeria 1875-1966*, the motivation of church union came from early missionaries in the nineteenth century due to a number of similar challenges faced by the missionaries ranging from inhospitality climate, communication problems, slave trade and tribal wars. At first there were territorial dispute between the Presbyterians, Methodist, Qua Iboe missionaries in the calabar and Ikot- Ekpene areas but their shared common goals and interest helped them to resolve their differences and adhered to the principal of comity, removing a major source of stress and furthering cooperation among the early missionaries (p.3). The only exception was the catholic which did not agree to the principles of comity.

In 1911, inspired by the Edinburgh conference of 1910, there was a calabar conference where several issues were discussed like education, marriage, medical works, liquor control and others. In 1923 a wider conference was staged under the name of "Evangelical union of southern Nigerian" The four dominating bodies were Presbyterians, primitive Methodist, Niger- delta pastorate and Qua Iboe missions. The uniting force was the preaching of Christ.

In spite of their unity and the endeavors they could not match the phenomenal growth and challenges of the Holy Ghost Fathers. Their evangelistic methods according to professor Ayandele was based on close understanding of Ibo religion. The spread of the catholic religion was very fast in Onitsha area through medical services, education, giving of gifts, and baptisms. The protestants felt threatened by the catholic expansion and cried out for unity among themselves (p.7).

Ekechi (1972) in his *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914* states that one of the prominent Protestants that were won over by the catholic fathers was Ephraim Agha in Onitsha. He was a C.M.S. chief Native Agent at Onitsha, highly indispensable to the C.M.S. His

defection to Romanism was disastrous to C.M.S. Ekechi has this report from the secretary at Onitsha .

“Here at Onica (Onitsha) one great difficulty we have already faced is this. We are daily coming across cases of persons who used to belong to our churches but who now are Roman Catholics. In almost each case the means used to draw our people has been medicine. Father lutz is the doctor of the whole town. From 7.a.m-9.p.m daily he received sick folks and of course everyone goes, whoever they may be ...our converts have gone over after receiving attention and kindness from the Roman fathers and sisters.” (p.99)

The missionary rivalry continued between Catholics and the protestant C.M.S. as Catholics continued to dominate where CMS previously thrived. An example is the village of Osamari. The villagers sent letters to father Bubendorf in 1898 requesting for teachers to be sent to Osameri to rejoin the ones dismissed by CMS. By 1903, a large number of Osamari people have been converted to Catholicism which opened doors of rivalry between the French leaders and the English leaders of the church. Since Nigeria was governed by the British at that time, the British felt it would be better to have their mission under English Bishops rather than French. Eventually, with the continued demand of Sir James Marshall, Irish missionaries replaced the French missionaries between 1902-1917 and father Shanaham became the new vicar at Onitsha. In 1917, an Irish bishop named Thomas Broderick was appointed for the Asaba vicariate. Even before now Catholicism had managed to penetrate to such interior places as Aguleri, Obosi and other areas by converting their traditional rulers, offering medical services and protection during clashes and wars with the Royal Niger company and other neighboring tribes. In the area of

medical service they had an advantage over the CMS as a good number of them were won over after receiving medical treatment (p.101).

The Roman Catholic Church between 1900-1910, extended her dominance to the Igbo hinterland when the British led a military expedition there in order to terminate the influence of the Aro and their long juju on trade within the Igbo communities. The Aro were very influential and dominated and controlled trade as middle men. The British found it difficult to penetrate. Their only option was the military expedition. During this time they invited the RCM and other Protestants missions to join them which they accepted in order to open up opportunities for their mission's expansion in the cross river area. Here church and state united in order to achieve a common goal under the regime of Sir Ralph Moore. These military attacks continued until the whole of Igboland was subdued in 1910. Thus the missionaries of both RCM and the CMS made good use of the situation and the destruction of the Aro long juju. Archdeacon Crowther expresses this conviction to the CMS authorities in 1903 and wrote:

“I hope you will excuse the liberty I now take in addressing you the following line, knowing how happy you will be to learn that the interior of the Ibo country is quite open to missionary operations. Hitherto, we have been more or less confined to the coast: the expedition undertaken by the government has resulted in throwing open the hitherto closed doors of the Isuama country and today its two important towns- Bende and Arochukwu- so well known to all Ibo people are really to welcome missionaries.” (p.129).

Ekechi records that the “open doors” generated rivalries between different dominations who were all eager to take possession. Arochukwu became a competitive ground for all the denominations. In the scramble for territorial influence, the Catholics were the most aggressive. In spite of the double efforts of the Protestants, Bishop Shanahan was undaunted. He appealed for funds and men. His request was granted. Later he wrote “we have been in an atmosphere of

war and of conquest. War with Protestants...war with the pagan, war with enemies in different forms” (p.132)

The inter-denominational rivalries and struggle for mastery between CMS and RCM continued to rage as each tried to prevent the other from intruding into their exclusive fair of influence. There was competition in establishment of schools and medical services, the Protestants emphasized more on scriptures and the use of vernacular in teaching more than the Catholics. The RCM were not opposed to secular education and were willing to partner with the government politically to achieve their goal. The government subsidy they received helped them to expand and equip their schools more than the Protestants. In Onitsha they had the upper hand in education and the CMS could not compete without help from Salisbury square London. The CMS were further handicapped by retrenchment policy that drastically reduced their manpower.

Hope for the CMS sprang up again between 1905-1914 when they were invited to come to Owerri by Leslie Probyn who was the acting high commissioner at Calabar. The CMS missionary at Onitsha responded immediately since they had been anxious to find a better place than Onitsha to study the Ibo language, as the society wanted to produce a union version of the Igbo Bible to be used all over Iboland. Archdeacon Thomas Dennis and an Igbo catechist Alfonsus Onyeabo were delegated to visit Owerri. They were warmly received by the people who clamored for mission status and schools to be established in their towns. (p.208). Later Egbu town was chosen as the center for the CMS operation. In 1906, Dennis, Onyeabo and the others arrived Egbu town to begin their new assignment. In 1912 however, the RCM came to Owerri and actively started to establish mission stations in the various towns already occupied by the CMS. CMS of course protested this intrusion, causing territorial struggles to start afresh (p.222-223). The two organizations used the establishment of church schools as a mean of

evangelization and membership retention. The Catholic presence was a factor to be reckoned with. Their success was mainly because of less dependence on local support. They built their schools at their own expense unlike the CMS.

Meanwhile Archdeacon Dennis with the help of others like T.D Anyaegbunam studied Igbo language and produced several works in Igbo including Ibo-English dictionary and Palmers Catechism. In 1910, the New Testament translation was released. Due to these achievements, Archdeacon Dennis was honored with an award but died on his way to England to receive it. His death was a big blow and loss to CMS. As earlier mentioned, the Methodists, Presbyterians, Qua Ibos considered Roman Catholics as their common enemy. This served as common motivations to the interdenominational cooperation in Eastern Nigeria. The initiators were Presbyterians, Kalu (1978). In 1923 “Evangelical union of southern Nigeria” was coined. In the North, the same discussion of unity was also in progress. The mission in the North bought the federation idea suggested by Dean, due to certain reasons not enumerated in this paper. Coincidentally the Seventh-day Adventist church was born this year of denominational unity in Nigeria.

Kalu in his book *The Embattled Gods: Christianization of Igboland 1884-1991* reported that in the efforts to survive, the Igbo entered into covenants with the spiritual forces of the universe, with over a thousand spiritual beings or gods. Some operate in the air or as water spirits, deities, guardians of professions, spirits in natural objects, oracles and as ancestral spirits. The Igbo acknowledge a creator, with the name varying in different culture zones there is a debate whether the Igbo actually pay attention to this creator or just build a ritual covenant by erecting shrines representing those gods.

With Christianity coming into such communities, offering new covenants and essays to domesticate new set of values results into persecution. A spectrum of reactions would emerge as

individuals, families, clans and village communities respond to the spiritual challenges. This results to the gods of Igboland being embattled and fight back for three reasons: The new ideology's claims that the lord God is one God, a jealous God and that no other god or spirit should compete; the pattern of the new covenant and He creates a tension in the efforts to indigenize the new relationship (p.49).

Christianity and the Igbo, both have point of contact or continuity sharing same identical world view of understanding of two levels of reality; the material, seen world and a spiritual unseen world. Strategies were formulated by the different Christian missions on how to penetrate the Igbo land. The Roman Catholics came with a readymade strategy to use charitable institution as areas of rooting the mission and countering the Protestants. They adopted the use of "freedom village" with three groups in it which included: (a) Repurchased slaves (b) Children entrusted to the care of the missionaries (c) Abandoned children, orphans and refugees (p.90).

With an eye to penetrate the interior, the mission laid more emphasis on giving those entrusted to them possibility of acquiring higher skills so that they would be ambassadors to their communities. Schools were set up within these services. Other charitable institutions like dispensaries posed a challenge to Protestants because the Catholic Church re-baptized any patient before serving him/her medication.

The Roman Catholics gained ground with the setting up of such charitable institutions in the early 1900 with the Anglicans being plagued by constitutional and administrative confusion which hindered their progress amidst the intense rivalry of the Roman Catholics. Anglicans also offered health assistance to the wounded thus increasing their popularity. At a time a slow pace of Christianization was experienced due to the following reasons: short staffing kept personnel level inadequate, fall in cotton trade meant adherents possessed little to donate towards

evangelization, the Roman Catholic competition fueled with their adequate resources and a willing educational policy and Ekumeku wars which sacked missions, dispersed communities and created insecurity towards in evangelization.

Anglicans and Catholics as well as other missions were attracted to the North Eastern Igboland because of the rail roads (a tool by which evangelization was done). With the dispensaries, education and school and other charitable institutions, the people invited the white missionaries to come and visit them. These thereby formed valuable stones.

The white missionaries enjoyed a degree of comity, friendliness because they were of the same racial stock; some offered some measures of hospitality amongst themselves even though they were of different missions. Between 1860 and 1900, a couple of inter dominational conferences were held in Europe to encourage missionaries of various denominations to work with a common gospel cause and to cooperate to save cost, minimize duplication and avoid confusing the natives. These conferences influenced the effort installed by the Presbyterians to unite the protestant in the south-eastern Nigeria into a more deliberate cooperation (p.129).

However Ekechi notices the appearance of Seventh-day Adventist church in Igboland in 1923. It remained a small missionary organization and was severally limited to Ngwaland and a couple of out stations in Owerri. In 1923, Pastor J.Clifford and wife came to Aba in an evangelical fit. With the cooperation of the district officer, Clifford was operating from the government school, Aba. From the foundation amongst the Calabar clans; through the Ibibio hinterland, along the cross river high way to the upper reaches of the Igbo hinterland, the church spread the gospel in its mission of engaging discipleship in the first century of its mission.

Eyo (as cited in Aye 1996) in *150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1846-1996 A century and half of Presbyterian witness in Nigeria* edited by Ogbu Kalu writes that the Presbyterian church came to



calabar and cross river somewhat because of economic gains by the white from the establishment of pax Britannica and legitimate trade, growth and sell of cotton and coffee, sugar cane as well as slave trade. King Ayo (1842) puts the matter this way, “if I can get some cotton and coffee to grow and man for teach me and make Sugar cane for we country come up proper, and sell for trade side very glad”(p.2) . While king Eyamba (1842)concludes by saying, “and then some man must come for teach book proper and make all men saby God like white man, and then we go on for same fashion (p.2) both parties were to gain by each order.

The Presbyterian Church struggled within on the bases of low personnel and low funding, as it tried to advance. By Nigerias independence in 1960, the Presbyterian church of eastern Nigeria became “the Presbyterian church of Nigeria “as a result of its advancement and increase (p.21).The church met some challenges in its course of advancement especially in Ibibio and some of these challenges include:

1. **Culture:** some of their cultural practices were antithetical to the design of the gospel, its practices seem demonic and vain (p.46)
2. **Numerous churches under different names and missions:** this raised questions as to whether it was a deep reception or authentic spiritual explosion. These were some of the challenges encountered and needed to be addressed in its advancement course.

The Presbyterian church early enterprise in Igboland came to Uwana in 1888 which was the birth place of Doctor Akanu Ibiam. The association of the Presbyterian Church in Canada contributed immensely in the spread of the Presbyterian Church before the civil war, during the war and the period after the war. The association sent missionaries and their wives; two families were on government services though missionaries .These people contributed in three

major challenges confronting the church: “youth work, theological education and training of nurses (p.99)”

The civil war showed numerous and ambivalent sides in the non Igbo areas and it grew as a rallying point in distress times because of their relief material .in the war enclave, the spectre of a weak God who could not save them from lots of material goods and loved ones produced the wrong conclusions and drove many into the illusionary embrace of the native doctors (p.123). In educational achievement of the Presbyterian church, Africans lived in atomized societies which regarded other communities as enemies and treated each other with contempt. Hardly would a community cherish to share any benefit with each other.

Some of the challenges faced in the educational advancement that needed re-teaching and re-organization to the people included:

1. **Disregard for human life**-there was the underspread of human sacrifice and many were cannibalized.
2. **Women were held in low esteem**-good only to be given in marriage and nothing more. Mothers of twins were banished from the community and the twins destroyed and widows were abandoned without rights and privileges.
3. People were superstitious- diseases were assumed to come from evil spirits and witch-crafts as believed by the Ibibio, Igbo and Effiks.

Attraction to schools was done by gifts of books and clothes to encourage the people (boys and especially girls). Waddle (1996) states that “men would never get well alone in the world if their wives would not be able to help them, because ignorant girls would necessarily make ignorant mothers and would spoil their husbands and children “(p.145)

Presbyterian mission success was tremendous and produced qualified men and women such as Akanu Ibiam, late Alvan Ikoku, professor Eni. Njoku Nnamdi Azikiwe, Owelle of Onitsha, and others. It introduced a number of trades that have constituted the basis of economic survival of many Nigerians such as tailoring, baking, brick making, and agriculture. With the celebration of one hundred and fifty years of its existence in Nigeria the Presbyterians have tried to change the educational and spiritual needs of the people in the areas they are located.

Dave M. Nyekwere, writing on the *Medical Institutions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Southern Nigeria 1940-2000*, took a missiological and medical, sociological approach of evangelization in Southern Nigeria by the Seventh-day Adventist church. Apart from the introductory chapter which gives a brief history of medical ministry as it relates to the teachings of the gospel and Jesus' healing ministry, a proportion of the work gives a comprehensive history of the coming, in 1914, of the Seventh-day Adventist church and her slow and intense expansion to different parts of Nigeria. Though the bulk of his work is centred on the SDA Church medical ministry in Nigeria with special emphasis on Southern and Northern Nigeria within those period under review, he has also stretched his work in the direction of identifying special teachings which are notably and solely upheld by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, such as: the state of the death, the sanctuary, the spirit of prophecy, the investigative judgment, the millennium, and the Sabbath.

Nyekwere's work is very relevant to this research, and has been properly used. The areas of limitation of his work are as follows: while he attributes those beliefs and teachings that are identified with SDA Church to be solely held by them, he fails to allude to the fact that they did not originate with them. The only doctrine that can be solely SDA Church oriented, as this study reveals, is the 1844 and Investigative judgment in the heavenly sanctuary.

Nevertheless, Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that Christ sought by precept and example to teach the truth that with God there was to be no dividing wall between Israel and other nations (John 4:4-42; 10:16; Luke 9:51-56; Matt. 15:21-28). The apostle Paul writes, “The Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (Eph. 3:6). Nor is there to be among Christ’s followers any preference of caste or nationality or race or colour, for all are of one blood. The elect of God are a universal brotherhood, a new humanity, “all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

Adventists believe that “Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the foundation for a religion by which the Jew and the Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood, recognized as equal in the sight of God. The Saviour has a boundless love for every human being.” (p.22-23).

However, it is worthy of note that this section (review of related literature) has presented issues that have given fundamental information to this research.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **A HISTORY OF SEVENTH –DAY ADVENTIST IN NIGERIA**

#### **3.1 The beginning of Seventh-day Adventist missionary work in Nigeria 1913 – 1945**

A historical survey of the work of Seventh-day Adventist Church in the West Coast of Africa, for instance, in Nigeria and particularly in Igboland between 1923-2010 shall be examined, since this work is concerned with the history of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland. This shall be periodized into ten years in order to identify and discuss relevant issues related to this work.

However, the Seventh-day Adventist Global church had its roots in the Millerite Movement (a religious movement in the United States of America) of 1830s and 1840s. This was during the period of the second Great Awakening. The name Seventh-day Adventist was chosen in 1860. On May 21, 1863, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was formed and the movement became an official organization. In 2010 the global membership of the church was 16, 923, 239 with 111 universities, 1823 secondary schools, 5813 primary schools, and 59 worker training institutes (General Conference 2012:4). Prominent figures in the early church included: Hiram Edson, James Springer White and his wife Ellen G. White, Joseph Bates and John Andrews.

In Nigeria the work of the church began first in Yoruba land in 1914 with the arrival of the church's first missionaries that included Elder David Babcock and his family, with two other ministers of the gospel, a Ghanaian- Daulphin and a Sierra Leonean, Mayne. The crew left Free Town in a boat in February 1914 and arrived at the shores of Lagos on March 7, 1914. When Babcock arrived at Lagos with his crew, on travelling into the interior of Yorubaland came into Erunmu, while others in the company went to other places in Yoruba land. Babcock took as

his first missionary station Erunmu as a result of an invitation by the Chief of Ibadan. This invitation led to an interview between the Chief and Pastor Babcock yielding to the acceptance of Erunmu as a missionary field. The city was populated to about 180,000 people. Interpreters for Babcock while in Erunmu included one of the sons of the Chief of Erunmu (Baale of Erunmu), by name Samuel Oyeniyi, who could speak Hausa, English, and Yoruba languages fluently. After many months Samuel Oyeniyi started keeping the Sabbath. Jacob Alao was another interpreter for Babcock and he helped to enhance the growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church missionary work in Erunmu. In a nutshell, Babalola (1988) agrees and states that the Seventh-day Adventist Church missionary works in Nigeria, in its inception, particularly in the Western Nigeria had formidable foundation (p.88).

While Alalade states that the Seventh-day Adventist work began officially in Europe in 1847, it was not until 1888 that the Church gained its first entrance into West Africa. However, Africa was penetrated briefly in 1879 when Hart Ribon, an early convert in Italy, moved to Egypt and opened a school. But the project ended when riots broke out in the area. The Seventh-day Adventist Church first came to West Africa in 1888. It did not spread at once to all parts of the territory. It began in Gold Coast, which is now Republic of Ghana. From there, like the mustard seed to which Jesus had likened His kingdom (Matthew 13:31, 32), it grew gradually, making a slow but steady inroad into various parts of West Africa, including Nigeria (p.41).

In his report after the General Conference session of 1913, held in Washington, D.C., Alalade noted that, the West African work was placed under the direct supervision of what was then known as European Division. Its headquarters was at Hamburg, Germany. The President of that Division was Leonard Conradi. In December 2-11, 1913, a missionary conference was

convened by Conradi in Freetown, Sierra Leone. It was an organizational meeting, which was conducted by the President, Elder Conradi himself. This historic conference laid plans for the work in West Africa. It was recommended that British West Africa as it was called then, be divided into three separate fields: Sierra Leone and Liberia, Gold Coast, and Nigeria. After this reorganization, there was need for workers in these newly created fields. Conradi made calls for volunteers. The following honored Conradi's call: (1) Lewis and his wife volunteered their services for the work in Gold Coast (Ghana). (2) Greaves was appointed to be in charge of Sierra Leone field. (3) David C. Babcock was appointed to pilot the work in Nigeria. The Dauphins and Samuel Morgue convert of Babcock in 1907 at "the Cape Coast Crusade was to assist him in the leadership of the work in Nigeria" (p.50).

### **3.1.1 Seventh-day Adventist Church Missionary Work in Yorubaland**

In view of his administrative duties in Sierra Leone, Babcock was unable to begin his work in Nigeria in 1913 as was expected. However, Babalola (2002) confirms that, the genesis of the Seventh - day Adventist Missionary work in Yorubaland, Nigeria began in 1914, with the arrival of the church's first missionaries that included David Babcock and Family.

Neufeld (1976) reports that, David Babcock, the frontline missionary in Nigeria, from England, was born in 1854. He studied at Battle Creek College. After his graduation, he was called to ministry. He had served the church in different capacities beginning from 1892 before he was sent to West Africa in 1905. He had also worked in Sierra Leone and Ghana before coming to Nigeria (p.113, 512).

Nyekwere writing on the same issue further reports that, when Babcock arrived at Lagos with his crew, he went into the interior of Yoruba-land to a village called Erunmu. Others in his company went to other areas in Yoruba-land. The chief at Ibadan invited Babcock to Erunmu

(sixteen miles from Ibadan) and here became the first missionary station of Babcock. This invitation led to an interview between the chief and pastor Babcock, yielding to acceptance of Erunmu as a missionary field. The city was populated to about 18,000 peoples. In Erunmu, where Babcock began his missionary work Nyekwere indicates there was no other church other than Seventh-day Adventist church. Before December 1914, two schools were put into operation. A young Sierra Leonean who came with them was talented in learning languages. Being now conversant with the language of the people; he was kept to conduct one of the schools, which was four miles away from Erunmu. According to Babcock, as reported by Nyekwere, the early conversion of members at Erunmu toward the establishment of Seventh-day Adventist church were made possible through preaching and establishment of the school, as entry wedge (p.5).

He also says that in 1917, Babcock built another school with the assistance of some boys, about eighteen of them. He also built a church which measurement was 40 by 25 feet with this assistance. Every Sabbath they had between 50 and 100 people who were present to worship. Those welcomed worshippers were mixed with people of various needs and handicaps ranging from blindness to lameness, poverty, nakedness and age, a typical characteristic of a rural environment (p.43). Babcock's missionary work was extended to other places in Yorubaland like Shao, Ikpoti, to mention but a few.

Nyekwere mentions that, in 1917, Babcock made an explorative missionary journey to Kano, though not much was accomplished because of his ill-health that made him go back to England. He did not return to Africa after his recovery. He served in the Urgin Islands and finally in British Guiana, as Conference President in 1925. He later died in 1932.

According to Seventh-day Adventist year book (1918), the Nigeria Mission was formally established in December 1913. David Babcock was the first director of the work in Nigeria.



Although he was elected to serve from 1913, due to some logistics he could not arrive Nigeria until 1914. The first mission headquarters was Shao, via Ilorin, in Northern Nigeria. As a result of ill health, Festus Ashton of England came to succeed him. Ashton served as acting director in Nigeria until 1920. When Ashton left in 1920, W. Mc Clements of Northern Ireland succeeded him. Mc Clements remained in charge of the work in Nigeria until 1946, when he was transferred to Accra, Ghana (Gold Coast), to become the President of the newly organized West African Union (p. 412).

Further in his report, Alalade claims that Elder E. D. Dick, who visited West Africa in 1946, paid glowing tributes to these early missionaries that came to Nigeria. In the report he wrote about his tour, he remarked that Elder D. C. Babcock's devotion and untiring energy, which he spent in the beginning of "our work in Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, and West Nigeria, has been an inspiration to those who followed him" (p.47). No wonder that the Adventist Seminary of West Africa is named after him in appreciation of his pioneering missionary work, when the seminary was accorded full university status on 20th April, 1999 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. In a nutshell, the Seventh-day Adventist missionary work in Nigeria from inception, particularly in Western Nigeria had a formidable foundation. Many Schools, Hospitals, and Clinics were established in the area by the Church. Apparently, there is an expansion of the work and increase in membership in the Western part of the country.

### **3.1.2 Seventh -day Adventist Missionary work in Northern Nigeria.**

Nengel (1994) states that, the work in the northern part of Nigeria was begun by Jerry Hyde in 1931. Prior to his arrival, other missions such as the Roman Catholic Mission and Church Missionary Society had already established their presence. The work in the Eastern and

Southern part of Nigeria was easier than in the North because of Muslim influence (p.11). Read (as cited in Nyekwere ) made the following observation:

From Northern Nigeria, the Hausa merchants carry the Koran and their merchandise. No sooner do they open a wayside shop in some pagan districts, than the mosque is built by its side. The laity are in a sense, all preachers. Shopkeeper and Carmel driver are proud of their prophet and his book. If they cannot read it, they at least kiss it and wear it as an amulet and carry it elsewhere. All ranks of society are propagandists. (p.79)

The Muslims appeared very vibrant in evangelism, yet millions of African religious believers resisted their influence especially in the middle belt region of Northern Nigeria. In 1975, Crampton (as cited in Nyekwere) presents a list of statistical record of 1952 comprising Muslim, Christian, and others presence in northern Nigeria

**Table 1: Muslim Evangelism**

S/N	Province	Muslim/(%)	Christian/(%)	Others/(%)
1	Adamawa	335,000 - 30.1	38,000 – 3.2	788,000-66.7
2	Bauchi	1054,000 -74.1	23,000 – 1.6	347,000-24.3
3	Benue	156,000 – 10.6	101,000 – 6.9	1,121,000-82.5
4	Borno	1,332,000 – 83.5	9,000 – 0.6	254,000-15.9
5	Ilorin	332,000 – 62.6	32,000 – 6.0	167,000-31.4
6	Kebbi	149,000 -22.4	123,000 – 18.5	392,000-59.1
7	Kano	3,328,000 -98.0	15,000 – 0.4	53,000-1.6
8	Katsina	1,411,000 – 95.2	5,000 – 0.3	67,000-4.5
9	Niger	316,000 -44.1	21,000 – 3.0	379,000-52.9
10	Plateau	215,000 -24.1	115,000 – 12.9	561,000-63.0
11	Sokoto	2,519,000 – 94.0	13,000 – 0.5	149,000-5.5
12	Zaria	494,000 -61.0	63,000 – 7.8	248,000-30.8

Nyekwere (2010)

By the above figures, it is pertinent to note that Islam as at 1975 had made some powerful impact and gained ground in Northern Nigeria. Islam grew faster than Christianity in the area.

Nengel maintains that, the Islamic provinces were protected by Colonial policy from interference of their faith. This he said weakened the evangelistic thrusts of the Christian missionaries.

When Hyde and his family arrived at Jengre, near Jos in 1931, they were accorded a rousing welcome by the Chief of Jengre and his people. Unlike the Southern region (Igbo and Yoruba), the Northern indigenes resisted the conversion moves of the missionaries. According to Hyde, health services approach was implored and it became a useful and powerful tool of evangelization. For want of a health center, Hyde converted his old house in Jengre to a dispensary after two years of their settlement in the area. They converted their store into a waiting room and a place of worship. The dinning-room became the wet treatment room, while the bedroom was the examination room. Hyde also noted that, “the three huts that we already have are very useful. Sometimes we have had over a dozen women and children in one. To us it is shameful and over-crowding, but they are used to it” (p.81) Reports had it that, many of them were suffering from sores in the feet caused by Jiggers. Hundreds of jiggers were sometimes taken out of one person, sixty out of one toe. Great tactics were employed by the Hydies to reach the people. Before coming to Jengre to serve with her husband, Hyde’s wife had served at Stancorough Hydro in Watford, England as a trained nurse (p. 82).

In 1934, Hyde observed that:

Our people are primitive Pagans, Mohammedans, Hausas, or Fulanis. They are all very shy people on the one hand because of their retiring disposition and on the other because of their dislike for Christianity. Under such circumstances the medical side of our work proves to be invaluable. (p.82)

Hyde further reported that between sixty and seventy people lived with them from time to time for treatment and were also taught from the scriptures. Many of the afflicted were relieved by the ministry of Hyde. On daily basis, twenty-five to thirty people come for treatment. The

Seventh-day Adventist Church strategically expanded the medical work to get more converts. In 1935, they opened an educational institution which became another powerful tool for evangelism. Through the medical services and the school system, they made friends over a wide area. Some families lived in the compound to attend school every day. One of the converts at Jengre who came from Amo Clan endeavored to translate some of the Seventh-day Adventist Church hymns already in Hausa into Amo dialect. He however, influenced many people to join the Sabbath School at Jengre. By his dedicated effort, Seventh-day Adventist Church was started in his village. This was the first clear advance the church made in Northern Nigeria. The Kakwis were the first families to be converted in Northern Nigeria. Others include: the Numbers, Dariyas, Filibus, Bulus, and Manis. The Church was highly encouraged by the level of assistance the government had given to the hospital. The government donated six dozen bandages and assisted in the establishment of six huts.

The medical work of the church had a great impact on the life of the people of Jengre. The church had her largest baptismal service that year. Reporting, Lamp (as cited in Nyekwere) states that:

It was such an open-air pool that the largest baptismal service ever conducted in Northern Nigeria was performed on February 11th, 1956. On the day forty-one believers of whom twenty-three were men who found their way into church of God from a life of Paganism... one of the two African Pastors who performed the service was Bulus Kakwi, the first and only ordained African Minister from the Northern Region of Nigeria (pp.84 - 85).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church had made significant impact in Southern Zaria province by 1955. Many Churches sprung up from where there were none. Adventist Church programmes had also taken root among the people. Generally the Seventh-day Adventist Missionary activities in Northern Nigeria were very slow at the beginning due to the domineering

influence of Muslim religion and the skeptical attitude of non-Muslim indigenes towards Christianity. But with time the domineering influence began to fade away. In 1954, the Northern Nigeria Mission of Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized. Since then the Church has continued to grow. In 1993, the Seventh-day Adventist Year Book states that, the entire Northern Nigeria under the Seventh-day Adventist Church system was reorganized into two Mission fields- North-east Mission with its headquarters at Bukuru in Jos and North-west Mission with Kaduna as its administrative center. By 2000, the two Northern Nigeria mission fields (North-east and North-west) combined had a baptized membership of 24,484, and 102, organized churches, and 35 indigenes ordained into the gospel ministry as Pastors (Adventist yearbook 2000).

Summarily, one could see in this section that the background for the origin of Seventh-day Adventist Church was political, social and religious. The period (early 19th century) in the United States of America became conducive to the development of new religious movements. In this movement, William Miller, a major exponent of post millennialism at that time emerged. Miller and his followers advocated that the only hope of this world is the second coming of Jesus Christ. And very strongly they believed they were living in the time of the end, hence their missionary consciousness.

The reasearcher has tried to show an intimate relationship among the three angels' messages of Revelation. The knowledge of the first two angels' messages was considered a prerequisite for the understanding of the third angel. The proclamation of the three angels' messages was seen as a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Seventh-day Adventist church as a conservative body, world-wide in extent, evangelical in doctrine, professes no creed but the Bible. It places strong emphasis on the

Second Advent, which it believes is near. It observes the Sabbath of the Bible, the Seventh day of the week. These two distinguishing points are incorporated into the name Seventh-day Adventist. The structure of the church, mission statement, Doctrinal beliefs, the Church's need to adapt to culture are among the things reflected in this section. The next Chapter is going to deal with the work proper, having traced the origin of the church and being convinced that the Church exists.

### **3.1.2 Missionary work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland: 1923-1933:**

Here the writer examines how the gospel was preached, received, time of entry, challenges at entry, in order to be able to determine how much missionary work was done by the church within the period considered in this study and the challenges facing the church as it grows into the future.

The work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland can be traced from 1914-1927. However, Nyekwere states that the official date for reckoning the period Seventh-day Adventist missionaries entered Igboland is 1923. According to him, Jesse Clifford and his wife became the first Seventh-day Adventist Church missionaries to settle in Igboland in April 1923. The Cliffords chose to live in Aba because Aba then was a large market town with good roads, a railway, and postal services. Ochulo remarks that, due to accommodation problem, "Pastor Clifford lived in Qua Iboe mission station with O'Niel an English missionary working with Qua Iboe church at Ogbor Hill, along Ikot Ekpene Road. The Seventh-day Adventists' first place of worship was at Mr. Labour's house, an herbalist from Sierra Leone" (p.18). Pastor J. Clifford and his wife faced their challenges squarely with determination to succeed against all odds.

In Aba, Clifford through the special grace of God got a suitable land for a permanent site for the work from Chief Wogu of Umuola Egbelu. A church building was erected that could seat

about 50 persons. The small church grew spiritually and numerically. Clifford in 1923 organized Bible classes to teach the reading of the bible to his members and prospective members. The first baptismal service was conducted in 1923 with 14 persons baptized. As a result of large turnout of the members, churches were organized. By 1924 Pastor and Mrs. J. Clifford entered Omoku in the present day Rivers State with the Adventist message, and it was successful. Having studied the Bible with Pastor Clifford for eight months, Josiah Evoh was employed as the first evangelist to Abua, Rivers State on 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1925. He arrived Abua March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1925.

Invariably the Adventist work in Igboland seemed very challenging. Nwaobia (1980) in a Constituency Report (a triennial meeting of the church where new leaders are elected for the church) recalls that the Edmonds joined the Cliffords in the missionary work in Aba district in 1926 to give the work a lift. Nevertheless, Clifford (1931) reports two successful camp meetings at Aba and Abua in December 1929. As he says:

Two brief but encouraging camp meetings have recently been conducted in this field. The first was held in Abua near Calabar. Our work there has gone slowly in the face of heathenism and language difficulties; however there is encouraging progress since the coming of Brother and Sister Edmonds to the field (Elele District). At the centre were gathered one hundred believers speaking three different languages, but one in heart who listened attentively to the messages presented, while thirty-six followed their Lord in the ordinance of baptism (p.3).

He further reports that, by the following weekend about seven hundred and sixty believers gathered together in a large leaf booth at Aba. They all spoke the Igbo language and gave evidence of the progress of the message in their midst. Fourteen souls were baptized at that camp meeting. On evangelistic activities in Igboland, Clifford's efforts yielded fruits within a year of his arrival to Eastern Nigeria. In 1924, he wrote the following:

We are pleased to be able to report progress since we last wrote from Southern Nigeria. It is now one year ago since the first Sabbath were held in our mission station, and during that time the attendance has increased through the Lord's blessing, from six to fifty or more, there seems to be great Prejudice here among many against the true Sabbath, but one by one from different villages within a radius of five or six miles, souls are receiving the light and are becoming members of the Sabbath School (p. 6).

The researcher sees the establishment of schools, hospitals and welfare packages introduced so early by the Adventists and other churches as good strategies responsible for the large number of converts. It could also be possible that these villages were tired of their traditional religion and needed the truth and pure religion void of sacrifices.

### **3.2 The Seventh-day Adventist Church 1934-1944:**

In keeping with the Adventist heritage of establishing the gospel mission along with sound health and qualitative education, the years of 1934-1944 saw the establishment of more schools and the healthy growth of already established ones. In 1934 Adventist Primary School Elele was established, and by 1935 the Adventist primary school Umuobiakwa was opened. By 1935, the Adventists in Eastern Nigeria had made some progress. Many companies and Branch Sabbath schools of the church had come into existence.

Reviewing the effect of their missionary activities in Igboland in 1936, Mc Clements (1936) felt happy that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had continued to record systematic progress. In the same year, the church recorded over 1000 baptized converts within six months at Elele. In 1937, G.E. Nord reported counting more than 10,000 Sabbath School members in the two mission stations (Elele and Aba Camp meetings). To Turner (1938) the Adventist message was spreading very fast like "Prairie fire" in Southeastern Nigeria. Many of the early converts remained steadfast to the Christian teachings despite the pressures against them for leaving their former organizations.



Izima (1973) presents the year 1938 as a year of “Spirit Movement” in Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland. It was a period when certain members of Seventh-day Adventist Church claimed they have visions from God about the second coming of Jesus Christ. This was spear-headed by Edwin Ukonwa from Umuakpara District of Seventh-day Adventist church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church then did not accept this spirit movement as divinely sent, and thereby removed the names of all the people who got involved in this movement from their Church membership record book as this was their practice.

The church frowns at a member who teaches what he sees as truth without discussing such truth and convincing the church leadership about it before teaching. The church sees it as denial of faith and going contrary to the beliefs of the church. This is punishable by removal from membership.

### **3.2.1 A period of accelerated Primary and post-primary educational expansion 1945-1955:**

Like earlier stated, it was Jesse Clifford who officially brought the Seventh-day Adventist work to Igboland in 1923. The Cliffords and a native convert, Daniel Onyeodor started the first bible class in Aba, in the same year. From the way they started, it probably did not occur to them that their responsibility was not only to win converts but also to cater for the educational needs of their converts. When at last they recognized the importance of formal education in the advancement of missionary work in Igboland, they sowed the seed of education. It germinated, grew and gained momentum. Today the impact of the brand of Christian education received from the Seventh-day Adventist Primary Schools, Post-Primary institutions and Institutions of higher learning by young men and women, Adventists and non- Adventists is being felt wherever the recipients are found. Other denominations like the Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Qua Ibo Church, also operate educational institutions that are excellent.

Awoniyi (1949) reports that, in 1948 the Adventist Training College at Oke Bola, Ibadan in Western Nigeria for want of space was moved to a new site at Ihie, Igboland. Five classes of students had passed out from this school to take care of the increasing, number of Adventist Schools in Eastern Nigeria. When the school moved to Ihie, the name and address changed to Nigerian Training College, Ihie, with Lawrence Downing, a Canadian as its first principal. In 1950 the school rose in status from grade III Certificate College which it had hitherto been to a grade II Training College.

He further reports that, in 1952 the church opened a Preliminary Training Course (P. T. C.) in Ihie to offer Adventist School leavers who wanted to take up teaching as a career some preliminary training in teaching. In the same year also, a Preliminary Evangelistic Course (P. E. C.) was opened for the training of the youths for evangelism. In 1953 the first Seventh-day Adventist Grammar School was born in Igboland, the Adventist High School, Ihie. The Grammar School which was opened in February 1953 had 28 students, 19 of whom were Adventists. Three of them were girls. Both the secondary school and the training college seem to have been a real blessing, not only to the Adventist communities in Igboland but also to non-Adventists.

### **3.2.2 Indigenous Leadership/Challenges in Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland 1956-1966:**

Ochulo (1979) remarks that due to the exit of the last European missionary in 1956, Albert Dike was elected to be the first indigenous president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland, with its headquarters in Aba. He served from 1957-1961. He handed over to Philip Onwere in January 1962. The functions of these presidents include among other things: the general administration of the district with the conference. They also had some disciplinary

powers over the district Pastors and other category of workers. They were accountable to the Seventh-day Adventist Church Headquarters in Freetown, Sierra Leone for the progress of the mission work.

Before the assumption of office by Albert Dike as the first indigenous president of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland, the church being mission driven had moved from Umuola in Aba to other parts of Igboland. Such areas include: Imo State (Umuahia, Ohafia, Igbere, Okigwe, Nkwere, Ugwulangu and Owerri), Cross River State (Calabar, Itumbuzo, Ikot Ekpene and Abak), Old Anambra State (Onitsha, Awka, Nkpor and Nnewi) and Markurdi in Benue state.

According to Galadima and Turaki (2001) it was not the Seventh-day Adventist Church alone that opted for indigenous leadership. The Independent and Faith Missions did two things to ensure indigenous leadership: (a) they developed new church structures and organizations; (b) they trained and developed lay agents to take over mission work or to take the places of missionaries.

The overwhelming medical needs of the Igbo within this period under review informed the leadership of the church to open hospitals in Igboland, even though there were other churches operating hospitals in Igboland. The hospitals were Ahoada county hospital, Elele Alimini which started in 1957, and Northern Ngwa County hospital at Okpuala Ngwa, which opened to the public in 1963. Nyekwere records that Ahoada hospital became so influential that some members of the Eastern House of Parliament used it as a referral health institution. A medical boat was acquired by Ahoada Hospital with which the Adventists provided health services to many islands in the Niger Delta and Atlantic Creeks. Both hospitals became successful agencies in propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Eastern part of Nigeria.

It could be recalled that the mission when it was established newly faced some challenges from the other existing denominations. These challenges which ranged from doctrinal issues to zoning of areas for evangelism made expansion difficult. Onwere (1970) in a camp meeting presentation emphasized on finance as another area the Church had her initial challenge. In his observation, since there were few members, little fund was generated to take care of the personnel and could not be enough to sponsor evangelisms.

Like every other mission in its evangelistic outreach, the Seventh-day Adventist Church met some doctrinal objections especially as it affects Sabbath as the day of worship. Ekwubiri in a personal diary records how in some villages environmental clean ups are scheduled on Saturdays (This attitude too seems to be in play today through the monthly clean up exercise organized by the state and Federal governments). Failure to attend these village works attracted some disciplinary measures. This measure discouraged some of the proselytes from joining them in worship. In the case of Saturday clean up exercise today in Nigeria, the church has made a representation to the Federal Government and the states affected, hoping to get a favorable response.

Despite these challenges, Okwuonu (1980) in a paper titled “reflection” expresses joy over the increase in Seventh-day Adventist Church membership. He relates this to the understanding the church had within the cultural and social environment in which it found herself, which gave her the opportunity to launch out her evangelistic campaigns with much success. More so, the church was beginning to have indigenous pastors and evangelists like Abraham Nzotta, Elechi Okwuone, Hope Oriaku, Chidi Nwabike, Onyemaobi Nwagwu who understand the people and their environment and who could also move into the interior to make converts and to spread the gospel as believed by the Seventh-day Adventists. By the reason of

increased man-power, more members were won and finances also increased as a result of membership increase to meet the earlier challenges of expansion. The Dorcas Society, a Welfare organization in the Adventist Church Headquarters in Aba was highly instrumental to the growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland through alms they gave to the people.

### **3.2.3 The Church within the Civil War Era: 1967-1977:**

Izima (1973) remarks that the Seventh-day Adventist church, notwithstanding the horrors of the war, the blazing light of the gospel was kept burning. This was true of other churches too. This, however, was not without disappointment and losses. With the fall of Aba on September 4, 1968, the church became a wandering refugee like other churches. The administrative headquarters now moved to Umuocha, and later on to Ihie. The turning point of the war came in December 1969, when the Federal Government army pushed from all directions to squeeze out what was left of Biafra. At this time the church was again forced to leave Ihie on December 23, 1969, to take refuge first at Amaumara in Mbaize, and later on the administrative tent was pitched at Umueze in Mbano. Here the church remained till the war ended on January 12, 1970. On January 1, 1971, the East Nigeria Mission was reorganized into two namely: East Central Nigeria Mission, with its headquarters in Aba, and Rivers/South-Eastern States Mission sited in Port-Harcourt. The reorganization was for wider coverage in evangelism and administrative convenience. January 21 1977, East Nigeria Mission was organized into a conference covering: Anambra, Imo, and Cross River States.

Agharaumuna (personal communication Oct 10, 2012), laments on the after effects of the war. He comments on how people lost their means of livelihood, and their lives. Many died out of hunger and those that lived regretted living such frustrated lives brought by the civil war.

However, he says that through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and other denominational Relief Agencies, support was given to these war victims.

### **3.2.4 Adventist Health Care System: 1978-1988:**

A year after East Nigeria Mission had been inaugurated into a conference in 1977; the conference took the initiative of establishing a motherless baby's home at Aba, Abia State. Comfort Ohiagu took care of the first baby in the Home. The survival of the baby became big news all over Igbo Adventist Community. The presence of the Motherless Babies Home created a favorable platform for the beginning of Seventh-day Adventist Health Centre in Aba. It was commissioned in 1984, by Pastor Caleb Adeogun, Nigeria Union Mission President. This project was pioneered by Pastor Hope I. C Oriaku (Oriaku 2002).

Like other churches, the Adventist Church believes in Bible health-care programmes. They also insist that for individuals to remain healthy and sane, the physical, social and spiritual well-being must be encouraged and maintained. In its statement of philosophy of health as recorded in her working policy (2008) Adventists state thus:

The Seventh-day Adventist church has since its inception, promoted a philosophy of health and healing. While developing a system of health-care institutions which belt the globe, a health promoting way of life has been taught to the church membership. While advocating positive steps to be taken to develop a healthful life style, the church has long required its members the non use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco, and has strongly urged them to refrain from the use of coffee, tea, and other stimulating or depressing mind-disturbing agents, and other harmful substances (pp. 209-210).

In 3 John 2, God declares. "Dear friend, I am praying that all is well with you and that your body is as healthy as I know your soul is." The church sees healthful living as the obligation of every Christian. When humans are healthy and are sound in mind and judgment, they find it easier to differentiate between good and evil. The Adventist believes more in

preventive rather than curative medicine. That notwithstanding, it has established medical institutions in Igboland and all over the world. These institutions practice both preventive and curative medicine.

### **3.2.5 Evangelism, Church Growth, and Education: 1989-1999:**

Over the years the Seventh-day Adventist church, like other Churches has been confronted with the tremendous challenge of proclaiming the “three Angels’ Message” of Revelation 14:6-12 to everyone, everywhere to prepare a people for the Lord that will return soon. However, the church was poised for more serious action within the years 1980s-1990s. The Seventh-day Adventist Church focuses on two directional evangelisms, namely: in-reach and out-reach evangelisms. In-reach is aimed at reaching those who are already members of the church to have a heart relationship with Jesus, thereby preparing themselves and others for the end. The Goal of the church is an essential total involvement in outreach. Under this, every member needs to be happily involved in the outreach mission of the church that focuses on non-members.

Eko (2010) agrees that out-reach is geared towards those who are not members, with the same objective of preparing them for the second coming of Christ. However he remarks that the following constitute some of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s methods of gospel propagation, namely literature evangelism, media evangelism, Tenth/Public evangelism, Missionary evangelism to foreign lands, Institutional (Medical, Education, Hospital, Prison) Evangelisms, Electronic Evangelism, and Door to Door Evangelism.

Gungadoo (1987) recalls that several slogans have been developed to motivate the Seventh-day Adventist Church members in Igboland into action for the work of soul winning for Christ. They include: 1000 years of reaping, harvest 90, Revival and Reformation to mention but

a few. He admits that the only thing that motivates a good Christian to set goals in other to achieve this great project of soul winning for God is his deep love for his master not slogans.

Whereas evangelism is the main thrust of Seventh-day Adventist church, Ochulo notes that much of the ground gained by the church in winning converts in Igboland and other places could be traced to their unique method in evangelism. Unique in the sense that each district, being autonomous goes out on evangelistic mission within its neighborhood; and the productivity of a district pastor is counted by the number of converts he was able to make during his tenure in a particular district. Reports about these converts are given during annual camp meeting and constituency sessions.

Oriaku (1991) during a Dorcas Day celebration, explains that the Dorcas Welfare Society which was formed in October 1874 by Henry Gardner in Battle Creek Michigan, United States of America is an organization of Seventh-day Adventist women, established for witnessing especially for those in sickness and in need. From the observation of the writer the objective of this welfare society is to help people physically and spiritually, and to win their heart to Christ, through their welfare services. This approach seems to have been working for them.

Ogbonna (1996) observes that the Voice of Prophecy, a non-denominational Bible Correspondence School, is another successful method the Adventists have used to propagate the gospel, and this has quickened the growth of the church. Anaba (2009) commenting on Adventist methods of soul winning says that the Adventist Youth Ministry is a department of Seventh-day Adventist Church through which the church involves her youth in evangelism. Other departments which are involved in this evangelistic venture of the church shall be discoursed later in the work.



Nwangwa (2008) recalls that in 1993, to make up for the flaws in Adventist education in Nigeria, the Adventist Secondary Technical Collage (ASTEC), Owerri was established by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in East Nigeria Conference. The birth of ASTEC therefore to him, was to further fulfill and sustain the Adventist educational philosophy of holistic training. Other institutions established with the same purpose include: Adventist Comprehensive High School (ACHS) Elele, Rivers State and Adventist Technical Secondary School (ATESS) in Ebem Ohafia, Abia State.

### 3.2.6 Conference Organization/ Reorganization Data 1923-2010:

In the spirit of mission to the entire world, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland has continued to reorganize into smaller units especially between 2000-2010. According to the Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook (2012), the following chart represents the organization and reorganizational stages of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland.

Table 2: **Organizational/reorganizational Structure of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland**

Conference	Date Established	Organized	Reorganized	Territory	Membership	Admin Hqtrs
East Nigeria Conference	1923	1930	1971,1977, 1980,1986, 2003	Assigned local Government areas of Abia	83,016	Aba
Rivers-Bayelsa Conference	1923	1971		Rivers and Bayelsa states	46,764	Port Harcourt
South East Conference		1980	2004	Akwa Ibom and Cross River States	7382	Calabar
East Central Conference		1986	2002	Ebonyi and Enugu States and some LGA of Abia	17,676	Umuahia
Anambra –Imo Conference		2001	2003	Anambra and Imo states	9,467	Owerri

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook (2012)

In 2004 the Nigeria Union Mission, an umbrella name that supervised the churches in Nigeria was reorganized into two namely: Eastern Nigeria Union Mission and North West Nigeria Union Mission. The Eastern Nigeria Union Mission (ENUM) was organized on December 4, 2004 at the ENUM headquarters permanent site in Ahiaba Umueze. Gideon Nwaogwugwu, a pastor was its first President, while Bassey Udoh, a pastor and Emmanuel Manila, a church elder, were secretary and treasurer respectively. In 2010, at the enlarged Executive Committee of the West Central Africa Division, Pastor Bassey Udoh was elected to take over from Pastor Gideon Nwaogwugwu as the President of Eastern Nigeria Union Mission. The tenure of office is five years after which the person or persons can be re-elected or removed.

### **3.2.7 Seventh-day Adventist Encounter with Culture:**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, being conservative in nature has problems with most of what is allowed in the culture of the people in Igboland, especially in matters concerning food, dancing, music and clapping of hands during worship, and some traditions. In this culture study, there are succinct incompatibilities between Seventh-day Adventist Church and the culture of the people of Igboland.

To elucidate this fact, Aye (1990) states that the Seventh-day Adventist Church for religious reasons, regard some foods cherished by some Igbo indigenes such as shrimps, pork, dog, as unclean and are generally referred to as non – edibles. They also abhor fishes without scales and fins as stated in their fundamental beliefs and as referenced in Deuteronomy 14:2-21 and Leviticus 11:1-47.

Cress (2000) further affirms that Seventh-day Adventist Church teaching “on temperance and health habits as part of their life style agrees with no alcohol, tobacco, or unclean foods, if

not outright vegetarianism.” They also teach against theatre movies, novels that are not spiritual, dancing, jewelry or make ups which have some restraint on some culture and eating habits of the people of Igboland. These restrictions form the major dietary and health teachings of the church and constitute some of the conditions for membership.

The Seventh-day Adventist liturgical position, especially on instruments of music is that type of music that is consistent with the message and mission of the church. Music is one of God’s great gifts to mankind. It is one of the most important elements in a spiritual program. It is an avenue of communication with God.

Music in the worship service should be the primary and eternal activity of mankind. Man’s highest end is to glorify God. As the worshipper comes to the house of God to offer a sacrifice of praise, let it be with the best possible music. Careful planning of every musical element of the service is essential so that the congregation is led to be a participant and not a spectator. The hymns used for this service should be directed to God, emphasizing praise and utilizing the great hymns of the church heritage. They should have strong, singable melodies and worthy poetry.

Eko therefore recommends that Igbo evangelization requires wisely coordinating religious principles through the vehicle of existing cultural values and practices that do not contradict those acceptable principles that agree with the Bible in the encountered cultures.

Oliver (1999) stresses that in order to pass across Adventist Church beliefs in a culture, the concept of adaptation would be a necessity. Adaptation, according to him, seems to have various labels when it comes to Adventist message. It seems obvious that each human being is nurtured within a cultural context. Individuals and Communities interpret their worldview

through the context of their culture. They evaluate in-coming ideas, beliefs, and values through their own particular worldview.

### **3.3 Influence of Pentecostalism in Seventh-day Adventist Church:**

Okwueze (2004) defines Pentecostalism as a Greek word which means Pentecost, literally fiftieth. It refers to one of the Jewish festivals, celebrated at Jerusalem on the 50th day after the Passover feast. Hollenwger in Okwueze sees “Pentecostalism as a movement started and carried on by those Christians who fervently believe in the unrestricted and uncontrolled free use of the gift of the spirit by individual Christians”. (p. 21) These Christians believe that through the baptism of the Spirit testified by the act of speaking in tongues, they gain a deeper understanding of the love of God. Nna (2010) says that, the term Pentecostalism is relevant to a Christian movement that originated in the United States of America in the 20th century. Its founders were Williams J. Seymour and Charles F. Perham. They sought for spiritual revival through baptism of the Holy Spirit, as experienced by the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The movement grew rapidly in America, meanwhile dividing into dozens of small, contention sects separated by doctrine and by such practices as faith healing. In the 1950s, faith healing, represented most prominently by Oral Roberts, was at its peak among Pentecostals. After the 1960s, prosperity through faith became a dominant theme, taken up by Roberts and other television evangelists. However, all the Pentecostal sects- ranging from the largest, the Assemblies of God, to small storefront churches –shared an ecstatic tone that continued to have a powerful appeal in the United States of America, Latin America, and Africa. The movement in Europe, after rapid growth in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had stabilized by mid-century. A similar movement within the Roman Catholic Church, the charismatic movement won large numbers of followers beginning

in the 1960s. Hence, the Roman Catholic Church has her own brand of Pentecostalism called Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Achunike (2009) further clarifies that:

The charismatic wave is Pentecostalism operating within the mainline church tradition, catalyzed by the spiritual flames of healing, vision, speaking in tongues, Holy Spirit baptism and prophecies. Some Catholics desire to have the same experience particularly speaking in tongues and baptism of the Holy Spirit. When therefore Catholic Charismatic Renewal was started, many joined the movement. Obviously, some infiltrators from other Pentecostal Churches influenced Catholics and with some excesses and strange conflicting views, the watchman Catholic Charismatic Movement created the first conflict (p. 82).

According to Hyde (1999) the Charismatic influence of the neo-Pentecostal movement is evidently becoming a serious problem in Seventh-day Adventist Church. All African publications (1987) in an article published in the Review and Herald admits that “the neo-Pentecostal movement will prove to be a far more subtle danger to the Seventh-day Adventist Church than theological liberalism or evolutionary humanism” (P. 72). However Mc Gavran (1980) points out common features among the Pentecostal churches as follows:

The Pentecostals by their marching, witnessing, praying aloud, giving testimonies in churches, telling what God has done for them, gathering in large numbers, speaking in tongues, preaching into buses by the hundreds, preaching on street corners, and defying the customs of the traditional churches are helping Christians of the “masses” to overcome their feelings of inferiority. These activities give them a taste of victory in the moral and spiritual realm. “We are sons of God. Christ has redeemed us. We have rights. We can forgive our enemies. We are freed of our sins. Praise the Lord (pp.184 - 185).

Abaribe (2007) in a lecture titled, Influence of Pentecostalism in Seventh-day Adventist church further points out the following as a growing tendency of the influence of Pentecostalism

in the attitude of most seventh-day Adventists in Igboland : a highly emotional informal approach to worship; the changing pattern of prayer; the Adventist philosophy of systematic giving that is gradually being replaced by prosperity theology as seen among the Pentecostals; and the approval of miracle at all cost that is also an influence from the Pentecostal circle. Although he does not condemn the Pentecostal approach to worship but calls for moderation in worship.

Ukomadu (2010) also reflects Pentecostalism in Adventist church. In a paper titled primitive godliness he states that, the emergence of contemporary worship styles and the use of contemporary music in Seventh-day Adventist churches in Igboland is a new innovation. However, he appreciates the zeal and the dedication found among the Pentecostals. He advises other Christians to see the need for the zeal and dedication of these Pentecostals in promoting unity and spirituality. He encouraged the Seventh-day Adventist Church to learn from the Pentecostal churches how to live by faith and be united. Worthy of emulation also is their regard and relationship to their leaders. Most of them may be, because of their spiritual affinity call their leaders “Daddy” and they seem to share great love among themselves.

### **3.3.1 Seventh-day Adventist Church and Sabbath churches:**

As earlier stated, the Seventh-day Adventist church is a denomination which upholds the validity of the Ten Commandments of God, with special emphasis on Sabbath as a day of worship. They teach as part of their belief the imminent coming of Christ. While the Sabbatarians are those Christians who believe that Sunday (the Christian Sabbath) should be observed in accordance with the fourth commandment, which forbids work on the Sabbath day because it is a Holy day.

However, Seventh-day Adventist Church members are sometimes referred to as sabbatarians because of their belief that the weekly holy day should be observed on the Sabbath, rather than on Sunday.

### **3.3.2 Seventh-day Adventist Church- a Cult?**

In his book, *the Kingdom of Cults*, Martin (1997) includes Seventh-day Adventist Church as a cult although in his opinion which reflected in other books he wrote, he has classified them as a Christian denomination. However, through the book *the Kingdom of cults* he wants to correct a stigma the church has borne over the years. He states that “I felt it was necessary to include here Seventh-day Adventism as a proper counter balance- presenting the other side of Adventism and representing the theology of Adventism as the Adventists themselves believe it” (P. 389).

Wikipedia (n.d) defines cult in current popular usage as “a new religious movement or other group whose beliefs or practices are considered abnormal or bizarre. The word originally denoted a system of ritual practices” (para.1). This researcher has tried to examine the word “cult” and has observed that Seventh-day Adventist Church does not fall into its definition. Therefore like Martin rightly stated, Seventh-day Adventist church should be seen as a Christian denomination rather than a cult.

### **3.4 Summary:**

This section has attempted to provide information about the Seventh-day Adventist church, globally and in Igboland. However, none of the authors discussed above seem to have interest to inquire or identify commonalities and differences between Seventh-day Adventists and Christians of other denominations in Igboland. They did not also suggest possible ways and means to accelerate the growth of Seventh-day Adventist church in Igboland, considering its

socio-cultural and religious situations, and if they have, there is no documented proof. Therefore this research work will fill in the gaps created by these authors while exploring every available means that shall include field work and archival materials to get an up-to-date document in the reconstruction of the history of Seventh-day Adventist church in Igboland.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Cultural and Religious Theatres:**

This chapter presents the background to the main study: *A History of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland*. This background study is concerned with Igboland as the agent that encounters the gospel, as it is taught, preached and practiced by Seventh-day Adventist Church as the case study in this research. The background study of Igboland will take cognizance of the people, their culture, religion, and worldview that have bearing with the main topic. It will also consider the study of Seventh-day Adventist Church in her global perspective, with special attention to its founding, mission, beliefs among other things. Finally, this chapter will delve into a brief history of the spread of the missionary activity of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria.

#### **4.1 Igbo Cultural Context:**

**a. Who are the Igbo** Several scholars have tried to explain the origin of Igbo people. So many hypotheses have been propounded on this. One thing is clear in all these postulations on Igboland and its inhabitants: the people must have been made up of a mixture of aborigines and people (migrants) from the Northern and Western parts of the country, or beyond as assumed by Okechukwu. It is not the intention of this work to dig into Igbo origin, instead; a proper research will be conducted on how they have accepted the message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### **b. Religious Life:**

The Igbo like other Africans are purely religious. Their world-view is fundamentally a theocratic one. Religion has a prominent place in the lives of the people and it can be said that the Igbo live their lives in an atmosphere that is essentially religious. The Igbo were highly religious even before Christianity confronted them.

Kalu (1988) observes that traditional Igbo religion is based on the belief that there is only one creator, God, also called *Chineke* or *Chukwu*. The creator can be approached through numerous other deities and spirits in the form of natural objects, most commonly through the god of thunder (*Amadioha*). There is also the belief that ancestors protect their living descendants and are responsible for rain, harvest, health, and children. Shrines, called *Mbari*, are made in honor of the earth spirit and tableaux of painted earth. Other shrines keep wooden figures representing ancestors and patrons. The evidence of these shrines, oracle houses and traditional priest in the villages still emphasize the people's beliefs. However, with the western influence, Christianity has taken a more dominant role in modern Igboland while the Igbo remain faithful to the *Chineke*, the one Almighty Creator God.

**c. Economic Life:**

Farming has been the chief occupation of the Igbo. The land serves as their greatest asset. As the people organize their lives in communities, ownership of land is often communal. Although the majority of the people are subsistent farmers, most of their products (palm oil, kernel, yam, cassava, Garri,) are often transported from rural villages to the cities for marketing. Even though lands are jointly owned by the community, each family especially male members of the community are entitled to have their own positions for cultivation. Apart from the cultivation of food crops, the Igbo are good at the breeding of life – stock as well as hunting and fishing. By these they run their families and cater for their needs. However, he observed that the introduction of the iron industry and the production of iron tools like knives, hoes, axes, revolutionized farming in the region.

No wonder Ijeoma (2009) in this ongoing Economic life of the Igbo supports the idea that the Igbo showed dynamism in their technology in their quest to improve their lot and environment. He said that:

Early enough, they (Igbo) acquired the knowledge of iron working and this helped them to overcome the ecological difficulties of the forest environment. Awka in particular showed great dexterity in iron technology. The Nkwere and Abiriba were also famous smiths. The smiths produced household items and farming implements such as knives, nails, hooks, files, chisels and tongs, hammers, spears, and guns at a later stage. The Igbo Ukwu archeological excavations certainly reveal great antiquity and skill in metal working among the Igbo. (p.18)

He also mentions that apart from the above listed items, the Igbo were producers of charcoal. Dead woods were burnt into charcoal. Their women also produced pottery, which were used to produce earthen ware such as cooking pots, bowls, mugs, water jugs. Weaving of cloth and basket industry was a gainful employment in Igboland, particularly in Akwete in Abia State. Spencer in Ijeoma observed that “the inhabitants of Akwete are very industrious; and can weave cloth of every description. Both then and now, agriculture seem to have remained the major source of the Igbo economy.

**d. Igbo Cultural and Political Organization:**

Writing on the Igbo cultural and political organizations, Okechukwu states that, from the political point of view, the Igbo are not as organized as other tribes in Nigeria or in West Africa who had a structured monarchy. This is confirmed in the famous Igbo adage “*Igbo enwe eze*” (Igbo have no king). Much of the early history of the Igbo people is shrouded in mystery and legend. However, some concrete information about their history and culture in the ninth century A. D. has been acquired from archaeological findings in 1936 at Igbo-Ukwu, a small village near

Onitsha. The bronze figures there are testimony to a highly developed culture in ancient Igbo country. In line with the idea of *Igbo enwe eze*, it is commonly accepted that the people had no kingdoms or powerful city-states. Until the nineteenth century, they lived in self-governing and “democratic” villages. In spite of this fact, the Igbo political culture is democratic in nature.

According to him, democracy in the Igbo context should not be understood in the western political sense. This democracy rests on the fact that the people’s lives are governed by the philosophy of ‘*Igwe-bu-ike*’ (unity is strength).

The Igbo “promote justice as a way of life, *egbe bere ugo bere*; “*ndu miri ndu azu*”; *onye anwuna ma ibe ya efula*. Through “*ijide ogu*” they foster uprightness of life. “*Ikwuba aka Oto*” or “*aka idi ocha*” is upheld among the Igbo, as an ethnic group that had no kingdoms originally. Exception is given here to the people of Onitsha who, under the influence of Bendel, originally had an influence of Igwe’s court for the Obi of Onitsha

The principle of *Igwe-bu-ike* is an important factor in Igbo socio-political organization. It implies that power belongs to the people and this power is only realizable when the people are united. The strength of this principle is evident in the organization of “*nzuko-ndi-Obodo*”. Here every delegate has his seat and has the right to air his view. It is only after consultations and deliberations have been satisfactorily completed that the assembly will take its final decision.

Judging from the democratic way of life and settlement of disputes among the Igbo people, Chinua Achebe in *Okechukwu* argues vehemently against those who have the opinion that the Igbo cannot be democratic. Although political authority was not centralized and power was rarely concentrated in any one individual, no one wielded political authority as a full-time occupation. The political culture and proceedings in community gatherings were purely democratic, although authority was weighted in favor of the elders and men of wealth and

influence (title holders) because it was presumed that, as title holders, such calibre of people will defend the laws and ethics of the society (*Omenala*). The holders of authority were leaders rather than rulers. What obtained was direct village democracy.

The Igbo political process allowed every adult male to have his say. He could, if he wished, participate actively at all levels of government. The male elders, especially, the various representatives of the families during village assembly constitute the board of consultants for the traditional leader “*Eze*” or “*Igwe*”. The people place confidence in the judgement of the traditional leader and his council because they endeavor to deliver just judgement. Neighbors come together not only for work or recreation, but also to solve disputes. The neighborhood court plays an invaluable role in reconciling disputes, in settling quarrels, and in imposing sanctions. A local chief or headman (*onye isi*) might be responsible for the final decision taken, but this would only take place after due hearing and consultations with the parties involved. His judgement would have to reflect the opinions voiced in the free discussions which had preceded it.

He further observes that, through the extended family system, Igbo people organize themselves in small village compounds or communities with the eldest male members of the families serving as both the mediators between them and the dead family ancestors. They as well serve as the representatives of the families and the kindred, on the village or clan level, during meetings on the external family and kindred levels. Among Igbo people, “the family is considered as fundamental. With their sense of the family and respect for life, the Igbo love children and welcome them as gifts from God. For them life is respected from conception till natural death. Thus elderly parents and relations are cherished in the family. The basic Igbo political unit was a village group consisting of lineage segments from one ancestor. These

localized lineage groups were structurally equal units. This family-village-community structure helps in the organization of the people's lives politically, socially and religiously. The running of the villages depends on the elders who represent the families. Political process, in Igboland, was determined by agreed rules and consensus rather than by legalism and compulsion. The people always suspected personal authority and detested external dictation and tyranny. They met in assembly (Council) to transact the normal business of government (rule-making, rule-application and adjudication). Every male adult can attend personally, or by representative, at all the levels of government. Igbo political society is divided into age-grades, which played significant roles in executing development projects in the communities. Each age grade had defined obligations in community service. The age grades were jealous of their reputation and so had means of controlling and disciplining unsatisfactory members. The eldest in every traditional Igbo family played leading role in the daily life of the entire Igbo family. They were fundamentally the representatives and mouthpiece of the ancestors. Their sacred staff of office, called the *ofo*, symbolised the authority of the ancestors and was venerated as the embodiment of the supernatural world and all the spirits of the ancestors. In his view each elder possessed domestic authority because he was the intermediary between the family and the ancestors, on whose goodwill the members of the kindred set great store. The elders also played priestly roles in their families. It was their responsibility as the nearest people to the ancestors to offer rituals and the famous ceremonies on behalf of their families. They prayed for peace, good health, prosperity and life and good harvests on behalf of the entire family. In moments of tribulation they offer sacrifices (*aja*) to appease the ancestors and family gods.

## 4.2 Geographical Location of Igboland

The Igbo constitute one of the three most populous tribes in Nigeria. Others are (the Hausa-Fulani tribe in the north and the Yorubas of the South-west Nigeria). Igboland covers most of Southeastern Nigeria. It is divided into two unequal parts by the River Niger. However, the river seems not to have acted as a hindrance or barrier to cultural unity; rather it has provided an easy means of communication in the area where many settlers claim different origins. The major states that make up Igboland include: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The Igbo are surrounded on all sides by other tribes. These tribes include: Bini, Warri, Ijaw, Ogoni, Igala, Tiv, Yako and Ibibio. It is expected that there are more than 16 million people that inhabit Igboland. It has a density ranging from 1000 per square miles in high density areas and 350 per square miles in low density areas. Together, it has an area of about 15,000 to 16,000 square miles.

**Table 3: Landmass and population density of the Igbo**

State	Population 2006	Landmass Km <sup>2</sup>	Population Density km <sup>2</sup>
Abia	2,833,999	5,420	441
Anambra	4,182,032	4,844	863
Ebonyi	2,173,501	5,530	393
Enugu	3,257,298	12,440	260
Imo	3,934,899	5,430	725

Urban Management Consultancy (2006)

Wikipedia (nd) records that, Igboland lies in the South East of Nigeria between longitude 8.675 of the Greenwich and latitude 9.081 of the equator. Commenting on the population and spread of the Igbo, Osuji (as cited in Nganwa) maintains that:

Population wise, it will be difficult to ascertain even to the nearest million the exact population of the Igbo in Nigeria because they are by nature highly mobile. The population of the Igbo is approximately between 15 and 20 million today. A good number of them live in northern states particularly: Kano, Plateau, Sokoto, Kaduna, Benue, Adamawa, Borno and Yobe... The Igbo live anywhere and everywhere. There is a common saying that the only place where one cannot find an Igbo Person is in the moon. (p.13).

#### **4.3 American Religious Context:**

##### **a. Political Factors:**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of unprecedented geographical expansion for United States of America as a nation and Churches within it. It was during this period that a “powerful nationalistic spirit arose, which influenced the development of the missionary movements” (p.4). America’s expansion was a “westward movement into neighboring territories thinly populated by Indians.”(p.5) The Louisiana Purchase from France under Jefferson greatly extended the territory of the nation. Olmstead in Damsteegt views this expansion as “perhaps the most optimistic period in America’s history” (p.5). The Industrial Revolution of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century made its initial impact on the country. The Revolution, together with the territorial expansion, brought an enormous growth of population caused by a high birth rate, a reduced death rate, and a tidal wave of immigrants. Consequently, from 1790 to 1860, the population of the United States of America increased eight times from early four million to more than 31 million. The immigrants, mainly from Europe, were attracted by the opportunities unlimited now found in America. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a strong increase of Roman Catholic immigrants. Within the period: 1790-1840 the population of the “Catholic Church increased, nearly about 19 times. By 1850 they had become the largest single church in America. The accelerating speed of Catholic immigration seemed to create fear and tension among many Protestants who conceived



of the United States of America as a protestant nation” (p.6). Damsteegt presents another important principle in American Christianity. According to him:

During the American Revolution the place of the nation in God’s plan was often stressed. The Revolution itself was being interpreted as one of the greatest since the Reformation. Frequently from the pulpits the view was presented that it was the destiny of the newly formed Republic to lead the world to millennial glory (p.6).

This view was widespread because of various factors as held by the Protestants. Hence to them America became the land of promise for fulfilling God’s plan for humanity. This predominant religious situation in America led to the rise of protestant preachers, teaching and projecting the expectation about America. It was just a few years after these feelings that Seventh-day Adventist Church emerged as a religious group.

**b. Social Factors:**

In 1789, George Washington was inaugurated into office as President of the United States of America. This brought into America’s politics what Damsteegt refers to as the “era of good feeling” or the “early national period” (p.7). To him this era ended when Andrew Jackson, a hero of the masses, became President of the United States of America in 1929. Although there seemed to be feelings of anxiety and insecurity, the “optimistic postmillennial view of the future of the society was popular” and became the major factor which encouraged them. In this optimism, the “Vision of America as a redemptive instrument strengthened the activism of evangelical Protestantism” (p.8). There seemed to be a strong determination by many churches to keep the Republic a Christian nation even though there was a separation between Church and State. The Strategy of many Protestants concerning the Christianization of society was to increase the strength of their churches and influence the Republic through reform and benevolent

societies. One of such societies was the British evangelical and reform societies in America. Due to the enlightenment brought into American Society, there was a humanitarian concern which activated the already formed benevolent activity. The result was that serious interest was awakened in the cause of peace and temperance (p.9).

Also in the foregoing Eko observes changes in theological concept in America which emphasized the concept of man's freedom on the one hand, while at the same time stressing man's self-improvement. Hence, it became glaring into the American Society that the improvement of a society depended much on what the man himself would accomplish, which ushered in the atmosphere of optimism. There was revivalism, which gave the reform and benevolent movement its power and purpose. The impact of revivalism led to the second Great Awakening or Great Revival started by people like Charles G. Finney and others in 1826 (pp.156, 157).

**c. Religious Factors:**

Predominant in the United States of America then, according to Eko was the Protestantism with "Puritan Pietist – Evangelical strain, though it was much more noticeable in Europe. In America, a few was interested in associating with a church, especially at the time of independence, even though the colonies had experienced the great Awakening in the 18<sup>th</sup> century" (p.158). Nevertheless, with the adoption of their constitution, there came the notion that the Church should be separated from the state. The Constitution of the United States of America (as cited in Eko, 2010) states that, "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under United States" (p.158). Later on, this Constitution was amended (that is, its first amendment) forbidding the government to issue any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. However, religious pluralism

was the focus of the American Constitution in this perspective, which made it impossible for the establishment of a “state Church situation” in America (p.158).

Major among the factors in the formation of Seventh-day Adventist Church is a reflection from the 18<sup>th</sup> century’s growing millennial expectation in evangelical circles with emphasis on postmillennialism – “a view which expected the Second Advent of Christ not at the beginning but at the end of the millennial age” (p.159). To realize this promised millennial blessing, there was an occasioned human means of propagating the gospel in the power of the spirit. Finally, during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there arose an increasing emphasis among the evangelicals on the study of Bible passages, especially those that alluded to the Second Advent – the *parousia*. Many who participated in the studies appeared concerned that the Day of Judgment was imminent and that the second coming of Christ would initiate the millennium. Coincidentally, there were two views about the millennium held at that time (post millennium and the pre-millennium). Each of these views was opposed to the other. It should be known that, the principal exponent of the pre-millennium view in America during this period was William Miller 1782-1849, who by his pre-millennial views the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was affected

#### **4.4 Global Seventh-day Adventist Church:**

This section presents a brief history of the Seventh-day Adventist church from its inception as a new religious movement that arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it had spread to other parts of the world. It also will among other things look into the church’s formal organizations and growth, its world vision, beliefs, and missionary impact globally. In a nutshell this section will provide an understanding of the Church system, its missionary focus and mission praxis as having the same composition throughout the global

Christian organization. This will create an environment whereby the researcher could find out if possible, any reasons or causal factors to slow growth of the church in Igboland.

There seems to be abundant historical evidence on the emergence of Seventh-day Adventist Church from its local inception in the United States of America (U.S.A.) in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. A brief highlight of the historical background of this church in this research is unavoidable, since there is the need to queue in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland, as an integral part of the global body of Seventh-day Adventist Church. As part of the global family, it shares with other believers the same faith, practice, theology, mission, and the ultimate expectation or hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ. In other words, there is the need for a brief historical survey of Seventh-day Adventist church in order to identify and discuss relevant issues relating to this work.

Damsteegt (1995) gives the background of the origin of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be incidentally related to political, social, and religious climates in the United States of America, particularly during the first 50 years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He sees Seventh-day Adventist as a movement rather than adding them as another denomination among the lot with their peculiar mission of restoring Christianity's major teaching and practice (p.3).

#### **4.4.1 Early Experiences that Marked the Beginning of Seventh-day Adventist Church:**

The history of Seventh-day Adventist Church as path of history could be traced from the 1800s and significantly linked up with William Miller. It is not linked with him as its founder but as the forerunner and the herald of the Adventist Movement. However, what has become known today as Seventh-day Adventist Church started gradually through the ardent effort of the pioneers of this movement and what they discovered as divine counsel. The following brief account is information on the experiences that mark the beginning of the Adventist church.

(a) **William Miller and Early History of Seventh-day Adventist Church:**

Maxwell (1982) states that, William Miller was born in Pittsfield Massachusetts. As the eldest of sixteen children, Miller realized that there was no money to bring him to the level of education which he desired. Realizing his situation, and to achieve his quest for education, he borrowed books from friendly neighbors in the semi-frontier area, Southwest of Lake Champlain, where he grew up to update himself. Reading with street lights long after the rest of the family had gone to sleep; Miller developed a good knowledge of the Bible and of history. He also developed some skills in writing, enough that he was frequently called to write letters or compose a verse for people. Therefore, Miller became self-educated having had no one to lead him through any formal education, though he was zealously interested in reading (pp.11-13).

According to Schwarz (1979), at twenty one, Miller got married to a young lady from Poultney, Vermont, just at the state boundary from his family home in Low Hampton, New York. While in the bride's community, Miller quickly took advantage of the village library. His scholarly interests brought him into contact with the local village intellectuals, most of whom were deists. Under the influence of a religious mother, grandfather, and uncle who were Baptist preachers, young Miller had learned to reverence the Bible. His new friends introduced him to skeptics such as Voltaire, Paine, and Hume. By the influence of these people he concluded that a deistic philosophy was more reasonable than the acceptance of the Bible. To him the Bible seemed filled with "troublesome inconsistencies" (p.30). Miller was well accepted in his community, serving it as a constable, justice of peace, and deputy sheriff.

Shortly before the outbreak of the war of 1812, he had risen to the rank of a lieutenant in the State Militia. During the war he advanced to a captain in the regular army. His wartime experiences shook his faith in deism. As he saw comrades die, he became preoccupied with the

question of a future life or life after death. At the end of the war, Miller moved back to Low Hampton either to care for his recently widowed mother or to continue with life in the village. While in his home of nativity, he began attending the local Baptist Church, where his Uncle Elisha preached quite regularly, perhaps to please the family. On occasion, when a minister was not available, a deacon would read a printed sermon handed to him. This, Miller did not find edifying and was so uncomfortable. He stopped attending on such Sundays, until the deacons invited him to present future sermons. Gradually he lost interest with deism because of its lack of hope for a life beyond the grave. Little by little he began to see the beauty of Christ as a personal Savior. Immediately, he became an object of ridicule among his former friends, who were deists. They have now advanced the old arguments Miller had previously used against the Bible, and were using them against him. To answer these challenges and to build a firm foundation for his faith, Miller began a program of systematic Bible study. In the cause of this systematic study, he discovered that commentators frequently differed strongly with each other, and therefore he determined to use only the Bible and Cruden's concordance. He decided to let the Bible serve as its own interpreter. As Miller studied the scriptures, his earlier reading of history influenced him. As he studied Daniel 8:14, he became convinced that the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days/years was the Church, which would be purified at the Lord's return. He then linked up the 2300 days of Daniel 8 with the seventy weeks of Daniel 9. By linking them he deduced that both periods had begun at about 457 B.C. This seemed to say something special to him about his new found friend, Jesus. Having reached this conclusion in 1818 after two years of intensive Bible Study, Miller was thrilled at the thought "that in a time not too long Jesus would come and all the evils of this world would come to an end" (p.31-32).

Commenting on the genesis of Miller's drive to the study of prophecies, particularly those of Daniel, and the conclusion he drew from his study on prophetic time Maxwell says:

Like many people of his day, he wrongly assumed that the sanctuary was a symbol for the earth, but he rightly determined that the days were symbols for years. Because of the many links between Daniel 8 and 9 he concluded that the 2,300 years of Daniel 8:14 began with the same event in 457 B.C that initiated the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27. Miller curiously arrived at the astounding conclusion that: around the year 1843 (later corrected to 1844), Jesus ... would come on the clouds to purify the earth with flaming fire and introduce the millennium – that is, that in about 25 years... all the affairs of our present state would be wound up (p. 14)

Miller had lived with the conviction of Jesus' coming for about 15 years, 1818 - 1831. He did not feel qualified to publish the significance of the 2,300 days prophetic time he had discovered. He reasoned that his lack of training and experience as a public speaker denied him the opportunity to carry out any such assignment. Yet there was a disturbing conviction which caught fire in Miller's mind, "Go, and tell it to the world!" (p.14-18). Schwarz emphasized that this impression disturbed him, until finally one Saturday morning in August 1831, alone in his study, Miller desperately promised the Lord that "if I should have an invitation to speak publicly, in any place, I will go and tell them what I have found in the Bible about the Lord's coming" (p.32). Instantly his mind was relieved. Since he never had such invitation, he felt it could never come. He felt entirely very safe in making such a promise. Within the same hour, Miller had his greatest shock; an invitation was extended to him. It came from his brother-in-law in nearby Dresden, New York. When the brother-in-law, Silas Guilford had learned that there was no preacher available for Sunday service, he sent his son to get Uncle William to come, and talk with neighbors about the things he had been studying in the Bible relative to Jesus' return. Miller's first reaction was anger. He became angry with himself that he had made such a foolish promise. Not minding the situation, he was a man of his word. That afternoon, he set out for

Dresden. His meeting with the people the next day was a thorough success. By the time Miller launched into his topic, he lost his shyness and presented his views so forcefully and convincingly. In view of what they saw in him, he was invited to stay on for a week and hold revival services. This he accepted and the results were a foretaste of what was to come. In thirteen families, all but two persons were converted.

Upon his return home, Schwarz says Miller found a letter containing a request from the Baptist Pastor in nearby Poultney inviting him to come and talk to the Baptists in the area. From that time on, Miller was regularly invited as a speaker in Methodist, Baptist, and congregational churches within the area and across the border in Eastern Canada. In September 1833 his local Baptist Church, granted him a license to preach the word. This was done without his knowledge. Miller's earnestness and sincerity won him high marks. Even from those like William Lloyd Garrison, who disagreed with his interpretations of prophecy, he made disciples. As he travelled round, hundreds of people appreciated him and commented on his spiritual life while his greatest desire was to see men and women accept Jesus Christ as Savior and look forward with joy to his soon return. Miller's sermons were known for their careful organization and heavy reliance on numerous Bible texts. He spoke in a language common people understood. The first printed version of Miller's views appeared in a series of letters which he wrote in 1832 to a Baptist paper, "The Vermont Telegraph" (p.36). In 1836 he published a more comprehensive version in sixteen lectures bind in book form. Early in 1838 a copy of his lectures was received by the editor of the Boston Daily Times, and the editor published some of these lectures.

Through the preaching of William Miller there arose a great revival in the United States of America in the 1800s. In America and in other places such expectations and studies of the books of Revelation and Daniel caused a great revival in the belief that Jesus was actually



coming as Miller had concluded. Millions who believed this exposition had come from many existing denominations at the time.

Maxwell trying to clarify issues on the 1844 date setting argues that, Miller's prediction of Jesus' coming in 1844 was definitely dated by another Adventist pioneer, Samuel Snow; though it was never disputed by Miller. Snow proposed that the actual fulfillment of Miller's prediction of Christ's coming should coincide with the Jewish Day of Atonement celebrated on 10<sup>th</sup> day of the Jewish 7<sup>th</sup> month found in Leviticus 23:27. In Snow's own words he says, "By the most careful reckoning preserved in the Lord's providence by the Karaite Jews, the tenth day of the seventh month falls this year on October 22" (p.33). By this conclusion he fixed the date for the coming of Jesus at the autumn of October 22, 1844. This date was generally accepted by these curious searchers of the word of God. Many who believed this prediction made every effort to be ready for the coming of Jesus on October 22, 1844. In his commentary on this event, Maxwell describes the expectancy of the awaiting believers in these words:

As October 22 dawned, the Millerites gathered in companies large and small in their tabernacles, in churches, in meeting tents, in private homes; in meetings solemn with prayer and joyous with praise. At Low Hampton, New York, Miller's friends gathered by the maple grove beside his house, on what is known today as the Ascension Rocks. They watched all day, for they knew not what hour their Lord doth come. The sun arose in the east, as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. But the Bridegroom did not appear. (p.33).

Schwarz and Green Leaf (2000), described all waiting as really unfruitful, because Jesus did not come at the time they expected Him. That prophecy projected by William Miller brought what is called the "Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844 (p.12), in the Seventh-day Adventist Church history. The aftermath of this disappointment distorted the Adventists years'

of origin and formation, due to their mistaken belief in the Second coming of Christ on October 22, 1844.

They observed that many who had believed Miller's message turned back and never believed the Bible any more. Others went back to their former churches, while others still continued as Millerites. Yet, others, a little group saw that the Second Coming of Christ was an outstanding truth. The little group went back to restudy the prophecies of the books of Daniel and the Revelation and according to White they soon discovered the following:

1. No man knows the time of Christ's Second Coming.
2. That the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation concerning the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 was not about the coming of Jesus to this earth as concluded by Miller, but that it is about His work of Investigative Judgment in the Most Holy place in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8,9).
3. They saw that the Great Disappointment of 1844 had some prophetic undertone found in Revelation chapter 10. As interpreted by them, the experience of John the author of the book of Revelation in eating the little open scroll from the hand of the Angel who talked with him, and the sweet-bitter phenomena connected with this act, had much to do with the preaching of the message of the book of Daniel in their age. They interpreted the "bitterness" to represent the disappointment experience of those who had waited for the coming of Jesus and did not realize it.
4. These seekers of truth soon discovered that the message which was preached was important, and that the time was significant but the event he predicted was misunderstood, and so incorrect.

It was this little group of people, though among those who were disappointed during William Miller's preaching about the Second Coming of Christ in October 22, 1844, who nevertheless inquired to find out the error in Miller's message that later became the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Amongst those that constituted Seventh-day Adventist pioneers are the following: Joseph Bates, James White, Ellen Gould Harmon, Hiram Edson, F.B. Hahn, John Nevins Andrews, John Norton Loughborough, John Byington.

Although William Miller was not one of this little group, he is regarded as the one who ignited the candle fires of the Great Disappointment. He became a milestone for discovering a major truth about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and His mediatorial and intercessory work in the heavenly sanctuary, as the Great High Priest of God's people. Therefore, Miller is in this way connected with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The history of Seventh-day Adventist Church will be incomplete without a relevance to this Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, which to the Seventh-day Adventist believers has a prophetic significance to their existence. It constitutes a land-mark of their prophetic root as God's Remnant Church.

**(b) The Relevance of A. D. 1844 and its Disappointment:**

It is true according to Adult Teachers Sabbath School study Guide (2006) that, the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares with other Christian denominations in almost all the beliefs and teachings of the Bible, but the teaching on 1844 pre-advent judgment is uniquely Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. It is therefore significant to clarify the relevance of this subject to today's believer and particularly, the Seventh-day Adventist believers.

According to Maxwell, 1844 marks the close of the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14. This is the time when the Father moved His throne to the new place in heaven and Jesus, the Son of man,

traveled on the clouds of heaven to join Him there, as foreseen in Daniel 7:9-14. At the end of His priestly ministry in the sanctuary, while still in heaven, Christ receives the kingdom from His father and then returns to earth for His saints.

He therefore encourages Christians to see the event of 1844 as a major mark or sign of the beginning of the end of time and the great commencement of both the final judgment and heaven's Day of Atonement. Subsequently, 1844 acts as a cue for the preaching of three angel's messages as found in Revelation 14:6-12. These are messages that combine a renewed proclamation of the everlasting gospel with starting announcement that the final judgment has already begun. It also informs all the inhabitants of the earth that Babylon has fallen and that God's wrath is about to fall on the disobedient. A time when God's end-time saints should be found keeping all the commandments of God through their vital faith in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he sees the year 1844 as significant in that, it enlightens the believers by showing them what Jesus is doing while they wait for Him- still interceding for them as much as ever (Heb. 7:25). To him Christ is now judging everyone who has ever believed in him and cleansing living believers of all their sins (P. 174).

Goldstein (2006), writing on Christ's ministry in heaven as it relates to 1844, stresses that there are enough reasons in the book of Hebrews that establishes the inseparable link between Jesus and the sanctuary. He further emphasizes that, recent scholarship shows that the book of Revelation is structured around the sanctuary. He exposes the confidence of the Seventh-day Adventists, who believe that they are on solid biblical ground when it comes to "the sanctuary message, especially as the knowledge of the sanctuary forms the basis of their theology on eschatological judgment (Rev. 14:6, 7); yet he emphasizes that this teaching is the

aspect of the church's belief that undergoes serious criticism" (p.12). He therefore presents essential biblical texts regarding judgment as it relates the sanctuary to include:

Some sort of final judgment process near the end of time (Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 14:10-12; Dan. 7:24-27). This judgment is often directly associated with the Second coming (Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12). Among those judged are the followers of Christ (Matt. 7:22-23; 22:1-12; 1 Peter. 4:17; Heb. 10:30); a crucial element involved in this final reckoning in our relationship with Jesus as revealed through our works of obedience (Matt. 16:27; 25:31-46; Rom. 14:10-12; Eccl. 12:13, 14; Rev. 20:12), (p.12)

He assumes that in this judgment process only two groups would clearly show its outcome or consequences. One group will inherit the Kingdom prepared "from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34), and the other group will go into "everlasting punishment" (verse 46). He points out that there is also a judgment as portrayed by the Bible prior to the execution of any sentence or projected outcome (2. Cor. 5:10; Matt. 22:1-13; 25:31-46; Rev. 22:12), after all there cannot be real judgment without investigation, sentencing and execution. He concludes that the early sanctuary was a picture or painting of the plan of salvation typology, where the gospel was presented to Israel in symbols and types. In the anti-type, the plan of salvation is carried out in the heavenly sanctuary reality by Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest of all believers (P.1, 13).

#### **4.4.2 Organization and Authority – 1860-1880**

The pioneers of Seventh-day Adventist Church in early years understood church order and unity as a necessity for effective operation and success in mission endeavors. As the religious body grew larger, there was more urgent need for unity and organization to prevent general confusion. Schwarz remembers that, at a conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church believers held October 4-6, 1860, steps were taken to organize a central body for the Church. The conference was held in Michigan under the leadership of White, Loughborough, and Bates.

These participants and all the delegates took an action that “the Seventh-day Adventist Church shall have no creed but the Bible” (p.87). They recommended that members in each local congregation should sign a covenant that they were associating together as a Church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventist, covenanting to keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ. The membership accepted this recommendation with joy. The name ‘Seventh-day Adventist Church’ represents the Church’s distinguishing beliefs: the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath and the belief in the soon return of Jesus. The signing of the covenant was a major feature in the organization of this new church. After a minimum of discussion a simple state organization was recommended – to be known as a conference, although this term was already in use by Methodists. The annual sessions of Seventh-day Adventists were to be composed of Ministers and delegates from all the churches in the state. The Conference officials were kept to a minimum: President, Clerk, and a three-man executive committee. The membership in Session elected Joseph Bates and Uriah Smith as President and Clerk respectively. Furthermore members of the executive committee elected were Loughborough, Cornell, and Hull. These elected officers and members of the executive were to serve until the next annual meeting. The Conference voted to issue credentials annually to the ministers serving within its territories. This was necessary so that congregations could be sure that a traveling preacher was what he claimed to be. Michigan Conference therefore became the first Conference to be organized in Seventh-day Adventist Church. The organization of this Conference became contagious. Within a year, five other Conferences were organized (p.96).

Consequently, in 1862, Michigan Conference invited all the newly organized State Conferences to send delegates to meet with them during their 1863 annual Council. This was with the aim of organizing a General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church. By May 20-

23, 1863, delegates from the five other Conferences converged at the Michigan Conference headquarters to join Michigan delegates for the first General Conference Session of Seventh-day Adventist Church. At this meeting, a Constitution was adopted and Officers were elected for the General Conference. The Constitution provided for a three-member executive committee, including the President. The President was to have general supervision over all ministers and see that they were evenly distributed. He was commissioned also to foster missionary work and to authorize general calls for funds. The Conference nominating committee recommended John Byinton as President, Uriah Smith as Secretary, and E. L. Walker as Treasurer. These names were voted by the delegates in session as the first officers of Seventh-day Adventist Global Church (p.120).

Finally in 1863, the Seventh-day Adventist Church organized legally with the specific purpose of securing unity and efficiency in labor and promoting the general interest of the cause of the present truth. In the same year, the idea was brought forward for the first time among Seventh-day Adventists, that the Church was a missionary society established to make disciples for Christ. Therefore, it was, and still is under obligation to obey the great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). This was a motive widely advocated by other Christians at that time.

White (1863) wrote to the newly organized Churches, addressing them on a distinction which was made between the leadership and the laity with regard to the question of authority. Referring to such organization she pointed out that “there is no higher tribunal upon the earth than the Church of God” (p.14). She therefore urged the members to submit to the decisions of the Church as led by the Holy Spirit.

However, as far as the mission of the movement is concerned, White cited that, the work does not depend upon the ministers alone. The Church – the lay members – must feel their

individual responsibility and be working members. During the 1870s, a discussion arose on the question of leadership. By 1873 James White, one of the founding fathers of Seventh-day Adventist Church declared, “Our General Conference is the highest authority with our people, and is designed to take charge of the entire work in this and all other countries” (p.17). Till today, the authority or power base of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the General Conference in session. This has been really obeyed. White further expounded the function of the Church in the context of Christ’s mission for the salvation of human kind. She stressed the importance of the organized church, stating that:

The son of God identified Himself with the office and authority of His organized church. His blessings were to come through the agencies He has ordained; the Redeemer of the world does not sanction the experience and exercises in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church, where he has a church. (p. 21)

Despite the fact that Christ has power both in heaven and upon earth over the Church, yet He respects the means (Church) He has ordained for the enlightenment and salvation of humankind.

The first annual camp meeting ever held by Seventh-day Adventist Church took place in 1868, in Battle Creek, United States of America (U.S.A). Since then, annual camp meeting has become a pattern among Seventh-day Adventists. It is still practiced till today all over the Adventist world. In 1874, J.N. Andrews became the first official Seventh-day Adventist missionary to travel to overseas. He was sent to Switzerland, where he ministered and organized the Sabbath keeping companies under one umbrella.

Alalade (2008) has observed that when the Seventh-day Adventist Church started, it was considered to be a small sect of a few hundred believers. These believers were scattered around the northeastern of America. Most of the members in this group were poor and of lower class



people. Numerically, socially, and economically, Seventh-day Adventists were one of the least of the many religious movements, which arose in North America at that time. In 1863, the membership of the church was 3500 with not more than thirty ministers to shepherd this scattered flock. Many Adventist churches never had the opportunity to see a minister from one year to the next due to scarcity of Ministers. However, in just about a century and half, the church has grown from a small company of 3500 believers in 1863 to about 15 million believers in 2010. From an American-based and American-oriented sect, it has grown to become a universal church, which has been well established in about 208 countries of the world. It embraces people of many different cultures, ethnic origins, and language groups (p.12).

#### **4.4.3 The Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Mission.**

Neufeld (1976) states that the Seventh-day Adventist church regards itself as:

the body of believers who are divinely commissioned to proclaim to the world God's last message of grace prior to the close of probation and the return of Christ in power and glory at His second coming (p. 1200).

Seventh-day Adventists understand that the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, coupled with the message of Revelation 18:1-4, constitute the last message to the world. The message summons all humankind everywhere to worship the creator, in view of the fact that the hour of judgment is at hand. It also warns against succumbing to the great latter-day apostasy foretold in Revelation 13:11-17. This all important, final message from Revelation 14:6-12 to the world runs as follows:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. Saying with a loud voice fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth and the sea and fountains of water. And there followed another angel saying Babylon is fallen, is fallen that great city because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them saying with a loud voice if any man... (KJV).

Following this is the angel of Revelation 18, calling in a loud voice, “Babylon is fallen...come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues” (Revelation 18:1-4). Convinced that the time has come for this message to be given, and in view of the fact of their claim that “they alone among the bodies of Christendom” are given this message, the Seventh-day Adventist church, according to Alalade believes the term “remnant” to be an appropriate designation of themselves in their role as God’s witnesses to the earth’s last generation. Neufeld (as cited in Alalade, 2008) puts it to the understanding of the Adventist Church members that God also has loyal people in other Christian Churches (p.15). Following this statement of fact, this researcher therefore can boldly say that the Seventh-day Adventist Church today is a part of the remnant Church and not the remnant Church.

He points out that the early Pioneers of Seventh-day Adventist Church have designated the message of Revelation 14 and Revelation 18 as the three angels’ messages. They have formed the basic structure of “the theology of mission” during the formative years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This basic structure consisting of three interrelated progressive proclamations in the context of Christ’s final mission in heaven and on earth was considered the only means of preparing humankind for the Second Advent. The Seventh-day Adventist theology seems to have started with Miller. From its beginnings, “Millerism was an inter-confessional movement” (p.38). Its primary aim was to arouse the churches regarding Christ’s

imminent return. In view of this, William Miller led his followers to proclaim the first and second angels' messages with all vigor and devotion. His intention probably was not to form a separate group.

Due to the religio-political climate in United States of America, which became favorable to the rise of new religious movements, premillennialists with Miller as one of their major representatives were able to develop rapidly into inter-confessional second Advent movement. From here a theology of mission gradually emerged. It interpreted this movement as playing an important role in salvation history. When they realized they were participants in the prophetic movement whose task was to prepare the world for Christ's return, they were highly induced to an enormous sense of responsibility, missionary zeal, and enthusiasm. Within few years their religious publications were on a worldwide scope. This was in keeping with their concept of world mission, based on their interpretation of Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (KJV). The Millerites employed several dating systems determining the specific time when the Second Advent was to occur. A number of time settings were made but none came to fulfillment. Nonetheless, the failure of time setting did not diminish the hopes and missionary zeal of the Millerites. However, there has been no more time setting for the second coming of Christ since after the 1844 disappointment.

Commenting on the courage and dispositions of the Millerites at this crisis time, Damsteegt states that:

These expectations were translated into an active mission to warn others of the coming events because they realized their responsibility for the salvation of mankind. These time settings played an important part in their missionary activity. (p. 46).

Although these predictions failed, some of Miller's followers, however, did not consider the rejection of his views by the ecclesiastical organizations as a setback or a defeat, but as another sign of the times and a fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

In 1850, the Seventh-day Adventist Church incorporated into their system of doctrines and as their theology of mission; the apocalyptic eschatological aspects of theology, indicated by the three angels' messages with its focus on the third angels' message. This was central in their mission proclamation to prepare humankind for the Second Advent. Their "ecclesiology also became a vital element of the mission thrust" (p.49). The Seventh-day Adventist church theology had two points: (1) the affirmation of the validity of the Advent experience of 1844; (2) the necessity of the restoration of certain neglected Bible doctrines, particularly the Sabbath before the occurrence of the end. Damsteegt submits that:

It was especially this aspect of restoration, which came to play an increasingly important role in the self-understanding of Seventh-day Adventists. The three angels' messages of Revelation 14, which were frequently designated as the third angels' message, formed the basic structure of the Seventh-day Adventist theology of mission. (p.55)

One of the functions of this third angels' message (Revelation 14:8) in the emerging theology of mission was to inform people about the fallen condition of the contemporary Christianity. The object of this message according to Cottrel (as cited in Alalade, 2008) is to "cut every honest soul loose from their allegiance to the religious bodies with which they may be connected, so that they may be prepared to act on their own individual responsibility in reference to the third angels' message" (p. 24). The message of Revelation 14:8 as part of Seventh-day Adventist theology of mission had a considerable influence on Seventh-day Adventist self-image, and the attitude to contemporary Christianity and ecumenism. In fact, to him the first and the second angels' messages played a vital role in the formation of the Adventists as a separate

religious entity. He further said that “if we never heard the judgment hour cry, which was based on definite time, we never should have been led to bear a testimony which being rejected by our own brethren, made it necessary for us to separate from the churches” (p.25).

He affirmed that the Advent cause owes its very existence to the first and second angels’ messages of Revelation 14. The third angel’s message as indicated before was considered a message of restoration. He sees the central theme as the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, which explained the 1844 Advent experience and the present theological position. However, the third angel’s message seem to be interpreted as a preparatory message restoring true worship and purifying God’s people for the coming crisis and the Second Advent. It was considered as a vital part of the closing work of Salvation through Jesus Christ because man’s response to it was to ripen the harvest of the earth.

He posits that health reform was another factor that influenced the Seventh-day Adventists. Later the mission of health reform was much broader than to be confined only to Seventh-day Adventists. About intemperance, Alalade advises those who may live a carefree life on the dangers and the consequences of intemperance. Furthermore, the “burden of our mission is to teach the people how to live so that those who enjoy health may remain well, and that those who are running down in health may return from wrong habits, and live” (p.28). No wonder then that the Seventh-day Adventists regard the health message as the “right arm” of the gospel message. It also views health reform as an important aid in the preparation for Christ’s return. In this instance, health reform became to them an integral part of the third angels’ message. This reform advocated a series of changes based on the concept that the laws of nature are as divine as the Ten Commandments. As a result, a purifying influence on spiritual, mental, and physical faculties was expected to leave believers in a better condition to engage in mission work. It

therefore became an assignment for the Church to promote and establish health institutions all over the world to facilitate, not only the healthy living among believers, but also to restore others while reaching them with the gospel. Thus like other churches, the Seventh-day Adventist church world-wide has health ministries as a department of the world church and in all other levels of Church administration to promote healthy living.

Besides a health reform institution, the Seventh-day Adventists began publishing in 1886. The first publication was a periodical named the Health Reformer. Its purpose was to educate people on “the principles of health reform” (p.30), especially those that did not have sufficient funds to attend the institution. In broader perspective, its mission was to contribute to the improvement of mankind physically, mentally, and morally. The above philosophy on health reform formed the basis of a future worldwide system of sanitariums and hospitals. The health reform was considered as a powerful missionary tool to spread the three angels’ messages to all humankind. Indeed, considering the results, the health ministry seems to be the right arm of the gospel ministry.

#### **4.4.4 Structure of the Seventh-day Adventist as an International organization.**

Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (2010) states that, the early Pioneers of the Church saw the need of organization in the following direction:

As our members increased, it was evident that without some form of organization, there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work of new fields, for protecting both churches and ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the Press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable. (p. 159)

There are specifically four generally recognized forms of church government which include: Episcopal, Papal or Monarchical Episcopacy, congregational or Independence, and Representative. Out of these four, the Seventh-day Adventist church has adopted the

Representative system. This form of church government recognizes that the authority in the church rests on the church membership with executive responsibility delegated to representative bodies and officers for the governing of the church. According to Alalade this was adopted by the Seventh-day Adventist Global Church during the General Conference Session of April 1980. He confirms that it was Elder Robert Folkenberg who facilitated the effective personal representation of all union presidents world-wide on the General Conference Executive Committee with effect from 1996 annual council of the world church.

In this representative form of church government as adopted and practiced by the Seventh-day Adventist church; there are four constituent levels in its organization, namely:

1. **The local church:** A united organized body of individual believers. The local church administration is partly on a Presbyterian pattern, though ministers are not chosen by the congregation. They are assigned by the Conference or mission or field or station composed of a number of churches.
2. **The local conference or field/mission:** A united organized body of churches in a state, province or territory. There are about 566 of such Conferences, missions and fields all over the Seventh-day Adventist world. These in turn form Union Conferences, Missions or Fields.
3. **The Union conference or Union Mission:** A united body of conferences, missions, or fields within a larger territory. The total number of Unions and attached fields as at 2010 is about 129. The Unions are the constituents of the General Conference, the world-wide administrative body, with the headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States of America. (U.S.A.).

4. **The General conference:** The largest unit of organization and the highest decision making body in Seventh-day Adventist Church. It embraces all Unions in all parts of the world. Divisions are sections of the General Conference, with administrative responsibility assigned to them in designated geographical areas. It is pertinent to note that there is a symbiotic relationship among these strata in programs, plans, finance and distribution. It is the highest organization in the administration of the world wide of the church. However, there is a little autonomy and independence among them. The General Conference Executive Committee functions, not only through geographical administrative divisions, but also through advisory departments, committees, and commissions. The General Conference Executive Committee includes members from the 13 Divisions. It has its President who is also a vice President of the General Conference. The Division committee serves somewhat as a sub-committee of the General Conference, operating in its own section of the globe.



**Figure 2:**

**5. Seventh-day Adventist Church World Map**



Sources: Okoma (2014)

#### 4.4.5 Seventh-day Adventist church Mission Statement:

The mission statement of the Seventh-day Adventist church is pivotal as a medium through which the church carries out its mission. The church's working policy (2012) states that:

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church is to proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as personal savior and to unite with His church, and nurturing them in preparation of His soon return.

(p.22)

In fulfilling the objectives of this mission statement, the following methods as guided by the Holy Spirit have been unanimously upheld by the Seventh-day Adventists; they are: Preaching, Teaching, and Healing.

1. **Preaching:** Accepting Christ's commission (Matt. 28:18-20), Seventh-day Adventist Church, proclaim to all the world the message of a loving God, most fully revealed in His son's reconciling ministry and atoning death. Recognizing the Bible to be God's infallible revelation of His will, Adventists present its full message, including the second advent of Christ and the continuing authority of His Ten Commandment law with its reminder of the Seventh-day Sabbath.
2. **Teaching:** Acknowledging that the development of mind and character is essential to God's redemptive plan; they promote the growth of a mature understanding of and relationship to God, His word, and the created universe.
3. **Healing:** Affirming the biblical emphasis on the well being of the whole person, the church makes the preservation of health and healing of the sick a priority and through the church's ministry to the poor and oppressed, cooperates with the Creator in His compassionate work of restoration.

Vision: – In harmony with the great prophecies of the Scripture, Adventists see as the climax of God’s plan the restoration of all His creation to full harmony with his perfect will and righteousness (p.22).

#### **4.4.6 Seventh-day Adventist Church Doctrinal Beliefs:**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church doctrinal beliefs have come a long way from the period of 1850s. Damsteegt explains that, the doctrines are simply a summary of Seventh-day Adventist faith. These beliefs do not and should not be misunderstood to mean that the church has “articles of faith, creed, or discipline” (p.165). These beliefs constitute the Church’s understanding and expression of the teaching of scripture.

Commenting on the fundamental beliefs, he clarifies the major reasons for the formation of the fundamental beliefs as upheld by the Seventh-day Adventist church. In his defense, he states that it is to protect the church from dissidents who may advocate for what the church does not teach in the name of the church. The other reason is to identify the church with these biblical beliefs, so that she could be understood, to avoid misconceptions and preconceived opinions about what the Adventists believe and practice in reality (p.30)

Eko writing on this fundamental issue, recalls that, the Seventh-day Adventist church’s fundamental beliefs have been reviewed and increased in number over the years. This review has been necessary so as to include doctrines that have come as a result of a new light from the Bible. The church is open for more revelation of God’s word for His people. Adventists believe (1988) records that, in 1872, the church had 25 items of beliefs. She gradually increases these beliefs as the church becomes globally challenged to meet cross-cultural needs (p.iv). The Church Manual (2005) records also that; in 2005 the Adventist church voted 28 fundamental principles of faith or beliefs (p.9-19). Although the manual is reviewed every five years at the

General Conference session, this is the list that is most current. It contains explanations and points of the beliefs as are held by the Seventh-day Adventist Church until now. Below is the summary of the 28 fundamental beliefs as held by of Seventh-day Adventist Church. They believe:

1. In the Bible as God's inspired word as the full, the sufficient, and the only rule of faith and practice, II Tim. 3:15-17, II Peter 1:19-21.
2. In the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal persons who are united in purpose and love towards humanity. Genesis 1:28. Eph. 4:4-6
3. In a true and living God, the Father, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all Creation. Heb. 1:1-3, I Cor. 8:5, Jer. 10:10-12.
4. In Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God and by whom He created all things. He is our Savior from sin. In Him the character of God is revealed, the character of humanity is accomplished and the world is judged. Jn. 1:1-3, 14:3-16, Acts 4:12, Col. 1:16-18.
5. In the Holy Spirit, Christ's Representative on earth, who leads sinners to repentance and obedience to all God's requirements. He inspired the writers of the Scripture. John 14:25.
6. In creation as the only reliable account of human kind and all other Creatures. Genesis 1, Heb. 11:13.
7. In the mortality of man and resurrection for the saved to eternal life at Christ's return. Job. 4:17, Ecc. 9:5-6, 1 Cor. 15:21, 51, 55
8. In the Great Controversy which describes the conflict between good and evil with ultimate triumph of God over Satan. Isa. 14:12, Ezek. 28:12-15, Rev. 12:7-9:20.

9. In righteousness by faith alone in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Rom 4:35, 6:23. Eph. 3:15.
10. In regeneration on the new birth; through the acceptance of the Gospel. John 3:3, II Cor. 5:17, Heb 8:10, 12, Eph. 3:15.
11. In Growing in Christ. Psalm 1:1-2, 23, 4 Peter 3:18, Romans 8:38-39
12. In the Church of God as the gathering of those called out from darkness of Sin. Acts 7:38, 20-28, Eph. 3:15.
13. in the Seventh-day Adventist Church as the remnant church called to proclaim the three angels messages of Revelation 14:6-12, Rev. 12:17, 14:6-12, Matt. 24:14.
14. In the unity of the body of Christ of church. Jn. 17:6, Eph. 4:4-6.
15. In baptism by immersion. Matt. 3:12-17, 28:19, Rom. 6:3-5, Col. 3:1-12.
16. In the Lord's Supper as a commemoration of the death of Christ to deliver us from sin. Exod. 12:8-13, 1 Cor. 11:24-26
17. In loyal support to the church and its organization by employing the Spiritual Gifts and Ministries endowed upon every believer. Matt. 16:16-18, 18:5-18: 1 Cor. 12:14, Eph. 4:12.
18. In the Gift of prophecy as God's agency to reach fallen man. Amos 3:7, 11. Chronicles. 20:20.
19. In the Ten Commandments as the standard of righteousness by which all will be judged and which all Christian are committed to obey. Exod. 2:1-17, James 2:10-12.
20. in the Seventh-day weekly Sabbath as the day of Christian worship and God calls all to observe. Genesis 2:1-3, Exod. 20:8-11, Isa. 58:13, 14; Mark 2:28, Lk. 4:1.
21. In the support of the Gospel through tithes and offerings. Lev. 27:30-32, Mal. 3:8-11.

22. In beautiful living by moderate use of that which is good and abstinence from harmful unclean foods, alcoholic beverages, tobacco narcotics or other drugs 1 Co. 6:19-20, 10:31; Lev. 11, Prov. 23: 29-32.
23. In the sanctity and performance of Marriage Institution. Gen. 2:2-24; Matt. 19:3-9, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Eph. 5:24-28, Heb. 13:24
24. In the investigative judgment going on in heaven before Christ's return. Dan. 9:24, Heb. 4:14, Rev. 14:6;7;22-11
25. In the second coming of Christ, it will be literal, personal and visible. Jn. 14:1-3. Acts 1:9-11, Titus 2:13
26. In the unconscious state of man at death, literal, and bodily resurrection at the coming of Christ. Eccl. 9:5;6, Job 14:10-12, 2Thes. 4:13-18, Rev. 20
27. In the Millennium beginning at Christ's second coming and the end of sin. Rev. 20
28. In the New Earth as the eternal home of the saved. II Peter 3:6,7;13, Rev. 21:22.

The Seventh-day Adventist considers five doctrines among the 28 fundamental beliefs as unique. They may be termed as the key doctrines of the church. Nyekwere outlined these doctrines to include: sanctuary services and the pre-advent judgment; the mortal state of man at death and a heavenly millennial reign of the saved with Christ; the Sabbath as a day of worship; the philosophy of health; and the importance of spiritual gifts with special emphasis on the presence of "the Spirit of Prophecy". This is one out of the two marks to identify the remnant church (P. 22-31).

However, Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible study Guide (2006) postulates that, even these unique doctrines are not really, uniquely Adventist doctrines. This is because historically, the Adventist got the Seventh-day Sabbath from the Seventh Day Baptist, through Rachael Oaks.

Maxwell in his own view on these doctrines asserts that, among other Christians not many keep the Seventh-day Sabbath as well. Nevertheless, the Adult Teachers Sabbath School study Guide affirms that “almost all our doctrines are scattered throughout Christendom, except the 1844 pre-advent judgment. This is indeed the only doctrine that is solely Seventh-day Adventist” (p.2)

#### **4.4.7 How to Adapt Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs to Culture**

Haviland (as cited in Eko) defines adaptation as a sociological term, which “refers to the process of interaction between changes made by an organism on its environment and changes made by an environment on the organism” (p.188). This point refers to humans as organisms, who react to environmental, sociological, and religious changes, either positively or negatively. If their reaction is positive towards a given innovation, they simply develop a tendency toward adaptation. This, Haviland says establishes a moving balance between the need of a population and the potential of its environment.

Nwachukwu (1996) says, in missiology, adaptation encourages borrowing foreign ideology and practices by a national church, so as to bring conformity in these areas with those of foreign missions. Sometimes what is seen as negative about adaptation is the problem of cultural imposition on the national church of foreign practices and ideas; hence the acceptance and the effects of these imposed ideas and practices may be superficial and not rooted in the fabric of the receiver as a way of life (p.121). Gustin (2001), challenges the missionaries to do a lot of adaptation culturally if they should succeed in their mission. She sees this very possible if the missionary resumes as a child and begins slowly to learn the outward manifestations of the new culture. The missionary should also get himself acquainted with what is behind the behavior, beliefs, values, and worldviews of that culture.

Oliver writes that “the apostle Paul varied his manner of Labor, shaping his message to the circumstances under which he was placed” (p.66). He insisted that workers with God are not to be stereotyped in their manner of working, unable to see that their advocacy of truth must vary with the class of people among whom they are working and the circumstances they have to meet. At the time Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, God found it very necessary to adapt. His love for the world compelled Him to find a means of communicating in a context that was very finite and imperfect. God took a decision to engage in the greatest missionary work of all time – Salvation mission of the world. By this, He demonstrated both the necessity and the method of adapting mission and message in order to bring salvation (p.73).

He believes that, the writer of Hebrews reminds Christians that God has even demonstrated greater initiative and adaptability when communicating with humanity. Hebrews 1:2 states that “In these last days He has spoken to us by His son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe.” In Philippians 2:7, Jesus took the “very nature of a servant” in order to communicate God and to implement the plan of salvation. Paul assures humanity that Christ “being in the very nature of God, He was all the fullness of the Deity... in body form” (Phil. 2:6:9). When Christ came to the earth in order to give humanity the most complete revelation of God, He appropriately adapted Himself to human situation. It became obvious, then, that an essential starting point for mission is an appreciation of the implementations of the doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and the incarnation (p.73). The following are considered in this culture adaptation:

## **1. The Church and Culture**

Oliver defines culture to mean an integrated system that gives its people a sense of dignity, security, identity, and continuity. It includes the values, beliefs, customs, institutions



and material artifacts of the group” (p.74) He sees it stable, but at the same time sufficiently flexible to cope with the contingencies of change that confront it. To realize the necessity of appropriate adaptation, Seventh-day Adventist should recognize that each culture is distinct. If the Church should excel in the present century, the Church has to accept and respect the diversity that characterizes the church and the world. The gospel by its very nature challenges and calls for a transformation of each culture. It is the Holy Spirit that transforms. The spirit can do its work only if the message is communicated in the context of the receiving culture. It is then that the gospel can be heard, understood, accepted and applied. Each human being is nurtured within a cultural context. Individual and communities interpret the world through this context. They evaluate incoming ideas, beliefs, and values through their own pre-existing world view. If the church is unable to share the gospel and the specific message of the three angels in terms that are ineligible to them, they are failing to give people opportunity to hear, understand, and accept God’s world.

## **2. The means of Adaptation of Culture**

Various labels have been placed on the process of adapting the Seventh-day message to culture. While in this paper the term adaptation is used, others could prefer such terms as contextualization, indigenization, or incarnational mission (these may be used interchangeably). The fact is that one has the God-given responsibility to ensure that the authentic message is heard. While it is true that the Holy Spirit brings conviction and conversion, God has placed on humanity the responsibility to communicate the message and power of the gospel in the best possible ways and with as much clarity as possible. The responsibility is two dimensional: one aspect is ones “responsibility to adapt the message. The other is the need for the messenger to be adaptable “(p.75). None of the two stands alone in the process.

**a.     Adaptation of the Message**

To contextualize the message, the messenger is more concerned with the manner and emphasis than the content. The Seventh-day Adventist accept 28 fundamental beliefs as a consensus of the principal tenets of their faith. Authentic Seventh-day Adventists cannot deny any of these fundamentals. However, two things need to be said. (1) The Church need to find the most effective way to communicate the truth of each fundamental belief for each context. In a given situation, some beliefs may prove to be more effective as entering wedges and others may not. Indigenous Seventh-day Adventist Christians need to be encouraged to find the most effective language, symbols, and values that shape the communication of the message. (2) The Church should also remember that at the Church's General Conference Session in 1980, a statement of fundamental beliefs that recognizes that the Church's understanding and expression truth is developing was adopted. These Fundamental beliefs can be revised at a General Conference Session when the Holy Spirit leads the Church to do so (p.76).

**b.     Adaptation of the Messenger:**

Oliver states that the task of the messenger is to identify with the people and their culture without losing their own identity. To him integrity in mission demands both identification and identity. Incarnational mission approaches the world with a willingness to take risks for the sake of the gospel, while at the same time maintaining integrity to that gospel, and the mission itself. If one is using the incarnational approach to mission, several implications follow:

1.     The incarnational method ensures that the message will make sense for each people's group.

2. An incarnational approach by the cross-cultural worker communicates to the recipients of the message that although sin has tainted everyone and everything, all that is good and consistent with Christian faith in their culture is to be respected and affirmed.
3. Incarnational mission establishes a participatory dialogue for seeking truth.
4. Incarnational ministry and mission focus people's confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to enlighten and awaken people in each cultural setting to their need of God's gracious provision in Jesus Christ.

### **3. The Dangers of Inappropriate Adaptation:**

Oliver further states that in making the Seventh-day Adventist message hearable, the membership needs to be at alert to some very real dangers. They should understand that, just as the effectiveness of communication of the message is lost when the church fails to "contextualize appropriately and critically, so the effectiveness is lost when the cultural context is elevated to such an extent that it dominates the content of the message." In such situations the church is in danger of losing the message itself. If the church comes to a place where she denies that her theology can transcend diverse cultural settings, then the church in fact denies that God has spoken in history and that He can continue to break through to the Church today. The Church then would be left with nothing more than small clusters of culture – bound churches that are unable to communicate with one another. It is important that each member is granted the right to express the message in context while at the same time recognizing that the church has the responsibility to listen, honor and maintain cultures, and beliefs and structures that unite them while continuing to work toward finding appropriate ways to critically contextualize their ministry and message. Appropriate contextualization of ministry and message, adopting the incarnational model of Jesus Christ, is the means of bringing unity into the church (p.78).

Conclusively, the Seventh-day Adventist Church today will be effective as it finds ways to express the message in terms of the culture of its recipients. Although there may be some cultural practices like “*Igba Ekpo*” that may not agree with the church’s beliefs, the church through proper missionary work can still win these people to Christ. The church will be a church of mutuality, honoring those cultural elements that are consistent with the gospel and the three angels’ messages. The Church should be a missionary church. People convicted of the truth of the gospel and the message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will come from everywhere going to everywhere to carry their convictions and share them in the diversity of cultural and social contexts that present themselves. These people filled with the Holy Ghost will attract people to the Savior. They will accomplish this mission as they communicate the message in words and deeds appropriate for each context.

Finally, from the foregoing, the researcher submits that it is not only desirable but absolutely essential for the church to be appropriately adaptable when it engages in cross-cultural ministry and mission. This section has achieved its purpose by encouraging the Seventh-day Adventist church to seek and find appropriate means of communicating its message so that it is readily heard, understood, accepted, and applied in diverse cultural and social settings.

#### **4.5 Global Evangelistic Programs and Themes:**

Periodically, the Seventh-day Adventist church, as it shall be voted by the General Conference of the church, launches some evangelistic programs globally. This is done to challenge and spur her members all over the globe into soul winning endeavors with specific goals. Some of these reaping initiatives that were introduced during the years to sensitize members carried with them denominational slogans. These are to energize the membership towards a world-wide mission. Focus has been in the areas of the world where Seventh-day

Adventist church were not yet reached with the gospel. Some of these slogans include: “1000 Days of reaping” for 1985. “Harvest 90” introduced by 1990 was to inspire membership growth. The drives in these initiatives have metamorphosed into what the church now calls the “Global mission strategy”.

Schwarz and Greenleaf state that, the global mission strategy is a new perspective of Seventh - day Adventist mission following their view of the world population as consisting of people groups rather than countries” (p.579). This view of the world led the church to divide the world into strategic divisions of one million (1 million) people per people group. This was to enhance easy evangelization. It was discovered that there are 5000 segments in the world. Out of this number 1800 were unentered by Adventism. Hence, “Global mission was to establish a new church in each of the 1800 unentered segments between 1990 and the year 2000” (p.581). This was the first substantial effort to strategize the mission program of Seventh-day Adventist world church on a cooperate dimension on a global scale.

Eko observes that, following the global vision on mission, the Adventists have looked into another initiative currently named the 10/40 window. The 10/40 window initiative is said to be an evangelistic projection towards entering regions of the world heavily made up of regions other than Christianity with the gospel, especially occupants of the geographical areas with:

a strip of land between the tenth and fortieth parallel north latitude, beginning in west Africa and extending eastward across Asia to Japan. This window housed 60 percent of world’s population and touched eighty-two countries, but was a home of only a tenth of the Adventist world population. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam were the dominant religions. (p.234)

The Seventh - day Adventist method of evangelization looks at a global perspective of propagation in view of the three angels' messages in Revelation 14 and the gospel commission in Matthew 24, in the light of the church's mission. This goal is shared by all the Seventh-day Adventist churches all over the world. This global perspective of church evangelism also makes all her churches to share in the same methods.

#### **4.5.1 Seventh-day Adventist Church World Statistical Evangelism**

##### **Impact:**

Sequel to the Seventh-day Adventist church Working Policy (2011), the following 2010 world statistical record of the church shows the stance of the world Seventh-day Adventist Church's Evangelism strategies and results as at June 30, 2010 (p.412).

**Table 3: Membership and Employees**

	<b>2010</b>
Churches	68,952
Church membership	16,641,357
Baptisms and Profession of faith	1,055,312
Ordined Ministers, Active	16,949
Total Employees active	213,267

<b>Mossion Work:</b>	
Countries and Areas as Reorganized by the Nation.....	232
Countries in which Seventh-day Adventist Work is established .....	206
Divisions .....	13
Union .....	114
Conferences, Mission and Fields .....	575
International Development of Personel .....	134
Adventist Volunter and Youth Services .....	853
<b>Educational Programme:</b>	
Schools operated by the Church .....	7,804
Colleges and Universities.....	110
Worker training institutes .....	47
Secondardy Schools .....	1,748
Primary Schools .....	5,899
Total Enrolment .....	1,673,580
Food Industries .....	21
<b>Health Ministry:</b>	
Hospitals and Sanitariums .....	167
Clinics and Dispensaries .....	351
Nursing Homes and Retirement Centers .....	132
Orphanages and Children's Homes .....	42
Out-patience visit .....	16,079,916

<b>Humanitarian Work:</b>	
Countries/areas where Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is involved .....	118
Number of Projects Funded .....	2,167
Number of Direct Beneficiaries .....	51,812,987
Value of Assistance Provided .....	\$272,692,239
Media Centers .....	13
<b>Publishing Work:</b>	
Number of Publishing Houses .....	63
Languages and Dialects used in publications (including Igbo) .....	372
Languages and Dialects used in publication and oral work .....	910
Literature Evangelists .....	6,975
<b>Sabbath Schools:</b>	
Sabbath Schools .....	140,769
Sabbath School Membership .....	19,563,034

#### **Evangelism Strategies and Results (2010)**



#### 4.5.2 Seventh-day Adventist Church World Membership Statistical record as at Organization

**Table 5:**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Year Organized</b>	<b>Membership as at Organization</b>	<b>N0. of Churches</b>
1	East-Central African Division	2003	2,120,609	9210
2.	Euro-African Division	1928	172, 616	2464
3.	Euro-Asian Division	1990	143,459	1972
4.	Inter-American Division	1922	2,608,127	8625
5.	North-American Division	1913	1,012,238	5080
6.	Northern Asia-Pacific Division	1919	549,228	1760
7.	South American Division	1916	2,492,178	8235
8.	South Pacific Division	1922	385,872	1827
9.	Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division	2003	1,912,831	6845
10.	Southern Asia Division	1986	1,003,536	2512
11.	Southern Asia-Pacific Division	1919	1,014,922	6089
12.	Trans-European Division	1928	99,998	1348
13.	West-Central Africa Division	2003	740,638	2952

**Adventist Policy( 2010)**

#### **4.6 Ellen Gould White (Harmon) and the History and Mission of Seventh-day Adventist Church:**

According to Amanze (n.d.) Ellen Harmon was in her teenage years at the time of the Great Disappointment of Oct. 22, 1844. She was born on Nov. 26, 1827 to Robert and Eunice Harmon at their home which was a few miles away from Gorham, Maine. It is said that Ellen came from the ancestry of Hardy, New England pioneers. She was one of the twin girls among the eight children of her parents. At the age of 12 she was baptized by immersion on biblical conviction in the Methodist church. However, her real conversion came while she was attending a Methodist camp meeting.

Jemison (1955) states that, Ellen Harmon with other members of her family and friend had the opportunity to listen to William Miller's preaching at the Casco Street church in Portland, Maine between March 1840 and June 1842 (P. 204). When her family received Miller's message, they were consequently removed from membership in 1843 from the Methodist Church along with others who took the same decision to believe in the soon return of Jesus Christ. With Miller and 50,000 other Adventists, she suffered bitter disappointment when Christ did not return on October 22, 1844.

During the early years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the church witnessed the manifestation of God's power through the Ministry of Ellen Gould Harmon (1826 – 1915) who was later called Ellen Gould White, when she got married in August, 1846 to James White.

At 17 years Ellen was endowed with a prophetic gift. Just after the disappointment of 1844, Ellen Harmon, though, the youngest amongst the rest of the believers, is said to have been used by God in her prophetic office to lead and encourage the "little flock", which later became the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in its cradle, to the understanding of their experience and

growth. Ellen White saw her work as that which was more than those of a prophet, but as a messenger of the Lord (P. 220). She had over 2000 visions and used expressions as:

‘I saw, ‘The Lord revealed to me,’ ‘The lord showed me,’ and ‘I was shown,’ indicating that she claimed to receive supernatural revelations from God, which she believed it was her duty to pass unto individuals, groups, churches, or to the church as a whole. She related a large number of visions and dreams that came to her, and told of specific instructions sent by God, for the guidance of the Adventist people. (p.219)

She is best known through her books which are over seventy-five volumes. As early as 1914, George Whartson James, who was personally acquainted with Gould White, made this comment: “This remarkable woman, though almost entirely self-educated, has written and published more books and more languages, which circulate to a greater extent than the written works of any woman of history” (p.294).

Though of little education, she was a prolific writer and had covered different areas of human endeavors in her writings. She wrote on education, sciences, health, astronomy, prophecy, especially on areas that have beaten human imaginations. She also wrote personal letters to individuals from different walks of life, and these letters have remained as corpus for counsels on similar situations, counsels and testimonies to the church. She has also written commentaries on the entire Bible.

Jemison considers her prophetic significance in three areas: (1) to direct attention to the bible, (2) to aid in understanding the Bible and (3) to help in applying the Bible principles in our lives (p. 371).

#### **4.7 Membership into Seventh-day Adventist Church:**

Membership into Seventh-day Adventist Church is on spiritual basis.

The serious solemn obligation of church membership should be impressed on every one who applies for admittance to the church. All should be faithfully taught what it means to become a member of the body. Only those who have evidence of having experienced the new birth, and who are enjoying a spiritual experience in the Lord Jesus, are Prepared for acceptance into the church membership. Thorough instruction in the fundamental teachings and related practices of the church should be given to every candidate for church fellowship. The Adventist Church manual (2010) states that, before one is admitted into the Adventist church the person should be informed of the principles for which the church stands (p.29, 30). Entry into local church membership requires teaching, belief in Jesus Christ, baptism by immersion in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, as gospel requirement.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 Seventh-day Adventist church in Igboland, 1923-2010

The main issues of the research work will be discussed in this Chapter. Here the writer hopefully shall examine how the gospel was preached and received in Igboland. Its time of entry, challenges at entry among other things shall also be examined, in order to be able to determine how much missionary work was done by the Church within the period considered in this study. This is necessary so as to assess the challenges facing the church as it grows into the future.

It has been established in this thesis that Seventh-day Adventist Church came into Igboland in April, 1923. Nyekwere states that Jesse Clifford and the wife became the first Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to settle in Igboland. Jesse Clifford chose Aba as his base for missionary activities. Clifford (as cited in Nyekwere), reports his first missionary experience in Igboland:

It is two months now since we landed in the Niger Delta and by this time our young people in the British Isles will be waiting for some word regarding the work in this part of the field. My wife and I are located at Aba. Aba is a large market town with good roads, a railway, and postal services. We are sure that God has led us in the selection of this place for our headquarters... on coming here we were glad to find two Sabbath keepers who had learned of the truth through a former Sabbath-keeper from Gold Coast. (p.57)

He further explained that these members, who had learned of the Sabbath truth, brought others. Empty boxes were used for want of seats to avoid turning any person away. He stressed an urgent need to acquire a larger place of worship as well as a better place to live. Nyekwere reports that the Lord answered that prayer through the indigenous Chiefs of Umuola at Ogbor-Hill area of Aba who granted him a suitable piece of land to erect a place of worship and where to live. He also reported that Clifford commenced the first of a series of Bible studies in the

home of an interested person (no name mentioned). During the first day of Bible study, fifteen adults were present to hear the study. The adults manifested a very intelligent interest in the word of God and were eager to attend the bible class every week. Some of them were people of good education whom he had met through the distribution of Seventh-day Adventist tracts (p.57).

Initially, Clifford had problems trying to meet the demands generated by the interest shown by various ethnic groups that occupy the Igboland. He confirmed that there were many Sabbath-keeping groups located hundreds of miles east and west of Aba. The groups had strange ideas and customs which intermingled with their Sabbath keeping. These groups were located at Omoku in Ogbaland, Abua and Elele in Ikwereland (Rivers State) far away from Aba. From Omoku, G.W. Chinwah had written a letter requesting for tracts and journals early in 1923. In his visit experience Clifford (1923) said:

I have just returned from a trip among some of them. Within a journey of 200 miles I found three companies of Sabbath keepers numbering about 150. Many of them learnt of the Sabbath about one year ago. These groups had not met Seventh-day Adventists before. With little Bible knowledge, they had formed a Church organization of their own, trusting largely to the guidance of dreams and visions. (p.4)

Clifford gave them Bible Studies and their responses confirmed the fact that they were eager to receive the truth. Clifford and the wife had a challenge to have comfortable home. They had lived in a native house, “with leaking roof, dirty floor which made it difficult to keep things clean, and the “sun never enters our bed-room” (p. 3, 4). They managed to stay in this native-bush house for about seventeen months before moving to their new home on a piece of land at Ogbor Hill. The Seventh-day Adventist Church therefore, began its ministries in Igboland through the missionary activities of Clifford and his wife. From their headquarters at

Aba they were able to plant churches and organize companies and groups already formed by the indigenes across Igboland.

### **5.1.2 Evangelistic Activities**

#### **1. Ngwaland, Ahoada, Etche, Mba and Ikwere**

Despite the fact that some points here had been highlighted earlier, they are repeated for the sake of clarity. Clifford's early missionary efforts yielded fruits within a year of his arrival to Igboland. Clifford (1925) reports:

This year has also seen the first fruits of our work. Our visiting brethren have been able to baptize fourteen souls. These are intelligent people, able to read their Igbo Bible; they are faithful in returning tithes and offerings and telling others about the message. (p.6, 7, 9)

These fourteen souls baptized in 1924 became the first converts of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland. The baptisms took place in Aba, at the river side popularly called waterside. Clifford penetrated Ngwaland successfully in the 1920s and was able to establish the presence of the Adventist Church with his early converts. In 1926, the Edmonds joined the Cliffords in the missionary work at Aba district, possibly to push the work faster. The first camp meeting ever held by the Adventist Church in Nigeria took place in Igboland (Aba) in 1928. In a paper titled *first camp meeting in Nigeria*, Mc Clements (1928) reports of first camp meeting at Aba:

Last December we held our first camp meeting in Nigeria. This was convened at Aba and proved a real success. All the members in that district entered enthusiastically into the program from beginning to the end... we rejoiced to see over five hundred people present. The spirit of the Lord was in our midst and moved on many hearts. Following the Sabbath morning service conducted by Pastor Clifford, an appeal was made for deeper consecration and the response was great. (p.6)

Mc Clements further noted that at the close of the appeal during the camp meeting, twenty precious souls stood for baptism. No time was wasted; they were taken to the River and were baptized. After baptism an ordinance of humility and the Holy Communion service was conducted for the old and new members.

The Adventist work in Igboland became more challenging as the days go by. Clifford in 1929 reports of another two successful camp meetings at Abua and Aba in December 1929. In this report he said, two brief but encouraging camp meetings have recently been conducted in this field. The first was held at Abua near new Calabar. “Our work there has gone slowly in the face of heathenism and language difficulties, but it is showing encouraging progress since the coming of the Edmonds to that field (Elele District). At the centre were gathered one hundred believers speaking different languages, but one in heart, who listened attentively to the messages presented, while thirty six followed their Lord in the ordinance of baptism” (p.3).

The following weekend about seven hundred and sixty believers gathered together in a large booth at Aba for the same purpose of camp meeting Clifford recollects. Igbo language was the common language at the camp meeting. In this camp meeting fourteen souls were baptized. In May 1929, Clifford and his team arrived the home of Chief Okpori Mgbeke Odum of Umuamadi, Umuka in Mba Etche. Here the team of lay preachers organized an Adult Education program for interested indigenes of Mba, Etche. The language of communication here was Igbo. Reporting the missionary work in Etche, Okpori (1929) observes that, within an interval of six months, Solomon Oluo, the son of Chief Okpori learned *A B GB D* letters of Igbo alphabet. Igbo Bible was bought for him and he started intensive studies. Still in 1929, the first Seventh-day Adventist Church was planted at Mba, Etche, through the Ministries of Clifford. Solomon Okpori was among the first indigenous members that embraced the faith and were baptized (p.3).



The work in Elele district in 1930 was supervised by the Edmonds. Elele district was made up of Abua, Ekpeye, Ogba and churches in Ikwereland. Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Elele began in 1923 with the visit of Clifford, it could not attain a strong Sabbath School status until 1926. This was encouraged by the posting of the Edmonds to Elele town (p.4-5).

While in Elele district, Edmonds (1931) reported of the bitter experiences witnessed in that field in 1929:

In opening our work in Elele we had some very vivid experiences of those forces, which are arrayed against us. Yet notwithstanding the bitter sorrow occasioned by the loss of some who were poisoned, when even our own lives were felt to be in danger, the Lord gave to us a deeper revelation of His presence and power. Not one of our converts wavered under that demonical spell which had been created by a strong emphasis upon native beliefs. (p.5)

He recalls that despite the bitter experiences, so many people were happy with the Adventists and their messages of hope. Several young people and the old declared their interest in joining the Adventist Church almost on regular basis. He also emphasized that the paramount Chief of Elele who was a Muslim, also showed interest in the Adventist teachings (p.6). Following this interest and the way they were received, Clifford saw a splendid opening at Elele for School work. To him circumstances became favorable in the area at the time for such venture. With the membership he had there, he was convinced that starting a School at Elele was the best for the Church. Hence that would assist them make more converts. Considering that the Church already has quite a number of members in that part, they therefore, decided to open a school to train the young ones among their members for service.

By March 1931, realizing that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had a Sabbath School membership of about 1,500, with only one primary school located at Aba, they decided to go for a second one at Elele. The School at Aba was started in 1927. Considering the structures

already in place, Clifford lamented the lack of accommodation. He recalled that the School could only accommodate 120 pupils which was not enough and was full all the time (p.7.)

It is hurting to note that, the School in Aba Centre was for only boys because it had one hostel apartment. In view of this, Mc Clements had a burden of providing a Girls' boarding School. He lamented how after the young girls had passed Standard One or Two, the Church could not do more for them. In his observation many of them went back to the village and ended up marrying heathens, thereby leaving the Church. Further in his observation, most of their teachers were married to illiterates or heathen wives. This led to the loosing of such prospective indigenous teachers. Mc Clements maintained that Adventist young men needed "good intelligent Christian wives to help them in their homes and in their work" (p.5).

Furthermore, he observed that there were unhealthy rituals these girls were exposed to before they are moved to their husband's homes. In Aba District, Igboland, he said that the heathen husbands fed their brides with all kinds of food before taking them home. Some are fed on snails and other delicacies for five or six months before marriage. (Most of these foods are considered unclean by the Church). During this time they did not work but spent their time in eating, sleeping, and talking to friends. He reiterated that this custom could not provide suitable wives for young Adventist men. He therefore saw a great need for a Seventh-day Adventist Girls' boarding School. (p.6)

Apart from Schools, the medical work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church also helped the Cliffords in the 1920s to enter into many villages proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. A lot of people were healed through the medical services of the Church. Among them were people who were tortured by demons, and those who were infected by ordinary ill-health. Through the medical work the church made so many converts before the middle of the twentieth century. It is

right to observe that the health sector of the Church's work served as an opening wedge while the educational sector served as the retaining wedge.

It was reported that the Seventh-day Adventist medical and educational work were growing rapidly in Igboland. Thousands of baptisms also took place. Obstacles were being overcome. Igboland seemed to be a breeding ground for Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the twentieth century. Edmonds assisted Clifford by superintending the Adventist work in Elele District. He and his wife lived in a small house at Mgbuigwe in Elele. He was transferred to Aba in 1932. Pastor A. Vine took over the overseeing of the Elele District in the same year. Strahle (1932) observes that:

In the Southeastern Mission, where Brother L. Edmonds is Director and Brother Vine heading a Mission station (Elele District), most remarkable results are being obtained through their missionary efforts. They believe that now with the distribution of literature the whole country will be set aflame. Thus, causing the people to seek for the third angel's message. (p.4)

During this period, it appears there was great religious awakening among the Igbo indigenes and series of calls were made to the missionaries requesting for teachers. Dick who visited Igboland from Jengre in 1931 was overwhelmed by the heavy population of Adventists he met in Igboland. He confirmed that the Church work in Igboland was centered in two stations, Aba and Elele. Nwabeke (personal communication, October 10, 2010) explained how excited Dick was as he observed that Pastors Edmonds and Vine were overwhelmed in their efforts to respond to the many calls along with their other general mission duties. Dick also noted that the work had so much developed that the buildings were no longer suited for service for which they were used. He saw an urgent need for expanding or replacing them with more adequate buildings. After spending a few days at Aba, Dick was taken to Elele and he was pleased to see the new Church, and School building on the station, which was almost completed. In Elele,

series of evangelistic and revival meetings were held in some of the leading nearby Churches. Souls were baptized from those meetings. From Elele, Edmonds and Dick returned to Aba where a Camp meeting was organized. This meeting was the largest so far witnessed among the Adventists in Nigeria. On Saturday of the Camp meeting 3,000 adherents were present. While on Sunday morning, 2000 worshippers witnessed the baptism of 124 converts.

At Umuobiakwa, Agharaumunna (personal communication, December 8, 2009) revealed that an Elementary School was started by the missionaries. The daily attendance ranged from between seventy and ninety pupils. The Christian education programs at Umuobiakwa became so influential on the pupils that one of them, Luke Wigwe, on accompanying his father to a new yam festival refused to eat meat sacrificed to idol. He drank only water during the two days the feasting lasted. Luke's father was so impressed that he related the incident to the Adventist teachers and to the Chief of the village. The Chief reacted positively by donating a large piece of land for the erection of a School building in Umuobiakwa. Worthy of mention also is 1933 camp meetings attended by Hyde. Hyde who served in the Southwestern region of the country was thrilled at the turnout of believers at this camp meeting ground. According to him, that was his first time seeing such a crowd in any Adventist gathering in Nigeria. Sunday morning according to him all marched down to a stream where one hundred and forty-four believers were baptized into the membership of Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As earlier stated, by 1935, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland had made some progress. Many companies and Branch Sabbath Schools had come into existence. In Elele there was an upsurge in religious activities and a great desire among the people to become Christians. Vine (1935) noted that in Elele District, there were hundreds of villages and thousands of people to be reached. He observed that their main source of income was the palm oil. He was happy to

also observe that the people were very religious, very susceptible to Christianity and very eager to listen to the word of God. He therefore stood by these words:

In this country, unlike Western, civilized lands, we do not have to create interests: in fact we spend all our time trying to cope with interests and calls in all sorts of unheard-of places, among people who speak five distinct languages and many dialectical variations. We have twenty-four companies of baptized and Sabbath-School members, and many places to which we are planning to go immediately in answer to the insistent calls, which have been coming in during the past year. At present, there are six towns in which the people have built Churches before coming to ask for a teacher... The Spirit of God is leading in a definite way in Nigeria – we are only followers. (p.3)

Mc Clements (1936), in his review of the missionary activities in Igboland in 1936 displayed happiness in the way Seventh-day Adventist Church has continued to record Systematic progress. He recalled his overwhelming joy during the camp meeting of December 1935. People turned out in mass. More than or about 4,000 adherents were present. That Camp meeting was blessed with 122 baptisms. He remembers that at the camp meeting Centre in Elele the same year (December 1935), 46 persons were also baptized. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland, no doubt, from its inception in 1923 has had success in soul winning and planting of Churches. By 1936, it is on record that the church had over 1,000 baptized Converts in Elele District. In 1936 also, on a head-count, more than 10,000 Sabbath School members in two Camp meetings held in Igboland (Elele and Aba) (p.12-13).

## **2. Umuahia – 1925-1943:**

Nnaji (2003) states that, in Umuahia the Adventist Church began in Ohiya by 1925. According to him, certain circumstances (not documented) forced their ancestors to detach from the Anglican Church in 1925 to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The first two persons that embraced Seventh-day Adventism here were, William Umesi Adimibe and Benson

Nwaekpe Ogbuokiri. Robert Wosu, a Literature Evangelist had interest in the Church and began visiting the Ohiya Church from Seventh-day Adventist Church at Umuobiakwa. He distributed tracts to the members there. Some of these tracts he sometimes sold to them. Most times he could spend two or three nights before returning to his town. Later, Wilson O. Uzuegbu and Pastor L. Edmond began visiting the Church in Ohiya from Aba. Converts were made from the village and Pastor Tikili was sent to baptize them into the membership of Seventh-day Adventist Church. Anderson Amajuoyi who lived at Aba then brought some worshippers at Ogbodi (Umuahia) to join the Church at Ohiya. In 1928, Robert Ugwuala and his wife were sent to Ohiya as the first Seventh-day Adventist Missionaries to the place. They remained there until 1930 (p.9).

He further records that, in 1930, Teacher Robert Nwosu was sent to head the Ohiya Church. In 1934, Teacher Nwosu opened a School in the area. The membership of the Church then was about one hundred. Within the period, the Church evangelized: Ogbodi, Ubakala, old Umuahia, Umungwa, Umuede Nkpa, Obiohuru, Okigwe, Igbere, Ikwuano, to mention but a few. People from these areas were attending Church at Ohiya until a Church was built in their area. By 1939, Teacher Nwosu was transferred to Aba. Leader Woru was sent to replace him. In 1943, the Church had its headquarters at Umuoriehi, where they felt was more central to accommodate those other Church members from afar (p.9).

### **3. Owerri – 1933-1934.**

Anukam (1990) notes that, the Seventh-day Adventist Church made its first humble beginning in Owerri area (Emeohe-Emii) in 1933. It was through two literature evangelists, Frank Ihuoma and Johnson Ogbuokiri who came to Emeohe-Emii by selling their Christian religious books. During one of their visits, they met one Nelson Nmegwa Onwubere who was a

Baptist teacher. Through routine visits, distribution of tracts and other religious books, the literature evangelists and Nelson Nmegwa Onwubere became close friends. By this relationship Onwubere released his house to the literature evangelists to serve as a transit camp. He states that one striking event that attracted the attention of Nelson Onwubere was that each time they spent a night in his house, they observed their early morning watch prayers...and sang with their hand horn speakers” (P.I). Pastor Edmunds, who was formally at Aba, visited Emeohe-Emii with the literature evangelists in 1934. Nelson Onwubere became the first Adventist in Emii. Pastor Edmunds conducted a religious meeting in the area and about 104 people (children and adults) attended. Some people were also baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist faith. Anukam commends Nelson Onwubere as an “epitome of unprecedented Christian exhibitions, a pillar of light, encouragement, and success” (p.21).

To him, he was an orator per excellence who hardly lost any argument. The Emii Community donated land for the building of Seventh-day Adventist Church, on the condition that they will also establish Schools for them like the C.M.S. and R.C.M did to their host communities. It is interesting to note that in 1934, a school was established in fulfillment to the request made by the indigenes of Emeohe and Emii. The Church continued to grow in size and number until districts were carved out of it. The districts were: Amuzu, Amala, Awara and later Owerri Township were created out of Emii District.

#### **4. Akwa Ibom – 1937-1942.**

Eko discovered that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1937 found its root in Akwa-Ibom. Curious as they were, Josiah Akpan from Nto Akan and James Una Ama from Nto Udo and some other members of Obuma Church, who in 1937, heard of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, went to Aba to get further information about the Church. The delegation met with

Pastor L. Edmonds, who by this time had taken over from Pastor Jesse Clifford. He was invited by these curious and future Adventists to visit Nkwot and meet with them. In his visit to Nkwot in August 1937, he met with the good news that these curious and future Adventists were ready to become Seventh-day Adventists. The leaders of the group included: Jonah Udoudo Uwah, David Ikono, Daniel Jonah, Abraham Udo Idiong, Uko Essien and Dickson Akpan. These, among others accepted solidarity with the Seventh-day Adventist Church as members on August 9, 1937. This was in the presence of Effiong Edet Ekanem, an Efik man and teacher by profession, who was an interpreter for Pastor L. Edmonds.

In 1938, Edet Ekanem, who was the first convert into Seventh-day Adventist Church from Calabar, was temporarily appointed to be visiting this new group from Aba where he stayed. In 1939, the Church was organized. New members joined the Church while some old ones left. According to Eko the reasons for the withdrawal of some Obuma group members from Seventh-day Adventist Church came as the foreign missionaries taught them the word of God, and dissuaded them from playing Ibit (native drumming), prophesying in the way they were doing, forbidding dancing, and making the recitation of Ten commandments a condition for getting baptized into the Church. Some of the Obuma group members became members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church while others remained as Obuma group members (p.141).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was established in this territory with nearly one thousand members (p.143). Later it was organized into Ikot Ekpene District, which at the time was a designation for the division of the work of the Church comprising all Anang territories. Ekanem was the first district leader. The new Church congregation was kept under the leadership of James Ananaba from Akanu Ndoki. He was there as an Evangelist. At this time, an Evangelist was one who had not received any Ministerial licence into Church work. In



October 1937, a second Evangelist was sent to the group at Nkwot as the new members were relocated to the present site with zinc roof after many years. The Church which was roofed with zinc sheet was formerly roofed with thatch. It was dedicated for worship on December 18, 1939.

Eko pointed out that, in order to strengthen the work in Anang territory, Abel Oluikpe was also sent there to serve as a Literature evangelist. In March 1939, the Pioneer members were baptized at Nji. Jacob Ukegbu was the first permanent Evangelist sent from Aba to this new group until Pastor Thomas L. Gillet came in 1940. He settled at Ikot Ekefre. In 1942, John Enang, who lived with Pastor Gillet from 1941, was employed as an Evangelist. He was employed as an interpreter for Pastor Gillet. The first headquarters of Seventh-day Adventist missionary work was at Nji in Okon in the defunct Ikot Ekpene Division of Eastern Nigeria. However, when Pastor Gillet came, another site was chosen at Ikot Ekefre, very close to Ubon in Akwa village. The choice of this place by Pastor Gillet was based on its proximity to surrounding streams. It was here that a mission headquarters was built. Here too, the first Seventh-day Adventist Primary School in the area was built and established in 1942. Ekanem and Josiah Idiong were the first teachers (p.142).

## **5. Anambra – 1954-1982**

Akwarandu (2010) says that before Nigerian civil war of 1966-1970, the Seventh-day Adventist Church had registered her presence in Onitsha. The Church which started about 1954 faced the challenge of accommodation. Incidentally, the arrangement for a temporary site or a permanent site failed and the people got frustrated and disappeared. These are “Colporteurs and some business men who occasionally met in some members’ houses whenever they came on business trip to Onitsha” (p.4). However, these early pathfinders were not domiciled in this area.

They visited from Enugu and Aba, and because they were not residents, they could not run a successful Church. Hence the Church collapsed for want of manpower.

He recollects that after the Nigeria Civil war in 1970, Pastor Nwosu was sent to Onitsha to pioneer the work there. The believers met in the Pastors house for worship. Some of these early worshippers, who are still alive today include: Ugo Igwe, Peace Ezeh Ihesiulo, Ola Kalu and John Ironidi. In 1973 when the Pastor's house could no longer contain them, another accommodation was provided for them at Government Primary School Fegge. Enoch Igwe and Moses Johnson were appointed to lead the small branch. Pastor Emelogu took over from Nwosu in 1973 and there was a marked progress. A land was secured at Onitsha and a church building was erected there. By October 11, 1980 the church was organized. In 1982, a Branch Sabbath School was established at Nkpor in a piece of land donated by Christian Okeke. From Onitsha the church has spread to Nkpor, Oba, Nnewi, Awka, Umueze, Nibo, Iyiowa, Ihiala, Ukpore, Awka-Etiti, Abagana, Umudi-oka, Nnamdi Azikiwe University campus, Ufuma and Obosi (pp. 10-16).

## **5.2 Seventh-day Adventist Institutions in Igboland**

Like other Churches, it is in the character of the Adventists to establish qualitative education with sound health. However, the two shall be discussed in this section.

### **a. Educational Institutions: 1945-1955**

Seventh-day Adventist educational work in Igboland started around 1923 with the coming of Pastor Jesse Clifford. It was with his assistance that Daniel Onyeodor started the first Bible Class, which of course, was the first Seventh-day Adventist educational institution in Aba by 1923. However, the Church's philosophy of education reflects her attitude to life. It sees education as the harmonious development of the mental, spiritual, and physical aspects of man.

No one aspect of a man's life can be removed from another without causing some harm. Therefore, every child should be given an opportunity to develop and aim at all round efficiency as a citizen, fully conscious of his civic duties. He should also be eager to make a contribution to the moral worth of the society in which he finds himself. To this end, the church's earliest endeavours involved not only Christian evangelization but also educational and medical work. By 1967, the Seventh-day Adventist Church operated thirty-two Primary Schools and two post-Primary institutions in Igboland.

Okwandu (1974) states that, the Adventist educational institutions at Ihie, came into existence in 1948. It was known and called "Nigerian Training College of Seventh-day Adventists" (p.3). Until 1948, it has been functioning at Oke-Bola, Ibadan, Oyo State since 1932. As the name imply these institutions (Seventh-day Adventist Teacher Training College, Ihie. Adventist High School, Ihie and College Practicing School, Ihie) served the whole of Nigeria, drawing both students and staff from Eastern Nigeria, Western Nigeria, and Northern Nigeria. They even served other West African Countries as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, and Cameroon (p.3). Thus from their inception they had an international outlook. Also in 1948 the first set of students were admitted for the Teachers' Grade Three Course. In 1949, Evangelists (Ministers of Religion) were also offered an opportunity to receive further education in their own particular vocation. This section of the college was phased out in 1955. Started in 1948 also was the College Practicing School, the workshop of the Teacher Training College. Last of the sister institutions was the Adventist High School which was founded in 1953. It is pertinent to note that all the buildings at the Teacher Training College, the High School, and the Practicing School were completely financed with Church funds, except the High School Biology Laboratory block which was financed by the Eastern Nigerian Ministry of Education 1962-63 (p2). In 1953 a

Church building, built in the School premises and equipped by the members of Seventh-day Adventist Church was dedicated. This was outside the School chapels. It would be necessary to mention here that the Seventh-day Adventist Church Ihie, Ngwaukwu came into existence before the Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions in Ihie. Nzota (n.d.) states that earlier than 1937, Seventh-day Adventist Church was built in Umuode, Ihie. The first teacher was Frank Sunji who lived in “Mama Nzotas” house and later lived at “Akirika Quarters” near the college site. By 1947, expatriate Missionaries arrived to plan for the expansion of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Evangelism and Education. Some of the White Missionaries include: Adam Rudy, Chielson, popularly known as Engineer, Augustine Brendel, who first worshipped at the church in Umuode, Ihie. Because of envisaged expansion, the Adventist local membership and the missionaries agreed on a central site for the Church building. A church house was raised, named “Doctor Forsythe Memorial church. Doctor Forsythe donated the money used in building the church” (p.2, 3). It was located on a central place to serve the Seventh-day Adventist membership drawn from the surrounding villages: Ihie, Abayi, Amapu, Amaoji, Ntigha, and Umuchima. Brendel was the first Church Pastor and also the principal of Seventh-day Adventist Church preliminary Evangelist Course (P.E.C.) at Ihie. Brendel and a team of Evangelists in training went to Lagos and brought the building plan of the “Catholic Cathedral” at Marina Street, Lagos for the proposed church house at Ihie. The plan was approved by the Church Board and used for the construction of the Forsythe Memorial Church, Ihie (F.M.C.I). As the Church was expanding, the Schools that were established became part of the Seventh-day Adventist community. The staff and students worshiped together with the surrounding villages in the church (p.3).

It is “important to point out that the Schools were a part of Seventh-day Adventist Church Community, not the Church as a part of the school.” While Brendel was concerned with evangelism, training evangelists, and other pastoral duties within Ihie district, Downing was incharge of the educational programme of Adventists in the Nigerian Training College, Ihie. He erected school buildings and staff quarters from funds received from West African Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists. The Forsythe Memorial church was dedicated on August 2, 1953 for a holy use, a place of worship for all peoples. During the dedication service, which was very colourful, Amala Ihie, (non-Adventists) presented a life cow to the Church in appreciation for the erection of such a magnificent church building in their village. The first important religious activity conducted in the Forsythe Memorial church was the “ordination service of Zaachaeus Imo into the gospel ministry in 1954” (p.5).

Since its dedication, the church has really served as a worship center and a house of prayer for which purpose it was built. It should be mentioned that the Adventist institutions at Ihie occupy an extensive campus measuring 122.58 acres. Donor Communities are: Ihie, Abayi, Ahiaba, and Amapu, all in Ngwa ukwu Community Council, in the then Northern Ngwa Division.

Other Viable Educational Institutions established by Seventh-day Adventists in Igboland include: Adventist Secondary Technical College (ASTEC) Owerrinta, Adventist Comprehensive High School (ACHS), Elele, and Adventist Technical Secondary School (ATESS), Ebem Ohafia. Nwangwa (2010) states that, the Adventist Secondary Technical College (ASTEC), Owerrinta was established in 1993. In 1998 the school got an approval to write the Senior School Certificate examination. It is located along Aba-Owerri Express way, opposite Naval School of Logistics, Owerrinta – Aba, Abia State. As a result of their open admission system among other

things, they often have students attending this school from up to 33 states in Nigeria. Its first Principal was Daniel Arungwa, who handed over to the school's present Principal, Kennedy Nwangwa. Presently the School has a population of over 2000 students. Commenting on the activities of Adventist Secondary Technical College, Owerinta, he emphasized that the Adventist Secondary Technical College, Owerinta was established with a mission to:

Providing our young people the best secondary level education that will develop their mental, spiritual, physical and social powers to meet the challenges of higher education and self-reliance in this world and prepare them for the world we are expecting. This is the focus of the work we do here, trying to offer a broad-based education that spans from pure Secondary through vocational, commercial and basic technical subjects (p.2).

The School deliberately tries to integrate faith and moral values into their teaching and learning acts. Nwangwa who is the current ASTEC principal sees this as necessary so that “the students who pass through the school will be able to imbibe a culture of hard work, industry, honesty and fairness in learning and reporting among other values” (p.3). He claims this is a mission they started with and have continued to strive to maintain it all these years and are determined to be focused on keeping it up. To him he insists that, it is a mission to provide all-round education that caters for the development of the students in the following ways:

1. Mentally, by working on the development of the thinking and reasoning faculties to grasp and assimilate facts and processes.
2. Physically, by consciously exposing the learner to the different physical activities that will not only help him to be useful to himself but also help him to maintain optimum physical health.
3. Socially, by providing a mixed environment where male and female students interact to develop healthy social relationships that will prepare them to take a right place in their

society. It prepares them to be agents of social adjustment and of service to their fellow men and women; nurturing an intelligent dedication to the work of God on earth and developing a practical preparation for conscientious service to God and their fellow men and women.

4. Spiritually, by providing a religious background that will enable the students take positive steps towards restoring man to the image of his maker by leading him to accept Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, as Lord and Savior, and to submit themselves to divine will, and grace through which they can grow as true, regenerated Christians. These are the basic goals of Adventist education.

Adventist Comprehensive High School (ACHS) Elele, was established in 1999. The school is located along old Estate Road, Elele, Rivers State. The principal of the school as at date is Godwin Kakiri. Another major institution of the Church at the Secondary level is Adventist Technical Secondary School (ATESS), Ebem, Ohafia. It was established in 2004. Its present principal is Okorie Anyaogu.

Anyaogu (2010) reflecting on the activities of the school states that the School is blessed with committed teachers and non-tutorial staff numbering 51. The result of their commitment is reflected in the performance of their students both academically and morally. They had almost one hundred percent pass in the 2010 West African School Certificate examination result. In fact, because of their performance, most of them have gained admission into the tertiary institutions. The school ranks among the best today around Ohafia vicinity. The principal laments their total dependence on school fees, and promised to invest in certain projects that could generate fund to the school. He however decried the persistent breach of trust by some

parents in settling the debts of their wards. This has posed an untold threat to the school. He therefore urged parents to clear their debts to assist the school's financial stability (p.4).

### **1. Proposed Clifford University**

Clifford as earlier discussed in this work pioneered the Seventh-day Adventist Missionary work in Igboland. Due to his dedication and selfless service in Igboland, the Adventists have decided to name their first University in Igboland after his name: Clifford University. Udoh (2010) expressing his joy discloses that arrangements have been concluded for the take off of this University by the year 2013. It has concluded its plans on the number of take off faculties/schools and programs to run. An interim vice chancellor has been appointed for the proposed Clifford University. The permanent site of the university is at Owerrinta, Isiala Ngwa South Local Government Area, Abia State.

**2. Educational Objectives:** Okwandu recollects that the Seventh-day Adventists during their early years in Igboland had her educational objectives which include:

1. Training or raising Light Bearers, Christian evangelists, Teachers, Medical Personnels, Social Workers, who will in turn help to eradicate ignorance, improve public health, and inculcate sound moral values in their various communities.
2. Providing educational opportunities to citizens in a wide range of communities, particularly in rural communities.
3. Providing training in vocational education – agricultural, technical, commercial, and industrial education.
4. Providing a deliberately broad-based teacher education aimed at producing morally conscious and dutiful teachers.



5. Making a conscious effort to help the citizen to realize, that he is eternally accountable for the utilization or otherwise of his opportunities, time, and talents.

The aforelisted objectives are reflected in the planning and content of Seventh-day Adventist education at all levels (nursery to university). To this Church, education is an area of worthy investment in human being, money, and service and never a source of financial gain.

#### **b. Health Care Institutions – 1955 - 2010**

The aspect of gospel work that presents basic health principles and offers practical instruction in health and sensible health habits is an avenue to a more abundant life and a sound Christian faith. From the 1860's, the Seventh-day Adventist has promoted health evangelism through its medical institutions and through its Professional Personnel. In 1866, the first health paper, "the Health Reformer" (Schwarz 1979), later Called Good Health was published. The Specific Health Journal and Temperance Advocate was first published in 1885. In 1868 Dr. George Kellogg was sent to visit the churches to promote an interest in health and in 1878 John Kellogg opened a school of hygiene for the training of health lecturers.

In 1970 the General Conference Ministerial Association and health department began to develop an integrated health and doctrine programme to be used in public evangelism. The church believes that only a sound body can render the most effective service to God and humanity. Health is related to religion in that it enables men to have a clear mind with which to understand the will of God and a strong body to do the will of God. The Adventist have always advocated for a health institution wherever her church is located.

Walter Newman, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in Igboland, in 1952, reiterated the need for the Church to begin medical work. He lamented that the missionary work had already lasted thirty years in Igboland without the great assistance received from health

services. To emphasize the need for a hospital in the area, Newman made the following observations:

But think of the barriers we could have broken down if we had an Adventist medical institution. Many who would not listen to the message would have responded had there been healing for the body. How much harder Christ's work would have been if He had done no healing... Our plan is to raise as much money as we can from the local people toward the establishment of a hospital on our old Elele station. (p.2)

However, the poor sanitary situations of the indigenous communities spurred the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to start stressing the need to build a hospital in Igboland. The foundation stone of the hospital was laid on August 16, 1955 at Ahoada. It was laid by Hon. Michael Okpara, Minister of Health of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. Harold Cherue was the first medical director of the Ahoada County Hospital. He served from 1958-1959

After the establishment of Ahoada hospital in December 16, 1957, negotiations between the Seventh-day Adventists and the Northern Ngwa county council on the establishment of a hospital at Okpuala Ngwa began in 1959. Dr. Harold Cherue of Ahoada county Hospital represented the Seventh-day Adventist Church administration while Chukwu Nwachukwu represented the county council. The community bought into the idea and agreed to set up the required buildings and equip the hospital. They also consented to subsidizing the operating cost of the institution beyond the fees charged and collected. The operation will involve among others the handling of all personnel matters. Izima (1973) states that, the agreement concerning the construction and running of the hospital was signed by the two parties on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1963. Signatories to the agreement were Stephen Akwada Ahuchaogu, the then chairperson of Northern Ngwa county council and Karis Kainem, the Treasurer of East Nigeria Mission of Seventh-day Adventist Church (p.33). The hospital started serving patients in August 1963. It

was officially commissioned by the government on July 1964. The first Medical Director of the hospital was Sherman Nagel. He remained the Medical Director of the hospital until 1969.

Izima further observes that when Okpuala Ngwa fell into the hands of the Federal troops on December 23, 1969, as a result of the civil war, the International Red Cross took over in 1970. Some workers that started the hospital moved some hospital equipment to Emii in Owerri where a skeletal medical service was maintained by Seventh-day Adventist Church. By March 1970, after the war, he mentions that some members of the staff of the hospital returned but there was no medical director available. The hospital experienced a lot of vandalization, and remained non-functional until November 3, 1972, when East Central State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Magnus Adiele, declared it a community health institution (p.34).

Nwankpa (personal communication, November 12, 2012) testified that, all had not been well in the health sector since after the civil war. Seventh - day Adventist health services in Igboland has not attained its former status, it has been paralyzed. The main reason has been the loss of the two hospitals (Ahoada and Northern Ngwa county hospitals) to their state Governments. Early in the 1980s a new health center was started at Ogbor Hill, Aba, since that of Okpuala Ngwa was lost to the Government. It started with a Motherless Babies Home. It was Pastor Hope Oriaku who started it while Madam Comfort Ohiagu took care of the first baby brought to the home. As earlier stated, the survival of the baby became big news all over the Adventist world. The survival of this baby was a credit to the home. The Motherless Babies Home created a favorable platform for the beginning of Seventh-day Adventist Health Center, Aba. Caleb Adelogun, the President of Seventh-day Adventist work in Nigeria then which headquarter was in Lagos, commissioned the Health center in 1984. It was during the time when Isaac Nwaobia was the East Nigeria Conference President.

The first medical officer to arrive at the Clinic was Emmanuel Enyinna. Although Enyinna came first, Emmanuel Nzota was appointed Acting Medical Director. Dr. Enyinna assisted him on part-time basis. In 1994, the status of the health center changed to: Seventh-day Adventist Hospital, Aba. This was possible because every facility needed to run a hospital was made available.

Osun (2011) commends the hospital management for the level of unity and spirituality he observed in the Seventh-day Adventist hospital, Aba. He records a staff strength of about 91 including 32 nurses and 3 medical doctors. He noted it was a busy hospital with outpatient attendance of 16,690 in 2010 (p.4).

### **5.3 Indigenous Leadership and Reorganizations in Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland – 1956-2010:**

#### **First Indigenous president Albert Dike**



Soureces: ENC Library (2009)

#### **1. East Nigeria Mission**

In view of the exit of the last European Missionary of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland in 1956, a landmark was reached. The Church in Igboland no longer solicited for a foreign missionary. The leadership of the Church now passed into the hands of a national. Pastor

Albert Dike shouldered the work as the first indigenous President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland in 1957. Dike's tenure of office ended in December 1963, due to his retirement. Before his assumption of office as the first indigenous President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland, the Church being Mission driven had moved from Umuola in Aba to other parts of Igboland. Such other areas include: the then Imo State (Umuahia, Ohafia, Igbere, Okigwe, Nkwere, Ugwulangu, and Owerri), Cross river (Calabar, Itumbauzo, Ikot Ekpene, and Abak), old Anambra State and parts of Benue in Benue State. He served for seven fruitful years.

Galadina and Turaki as discussed earlier concluded that, it was not only the Seventh-day Adventist Church that opted for indigenous leadership. According to them, the Independent and Faith Missions did two things to ensure indigenous leadership: (a) they developed new Church structures and organizations; (b) they trained and developed nationals to take over mission work or to take the places of missionaries.

Oriaku (personal communication, August 18, 2012) States that Albert Dike was succeeded by Philip Onwere in January 1964. Onwere could not lead for a long time. His tenure lasted for only two years (December 1965). In 1966, Pastor Zaachaeus Imo was elected to take over the mantle of leadership and he became the third national President. He was the serving President during the Nigeria – Biafra Civil war. He was so committed to his duty that he was able to save all the Seventh-day Adventist Church documents in his custody, not minding the horrors of the war. Within his tenure, there was marked growth in Church membership. The Seventh-day Adventist year book (1978) states that at the end of his period, the membership was 19,638 with 125 organized Churches. (p.239). With this membership, good financial position and considerable number of workers, the mission assumed a Conference (an administrative unit in

sevent-day Adventist Church that supervises the activities of the church in some parts of Igboland) status in 1977. It became the only Conference in Nigeria and the second in West Africa in the Seventh-day Adventist set up. The first is Central Ghana Conference. Pastor Imo was the longest serving President. He served for eleven years.

The first East Nigeria Conference President and the fourth after the missionaries left was Isaac Nwaobia. He assumed office by 1977. By the time he assumed office, East Nigeria Conference Constituency Report (1986) stated that Nwaobia started with a church membership of about 21296 with 128 organized churches. As at June 1980, further growth revealed 158 organized churches with a membership of 24,535. Nwaobia was in charge of the Conference administration with a strong team of indigenous officials until the end of his tenure in 1986 (p. 35). At the time Nwaobia left the office in 1986 for the Nigeria Union Mission Headquarters in Lagos, to become the youth director, Chioma (2000) stated that the membership of East Nigeria Conference had reached 26,959. It should be observed that the qualities of Nwaobia influenced significantly, the numerical growth of the Church in Igboland. Early in 1986, the mantle of leadership of the Church fell on Friday Ubani. His administration suffered lack of cohesion and unity within the rank and file of the administrators. The result was, like Chinua Achebe would say, the centre could not hold and things fell apart. The three officers were removed at the middle of 1987. That was one year before their tenure of office was due for expiration. As it might be expected, little or nothing was achieved during his term of office. As at the time of Ubani's premature exit from the exalted office of the President, the membership dropped. The membership went down because of inter-personal conflict that took the place of evangelism during his reign.

In order to remedy the situation, Johnson Achilihu, who then served as the Nigeria Union Mission Evangelist in Lagos was elected to take over from Friday Ubani in January, 1988 as President of East Nigeria Conference. Achilihu's administration restored unity, spirituality, and evangelistic spirit among both clergy and laity. Sanity was fully restored in the conference. Consequently, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland started growing again. Achilihu continued his good work until he retired in 1997. One of his greatest achievements was the completion of Adventist Secondary Technical College (ASTEC) Owerinta. At the time of his retirement the Seventh-day Adventist Church year-end report (1998) puts the membership of East Nigeria Conference at 51,706 with 204 organized Churches (p.48).

Njoku (2006), in his leadership comparative analysis records that early 1997, Pastor Gideon Nwaogwugwu was elected to take over from Johnson Achilihu. Under the leadership of Nwaogwugwu, the membership of the Conference rose to 61,303. The organized Churches stood at 212. His administration achieved a considerable measure of progress in the educational and medical areas. This was evident in the growth of Adventist Secondary Technical College (ASTEC), Owerinta and Adventist Hospital and the Motherless Babies Home, Aba. The reorganization of Nigeria Union Mission into two unions (Eastern Nigeria Union Mission (ENUM) and North-Western Nigeria Union Mission (NWNUM) in 2004 was his brain child. He became the first President of Eastern Nigeria Union Mission (ENUM) in 2005. At the time he moved to the ENUM to serve as President, Kingsley Anonaba, former evangelist of the Nigeria Union Mission took over from him the same year. Although he fought for the reorganization of Nigeria Union Mission into two, he never gave consent to the reorganization of East Nigeria Conference which was long overdue. Instead, he indicted those who wished it reorganized. The membership had risen to 80,000 with 66 districts and 70 pastors before he left (p.10). Kingsley

served until 2010, when he was elected Secretary of Eastern Nigeria Union Mission located at Udeagbala Road, Aba, Abia State.

Below is the East Nigeria Conference Statistical Report for 2010 as recorded by Nwarungwa (2011).

Table 6:

**A. Statistical Report East Nigeria Conference**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>2010</b>
1	Ordained Pastors	50
2	Un ordained Pastors	27
3	Missionary Credentials	18
4	Missionary License	3
5	Literature Evangelists	15
6	Contract Workers	8
7	Profession of Faith	227
8	Letters Received	305
9	Letters Given out	744
10	Death	529
11	Apostasy	474
12	Missing	1,174
13	Evangelism (action unit)	4,879
14	Public Evangelism	157
15	Revival Meetings	346
16	Revelation Seminars	34
17	Spirit of Prophecy Seminars	136
18	Churches Planted	40
19	Areas with Church Presence	4
20	Evangelism Seminars	-

Nwarungwa (2011)



## **2. Rivers State Mission and its Leadership:**

Rivers Mission was the first mission to be carved out of the old East Nigeria Mission shortly after the Nigeria civil war. It was organized in 1971 with the headquarters at Port Harcourt, the capital city of Rivers State. Alalade (2008) recorded that the first President of this mission was Wilson Limejuice. It had an initial membership of 2,866 and 22 organized churches. Before 1972, the Rivers Mission was known as Rivers-South-Eastern Mission. It was renamed Rivers Mission because the South-eastern part withdrew from the mission, for political reasons, and joined East Nigeria Mission. The leadership of the mission was changed in 1978 when Limejuice retired. Thordason from Iceland became President. Why they brought a foreigner then is not yet clear to this researcher. He was in the office till 1982, when he went on permanent return to his home. At the time Thordason was leaving, the Church membership had grown to 6,124 with 47 organized churches. After 22 years as a mission, in 1993, it assumed a Conference status. The pioneer conference president was Simeon Okochi. By the time Okochi assumed office, the membership stood at 14,036 with 72 organized churches. Okochi retired in 1996 after serving the church for 40 years. (p.63)

The mantle of leadership was passed to Reuben Eti in 1996. In 1999, Eti was re-elected president. The Seventh-day Adventist Church year-book puts the membership of the church then at 24,464 with 88 organized churches. It should be noted that Adventist Comprehensive High School (ACHS), Elele was established at the time Eti was president. Eti was a quiet, calm and unassuming leader. He led the Rivers Conference until 2002. Early 2002, at a Constituency Session, R. W. Nwuzor was elected President to take over from Eti. The membership of the church when he assumed office was 29,429 with 103 organized churches (p. 10). Nwuzor and his team continued from where Eti had stopped. Relentlessly, with the support of the laity, the

membership grew to 35,853 by 2005 when he handed over to Moses O. Okai. Okai (2009) in his year-end report analysis put the membership of the Conference at 42,937 with 133 organized churches. (p.20) Okai led the Conference as President until 2010.

Table 7:

**A. Statistical Report Rivers Conference**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>2010</b>
1	Ordained Pastors	37
2	Licensed ministers	17
3	Ordination of ministers	2
4	Missionary Credentials	12
5	Missionary License	11
6	Literature Evangelists (engaged)	17
7	Newly Employed Pastors	
8	Regular Literature Evangelists	30
9	Retired Workers	7
10	Dead Workers	
11	Sponsored students	
12	Organized churches, companies and branch Sabbath schools	365
13	Church organization conducted	
14	Total number of baptism	746

Goodhead 2012

### **3. Cross River Mission and its Leadership**

According to the Seventh-day Adventist Church year book (1989-2007), the Cross River Mission station began in 1980 with Hilary Luukko as its director. Its territory covered Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. The headquarters of the mission station was in Calabar. When Luukko left in 1983, Johnson Adeniji came in as the second director for the mission station. Gabriel Sholademi became director April 1986 to November 1988. John Obot took over from Sholademi and continued till 1993. Obot worked with Pastors and laity to achieve success. Their drive in evangelism and stewardship prepared the mission station to assume a mission status. The South East Mission was organized in 1993.

Simon Gbenedio was the first mission President which ended in 1995 with 2,565 members and 14 organized churches. Obot, who was a one time director when the mission was a mission station, was elected President in 1996. In 1998, Obot was re-elected. He began the drive for Conference status. He steered the ship of the Mission till 2000. By 2000, John Enang was elected President at a Union Constituency meeting held at Owerrinta, Abia State. The Lord blessed the ministry of Enang and in 2003, the mission assumed a Conference status. John Enang also emerged as the first Conference President of South East Conference. By the time the Conference was organized the membership stood at 5,489 with 16 organized churches (p.409). Enang continued until 2005. Enebiene Eko took over from Enang in 2005. Eko has been doing well to build on the solid foundation Enang laid for the Conference. As at December 2007, the membership of the Conference had risen to 6,889 with 16 organized churches. Presently Eko is still the President.

For the reason of clarity and avoidance of ambiguity, Eko (2011) presents the South East Conference report for 2010 statistically (P.1)

Table 8:

**A. Statistical Report South East Conference**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>2010</b>
1	Ordained Ministers	4
2	Ministers with Credentials	3
3	Licensed Missionary	1
4	Licensed Ministers	4
5	Un-ordained Ministers	10
6	Un-ordained Ministers studying Theology in Babcock University	-
7	Other Workers (non payroll)	2
8	Trained Missionary Pioneers engaged in Ministry	10
9	Evangelists	-
10	Ministerial interns	-
11	No. of current Elders	-
12	No. of Retreats (Elder)	-
13	Organized churches	16
14	Present church membership	7,375
15	Years baptism to date	101
16	Years profession of faith to date	3
17	Membership dropped by death	4
18	Missing members	-
19	Letters granted	2

20	Membership dropped by apostasy	-
21	Companies	54
22	Membership regained	-
23	Members Received by letters	-
24	Total Newly Entered Areas	-
25	No. of Districts	13
26	No. of Organized Churches	16
27	No. of Groups	2
28	No. of Companies/Branch Sabbath School	54
29	No. of Lamp Shelters under construction	-
30	No. of Areas under preparation by Pioneers	3

Eko (2012)

#### **4. East Central Mission and its Leadership**

East Central Conference in her Compendium report (2013) states that the East Central Mission was also carved out of the East Nigeria Conference. It was organized in January 1986 with Umuahia as the administrative headquarter. Its territory covers Ebonyi, Enugu states and parts of Abia. The Pioneer President was Sylvernus Chioma. It started with a membership of 6,612 with 39 organized churches. The laity and the clergy were all excited to do the work. In 1991 John Owolabi took over from Sylvernus Chioma as President. At the time Sylvernus Chioma left, the membership had risen to 8,251 with 49 organized churches. In 1994, Owolabi was not re-elected while Philemon Amanze was elected President. As a result of the high quality of Amanze's spiritual leadership, administrative competence and managerial ability, things went well with the mission. Although there were normal life challenges, Amanze's administration

coped well. In June 2001, Valentine Onwubuariri succeeded Amanze as President. His tenure terminated at the constituency meeting which was called to inaugurate the Mission to a Conference status in February 2002. Meanwhile, Onwubuariri had been taken to Owerri to head Anambra-Imo Administrative Unit, while Festus Awuloha was elected to hold brief as the President till the end of that tenure. Awuloha's tenure of office expired 2002 after 8 months. Okorie Anyaogu took over from 2002. The membership as at 2010 was 16,682 and 63 organized churches. Anyaogu was still in charge as President by 2010. The Conference established Adventist Technical Secondary School (ATESS), Ebem Ohafia in September 2004 (pp.4 - 7).

Uguru (2011) reports that the table presented below represents the statistical data of East Central Conference as at 2010.

Table 9:

**A. Statistical Report East Central Conference**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>2010</b>
1	Ordained Ministers	20
2	Licensed Ministers	15
3	Credential Missionaries	4
4	Licensed missionaries	4
5	Literature Evangelists	-
6	Retirees	11
7	Others (Contract)	2
8	Baptized membership	17,508
9	Sabbath school membership	19,589
10	Baptisms	918

11	Profession of faith	-
12	Gains (By Letter)	64
13	Losses (By Letter)	98
14	Losses (By Death)	130
15	Losses (By Apostasy)	-

Uguru 2010

## **5. Anambra-Imo Administrative Unit and its Leadership.**

Anambra-Imo Conference covers Anambra and Imo states. It started as an Administrative Unit. Udoh (2004) states that, it began in June 2001 under the leadership of Valentine Onwubuariri as Administrator. To constitute the Administrative Unit, 12 districts were ceded-six from East Nigeria Conference and six from East Central Conference. The re-organization was indeed a mark of progress. In February 2003, the Administrative Unit was inaugurated into a Conference status 18 months after the Administrative Unit took off. The Conference was faced with serious financial, personnel, and infrastructural challenges. In spite of all these odds, Onwubuariri's administration did not neglect evangelism. The membership of Anambra-Imo Conference in 2006 was 7,622 with 41 organized churches. Ephraim Okpulator took over from Onwubuariri in 2010. Hopefully the present administration is doing everything possible to overcome the teething problems of this youngest Conference (p.14).

Okpulator (2013) has the following highlights to represent the church's workforce statistically by 2010 (p.1)

Table 10:

**A. Statistical Report Anambra/Imo Conference**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>2010</b>
1	Ordained Ministers	8
2	Un-ordained Ministers	18
3	Office staff	6
4	Retired workers	5
5	Lay Evangelists	5
6	Literature Evangelists	3

Okpulator (2013)

**5.3.1 Creation of Eastern Nigeria Union Mission**

Alalade (2008) records that; the Nigerian field was part of the old West African Union of Seventh-day Adventist Church until 1972. Due to what was considered a large increase in membership and the vastness of the territory, Nigeria was separated and organized into Nigeria Union Mission. It was under the old Northern Europe –West African Division of Seventh-day Adventist Church. Lagos was chosen as its headquarters. Saunders Gustavson, from Sweden was the Pioneer President on the Nigeria Union Mission. Within the cause of time, a lot of Presidents, including indigenes piloted the affairs of the Union. In 1995, Joseph Ola emerged as the President of the Nigeria Union Mission. A lot of achievements were made within his period. Great among these achievements was the re-organization of the Nigeria Union Mission into two union missions, namely: Eastern Nigeria Union Mission (ENUM) and North-Western Nigeria Union Mission (NWNUM). In 2004 when the Nigeria Union Mission was reorganized into two unions, the membership was 223, 403 with 728 organized churches (p.82).



The Eastern Nigeria Union Mission was organized in December, 2004. Its territory covers the entire Eastern Nigeria, comprising the Anambra-Imo, East Central, East Nigeria, Rivers, and South-East Nigeria Conferences. Politically it covers nine states out of the thirty six states of Nigeria. These are: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, and Rivers state. The pioneer president of Eastern Nigeria Union Mission was Gideon Nwaogwugwu. Other pioneer officers were Bassey Udoh and George Manilla who became Secretary and Treasurer respectively. In 2010, in a Constituency meeting at the Church's headquarters in Abidjan, Udoh emerged as the President of Eastern Nigeria Union Mission with Kingsley Anonaba and George Manilla as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. With the strong and dedicated leadership of Bassey Udoh, the Church is getting to the next level.

### **5.3.2 Membership Growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland – 1981-2000**

Table 11:

Chioma (2000) presents the following as the rate of growth of Church Growth in SDA Church in Igboland

<b>Year</b>	<b>East Nigeria Conference</b>	<b>Rivers Conference</b>	<b>East Central Conference</b>	<b>South East Conference</b>	<b>Anambra- Imo Conference</b>
1981	26157	5893	-	702	-
1982	27631	6124	-	708	-
1983	28934	6385	-	728	-
1984	29914	6915	-	831	-
1985	32013	7580	-	1011	-
1986	26959	8250	6612	1082	-
1987	28983	9286	6889	1089	-

1988	30591	9831	7042	1253	-
1989	33050	10285	7484	1321	-
1990	35087	10841	7860	1511	-
1991	37389	11745	8251	1644	-
1992	39190	12869	8543	1937	-
1993	41971	14036	9273	2161	-
1994	43777	15229	9824	2369	-
1995	45480	15685	10144	2565	-
1996	47411	17199	10505	2749	-
1997	48771	18698	11146	2916	-
1998	51706	21055	11783	3657	-
1999	58592	24464	13219	4366	-
2000	54225	22243	12347	3858	-

Chioma ( 2000)

While the Seventh-day Adventist Year-Book (2001-2010) presents the rate of the church growth from 2001-2010

Table 12:

**SDA Church Growth in Nigeria**

<b>Year</b>	<b>East Nigeria Conference</b>	<b>Rivers Conference</b>	<b>East Central Conference</b>	<b>South East Conference</b>	<b>Anambra-Imo Conference</b>
2001	61303	25917	13984	4562	6396
2002	63595	29429	11933	5354	6882
2003	66643	32265	12797	5489	7235
2004	69362	32733	13243	5771	7549
2005	71865	35853	14167	5906	7708
2006	75241	35134	13807	5847	7622
2007	78180	37256	14768	6022	7884
2008	80344	38776	15334	6357	8153
2009	80455	42937	16236	6534	8506
2010	81161	47302	16682	6889	8866

Chioma (2010)

Furthermore, the Seventh-day Adventist Church Year-Book (2000-2010) has the under listed as the number of Organized Churches in the five organized conferences in Igboland within the period stated above.

Table 13:

**Organized Churches in Igboland:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>East Nigeria Conference</b>	<b>Rivers Conference</b>	<b>East Central Conference</b>	<b>South East Conference</b>	<b>Anambra-Imo Conference</b>
2000	208	88	61	16	-
2001	212	93	64	16	36
2002	225	103	47	16	39
2003	203	105	47	16	39
2004	203	114	53	16	41
2005	203	117	54	16	41
2006	205	114	53	16	41
2007	206	118	95	16	41
2008	207	128	57	16	41
2009	210	133	59	16	42
2010	213	138	63	16	44

Adventist Yearbook (2000 – 2010)

**5.4 Purpose and Functions of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland.**

Earlier, this work has demonstrated that the Church cannot be separated from the society because the Church is one of the social arenas that make up the society. In a social interpretation, Alalade concludes that the continuity and social identity of the Christian Society can be seen as part of the general social and historic life of human kind. Gustafson (as cited in Alalade) adds that the “elements of faith, commitment and belief have their approximate counterparts in other groups in the society” (p.186). He presents this as why Christianity cannot be pursued in isolation from the concrete social and cultural facts of human existence.

It will be inappropriate to discuss the purpose of the Church without touching on the functions of the Church. Even though both are closely related, the functions have to be discussed first. Dietterich (as cited in Alalade ) emphasizes on three functions of the church to include: spiritual journeying, caring, and empowering. To him the first functional area understands the church as the pilgrim people of God on a spiritual journey. The second functional area understands the church as a caring community. While the third functional area understands the church as a community that is intentionally engaged in equipping persons and groups to live with greater power and effectiveness. In another word, the church has the function of proclaiming the message of salvation to the perishing world by spoken word and practical living. It is to be a caring community to minister the love of Christ to the world, and of empowering the world for self-understanding, worth and growth. He seems to put his idea together succinctly when he states:

The Church is a social community among other social communities, but one with a peculiar vertical or religious relation within which God works uniquely for the salvation of the total human community – in preaching, mission, worship, sacrament and the behavior pattern of its life (p.188).

A church that separates itself from the society can be rightly seen to be guilty of neglecting its duty, in the light of the above functions. These functions of the church are contained in her nature and cannot be ignored if the church will be true to her mission and purpose in the world. It has been observed that among the functions of the church, Seventh-day Adventists seem to have neglected badly the social aspect of it. The church in Igboland can be said to rank high in the functions of preaching, teaching and caring (healing ministry) but very low in social service. Even though the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) have

started to break the ice, yet the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland must squarely face the challenge of social ministry, like drilling of water boreholes and providing such other amenities that could keep life going in a rural environment like other Churches do (p.190).

With the functions discussed above, it is clear that the Church cannot be removed from the political, economic, and social questions of the day. For the church to be faithful to her Lord, she needs to be in touch with the factors that currently affect most decisively the quality of human life. Niebuhr states that the purpose of the gospel is not simply that one should believe in the love of God; it is that one should love God and his neighbors as he loves himself. To him, faith in God's love toward man (human) is perfected in man's love to God and neighbor. The increase of this love of God and neighbor remains the purpose and the hope of the preaching of the gospel as understood by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland and all over the world. It is only with love that the Church is able to serve God's wider purposes – the reconciliation of all mankind to God, to themselves, and to the entire world. The missionary Church will not be able to point to God's action among humans unless it is living an intense inner life of love within the Christian community and the world in general. The Church must be truly gathered in the spirit of love before it is sent. More so meaningful fellowship must precede and accompany effective proclamation and service. Eugene (as cited in Alalade) puts it thus:

Faith for a secular age needs the arcane or hidden life of fellowship and worship. The missionary community that would readily be an instrument of Christ in the world must cultivate its inner life of *koinonia* as did the first missionary community of Christians (p.196).

Surely there is no true fellowship without love. More so, by the ongoing discussion, it appears clear why the church should maintain a positive and cooperative interaction with the society.

#### **5.4.1 Methods of Gospel Propagation by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland**

Damsteegt (1977) states that the earliest missionary endeavors of the Adventists were limited to North America. However, from the 1870s missionaries were sent to Europe and other parts of the world (p.285). The Seventh-day Adventist Church as earlier stated focuses on a two directional evangelism, namely: in reach and outreach evangelisms. Eko holds that the former is aimed at reaching those who are already members of the Church to have a heart relationship with Jesus. By so doing they prepare themselves and others for the end. The later, is geared towards those who are not members, with the same objective of preparing them for the second coming of Christ. Nevertheless the following constitute Seventh-day Adventist Church's methods of gospel propagation. They include:

##### **1. Literature Evangelism:**

Literature Evangelism, which inncludes tract Evangelism seems to have been the Church's best method of evangelization. This method was used prior to the organization of the Church in 1863. This system involves the publication of gospel messages in various perspectives to meet the cognitive, health, family, and spiritual needs of people and classes. Literature Evangelists are recruited for the distribution and sales of publications (p.114).

##### **2. Media Evangelism:**

This method includes the internet, satellite, television, radio, and mass public meetings or evangelisms. In 2003, a satellite evangelism program was beamed from Aba, Abia State. Many countries of the world watched this Satellite program as relayed by Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the end of the Satellite evangelism, Dave (personal communication, September 26, 2010) reports that more than 10,000 souls were baptized into the Seventh-day

Adventist faith. This method has been the fastest and far more reaching approach the Adventists and other Churches have adopted to reach the world for Christ.

**3. Public Evangelism/Tent Evangelism:**

These are large preaching meetings organized by the local Churches, Conferences or Unions.

They are sometimes reaping campaigns for large baptisms. Local and International evangelists are committed to such large meetings. The yearly camp meetings can be classified under these large evangelistic gatherings. The aim of such large gathering and camp meetings is soul winning for Christ. What the Adventists call camp meeting may be called retreat in other denominations.

**4. Institutional Evangelism (Medical, Educational, Hospital, and Prison Evangelism):**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church also embarks on health or medical ministries by establishing hospitals, clinics, dispensaries and sanitariums. They also embark on health educational programs, which include: how to stop smoking seminars, HIV/AIDS Seminars and workshops. They build and own hospitals, clinics, dispensaries and other care services like other churches. Wisbey (1999) says they also embark on some humanitarian services through some organized bodies such as Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM), Maranatha International, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), with development and relief driven mission. These agencies have their strategies reaching-out to everywhere in the globe. They specifically serve in poverty stricken regions, war zones and natural disaster areas and they take with them food, relief materials, medicine, clothing, and drugs. The Church also embarks on Prison evangelism by reaching-out to Prisoners with the gospel and



rehabilitation programs and outfit for several convicts, to change their attitudes to life, giving them hope for the future. These seem also to be true of other churches.

## **5. Small Group Evangelism**

As the Churches re-discover the significance of Ephesians 4:11-16, the centrality of the ministry of the lay person comes into focus. Among God's gifts to the Church are Pastors and teachers who are to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. In the calling and gifting of God, all the people of God share the life and ministry of the body of Christ. Through the centuries, the spirit of God has used Small groups of people meeting together studying the word to bring about renewal and revival (Acts 2:42-47). The groups have their biblical roots in Jesus ministry where He called a Small group of twelve men to be with Him (Mark 3:14). Their encounters with one another and with Jesus Christ equipped them to step out and serve God in their world. Today, there is need for support and challenge which comes from other Christians as relationships are built with each other. The idea of Small Group is not restricted to Christians alone. It is also used by God as the delivery room and incubator where new Christians are born into the Kingdom of God and begin to grow and mature. Hestenes (1977) states that the following aspects of Small groups may be of help in giving the Church a vision concerning what God can and is doing through this one way to renewal:

### **A. Small groups and its Special Benefits**

**1. Mobility and Flexibility** – The Church is to go into the world and bear witness to its Lord. Small groups can meet in homes, restaurants, offices and dormitories at various time of the day.

**2. Informality** - Many people feel ill at ease with the formality and order of worship of a typical Church worship. However, the living room of a neighbor's house with a limited number of people seems to put them at ease.

**3. Freedom** – Worship services seldom provide the context for raising questions, saying the unsafe and risky things, for articulating fears and doubts. Small groups provide the context for raising the disturbing questions of faith in a context of love and acceptance.

**4. Faith seems contagious** – As Christians and non-Christians meet and discuss the person and work of God, the faith and life that Christ gives to His people will draw others to Him.

**5. Training in Witness** – By sharing what is current in their faith and lives with other friends in a small group, Christians are really being trained to be more open and honest about their faith among those with whom they come in contact daily.

## **B. Small Groups in the Context of Healing**

Hestenes observes many barriers which affect human relationship with God, self, and others. They include: fear, resentment, guilt, and inadequacy. Healthy emotions and relationships contribute to the healing of persons. The Small group can provide the climate in which such healing takes place. Consider the following group conditions which foster wholeness:

1. **Acceptance and Belonging** – In the face-to-face encounter of a Small group of Christians who acknowledge their family unity in Christ; people begin to understand their own importance to God and one another. Inter personal contact is enhanced rather than inter-functionary meetings.

- a. **Self – Understanding** - People sometimes hide behind their mask and play games with one another. Authentic persons seem to face themselves honestly. Self-understanding can come through sharing current attitudes and feelings and receiving feedback from other caring persons.
- b. **Catharsis** – It is one thing to announce that God forgives you, quite another to see it expressed in a community, for the healing of guilt. The Christian Community in the Small group context can declare forgiveness and offers concrete assurance of pardon.
- c. **Support** – Paul set up the standard when he instructed the Church in Rome to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice ... “to bear one another’s burden and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). The fellowship which shares and prays together develops a mutual acceptance of responsibility for one another.
- d. **Love** – Love expressed among people who really know one another and yet care is the greatest medicine for those who feel unworthy and inadequate.

### C. **Small Groups in the Context of Fellowship and Growth**

The gift of fellowship from God to those who possess a Common commitment to Christ becomes the basis of life together. Scripture is full of rich concepts that describe the people of God. It says that they are a spiritual house being built. Together, they are living body, each of them are members of Christ’s body. Those who comprise the body are not identical entities. Different gifts have been given to each member and the parts function out of obedience to Christ who is the Head. A Small group is one of the best settings for people to discover their gifts and use them to build up other members of the body of Christ.

Nicholas (1982) states the components of Small Group life thus:

Component:	Nurture	Worship	Community	Mission
Definition	Being fed by God to grow like Christ	Praising and magnifying God by focusing on his nature, action and words.	Fellowship centered around the experience we Christians.	Reaching out with the good news of Christ's love to people in need.
Goal:	Growth of the mind and Spirit toward the image of Christ.	To bring joy to God.	To knit us together in love and build us as whole people.	To help people know God and become like Jesus.
Examples of activities	Discussing: the Bible inductively, books, lectures, tapes.  Memorizing Scripture. Sharing with each other.  Praying. Meditating.	Praying. Singing.  Reading worshipful passages from the Bible or other books.  Writing and reading poetry. Kneeling. Lifting hands.  Writing a letter to God.	Sharing with prayer partners.  Bearing each other's burdens.  Helping each other develop gifts. Eating together.  Recreating together. Going on a retreat or to a Conference. Interceding for one another.	Praying for non-Christian friends.  Praying for unreached peoples.  Reading Books on evangelism. Sharing the gospel with a specific group on campus.  Running an evangelistic booktable.  Befriending an international student. Raising money for world hunger relief. (p.38)

He therefore proposes the following seven keys to a Healthy Small Group: A Clear purpose, a good beginning, a helpful leader, clear communication patterns, worthwhile content, growing trust and caring, and centered in Jesus Christ. Committing oneself to a ministry of Small Group provides some excellent advantages usually not found in other approaches. Some of the ways Small group can benefit are: able to change structure and direction easily; can meet where convenient; allows for full exercise of priesthood of all believers, provides personal attention; brings Christianity back into homes, establishes close contacts; provides an effective

means of low-key, friendship evangelism, grows, divides and multiply; and develops specific gifts. In fact, there is a ministry to be found for everyone in Small groups (p.41).

#### **6. Evangelism by Church Auxiliary Groups:**

Apart from periodic public evangelisms such as tent evangelisms, in the form of city crusades and mega city crusades, the Seventh-day Adventist Church sustains her evangelistic endeavours by training her membership for both in-reach and outreach ministries. Such ministries include: Hospital Ministries, Prison Ministries, Youth Ministries, Women Ministries, Personal Ministries, Music Ministries, Family Ministries, Men Organization. Some of these auxiliary groups are first and foremost organized ministries that are made up of young people, women, men, talented persons or those who have discovered their spiritual gifts to witness for Christ in specialized manners. They organize themselves into functional groups in the church and have goals and objectives as specified in the Church's principal administrative workbook called the Church Manual. Such members having been trained launch out to minister to men and women and young people in order to bring them to Christ. The aforelisted auxiliary groups witness within and without the Church. They prayerfully reach out to meet the physical and spiritual needs of people in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Church Manual (2010) states that the Church views the services of these groups with great concern, and further states as follows: "the structure of the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is vital for the spiritual growth of members and for the fulfillment of the Mission of the Church" (p.101-144). Nevertheless, it is at the local church level of the Church's organizational structure that the greatest output from these groups is mostly realized.

The Church encourages Action units and House caring fellowships outside regular church worship programs. These include: Wednesday evening prayer sessions, Friday vespers, and Saturday worship which is the Church's official day of worship globally. According to Smith (1991), together with the obligation and privilege of carrying the gospel of the present truth to every creature (Mark 16:15), the church has been clearly told that the work will never be finished until the membership unites with the clergy in the work. Therefore, the greatest help that can be given to the people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him. Every Church should be a training school for Christian workers. To him "the Sabbath School should be one of the greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ" (p.9). One way to do it is the formation of action units. The action unit Sabbath School classes can provide an excellent organized continuous training school as Sabbath School meets every week. With their outreach leaders, the care coordinators, they can provide the "greatest help" (p.9), weekly promotion and soul winning both theoretical and practical.

Smith advises that, for effective plan, classes are formed into groups of six to eight for optimum participation. Each class has an outreach leader called a Care Coordinator, who is an assistant to the Church Personal Ministries Leader. (The Personal Ministry Leader is one that is in charge of evangelism at the local church level). Assisted by the Secretary, the Care Coordinator promotes outreach in accordance with the class plan. The outreach plans of the class are developed immediately after class organization at a special planning session. An hour is provided to the class, twenty-five minutes is devoted to outreach at the beginning of the class followed by thirty-five minutes for lesson discussion. There is weekly caring for missing Sabbath School class members. The Discussion Group Leader (teacher) takes up to five minutes

at the beginning of the twenty-five minute outreach time to welcome all, take the record, arrange for the sending of cards, telephoning, and visiting of any missing Sabbath School class members.

The care Coordinator uses the remainder of the twenty-five minute outreach time to: call for experiences related to the class plan, give simple training based on experiences shared and appropriate to guests present. He also promotes class plans and goals, gives visitation assignments and arranges for on-the-job training where needed. He also arranges prayers, special prayers, two by two or in rounds for those who have interests, plans, and goals to be achieved. The discussion group leaders, in the remaining thirty five minutes endeavors to get everyone participate in the discussion of the lesson and in making personal applications. He is more like a choir director than a soloist. He reviews the high points of the lesson and asks three or four questions that will help each present to apply the lesson to his or her daily life that week. Monthly, there is a corporate sharing of Care Coordinators before the entire Sabbath School.

Once a month, the classes Care Coordinators take the Superintendent's program time, or their normal twenty minutes from the class time and work together in presenting their successes before the entire Sabbath School. This encourages all, especially the weaker classes. To build mutual trust, fellowship and sharpen progress, casual, relaxed, and pleasant fellowship/evaluation meetings are held in the homes of class members. Dates and locations are set during the class planning session. The use of an evaluation sheet for such is very helpful. For proper consultations, evaluation and sharpening of plans, Care Coordinators met briefly after church service with the Personal Ministries Leaders, Superintendent, and if possible, the Pastor for prayer, encouragement, and strengthening of their coordinated efforts. With these a lively congregation will be maintained.

#### **5.4.2 Inhibiting Factors to the Growth of Seventh day Adventist Church in Igboland:**

Like every other mission in its evangelistic expansion, the Seventh-day Adventist mission encountered a lot of problems before it became a mission to reckon with in Igboland. The factors found out to be responsible for the early growth problem of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland have been verified. The researcher therefore wishes to present the following major factors that constitute inhibiting factors in the growth of the Church in Igboland. This means that there may be other inhibiting factors outside the confines of this research.

##### **1. Rivalry between the Existing Churches:**

There was serious rivalry between the existing Church Missionary Society (C.M.S), Qua Iboe Church (QIC), and Seventh-day Adventist Church, especially in Ngwaland. Ochulo (1979) states that, the C.M.S. in particular tended to be hostile to denominations other than her own. For instance when the Seventh-day Adventist Church came to establish at Ihie, Abia State, members of C.M.S.in collaboration with the villagers attacked Pastor Clifford and his houseboy, Abraham Nzotta. This attack seems to be an expression of their disfavor for a second Church in the village. At Umuocha and Okpuhie, Nnaji (1978) shares the same experience that, temporary Church buildings were destroyed by unknown persons possibly in their bid to stop the establishment of a Seventh-day Adventist Church in these places.

In their further attempt to cause more problems for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the villagers, who are members of these other denominations schedule village works on Saturdays, being worship day for the Adventists. This was done in an attempt that Seventh-day Adventist Church members would not attend those Saturday works and face the heavy fine which awaits any absentee. Their property was seized for failing to pay this fine. This measure discouraged some people from joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Erondur (as cited in



Ochulo) says many of them were even dragged to court for failing to attend village works on Saturdays which is their day of worship. In view of these measures against the church, much converts were not made. Some people who would have become converts feared to join in order not to pay fine or be dragged to court.

## **2. Boundary Agreement:**

One other striking problem encountered by the Seventh-day Adventists early in her evangelization was the effect of boundary agreement. According to Kalu (1978), the expansion policy of the Methodists created an explosive situation, but the Presbyterians defused it by calling a conference in 1909. This conference proved a difficult one because a serious boundary dispute had arisen before the sessions opened (pp.2-3). The Churches that came before the entrance of Seventh-day Adventist Church in some parts of Igboland, especially in Ngwaland marked out areas for themselves for evangelization. So the Seventh-day Adventist Church which came later, because of this challenge had no area to evangelize. With the entrance of the Adventist Church the boundary agreement failed as the Church could not restrict herself from evangelization. The earlier churches were not happy possibly because the Seventh-day Adventist Church will attract disciples from even their churches.

## **3. Religio-cultural Factors:**

Ochulor stresses that, the Seventh-day Adventist Church hadn't much problem with the Igbo traditional culture in their expansion effort. The reason being that, the earlier established churches had fought those practices so that Seventh-day Adventist Mission inherited almost a peaceful expansion program. He observes that the Seventh-day Adventist Church came in almost when the fight against idol worship and other evil practices, such as kidnapping, human sacrifice, killing of twins and their mothers and slavery had been won. There had been no

information where the traditional rulers halted Church services or expansion of the Church for cultural rites. In spite of the good work done by the missions that existed before Seventh-day Adventist Church, there were still other areas in this cultural study the Adventist had challenges. These are areas concerning food, dancing, music, clapping of hands, polygamy, social gatherings. They will alongside others be discussed as it affects Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church seems to have some problems with certain things that are tolerated in the culture of the people of Igboland. This can be substantiated in the following references: In matters concerning food, dancing, music, and clapping of hands during worship, visible differences between Seventh-day Adventist Church and the culture of the people of Igboland. The Church for religious reasons regards some sea foods as non-edibles. For instance, the Seventh-day Adventist Church members do not eat shrimps, pork, and dog. They refer to these as “unclean meat.” They also abhor fishes without scales and fins, as taught in the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Fundamental Beliefs as referenced in Deuteronomy 14:2-21 and Leviticus 11:1-47. But the culture of the people permits them.

Cress (as cited in Eko) confirms that the Seventh-day Adventist Church teachings on temperance and health habits as part of their life style agree with no alcohol, tobacco, or unclean foods, if not outright vegetarianism; no theatre, movies, novels, dancing; limited jewelry or make-up” (p.47). These have some restraints on the people of Igboland. These restrictions form the major dietary and health teachings of the Church and constitute some of the conditions for membership. The Seventh-day Adventist Church also does not encourage dancing and uncontrolled clapping of hands in the Church as forms of worship. Hence people may end up clapping and dancing in a Church without any spiritual effect.

Wagner (1984) encourages Church growth which should have both an evangelistic and cultural mandate. However, the Seventh-day Adventist liturgical position, especially on instruments of music other than instruments such as- organs, piano, guitar, played orderly and skillfully to produce meaningful musical pathos and hymns should be avoided. In an attempt to reform the society and give distinct value to cultural music it has to be played in the light of the scripture. Digest (2006) in turn encourages the Adventists to recognize and acknowledge the contribution of different cultures in worshipping God. More so, it advocates that there should be room for musical adaptation (p.9). This kind of approach to culture is worth adopting in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland.

Polygamy is another culturally inhibiting problem to Seventh-day Adventist Church's evangelization of Igboland. Mc Gavran (1980) stresses that "in Africa, the system of Polygamy keeps very large numbers from confessing Christ." (p.212-214). Most Churches rule that men who have married two or more women according to tribal custom must give up all but one on becoming Christians. Some Churches seem not to be happy with this rule, especially some African Churches. In Seventh-day Adventist Church, while those who are married to two or more wives remain members of the Church, they may not be elected as Deacons or Elders or hold any responsible office in the Church. The Adventist Church is one of the denominations that has refused to baptize polygamists and this has affected their number of baptisms. The preceding findings show that religio-cultural factor has posed a problem in the growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland. It seems obvious that each human being is nurtured within a cultural context. Individuals and communities interpret their world view through the context of their culture. They evaluate in-coming ideas, beliefs, and values through their own particular world view. The Seventh-day Adventist Church should be able to share the gospel in

terms that are intelligible to them as to give the people opportunity to hear, understand, and accept God's word as taught by Adventists.

#### **4. Socio-Economic Factor:**

An honest research on the influence of Socio-economic factor as it relates to the Seventh-day Adventist Church growth in Igboland, show that most social and economic activities are popularly and conveniently conducted on Saturdays in various communities. Nevertheless, Dudley and Cumming (1983) stress that the Seventh-day Adventist Church tenaciously uses Saturday only for religious purpose, according to their belief on the doctrine of the Sabbath, Exodus 20:8-11. Also, the church does not encourage her members to buy or sell; neither does she encourage her members to conduct any social activities, such as marriages or weddings on Saturdays. It is necessary to infer that Seventh-day Adventist Church regards their members as reformers, whose evangelistic goal is that of bringing other believers to the path of what they regard as "truth" (p.17).

Findings under this section indicate that, communities in Igboland attend Church services more conveniently on Sundays than on Saturdays, as a religious custom of the people. It could be inferred that the easy use of Sunday as a day of worship in these communities has made it part of the culture of the people of Igboland. Saturday as it relates to Socio-economic perspectives, seem to be generally a valuable economic day for farming, trade, and other social activities such as wedding and sports in many communities in Igboland. Interference with this day is usually considered a loss by those who make use of it for these pecuniary purposes. Hence, the socio-economic factors in this perspective pose challenges to the growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland.

#### **5. Socio-Religious Factors**

This section confirms the preference of Sunday as a day of worship in communities in Igboland and elsewhere as a cultural institution highly rated than any other day including Saturday as experienced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It also reveals how much Seventh-day Adventist Church has done in convincing the people of Igboland and other parts of Nigeria to accept Saturday; the finding is that there is no much awareness.

Eko (as cited in Chastain), the concept of a teaching Church being an evangelistic Church is pertinent in Seventh-day Adventist Church situation. In his reference to the duration of teaching in order to convince and transform a community or people, he suggests the following:

When Jesus set about his work, he first drew aside a little group of disciples that he might teach them. And he took time to do a thorough job of it. For three years – day and night – they were with him constantly... years were needed for Jesus to transform even more responsible of his disciples into dependable apostles. Nor did these men learn merely from what Jesus said; every experience through which they passed added something... we may not expect, therefore, to get quick, easy results. We, too must begin where people are and teach them by word and experience. (p.208)

It boils down to the fact that if Seventh-day Adventists would convince the communities in Igboland, of their messages they should adopt Jesus' teaching method, create awareness and impact the communities. Chastain emphasizes that, the Christian witness has always prospered most when it has based its outreach on a teaching ministry. It could be possible that one of the reasons Seventh-day Adventist Church has not sufficiently influenced the people of Igboland is that members of the Church are not committed to the teaching ministry of the Church. Secondly, they may not have intensified the teaching of the Church's beliefs in Igboland.

In the other way, it is possible that those taught are not able to adapt to Seventh-day Adventist teachings. Some of the stringent measures adopted by Seventh-day Adventists include: the observance of Saturday as a day of worship, refusal to observe some Christian

holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, in consonance with other Christian groups. These are substantiated points of misunderstanding of the Church's stance as a Christian organization.

On the impact of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Igbo Community, the school and medical approach adopted has influenced a lot of people. Evangelization in Igboland seems to be more successful when it is directed towards meeting social, psychological, physical and spiritual needs of the people. He maintains that, for the Seventh-day Adventist church in Igboland to advance properly, it should endeavour to adapt the message to the relevance of the present age and peoples' needs. The Church should be prepared to build more schools, hospitals and embark on social welfare programs in several areas of Igboland in order to make more disciples. Some of the mainline churches such as the Church Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Church seem not to conduct so much public evangelisms to win converts, yet their growth rate are facilitated by community development projects. This they have done by establishing schools, hospitals, and welfare projects. It is the role of the Church to impact the people she desires to evangelize.

White (1942) on mission and approach to be employed in soul winning encourages the Seventh-day Adventist Church to adopt Christ's method:

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good, He showed his sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them 'follow me' (p.143)

The Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic approach should be concerned more about meeting the needs of the people and arousing their confidence to accept Christ and his message. The School approach adopted by Seventh-day Adventist Church still remains very good opening wedge to missionary work in Igboland. The Church as earlier stated has tried to use other ways of gospel propagation, including evangelism to advance its cause. For Seventh-day Adventist

Church to be a house-hold name in Igboland, it has to do everything within her endeavors to step up the number of her schools, hospitals, welfare organizations, et cetera.

### **5.5 Effect of the Nigeria Civil War on Seventh-day Adventist Church 1967-1977:**

Izima (1973) states that, the 1960s, the post Independence years, was a decade of sectional conflicts in Nigeria. The taste for political power was so sharpened and led to sectional struggle. The divergence of political opinion which had deeply entrenched itself in the regions made the attainment of national peace impossible. Moreover, sectional fears and tribal hate widened the political gap between the regions and reduced the political parties to the level of mere tribal organizations. Many leading politicians capitalized on this and used the situation to sharpen the sword of tribal hate. Corrupt practices of various kinds were resorted to, in order to gain political advantage. Agharaumunna (Personal Communication, April 7, 2010) confirms that within the period, census figures were blown up, election results were rigged, social injustice were ripe and the country swooned on the verge of anarchy. The general political as well as social climate in Nigeria deteriorated so much that on January 15, 1966, a section of the Federal Army staged a bloody coup d'état in which prominent politicians lost their lives. As a result of these uncertainties, Izima says, "the Army intervention was welcomed by lovers of the nation and was underlined by expressions of relief from fears that the country was on the brink of national chaos and disaster" (p.36). He stressed that the hope was short lived as there was a counter coup.

Several Conferences were organized in search of tolerable compromises that would keep the country united. These Conferences could not help because the country had been split by fundamental differences of interest. He further states that by 1967 the forces of separation were emphasized over the forces of unity in the Eastern legislature that on May 30, 1967, there was a

break up. Hence, the former Eastern Region of Nigeria declared itself a sovereign state of Biafra. For thirty months the people of the Eastern Nigeria, particularly the people of Igboland were in the full blaze of the war. Millions were thrown into the streets, to live without home, and stripped of those humble treasures which made life attractive and comfortable. They became refugees swarming from one section of the country to the other as the roaring rockets and flying bullets gave them a chase. They lived in open market stalls, in school halls, and when fortunate, in homes of fellow citizens. Food was in short supply and hunger became the order of the day. People ate insects, rats, lizards, and snakes. Others especially children, fell victims and died of protein deficiency disease – *kwashiorkor* and infective Hepatitis (p.37).

On the side of the Church he confirms that notwithstanding the horrors of the war, the blazing light of the gospel was kept burning throughout. This, however, was not without disappointments and losses. Early in the war, the Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders at the Aba Headquarters expressed deep concern and worry about the Churches at the borders. Contact was quickly lost with churches in Markurdi, Eha-Amufu, Abakiliki and Enugu. A little later contact was also lost with Churches in Rivers and Ibibio areas. One of the Pastors stationed at Calabar, Pastor Jonah Imebuogu, a veteran pastor lost his life in October 1967.

Prior to the fall of Aba in September 4, 1968, Pastor Zaachaeus Imo, the mission President then had moved the offices to Umuocha, a rural area, close to Aba. The Church also became a wandering refugee. After one month at Umuocha, the church was forced to move to Ihie following serious threats of advancing Federal army. At Ihie, the mission offices operated in temporary booths for over one year except for a brief period of two and a half months when the thrust of the Federal army at Ugba junction led to a short move to Umuahia. In December 1969, when the Federal Army pushed from all directions to squeeze out what was left of Biafra, the



Church again was forced to leave Ihie on December 23, 1969, to take refuge first at Amaumara in Mbaise, then to Umueze. The Church remained at Umueze until the war ended in January 12, 1970. At the end of the war the mission, returned by way of Amaumara, Ihie, and finally arrived back in Aba on February 4, 1970. A temporary Church office was established at N0.18 Constitution Crescent, Aba. Here the mission operated till September 1970, when it was moved back to the original location, Umuola, Aba, following repairs made on the buildings (p.42).

Commenting on worship, Izima also emphasized that, regular Church services were observed throughout the duration of the war. In spite of the fact that Churches were scattered in various refugee camps and mixed up with Christians of other denominations, heathens, and infidels, the churches maintained their faith. Such Church services were conducted in many places, in booths made under cover of bushes, and shades of trees, while Church buildings became dwelling places for people. During 1968-1969, the intensity of the war was such that no large religious gathering involving the whole Churches was possible. This was true not of Seventh-day Adventist Church alone but of all denominations in Igboland. It was purely for security reasons. The army placed ban on such gatherings, since it would impose serious danger at a time like that when air raids were rampant. In view of all these, camp meetings and large gatherings were suspended.

Notwithstanding the difficult conditions of the war, members of Seventh-day Adventist Church, possibly true of other Churches in their hide-outs engaged in serious lay evangelism. The havocs of the war and its attendant sufferings could not interfere with their loyalty to their divinely assigned duty. The war became an opportunity to witness for Christ. Apart from the activities of the laymen, evangelistic efforts were organized in various refugee camps. He reports that, about 2,696 people were baptized between 1967 and 1969. Some of the people

baptized included soldiers. Nevertheless, it is sad to report also that the Church lost about 800 souls to death, within the period. Majority of these people died of hunger and sickness while a little fraction died as a result of direct hit of bullets or bombs (p.44).

It is a statement of fact that danger drives people to God. The civil war introduced many to God who might never have known Him otherwise. The civil war as a matter of fact brought people close to God. In spite of the hardship under which the people lived, many Adventists were very faithful to God in their financial support to the Church. Olukaikpe (personal communication, November 20, 2012) states that tithes and offerings flowed in freely in hundred folds. The Church became self-supporting and was designated to become a Conference. In view of the buoyant financial condition, the mission was able to support the work and the gospel workers received their full pay and war bonus.

The summary account of the civil war will not be complete without any mention of the welfare activities of the Church. When the war ended, the need for relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement of the victims of civil war assumed a new completion. The end of the war brought an upsurge of hungry and emaciated people, who had their means of livelihood either wholly or partially destroyed, and their accustomed homestead and farms erased. Although Relief and Welfare services were provided by the National and State commission for Rehabilitation, the Churches did not abandon these war victims. Like other denominations after the civil war, the Seventh-day Adventist Church engaged in emergency relief operation and resettlement work in the war affected areas. They received funds, gifts, and donations, especially clothing, from the brethren within Nigeria and overseas. These were distributed among the war victims. Gradually, normal life returned (p.48).

Erundu (1983) records that in 1973; the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland celebrated their 50th Jubilee Anniversary. Committees were set for smooth running of the anniversary programme. Such committees include: publicity, programme, Accommodation, Entertainment, and Uniform. The anniversary Committee Chairman was Pastor I.O. Erundu. The anniversary celebration was conducted in four zones, namely: Aba, Umuahia, Emii, and Okpuala Ngwa where they had large numbers of membership. Twenty nine districts were in attendance to this ceremony. About 85 people who began the church in 1923 with Clifford, and were still alive attended the Jubilee celebration. In a congratulatory message to the Church Clifford writes:

As I look back to the year 1923 when Pastor Clifford and I arrived in your country with practically nothing but faith and hope, I must exclaim, what hath God wrought: our thoughts and prayers have been with you through the years since we parted and though we may not meet again on this world, I look forward to the glad re-union in heaven where we will meet never to part again. Let us hold fast to that which is good that we may receive a crown of life that fades not away (p.1-3).

Figure 5: Fiftieth jubilee anniversary



Erundu (1983)

Sources: ENC Library (2009)

## **5.6 Pentecostal influences on Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland**

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland is undergoing a considerable transformation in worship or liturgy. Pentecostal influences seem to be having an extraordinary influence on the shape of worship in the Adventist context. This development includes the introduction and practice of drama, Christian rock music, and an informal approach to worship that is directed toward reaching the un-churched secular mind of urban Igbo. That is Pentecostalism affecting the church's style of worship. Some of the points here had earlier been reflected. They are repeated for emphasis and clarity.

Okwueze (2004) defines Pentecostalism as a Greek word which means Pentecost, literally fiftieth. It refers to one of the Jewish festivals, celebrated at Jerusalem on the fiftieth day after the Passover feast. Hollenweger (as cited in Okwueze) sees Pentecostalism as “a movement started and carried on by those Christians who fervently believe in the unrestricted and uncontrolled free use of the gift of the spirit by individual Christians” (p.21). Nna (2010) in his own case states that the term Pentecostalism is relevant to a Christian movement that originated in the United States of America (USA), in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Its founders were Williams J. Seymour and Charles F. Perham.

As earlier stated Achunike (2009) admits that a similar movement is within the Roman Catholic Church-the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. This movement operating in the Catholic Church won large numbers of followers in the 1960s. He further clarifies that, the Catholic Church has her own brand of Pentecostalism, the charismatic renewal. This movement operating within the “mainline church tradition is catalyzed by the spiritual flames of healing, vision, speaking in tongues, Holy Spirit baptism and prophecies” (p.82).

Many argue that the vast numbers attending churches that practice this approach is evidence in itself of God's blessing. Almost on this basis, the proponents of these phenomena insist on an aggressive and sustained effort to introduce and incorporate this system of worship into Seventh-day Adventist Church system of worship. To a large degree the efforts have borne fruit and Pentecostal worship is becoming part of Adventism in Igboland. This is especially evident in youth work. Unquestionably many of the youths support this approach and this can be seen in the thousands of young people who attend youth rallies and camporees. The inspiration for much of what is developing through worship in Adventism is not created from within her own ranks. The pressure this movement brings to Church leaders who set the direction and focus for Seventh-day Adventist Church is immense. The phenomenon is not restricted to age, gender, or geography.

Grolimund (2012) observes that the Pentecostal fueled revival burns its way through pews and minds all over Igboland and beyond. Old and young are taken up with the excitement and vibrancy of this movement. Those who dare to oppose this direction are marginalized as fanatics and placed with the lunatic fringe from the far right. Opponents are seen as traditional and narrow who are not capable of adopting a positive attitude to contemporary approach to a secular unchurched society. Reputations vanish, friends are lost, and others are ostracized because of their opposition to Pentecostal approach to worship. Many are afraid of the consequences of standing against this movement and therefore allow its progress unopposed. Others have embraced this Pentecostal drift and endeavored to advance its cause at every turn. They promote it in their churches and ensure its passage into the worship experiences at every opportunity.

He further sees Pentecostalism as an interdenominational movement, with its sweeping influence pervading throughout the Catholic, Protestant, and Seventh-day Adventist Churches. This phenomenon has arguably had more influence on modern Christianity than any other factor. They claim to lead a powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. Religion based on experience, and then truth appears to be the model manifested in a myriad of Pentecostal phenomena and success. Some are as follows: speaking in tongues, healings and miracles, spectacular growth, prophetic utterances and ministry, unity, spiritual gifts, secular success and wealth, colleges and schools, medical clinics, powerful culturally relevant worship, original music, huge slick and training conferences.

Ukpong (n.d.) has the following list as the practices of the Pentecostal Fellowship which enables her to pursue her goals effectively. These include:

1. To uphold one another in prayer, co-ordinate prayer meetings as Pentecostal networks.
2. To support and encourage one another in the task of missions and evangelism.
3. To promote Christian fellowship and cooperation among Pentecostals throughout the country.
4. To provide means of consultation and cooperation among the members and related agencies.
5. To share mutual concerns and insights relating to any crucial spiritual and temporal issues of the church.
6. To administer relief in times of crises. This enables the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (Igboland) to participate in the worldwide humanitarian services, giving information and cooperation when necessary.
7. To promote exchange of personnel in special areas of ministry.

8. To disseminate helpful information and up-to-date statistics for the benefit of the church.
9. To voice to the world and governments in defense of the faith, social justice, and persecuted Christians in the country.
10. To encourage missions partnerships among participating Pentecostal groups nationwide.
11. To serve as a cooperative fellowship whereby educational institutions approved by individual Pentecostal churches of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria would be recognized by other churches in the country and perhaps jointly train their ministers in such institutions.
12. To purchase the fulfillment of the Lords command to evangelize the lost in the shortest time possible.

These resolutions were reached by the Pentecostals at their Biennial Conference of the General Assembly as its apex tier, coordinated by the national officers.

Furthermore, Pentecostals claim they have made some positive impacts in contemporary Christianity in Igboland in the following areas:

### **Bible Study:**

Bible Study is no longer left for the clergy to read and interpret to membership because “Pentecostalism has re-awakened a general desire and love for the Bible as the written word of God” (p. 28) Ukpong further observes that there are many Bible Study groups in most of the mainline churches in Igboland.

### **1. Spirituality and Prayer life:**

The Pentecostals claim high spiritual lives and being prayer warriors. Today everywhere you go people are running helter skelter looking for one spiritual leader or the other for a particular purpose. Achunike(as cited in Ukpong) observes this when he wrote:

“people are looking for men of God and spiritual masters and the results their encounter with these men of God will yield for them” (p.25).

## **2. Preaching, Proclamation, and Teaching:**

Ukpong insists that one of the outstanding impacts of Pentecostalism is a general interest in the preaching, proclamation, and teaching of Christian faith in Igboland by the mainline churches. He observes an “earnest effort to expound the Christian faith and moral, which has led to much evangelistic renewal across churches” (p.30) The attention that is given to the Bible by the Pentecostals as the sole authoritative source of preaching the good news and of teaching the Christian faith and morals have “provoked theologians and pastors of the mainline churches to give a new zeal to the ministry of the word” (p.31).

## **3. Liturgy/Worship**

Achunike states that “Liturgy deals with the way people worship God. Pentecostals take worship seriously and allow it to penetrate and influence their lives. Indeed for the Pentecostals, worship is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week experience of God” (p.95). The way the Pentecostals give attention to worship and their vibrant attitude to liturgical functions has influenced most mainline churches, which before this explosion of the Pentecostal system stood by the pulpit as though they were reading funeral oration instead of preaching.

Nevertheless, despite these attractive features that are leading many to believe in the spirit driven success of this movement, a lingering doubt remains in the minds of many Seventh-day Adventists. There is an unfortunate suspicion that all is not right in the headlong rush. It is important to note that some of the church leaders have been affected by the Pentecostal spirit.



They are now encouraging the Adventist world into Pentecostalism, a move that must be watched.

### **5.7.1 Pentecostal Threat to Adventism**

Ukomadu (personal communication, December 30, 2010), a frontline Pastor of Seventh-day Adventist Church laments over what he calls Pentecostal threat to Adventism. He shares the following views:

1.     **Loss of identity:** As Seventh-day Adventist embraces the Pentecostal movement, Adventism seems to be losing its spiritual and doctrinal identity. Her worship experience is the same as any other denomination or church. Following this, many of her people (especially the youths) are leaving for a better worship experience – a Pentecostal one at a Sunday worshipping church.
2.     Thousands of her youths (and others) are worshipping to the heavy throbbing beat of rock music, together with dancing.
3.     The shared Pentecostal worship experience is making it simpler for the Adventist to identify with the other denominations, because the worship experience has become so central, that doctrine has become un-important. Often, it is seen as being a divisive irritant. In many instances, it is no longer fashionable or permissible to concentrate on distinctive doctrines that may cause disunity and disharmony with other Christian denominations. Some of the Seventh-day Adventist's Church distinctive doctrines like Saturday worship and the Ten Commandments as a standard for the Christian living are dropped because they are seen as embarrassments when preached. The unity Adventism now shares with most other Christian religions through the Pentecostal worship

experience seem to be cultivating pressure on these distinctive doctrines and those who promote them.

However, having studied the above views about Pentecostalism and its threats on Adventism, the writer encourages the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be relevant in corporate worship. There is no excuse for the church to reside in the 1950s or 1960s system of worship. Worship must be relevant. The Church should continually endeavor to reach the public and her members in a language they understand while not crossing the God given boundaries as outlined in the Bible and the spirit of prophecy. The Church's music ought to be vibrant and enthusiastic without turning worship into a party celebration. The worship service must be planned and must have as its focus the honor of God. Good worship is also inclusive worship. Both the youth and the aged together with their families ought to be actively involved. While endeavoring to experience worship in a relevant setting, it is also very important to remember and incorporate all that is important from the past. True worship that honors God will include that which is good from the past while integrating that which is proper in the present. Resistance of the faithful church to data projectors, overheads, and other technological tools is not fair. The Church should not also prohibit musical instruments. It is the musicians not the instruments who choose to uphold or dishonor God by the way they put the instruments together. When possible and appropriate, the church should use vehicles and modes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to encourage beautiful worship that uplift and honor God. Seventh-day Adventists should avoid extremes in Christian life style and practice. The Church should always cling to ways that will not damage the cause of Christ and the word of God. Jesus mingled with people before He won their confidence. As the church's master teacher, His examples remain the best.

## **5.8 Interactions between Seventh-day Adventists and other Christian Missions**

Though there were acute rivalries and suspicions among the missions, yet there were areas of cooperation between Seventh-day Adventists and Christians of other missions. Ochulo observes that, both missions (Seventh-day Adventists and other missions) appeared hostile to traditional religion. The joy that Igboland was getting Christianized created a sense of cooperation among the missions. The belief that each conversion meant another soul has been saved into the kingdom of heaven gave the missions the courage to labor, suffer, and even die for the people of Igboland. The missions are opposed to contributing money or materials to appease the gods of the land by traditionalists for one thing or another. In most villages, they bury their religious differences, and team up to plan for the progress of their villages. They team up to plan for the social, political, economical, and educational welfare of their villages. Most Christians have understood that no matter which mission they belong to, there is only one God to be worshipped. More so, they have realized that there is salvation in no other name given among men whereby any one can be saved except in the name Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). During their local community elections, people support the best candidate irrespective of religious or denominational affiliation. Together, all the denominations condemn crime no matter the denominational inclination. At times, joint prayer services are conducted by the denominations over certain challenges in the community, while their religious leaders are invited to lead out. No Christian religious denomination preaches or encourages the practice of evil for righteousness or obvious wrong for the right.

In doctrinal issues, the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares a lot of doctrines in common with other Churches. Such doctrines include: Belief in the scripture; Belief in Trinity;

Belief in God the Father; Belief in God the son, and Belief in God the Holy Spirit. Others include: Belief in God as the Creator, Belief in the nature of man; Belief in life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, and Belief in the Experience of Salvation. Furthermore they also share Belief in Growing in Christ; Belief in the church as community of Believers; Belief in the unity of the Body of Christ; Belief in Baptism by immersion; Belief in the Lord's supper, and Belief in the Gift of Prophecy. Finally, they share Belief in the Law of God; Belief in Christian Behavior; Belief in Marriage and Family; Belief in Death and Resurrection, Belief in the new earth as home of the Righteous; et cetera.

The Adventists accept and share ideas and theological beliefs from other church organizations and missions that do not conflict with their theological expositions. This is demonstrated especially in the distribution of the journal for ministers (Ministry), which is an Adventist monthly periodical for the clergy. Eva (2002) confirms that:

There are two and half times as many Clergy of other denominations receiving Ministry as there are Seventh-day Adventists. To be more specific, according to recent figures, there are over 47,000 Clergy of other denominations who receive Ministry to just fewer than 19,000 Adventist Pastors and Elders (p.4).

Nyekwere declares that, the Adventist Church accepts the ministries of Mother Teresa, world acclaimed for her kindness and devotedness in assisting the afflicted in India. Nyekwere references Mother Teresa saying, "By blood and origin, I am all Albanian. My citizenship is Indian. I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the whole world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to Jesus" (p.95).

Such missionary zeal is seen by the Adventists as inspired of God. The Church also believes that God judges people according to the light they have received. Furthermore, Mother Teresa belongs to the whole world – neither to Roman Catholics nor to Christians only. Indeed,

she is the first religious figure in history to be revered during her lifetime by adherents of all religions and Christians of all denominations. And when she died in 1997, there was a universal out-pouring of heart-felt appreciation and reverence for her long life of service. Humility, simplicity, and sacrifice are the terms most often associated with mother Teresa and her work (p.97).

He optimistically maintains that, the Seventh-day Adventists' relationship with other Christian missions seems to be highly positive. During the General Conference Session of the Church at Toronto, Canada, in 2000, about 80,000 adherents (delegates and observers) from all over the world were in attendance. Many Clergy of some other Christian missions participated as invitees. The session lasted for two weeks. The entire programme of the session was beamed through the Satellite to the entire world. The Session holds every five years (quinquennial Session) The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not condemn other Christian missions which make effort to uplift the name of Jesus. Rather, she encourages them to endeavor to live up to and proclaim in their congregations the truth. The Church explains that it maintains a ministry that is unique, at the same time; it is open for healthy relationships with other Christian missions who are interested in promulgating the gospel truth (p.98).

Nonetheless, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland, as a body is not a member of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) but remains as an observer. It is understood that many Christian Churches today come under the association of ecumenism. The Seventh-day Adventists do not belong to this body. According to Eva "Ecumenism among other things is the philosophy or practice that searches for ways to unite all faiths, confining them within the bounds of one super-administrated system of lowest-common-denominator unanimity" (p.4).

The Church is convinced that associating fully with such a body as the ecumenical movement will divest it of its beliefs especially as regards the sanctity of Saturday as the Sabbath of rest.

In spite of this, it is worthy of note that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has maintained a healthy relationship with other Christian missions. Having made these observations, it is well understood that the mission philosophy of the Church as stated earlier, has been the main compelling factor in the evangelistic outreaches of the Adventists.

### **5.8.1 Cultism and Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland**

It is observed that people seem to include the Seventh-day Adventist Church among the Cults. Some non-members think there is no Holy Spirit Power in Adventist Church to be reckoned with as a Christian Church. That is why, they claim, her teachings are not welcomed by many. Therefore, the misunderstanding about the Seventh-day Adventist Church is considered as an inhibiting factor to the Church's growth in some parts of Igboland.

Eko observes that the case of misunderstanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was clearly presented by Unruh in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's dialogue in 1950s. It is true few denominations around the globe do not see the church as a Christian Church, their misunderstanding about the Church seem to be in the area of her teachings, especially those teachings on the sacredness of Saturday instead of Sunday as a day of worship for all Christians. Another area is the Church's teachings concerning clean and unclean meat, that is, what should and should not be eaten. These doctrines, especially those that have to do with food and Saturday observance as a day of worship, seem to place the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the verge of what James Cress refers to as a "close community" approach to evangelism (p.182).

Moreover, as the Seventh-day Adventist Church neither worships on the popularly acclaimed day of worship, Sunday, nor eat what may generally be acceptable to non-members as

edible, they appear secretive in the eyes of other Christians who do not understand them. The writer's interaction with some members of other denominations reveals the above allegation as a slight on the Church's Community Spirit. In addition to the eating habits of the people of Igboland, an average married woman in the area would want to adorn herself with those "restricted ornaments" (1Timothy, 2:9; 1 Peter, 3:3), as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and some of other churches, such as necklaces and earrings. To stop a woman from doing that is scaring and unacceptable to an average fashion loving populace of Igboland.

Another cause of exclusivism among the Seventh-day Adventist people is said to be what Cress calls Adventists' pride in theological accuracy and orthodoxy", -a feeling of superiority over other Christians in their teachings. This attitude makes some Seventh-day Adventist Church members find it difficult to fellowship with other Christians or to appreciate the teachings of other Church groups. Such exclusivism as observed about the Seventh-day Adventist Church members appears to generate corresponding repulsive attitude from other Christian bodies against the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This has made it difficult for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to penetrate into territories or neighborhoods that are dominated by other denominations. For example, it is very likely that the Seventh-day Adventist Church members would wish to invite people of other faiths or/and Church groups to their child dedication programmes or crusades; and these people will accept their invitation. But it is most unlikely that a Seventh-day Adventist Church member will accept such an invitation from other people outside their members. This attitude can be repulsive and may cause people of other church groups not to respond to Adventists' invitation to soul winning programmes.

McGavran (as cited in Eko) postulates that the degree of people's consciousness is an aspect of social structure, which, greatly influences how and to what extent Gospel will flow

through the segment of the social order. He argues passionately and stresses that: “it is patently true that among societies with high people consciousness, those methods of propagating the Gospel which enable men to accept Christ without renouncing their people (or their cultures) are blessed of God to the growth of His Church” (P. 227).

With regard to the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s alleged connection with cultism, it has even become a stigma on Seventh-day Adventist Church in some parts of Eastern Nigeria. This stigmatization with cultism is one of the major blackmails that have stood against the growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church in some areas in Igboland. This is flagged by those who do not understand really what the Church stands for. In his book, *the kingdom of cults*, Martin (1999) has included Seventh-day Adventist Church as a cult. In most of his books, he has classified them as a Christian denomination. However, in this book, *The Kingdom of Cults*, he stated that he included Seventh-day Adventist Church to correct a stigma the Church has borne over the years. He maintains that “I felt it was necessary to include Seventh-day Adventism as a proper counter balance, presenting the other side of Adventism and representing the theology of Adventism as Adventist themselves believe it” (p.389).

The linking of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with cultism seems to be a misunderstanding of the Church’s status, which makes it an inhibiting factor to the growth of the Church. Wikipedia (2011) defines cult in current popular usage as “a new religious movement or other group whose beliefs or practices are considered abnormal or bizarre. The word originally denoted a system of ritual practices” (Para. 1).

This researcher has tried to examine the word “cult” and has observed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not fall into its definition. Therefore like Martin rightly stated, Seventh-day Adventist Church should be seen as a Christian denomination rather than a cult. Following



this light the Church should make serious efforts through the use of the media and the public life of her membership to prove her genuineness as a Christian denomination. This step is necessary to confront the sayings and erroneous impressions people may carry about against the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## **5.9 Future Growth of Seventh-day Adventist Church**

Findings reveal that for the Church to grow into the future, the evangelistic life of the members must be improved. There must be very high passionate participation of Church members in working for the salvation of other souls. There must be a thorough search for former Seventh-day Adventist Church backsliders. In the search conducted by this research, members' spirituality was not found as an inhibiting factor because almost all the responding members thought they were spiritual except a few. Spirituality of members suggests that they know their Lord, their spiritual gifts and are using the same for service. Should members' claims to be spiritually realistic, the future of the Church is very bright. Kelly (as cited in Eko) is right when he classified the success and failures of Churches to be dependent upon their activities. If the result of one's claim is a mutual accent without any supportive activities, the claim is fruitless. He postulated that the quality that "enables religious meanings to take hold is not their rationality, their logic, their surface credibility, but rather the demand they make upon their adherents and the degree to which those demands are met by commitment" (p.231).

The church needs to do more of teaching within the community they are located. Whether the community is friendly or unfriendly to the Church, people can be won for Christ if the Church members go about the right way. Serious fellowship meetings are also necessary for retention of members. New members should be properly engrafted and integrated into the Church system and life through indoctrination and teaching. They should be taught highly how

to live the Christian lives and appropriately use their spiritual gifts. One major loophole for members in Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland is lack of adequate care, fellowship, and indoctrination of new and old members. Adequate Spirit-filled ministry rather than programmed evangelisms should be indulged in by members who have known their spiritual gifts. Therefore, Mc Gavran concludes that until the church people solve the problem of recruiting, training, and supporting a ministry and making each lay member a functioning minister on a voluntary basis, “a growth of 50 percent a decade would be a nightmare” (p.232). If the ongoing discussion is followed, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland will grow beyond expectation.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Seventh-day Adventist Church in Contemporary Nigeria**

#### **6.1 The Impact of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland:**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church that came several years ago to Igboland has impacted on the Igbo society in more ways than one. The impact of the Adventist (like other churches) has been felt in Igboland as a result of its Bible Doctrines, unique songs and music, holistic Education pattern, exemplary health care facilities, and welfare packages. These have been done through the founding and running of Adventist High School and Teachers' Training college Ihie in Isiala Ngwa; Primary Schools that exist at Aba, Ahoada, Umuahia, Ubakala, Ugwulangwu, Igbere, Elele, to mention but a few. In terms of Health Facilities, the church built and operated hospitals in Okpuala Ngwa, Ahoada, Ogbor-Hill- Aba, and Ubakala. Whereas the first two are no more, the last two are still existing and functioning. Seventh-day Adventist Hospital Aba also operates a motherless Babies Home. Through their welfare programs, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, (ADRA) has provided water, shelter, food, and medicine, and has equipped schools with laboratory equipment and computer sets in various communities in Igboland.

Prominent Nigerians that went through the training facilities of the church include: Ojo Maduekwe, who is presently Nigeria's High commissioner to Canada; Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe the current chairman of Nigeria's Senate Committee on publicity; Emeka Nwogu the present Minister of Labour of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Others are: Professor Friday Mbon the immediate past Deputy vice-Chancellor, Academics University of Calabar; Nkem Ogbonna who after graduating from Ihie went to University of lagos and made First Class Honors in Mathematics and subsequently obtained a Ph.D degree in Mathematics at Oxford

University in England and today is Lecturing at Michael Opkara University of Agriculture Umudike, Umuahia; and Professor Christian U.Iroegbu, who after graduating from Ihie went to University of Nigeria Nsukka and bagged a First Class Honors Degree in Microbiology which fetched him a scholarship to England where he specialized in Virology, and came back to Nsukka and made his mark as a disciplined and committed lecturer. The list is in-exhaustive.

The daily throng of people seeking medical care at Seventh-day Adventist Hospital and Motherless Babies Home Aba attests to the exemplary feat of proper and genuine health Practice of that church's institution. The undiluted messages from the church's pulpit during in-reach campaigns coupled with the unique song and music composed by gifted individuals, have made many people in Aba, Port Harcourt, Umuahia, Enugu and other parts of Igboland to be converted to God within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The observance of the Bible Sabbath which is done on Saturdays by the church as it is enshrined in the Bible has impacted and still impacts on the lives of people who are domiciled where Seventh-day Adventists live and worship. This is so because at such places, on Saturday, markets do not boom, marriages, secular meetings and various other social functions do not receive patronage of its members.

## **6.2 Women in Seventh-day Adventist Church**

The department of the Women's Ministries was formed in the year 1847 under the name Dorcas Welfare Society. It developed from a prayer band, meeting in the house of Henry Gardner in Battle Creek, United States of America. The work then was to minister to those in need. With the passage of time, in 1913 the name was changed to Adventist women's Ministries.

The primary purpose of the department of women's ministries is to nurture, facilitate, and support Women in their lives as disciples of Jesus Christ and members of His world church.

In consultation with the Administration and other departments of the church, the department shares the responsibilities for developing a global evangelistic strategy and provides training to equip the women of the church to uplift Christ in the church and in the entire world.

In order to fulfill the purpose of the women's Ministries the following eight objectives have been identified, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church Policy (2013) states them as follows:

1. Elevates women as persons of inestimable worth by virtue of their creation and redemption
2. Enables women to depend on their faith and experience spiritual growth and renewal
3. Underscore the broad spectrum of needs and concerns of women across the life span from multicultural and multiethnic perspectives
4. Liaise and cooperate with other specialized departments of the church to meet the needs of women
5. Build networks among women in the world church that encourage bonds of friendship, mutual support and creative exchange of ideas and information
6. Mentor and encourage young Adventist women, creating parts for their involvement in the church as they reach for their full potential in Christ.
7. Bring women's unique perspectives on issues facing the church to decision making bodies.
8. Seek expanding avenues of dynamic Christian services for women challenging each Adventist woman to use her gift to complement the talents of others as they work side by side to further the global mission of Seventh – day Adventist Church (P.340)

### **6.2.1 Departmental Staffing:**

Women's Ministries department has a director and associate directors as may be needed. Qualified personnel are elected on the basis of their expertise and experience to care for the activities and responsibilities encompassed by the work of the department. Each elected individual has specific responsibilities and assignment which is made known to other appropriate levels of the church organization. Today the membership of the women in all the Seventh - day Adventist churches in Igboland is about 80,000 members.

### **6.3 Children's Ministries**

Christ's mandate to feed the lamb (John21:5) and to let children come to Him (Mark10:13, 14) commissions the church to evangelize children. More so, to nurture their spiritual growth toward a lifelong relationship with God and with the Seventh - day Adventist church. The childhood years provides an unequaled opportunity to bring children to Jesus while they are most opened to the gospel. The years also provide foundation for Christian character development (Luke 2:52). White states that the lesson learned, the habit formed, during the early years of infancy and childhood, have more to do with the formation of the character and the direction of the life than have all the instruction and training of after years (p.380)

In view of this understanding, every adult has the privilege and responsibility to model Christ's love and care and to assist children in building a meaningful foundation for Seventh-day Adventist Christian view point throughout life. Christ's instruction in Mathew 18:5, 6, and 7 holds the church accountable for action, influence, and attitudes relating to children. God is not willing that even one child should be lost (V14). A church that reflects God's attitude towards children will understand the importance of adult-child interaction and child participation. In Malachi 4:5 and 6, prophecy foretells that adult- child bonding will be a major feature of the

final message to be given before Christ comes. The Church should consider Children a high priority and seek ways to involve them in church activities. This will make children feel included and bonded to the Christian community while they are making their decision for Christ and the church. Such a strong connection within the church will protect them during the transition to adulthood and prepares them for future leadership role.

In response to the above, the General conference of Seventh-day Adventists, has organized a ministry for the children called “Children’s “Ministries.” This ministry exists to facilitate and coordinate a broadening and deepening of the church’s spiritual nurture of children, the only entrusted source of church growth, in order to draw them to a lifelong redemptive friendship with Christ and commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The West Central African Division Policy (2012/2013) states that, the Department of children’s ministries has adopted the following objectives to promote the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual development of children within the Adventist church community:

- i. To conceptualize for the Division territory the theology and methodology of letting the children come to Christ.
- ii. To educate leaders and church members to recognize the importance of the early years of life when mind and heart are most open to the gospel, and to teach them how to win the affection of children in order to draw them to Christ and church.
- iii. To encourage the inclusion of children in all programs and activities of the Church.
- iv. To prepare materials that teach parents, teachers and pastors how to engage children in meaningful bible learning to equip them to make thoughtful, spirit guided decisions now and in future years.

- v. To develop in consultation with the unions, Christ-centered resource materials for use by church members who provide religious education for children.
- vi. To mentor and assist union and conference children's ministries director and to coordinate the sharing of resource materials they develop.
- vii. To serve as consultant to church administrators on issues related to religious education of children.
- viii. To organize and coordinate worldwide church program that involve children and/or their leaders (p.216, 217).

The focus of this Department is participation. Children who feel included will be drawn to continued involvement in the church community. There are three main areas of emphasis in the children's Ministries Department.

- 1. Providing Children with a variety of religious education opportunities. This gives them a sense of inclusion as valued members of the church family. This leads them to Jesus, and teaches them to view life through a Seventh-day Adventist perspective.
- 2. Outreach to children (other churches) will have far reaching result, one of which will be winning parents to Christ.
- 3. Participation increases capabilities and assures children that they are an important part of the church family

#### **6.4 Role of Youth in the Seventh - day Adventist Church:**

The youth ministries department plans and coordinates programs for its members aged between 6 and 30years. The main aim is to help the young people appreciate God and His gift of



Jesus Christ to humanity, thereby equipping them to grow in love and with the knack to work for the salvation of other young people around the world.

As in other Churches, various curricula have been developed and are used to train the youth spiritually, mentally, physically and socially. They are grouped into two major segments called junior and senior youth. The junior is further divided into two, viz: Adventurers, who are ages 6-9 years and pathfinders, who are of age 10-15 years.

The senior youth is also categorized into two: Ambassadors who range from 16-23 years; and the young Adult who are of ages 24-30 years. Those who are above the age of 30 and are still interested in the youth programs are allowed to participate, provided they remain dedicated and committed to the aspirations of the ministry.

Spiritual training and nurture of the youth ensures that they study the bible, learn about its author, character, places, events and doctrines. The history of the church is also taught to enable them know and appreciate the way the lord God Almighty has been leading His church through the ages.

Mentally, the young people are taught to memorize bible passages under various subjects. They are made to compete in quizzes, searching of bible quotes and the rendering of memorized passages in recitation contests. They also learn about nature in its various forms.

On the physical front, games and sporting activities are organized from time to time to spur the youth to programs of physical exercises. Parade and marching drills are practiced. Survival camps are engaged in, to train and expose the young people to difficult situations of life, thus equipping them with skills that would help them survive emergency situations.

Socially the Adventist Youth Ministries does organize congress for various Youth groups to pull them together far away from home. This affords them the opportunity to socialize with

other young members and even non-members who attend this congress. They study; exercise, sing and fellowship together and thus get connected with people they would ordinarily not have had time to meet at such a close range. Workshops are also organized during these congresses to expose the youth to various practical vocational skills, thus availing them the opportunity to choose trades they could learn and use to earn their living. By these activities, Youth Ministries Department trains, develops and equips the youth of today with capacities, abilities, and enablements to be leaders in the church and society to the glory of God.

However, notwithstanding the several activities being paraded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church for her Youths, they still leave the church for what they call 'better worship experience'. Many of them go to worship where there are heavy throbbing beat of rock music, together with dancing. This has watered down some of the key doctrines of the church and has turned the pulpit into a seemingly social stage instead of a pulpit where the word of God is preached. This is learnt from the Pentecostal way of worship. The Church has tried to control this; it has not been very easy.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

#### **7.1 Summary**

The summary of this research presents the highlights of findings of this thesis, “A History of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland.” From the findings made, it is true that Seventh-day Adventist church was not the first church that came into Igboland, however they came in at the time the Holy Spirit opened the way for them.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Bible based Evangelical Missionary, non government, and non-profit making organization. It came into existence as a fallout of the great disappointment experienced by the Millerite Movement in 1844 in the United States of America (U.S.A). With Pioneers such as Joseph Bates, James white, Ellen Gould White, Uriah Smith, and others, the church sprang up after continued study of the Bible and the revelations they received from God to confirm their faith. In 1874 the Adventist believers sent out its overseas missionary. This was in the person of John Nevins Andrews who was sent to Switzerland. It was in 1914 that the Seventh-day Adventist church entered Nigeria through the missionary work of David Caldwell Babcock who was sent from Sierra Leone to Nigeria. He first settled in Erunnu near Ibadan in Western Nigeria.

Eastern Nigeria received the Adventist message first in Permanent practical form through the missionary exploits of Jesse Clifford who arrived and settled at Aba, now in Abia State. The church has since grown in Ngwaland and has extended to other parts of Abia, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Enugu, Imo, Anambara, Ebonyi, and Bayelsa States among others. Today, the church is quite known in many parts of Eastern Nigeria, especially in Igboland where it started, having produced many prominent indigenes as highlighted in chapter seven.

## **7.2 Recommendation**

The writer, like other researchers encountered problems while sourcing for facts for this research work. The major problems include:

### **a. Preservation of Records**

Several encounters Seventh-day Adventist Church had at her early stages were not documented and filed. This became part of the problem the researcher encountered. To solve this kind of problem, church records should be well preserved to enhance accessibility and continuity. To preserve organizational records, good filling system should be dutifully created. If filling is taken for granted, the church will run into problems of not telling her own story. However, if a good step is taken to organize an efficient filling system, it will eliminate unpleasant future situations for future researchs. All letters and correspondences, programs, and every document of the church should be in the church's custody. No church records or documents should be treated as private materials.

Record keeping facilitates reporting and sustains the life of any organization or church. Without record keeping, a system/church will be ignorant of its strength and weakness. The Pastor can contribute meaningfully to the development of the church through proper record keeping. To keep records, the person needs to be patient, meticulous, organized and orderly. Above all, there must be commitment. Remember, history will forget a church where no records are kept.

### **b. Reporting**

Reporting in this context has to do with giving an account about something. It calls for the clarification and evaluation of the church's purposes, mission, and vision. Reporting will help

people know where the church is coming from, where the church is, and where the church is going or will be in the next few years. It also helps the church to evaluate its plan, objective, and strategy for a proper follow-up and supervision. Therefore for any leader to report effectively, efficiently, truly, accurately and comprehensively records of activities must be kept.

**c. List of Documents to keep**

The writer here suggests that Church history committees be formed in churches to take care of these church libraries and documents as listed below:

1. ***Official church records:*** constitution and by-laws in original and revised form. The church charter, minutes of meeting, records of baptisms, marriage and deaths, legal records (deeds, trust agreements, tax certificates). Financial records, church correspondence, and all other records that would be required by the law of the land.
2. ***Publications:*** worship bulletins, News letters, and Publicity releases. Promotional pamphlets, Bronchures, Membership directories et cetera.
3. ***Audio and Vidio tapes of services or interviews:*** Oral hstory interviews taped Cassette tapes of sermons, Choral programmes, special service, and conventions.
4. ***Miscellaneous materials:*** Photographs directly related to the church, Biographycal materials on ministers and members and memorabilia and artifacts (plagues, diaries, trophies, paintings) et cetera.
5. ***Denominational records:*** Year books and directories, conference reports, periodicals and other publications.
6. ***Supplemental material:*** History of the denomination, Biographies or authobiographies of denominational leaders, former Pastors of the church, or church leader, Histories of local community and country.

### **7.3 Suggestions for further study**

This work though comprehensive, does not claim to be absolutely exhaustive. There are several challenging areas of research to be delved into for a more comprehensive work to be done on the History of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Igboland.

However, one area of challenge among Seventh-day Adventist Church members in Igboland is how to balance what is acceptable in the culture of United States of America and the Igbo culture, especially as it affects women on the pulpit. In a nutshell, this area of research could be titled: “Should women preach in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?”

### **7.4 Conclusion**

Christian religion seems started with the birth of Jesus Christ. He is recognized as its founder. Jesus trained His disciples to train others to continue His message. It was inaugurated at Pentecost by the Holy Spirit. Concerning its expansion, the great commission of Matthew 28:19, 20 “Go ye therefore into the entire world and make disciples of all nations... was given”.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church like other churches claims this mandate of Jesus Christ. It sees itself as a Christian organization with a mission statement which accepts the commission given by Christ, to preach the gospel to all nations emphasizing on the reconciliation ministry and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Church acknowledges that the development of the total being is important to God in His plan of Salvation.

In view of the fact that church order and unity were necessary for effective operation and success in mission endeavours, the Seventh-day Adventist church was legally organized in 1863. This was at a General Conference Constituency Session held in Michigan in the same year. Every decision of the church taken at this level of the church cannot be changed unless the same body meets again

The Government of Seventh-day Adventist church is representative. It has four constituent levels: The local church, the local conference, the Union Conference, and the General Conference, which is the final decision making body. The church has a mission statement that guides her operation. The mission statement is to proclaim to the entire world the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as their personal Saviour and to unite with His church, and nurturing them in preparation of His future coming. However these can be achieved through Preaching, Teaching and Healing.

The Church has 28 fundamental principles that guide their operations. These 28 Doctrinal Beliefs of the Adventist as clearly stated in the body of the thesis is firstly, to protect the church from dissidents who may advocate for what the church does not teach in the name of the church. Secondly, it is to identify the church with these beliefs to avoid misconceptions and preconceived opinions about the Church. These Fundamental Principles are reviewed every five years in case there is a new light from the Bible.

The Seventh-day Adventist church, even though a conservative body is doing everything possible to adapt her message to culture. Adventists need to find the most effective way to communicate the truth of each belief for each context. Jesus's method of evangelism is therefore recommended. He mingled with the people, had sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Through its evangelistic programs, the Church from a minority few in the United States of America has spread to so many countries of the world.

Through these series of evangelism strategies, Africa was evangelized in 1879. In March 7, 1914 David Babcock, and family, accompanied by two Sierra Leone Pastors (Dolphin and Morgue) came to Nigeria. His missionary activities lasted till 1917. Within this period he succeeded in laying a foundation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Ikpoti, Ekiti, and

Erunmu that has affected the lives of thousands of people in Nigeria. The legacy left by David Babcock for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria is highly appreciated by the Church. This appreciation is practically demonstrated by the naming of the Seventh-day Adventist tertiary institution in Nigeria: Babcock University after him.

In April 1923, Jesse Clifford began the Adventist missionary work in Igboland. Pastor and Mrs. Clifford chose Aba as their base because of its urban nature, good roads, railway and postal services. The Igbo were receptive to the message especially the Ngwa people. He began with Bible studies and their responses were encouraging. Seventh-day Adventist missionary work in Igboland grew rapidly outpacing the Church's work in both Western and Northern regions of Nigeria. Thousands of people in Igboland and mainland Delta region accepted the faith. The Seventh-day Adventist Church membership in Eastern Nigeria outnumber those in the Western and Northern parts of Nigeria.

The first Seventh-day Adventist hospital was cited at Ahoada in 1957, and in 1963 the second was built at Okpuala Ngwa, Abia State. It would seem as though the entry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church into Igboland was something in the nature of the fullness of time. At entry, collaborating with other missions, the church made a successful missionary enterprise within the period. The relationship between the Seventh-day Adventist and other Christian missions has been a healthy one. Nevertheless the church has maintained some doctrinal views that do not agree with the beliefs and practices of other Christian missions. The most outstanding of these views is the issue of the day of worship. Adventists observe Saturday as the day of rest and support this understanding by quoting the fourth commandment of the Decalogue as written in Exodus 20:8-11.



The introduction of Christianity in Igboland brought a socio-religious and political conflict between traditional religion and Christians. This made it difficult for anyone to be a Christian convert initially, and churches could hardly have converts. Seventh-day Adventist church suffered more of this because of their pattern of worshipping on Saturday instead of Sunday that was generally accepted. It could seem as if the Seventh-day Adventist church was crawling initially because it was newly established, but from the 1940s, she had an impressive growth. Some of the strategies she employed for this growth include: Personal witnessing, annual camp meetings, locally organized evangelisms, (church and district), and literature ministry. From Umuola, the church spread to every other part of Igboland.

The churches, Seventh-day Adventist, Roman Catholic, Church Missionary Society made a lot of impact in Igboland in their attempt to evangelize the area. The impacts are clearly seen in and are best measured by the volume of achievements of each of the missions during their period of operation. When one considers for example, the Catholic Church and its achievements in Igboland, one can quickly see that the building of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, health centers, churches, welfare organizations, had a lot of influence on the people of Igboland. Like the Roman Catholics, the Seventh-day Adventists also used their schools, hospitals and welfare schemes to develop Igboland. These types of initiatives were true of other denominations. It is worthy of note, that by the introduction of Christianity in Igboland, a higher civilization unknown to the traditional religion was embraced. The facilities which the missionaries introduced in Igboland became irresistible forces that undermined the traditional religion. Generally, Christianity which Seventh-day Adventists share became a useful instrument to change Igboland to a happier and better society.

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