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ABSTRACT

TOWARD A BIBLICAL MODEL OF CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE
PERSUASION FOR THE EVANGELISTIC MISSION
OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

by

Aloysius Ntiwunka

Adviser: Jeanette Bryson

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: TOWARD A BIBLICAL MODEL OF CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE
PERSUASION FOR THE EVANGELISTIC MISSION OF THE SEVENTH-
DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

Name of researcher: Aloysius Ntiwunka

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Jeanette Bryson, PhD

Date completed: February 2014

Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a worldwide denomination, but it is one of the smallest in Imo State, Nigeria, even though 90% of the population is Christian, Protestant and Catholic, with only 2% Muslim. Since most of the population of Imo State is Christian, the common belief in God should open the opportunity to present the unique teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; namely, the message of the Three Angels of Revelation. However, numerous approaches to evangelism do not seem to have been successful in producing changes in the lives of the citizens.

Method

This project document followed a descriptive research method and includes a review of literature related to persuasion, a presentation of the historical context of cultural persuasion in Imo State, Nigeria, and a study of models, procedures, and principles involved in incorporating a biblical model of persuasion, followed by a model developed specifically for Imo State.

Projected Results

Based on a biblical model of ministry to meet the needs of the community, holistic methods will be incorporated into outreach, such as a food pantry, health lectures, and home visits. The hope is that Seventh-day Adventists living in Imo State, Nigeria can learn to persuade others of their authentic faith in God and the message of the Three Angels of Revelation.

Conclusions

Christian outreach often involves coercion, a compliance-gaining approach. Forceful persuasive strategies can be replaced with a biblical model of persuasion, even though coercive strategies are still being used globally, as well as by the leaders of Imo State, Nigeria. An article published by Scalia (Scalia, 2012) suggests that evangelism is meant to persuade and not provoke. It is thought that a biblical model of persuasion will change the declining growth pattern.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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PERSUASION FOR THE EVANGELISTIC MISSION
OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Aloysius Ntiwunka

February 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The inspiration to write this project document came from a diversity of sources and I am indebted to all of them.

Without any reservations, I must express my profound gratitude to our heavenly Father for His love extended to me while doing this program. All I needed He supplied. His grace *indeed* was sufficient for me

I am grateful to the faculty of the Andrews University Theological Seminary; all of them I met during the course of my MDiv and DMin programs positively influenced my spiritual life. Their impressions will remain with me wherever I go. In fact, I owe a special debt to Dr. Stan Patterson and Dr. David Penno for their insistence and support that ensured the success of my writing. They acted as fathers to me each time I needed any assistance.

Also, I am especially indebted to Dr. Bryson and Dr. Don Jas, my advisors who encouraged and handled me as their only son during my writing. Their spirit of human relationships *indeed* have widened my wisdom and also taught me lessons on how to treat people in my future career.

My thanks at this time also go to Pastor Okpolor, the president of my conference (Imo Anambara Conference), who did not hesitate to give me assistance during my application process to start this program, and a special note of appreciation to other pastors who also helped me in taking care of my mother's burial while I was away.

Above all on earth, I owe an unpayable copious debt to my lovely wife, Gift Uchechi Ntiwunka, PhD, who kept on prayerfully and softly asking, on daily basis, how I was faring in my writing, whether it was raining or the sun was shining. I am so proud of her. I love her and my three children – Chidinma Ellen Ntiwunka (my first daughter), Chukwuemeka Godswill Ntiwunka (my son), and Enyioma Deborah Ntiwunka (my youngest daughter).

Let all the honor and praises for my success be ascribed to our Father in Heaven.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Jesus pronounced the necessity of sharing the gospel and how persuasively the message should be preached all over the world by His disciples. This great commission, given to those who love Humanity, as indicated in Matt 28:19 is the responsibility of every believer and is to be communicated to all nations, tribes, and languages by word of mouth, sign language or any possible means God has given to humanity to bring the conviction of His teachings to all creatures.

After Jesus was resurrected, He gave the responsibility of sharing the commission to the Church. After His ascension to heaven, He wanted His followers to carry the news throughout the world. Pastors, evangelists, and preachers are to lead out in following this command given the special calling they have been given to “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). However, every member in the Church is a minister called to participate in the gospel preaching and teaching, even as Jesus empowered His disciples to go and spread the good news all over the world. Then, based on the imperative as indicated in the above text and the analysis of its implications regarding the function of each member to accomplish Christ’s commission, the need to consider the project proposed in this document is critical. The response needed to support the effort to present the Great Commission serves as the drive that gives birth to the topic of my project, developing a biblical model of culturally appropriate persuasion for the

evangelistic mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Imo State, Nigeria.

Historical Context of Cultural Persuasion in Nigeria

Generally, globally, people tend to achieve control over others by devious messages that depend on compliance-gaining plans. That story is not different in Nigeria, especially in Imo State where coercive strategies are used by some leaders and politicians to achieve adherence. Though what triumphs in the communities are forceful persuasive strategies, a majority of people do not welcome such ideas. They cherish and obey when there is empowerment and choice rather than messages that contain elements of coerciveness. An article published by Scalia (2012) suggests that evangelism is meant to persuade and not provoke. People should be convinced of the reality of this fact as the entire world seems to misconstrue the basic idea of what persuasion means as a consequence of a global negative concept.

Scalia called attention to what persuasion meant as she referred to Christ's teaching model in the approach to the woman at the well. The evangelical message in these references exhibited Christ's diplomatic persuasive approach, based on love and grace. Jesus took time to discuss with the Samaritan woman and when she became aware of the fulfillment Christ offered in His promise of Salvation to this woman, it was not the result of a coercive strategy as some scholars, such as Kelan (1961, pp. 57-78) stipulated in his definition that persuasion with punishment or reward is coercive.

Punishment and reward could be regarded as coercive if the persuader has an ulterior negative motive of something to gain from his audience for adhering to what he says. When God gives rewards or administers discipline in the process of persuasion, He does not give it for any negative ulterior motive. His discipline and rewards are based on

love and grace and nothing else. The promise of eternal life given by Christ to the woman was specifically for her advantage. If the woman had refused Jesus' offer, that would not have taken anything from Humanity, neither from the Father nor from the Holy Spirit who usually talks to every heart after the message has been preached to the audience by anyone responsible. The promise and reward Jesus pronounced was not from a selfish motive as some managers and leaders in many companies and organizations give promises and rewards in order to maintain their position, job, or even favor. Many managers and leaders today threaten their subordinates if they fail to achieve what is expected. These leaders tend to present their desires in the context of persuasion by earthly rewards, and that is not the biblical model of persuasion as will be presented in this project.

The Nature and Practice of Persuasion in Nigerian Society

In Nigeria, traditional persuasive approaches are intensely rooted in a coercive concept. It is noted that socialization progresses from family to school, to churches, and then to various social societies. In Nigeria, as in other countries, the use of coercion and the pressure for compliance exists. Ideally, Nigerians customarily use stories as a means of socialization and relationship. Indeed, it is acknowledged that as a consequence of myths and traditional practices, the Nigerian youth/adolescents learn of and associate punishments and rewards with compliance and non-compliance.

On the same note, according to an article published by Onyekwere (1989), a paper that was presented by Nwuneli (1987, p.2) indicated that Nigerian youth are organized by age and grades and that every level of progress in the life of the child is related to a definite indoctrination on the expectation of the society from the individual at that stage.

It is clearly understood that any attempt to disobey or deviate from the indoctrinating communication will be met with sanctions, some wild, some very steep.

However, the utmost possibility to analyze and comprehend the connection between coercion and persuasion in Nigerian culture is by assessment of dominant Nigerian societies of socialization. The family organization, the church organization, the school organization, and other various establishments basically communicate rewards and punishments as motivational incentives for agreement. For example, such statements like the following will come from the leader or manager: submit your annual reports to me or you will not get your salary this month; take care of my children or you will go and look for another place to stay or live, listen to me and make notes for “so and so” or you will get an “F” in my class. All these and many other similar strategies indicate compliance through reward and punishment methods. The notion behind taking care of my children, listening and taking notes in the class so that one will not get a failing grade, calls for compliance either from the leaders, managers, teachers or parents of any organization, and these are the strategies that are preeminently taking the order of the day in Imo State and in Nigeria as a whole. As long as persuasive strategies are of a negative type, issuing of threats and punishments through commands, the leaders, managers, teachers, and parents will continue the endeavor to educate people by force in order to achieve compliance. This project will present positive approaches to persuasion as a means of sharing the gospel.

Statement of Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Imo State, Nigeria, is one of the smallest Christian congregations, even though 90% of the population is Christian: Protestant and

Catholic, with only 2% Muslim. Imo is unusual in that the majority of states in Nigeria are comprised of Muslim and Roman Catholic, rather than Protestant. Since most of the population of Imo State is Christian the common belief in God should open the opportunity to present the unique teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; but evangelistic efforts have not been successful. A new approach should be employed to reach those who are not Adventists by using a biblical model of culturally appropriate persuasion as taught in the Bible. In this model, persuasion means using methods that draw attention to God and facilitate the awakening of a desire to gain further knowledge, resulting in leading the hearer to Jesus. The Holy Spirit then transforms the individual into someone who demonstrates evidence of the presence of the fruit of the Spirit.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is to develop a biblical model of persuasion that enables the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Imo State, Nigeria, to reach and persuade those who may have accepted God, but have not heard the unique message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Also needed is a way to reach the Muslims who have not been exposed to the Word of God. The Church members in Imo State need to be trained to include Christ-like methods of teaching and preaching of the gospel. The Church members in Imo State can learn to persuade others to know the authenticity of their beliefs in light of the truths rooted in the Bible.

Justification for the Project

Most Protestant denominations and Roman Catholics believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, yet they do not appear to accept the totality of the Bible; for

example, they do not accept the Three Angels Message found in the book of Revelation, nor do they regard the practical health principles. The Muslims have the Quran. Some of the teachings are similar to that of the Bible. A comparative study which would be portrayed in chart A and B in Appendix D would identify the differences between the Quran and the Bible. A study of different versions of the Bible that identifies the theme that is consistent from Genesis to Revelation could possibly open the door to accepting the Bible in its entirety. In other words, the authenticity of the Bible needs to be incorporated into the outreach. Thus given the statement in A and B evangelistic efforts needs to present both the consistency and authenticity of the inspired Word in order to prepare these three groups for accepting the Adventist message: Protestants, Catholics, and Muslims.

Expectations of the Project

The project is designed to motivate and enable Imo State Adventist members to focus their evangelical persuasion on biblical models. It is a model calculated to train the Church members in Imo State and in other states in Nigeria on how to persuade members of other faiths of the validity of biblical teachings. In addition, the project is intended to enlighten and equip Adventists with strategies as to how to persuade members of other faiths in regards to the unique Adventist teaching on the Third Angel's message. The project above all, gives the Adventist Church some methods for persuasion to use as tools of evangelism based on a biblical model of persuasion to better present the message of the Second Coming of Christ.

Limitations

This project is limited to the use of Scripture as the basic fundamental approach to determine its validity or worth to the audience. The Bible is the only source by which all characters or issues are to be examined.

Evangelists, pastors, and leaders are entitled to use various means to bring convictions to their audience but these should be justified by the biblical concept, because “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20). The Word of God is to be studied until the foundation of the truth is established on the solid rock (White, 1889, pp. 529-530).

List of Acronyms

APDCR: Action Plan for Developing Cordial Relationships

IAQ: Indoor Air Quality

HDL: High Density Lipids/Lipoprotein (good) cholesterol

PH: Power of Hydrogen or Power of the concentration of hydrogen ion

BU: Babcock University

Description of the Project Process

Chapter 1 gives the introduction of this project with a detailed historical context account of how cultural persuasion works in Nigeria. Chapter 2 describes a theological reflection of my life journey and biblical model of persuasion from Old Testament and the New Testament, using for examples, Christ’s model of biblical persuasion, John’s model of biblical persuasion, Paul’s model of biblical persuasion, and Ellen White’s comments on persuasion. Chapter 3 investigates literature relevant to the biblical model

of persuasion from scholarly perspectives, and how to apply persuasion in the Nigerian context curriculum. Chapter 4 presents models, procedures, and principles designed in correlation with the biblical concept to communicate the message to others. Chapter 5 explains how the project could be implemented and projects how successful it would be perceived during and after its implementation.

CHAPTER 2

THE PERSONAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION FOR MINISTRY

Introduction

This section of the project document will address my personal, theological, and spiritual life experiences that have shaped my outlook and performance in ministry. Embedded in this description is the culture, the community in which I was born and raised, my communion with God, my temperament, and the call into ministry. The theological sections will present the biblical foundation as seen in both the Old and New Testaments. The observations found in the writings of Ellen G. White will conclude the theological foundation. The points that will be described in this chapter have tremendously influenced my ministry and are relevant to my project and its approach to using biblical persuasion in evangelism sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Imo State and other states in Nigeria.

Personal Profile

This section will articulate my spiritual journey, as well as temperament, spiritual giftedness, spiritual web, task type performance, as well as my spiritual needs and goals.

Life Journey

I noted with keen interest in the book, *A Work of Heart* written by Reggie

McNeal, the incredible possibilities for shaping a spiritual leader's heart. In the book, McNeal outlined and described six outstanding factors, the six Cs, critical to the basic divine heart sculpturing process God uses to prepare the heart of the leaders that will share His heart with other Christian believers. This basic heart shaping occurs in six significant arenas: Culture, Call, Community, Communion, Conflict, and the Commonplace (McNeal, 2000, p. xii).

Culture

I was born and raised in a small village called Egberede Nguru in the Aboh Mbaise local government area in Imo State, Nigeria on the 14th of July, 1964, just two years after Nigeria got its independence. This village was predominantly populated by the Roman Catholic Church. My parents were strong Roman Catholics, and one of the things I cherish so much about them was that they—more than other Roman Catholic members in the community—would not compromise with false teachings. The moment they became aware of the truth as the Bible teaches they would make appropriate changes.

There were six children in my family: five boys and one girl, and I was the last born. Traditionally, being the last born in the family, my elder brothers and sister were to take care of me from my birth through my tenth birthday. Traditionally, they would then continue to care for me as a means of showing respect and regard. While a young lad, I learned to work hard for my family.

Call

Realistically, calling has to do with God's action in summoning people to a

specific task or role, with a sense of sanction or apologia attached to such a calling from God (Ryken, Wilhoit, & Longman, 1998).

I discovered that for a leader to perform effectively before God and humanity, the person must first of all recognize that the call is a divine one. This is what McNeal refers to “as the awareness of a call” (Ryken et al., p. xii). Leaders who recognize their call, no matter how small they seem to be in stature or position, usually make a difference and also represent a formidable force in any community they find themselves in (p. 96). The acknowledgment of a divine call enables a leader to resist and overcome any unfavorable circumstances.

My work history actually started from my local Church in “Egberede Nguru.” After my conversion and baptism in 1978 as an Adventist, though I was very young-- about 16 or 17 years old, I was chosen to work as a church clerk from 1979-1983. Being given this responsibility while I was so young and new in the faith surprised other Adventists in nearby churches, an indication that God can even use the least expected individual to lead His Church in victory.

Indeed, during my secondary (high) school years, between the ages of 13 and 15, I was well known in the community for my active participation in sports. I played football so well that people could not believe that I would stop without advancing to the World Cup level and playing for my country. Anywhere there was football game and I was participating, the entire community would come out to watch me play. In fact, two of my team mates from secondary (high) school, who played during the World Cup games in 1994, invited me to join them and play for a professional football team in Belgium, but the Spirit whispered to me that I should not accept this offer, for something greater was

waiting for me. Many members of the community, where I was raised were avid football lovers and tried to persuade and encourage me to join my class mates for professional football. Through one of my oldest brothers, I became an Adventist and he advised me not to join the professional football team, because he had seen many football players become caught up in the worldly things of life. I listened to his advice, just as Moses listened to his father-in-law, Jethro's, advice (McNeal, p. 10), and also understanding that obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22), I graciously declined the professional football invitation by my class mates.

I became a Seventh-day Adventist through the special grace of God. I saw the level of Roman Catholic predominance in my area and realized that it could be a force that can hinder or obscure one's spiritual views in seeing the truth the Bible has for salvation, if God does not intervene to save such a person.

It was not easy for Adventism to come into our small village, because the entire community was Roman Catholic. People were not encouraged to read the Bible, perhaps to keep them from discovering the truth about Sunday worship. It was only the "Roman Catholic Reverend Father" who could read the Bible while conducting mass. In fact, how we received the Adventist message in my village indicated God's unmerited favor granted to us through His special miracles. The message came to us when one Elder Dominic Onuoha, an Elder in the Nguru Adventist Church (my local church today), was giving Bible studies to one of his family friends, whose house is very close to our own house. We would have lost the opportunity of receiving the message had we been discouraged as a result of peoples' wrong notions that anyone who reads the Bible or goes for such Bible studies is intending to rebel against the Catholic Church and God.

What made the whole difference, that opened our (my oldest brother and me) eyes to become Adventist, was the lesson of the Little Horn's attempt to change the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday. At the end of that study, the elder challenged us that anyone who finds where it is written in the Bible that the right day to worship is on Sunday and not the Sabbath day will be given three million naira (\$20, 000 USD) by the Seventh-day Adventists Church. He also said he would become a Roman Catholic member. This challenge that had to do with the truth from the Bible, was a burden that none of us was able to bear alone. It was not easy for us to ask the reason why we observe Sunday as a day of worship, because we would be termed rebels by the majority of the churches, Roman Catholic in particular, in our community. However, my oldest brother, who attended the Bible study with me, asked some of the prominent men, who were very close to my parents, the truth regarding the challenge made by the Adventist elder, but there was no genuine answer to satisfy our curiosity from the Bible. For that reason, both of us who attended the Bible study decided to become Adventists (the first Adventists in my village). This decision nearly led to a great division between my parents, but through God's intervention, peace and love continued to reign in our family. One question I remember that my father asked with annoyance was, "Why did you allow these children to attend such a Bible study while I was not around?" But my mother, being more receptive to biblical truth, politely replied, "Master, why should I prevent our children from going to listen to the Word of God seeing that the Bible is the only place we can find the truth for our salvation?" My father finally replied, "Fine." He expressed a concern that, because of our family's position in the Roman Catholic Church, we were not going to have it easy with our fellow Catholic members here in the community. My

mother finally said, “We have to give more priority to the word of God than our fellow members in the Church.” My mother’s reply quickly reminded my oldest brother and me of Acts 5:29 and Daniel 3:18, the two Bible texts the Elder used to encourage us as we took our stand for the Lord. We should obey and worship God rather than men as implied in the two texts, and that was our stand!

During the early periods of our decision to be Adventists, many nearby Roman Catholic church members, very close to my parents, pressured my parents to stop feeding the two of us such nonsense and that we should also be stopped from going to school as a punishment for the decision we had taken. My parents were disciplined in the Roman Catholic Church for allowing their sons to become Adventists. However, after a period of two years, my mother and the rest of my siblings, including my sister and her husband, became Adventists. This happened through that first Adventist message my brother and I received. My parents’ Roman Catholic friends saw the progress I was making in my education and how I was earning tuition through the Literature Evangelist Ministry as an undergraduate student in Babcock University. Many of these people became interested in knowing more about our beliefs and some became Adventists. These were the same friends who had been pressuring my family against the Adventist faith.

When I left my local church for Ilishan Remo Ogun State in the western coast of Nigeria in 1985, I was accepted into Babcock University (formerly Adventist Seminary of West Africa) to study Theology. I joined the Adventist group who worked earnestly to establish a Sabbath School in the town of Odobolu, approximately 16 to 17 kilometers from Babcock University. In this group, I was one of the Sabbath School coordinators. I also served as the Sabbath School coordinator for the Igbo people from my tribe, from the

eastern part of Nigeria, attending Babcock University Church. I continued with this work from 1999 to 2006.

During the school breaks, I worked as a Literature Evangelist in Nigeria, Sweden, and later in Norway. The Lord used me through the Literature Evangelist ministry to accomplish a little in His vineyard, for example, soul winning, planning, and building of my local church. In many other ways, there were evidences of what God achieved through me from such ministerial experiences.

The marriage to Gift, my wife, has enhanced my work. She was interested in education and ministry. Finances became available through the means of the proceeds of God's blessings through the Literature Evangelist Ministry. Right from the time of my conversion as an Adventist, people started calling me their pastor, due to the way the Lord revealed Himself in my life and in my manner of relating with them. Interestingly, even my wife was regarded as a pastor's wife, due to her active participation in Babcock University Church, where she had been teaching.

Our marriage has been a blessing and we both enjoy working for the Lord. We have three kids presently and all of them are studying at Babcock University High School. Our first child is now 15 years old and her name is Ellen "Chidinma" (God is good), the second is 11 years old and his name is Godswill "Chukwuemeka" (God has done well) and the youngest is 8 and her name is Deborah "Enyioma" (A good friend); my wife's name is Gift "Uchechi," which literally means "God's thought is best."

From the time I was a child, I never had the desire to study in public schools, when I got older I was not attracted to any jobs that did not pertain to the Church or to God and this has saved me tremendously from numerous troubles in my Christian life

experience. In fact, each time I reflect on how I prayed and shared Bible studies, I see myself as one who is being called by God to lead out in ministry. I have seen how God has used me to lead people to turn their lives to Christ. When I knocked on doors on a daily basis during my Literature Evangelist ministry and work with other pastors in organizing and holding public evangelistic campaigns that lead to souls being added to the kingdom of God then my conviction that the Lord wants me to lead out in His vineyard is strengthened.

Community

“Leaders do not develop in isolation. They emerge within a community that plays a vital role in shaping them” (McNeal, 2000, p. xiii). Community is defined as “a group of people who are socially interdependent, who participate together in discussion and decision making, and who share certain practices that both define the community and are nurtured by it” (Bellah, 1985, p. 333). In addition to my family members, who have tremendously played a vital role as a community in shaping my Christian experience, I have come across other people and friends who have influenced and shaped my life as a child of God. In my family, we are very close to each other. We are very open to one another and share almost everything in common. With this relational background inherited from my family, I was able to easily relate and make friends with people I came in contact with in my ministry.

Being born and raised in a community where the Roman Catholic Church predominates other denominations, gave me an understanding of the objections I came in contact with during the time I was selling books. I did not come in contact with most of the Muslims in my village, because they are a minority group, though their population in

Nigeria is of high percentage. I am thankful to God, however, as what interaction I did have with the Muslims was instructive as to how best to persuade them to understand the Word of God.

As the last born, I learned humility, since I was trained to respect my other four siblings according to our tradition. Traditionally, being obligated to respect the elders in my family played a vital role in my Christian life experience and this tremendously impacted me to respect even the authorities in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Apart from what the Bible says in Rom 13:1-2, everyone should be subjected to the governing authority. Every authority is said to have been established by God and that those who go contrary to it are said to be rebelling against God. As a result, judgment passes on to the person rebelling. This was engrained in my thinking by my family tradition.

Communion

Communion with God is one of the crucial possibilities God uses to shape the leaders. According to McNeal (2000, pp.139-141), communion determines the core shaping of the leaders, as well as the magnitude of their relationship with God.

My communion with God on a daily basis is what has sustained me and enabled me to remain steadfast before the Lord, irrespective of what happens in my ministry. I discovered in my daily devotion with the Lord, that the surest way to let God abide in me is through authentic worship. According to Kidder (p. 9), there is no way a leader or a Christian can grow spiritually without authentic worship. Authentic worship is the single most vital event in the life of every Christian, because all things in Christianity are centered on worship. I see this as an indisputable fact from my Christian life experience, because each time I seem to deviate from doing my devotions consistently and

passionately, I began to experience degeneration in my Christian life experience. My communion with God on a daily basis has incredibly helped me to form the habit of worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24). Though I do not see God face to face, as I worship Humanity on daily basis, His Omnipresent and Omniscient attributes are revealed to me. As I pray daily to God, I begin to see Humanity as He helps me to improve on my spiritual activities and mission.

My communion with God has urged me to pray and read the Bible every day. Through our relationship, I am committed to observing fasting and prayer at least once a week. I have discovered that seeking the face of the Lord through fasting and prayer opens the doors of heaven by God, so that I can draw on the abundance of blessings He has in store. It is my conviction that through prayer and fasting, from what Jesus said to His disciples in Mark 9:29, I can handle trying circumstance and that I can be successful in whatever I do (Phil 4:13). My prayer and fasting life experiences have taught me that God is able to meet all my needs, no matter how complex they seem. No deplorable situation can move me, since I know and believe that I can reach my omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God in every situation I find myself. Above all, my communion with God has revolutionized my relationship with Humanity; it has shaped my Christian life in the right perspective more than other possibilities God uses to shape the leaders that share His heart with others. I am so grateful for my relationship with God.

Conflicts

As a result of the spirit of relationship and openness that I inherited from my family, I have been able to meet and interact with many different people. However, not all these associations have been positive, many have caused me great distress, as some

people, both inside and outside the Church, sought to take advantage of my personality. Unfortunately, even members of the clergy and other leaders provided avenues of conflict in my life. But my faith kept me strong as I leaned on the “Thus says the Lord” (Isaiah 44:6-8). Nevertheless, these unpleasant exchanges are part of a person’s growth and maturity process—it comes with the territory of being a part of the human culture where we interact with different personalities, who have differing beliefs, value systems, etc.

Commonplace

As I mentioned before, the environment where I grew up was that of a small village where the people were more interested in small scale farming. Though many people were engaged in this sector, most of the things we ate were bought from the market, because we could hardly produce most of the things we needed. As a result, I became quite industrious at a young age. I learned certain skills necessary for survival in my community. I learned rope making; this skill was required as residents tend to their herds. I also learned how to tap their palm wine in the bush. I was very proficient in these services and so never lacked work before I finished high school and gained admission to Babcock University. My rope making job helped me to be independent and not have to rely on my parents for spending money as a student. Also, through my proceeds, I used to loan money to my parents for emergencies. I thank God for using such a small village made up of a people that were not affluent like in the larger communities to contribute to shaping my life.

Theological Foundation of Biblical Model of Persuasion in the Old Testament

From a biblical analysis and investigation in both the Old and New Testaments, it is noted that persuasion serves as the foundation for articulating a biblical theology or concept. In the Old Testament, for instance, the expression of God's love in the phrase "Let us make humanity in our Image" (Gen 1:26), reveals God's persuasive word to let the whole universe comprehend the "three components of God's nature in 'Trinity'" (Matt 28:19; Rom 1:4) and how He loves and intends to relate with humanity. That phrase defines the nature of God, as well as His relationship with humanity and other things He created. It is on the premise of this phrase, understanding that humanity could feel highly loved by God among other creatures, that we understand that we are created in the image of the Triune God. And, "Leading in the image of the Triune God" (Rodin, 2010, p. 29) gives us the power to have dominion over other creatures and convinces us of God's intent in creating human beings to live a communal life in accordance with His Triune Unity in nature. As beings created in God's image, we are to reflect the true image of God, manifested in the relationship of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Rodin, 2010, pp. 30-32).

Being created in the image of a Triune God, we are expected to exhibit the four levels of the relationship that the Son exhibited in God's Triune nature. A person is to relate with God, neighbors, and creation (Rodin, 2010, p. 33). Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:35). This means that it is through humanity's absolute relationship with God that the evidence of his having been created in God's image is revealed. Jesus uses the above text to clarify to His

disciples that He is the lover of the entire Universe and to let them know that, through their love for one another, the world will be convinced that He is Love (1 John 4:8). God's demonstration of love on the Cross of Calvary with the sacrifice of His only begotten Son is one of the most persuasive messages that will continue to lead people to the throne of God from generation to generation, till Christ comes the Second time. "The supreme happiness of life," Victor Hugo said, "is the conviction that we are loved"(Graham, 2002, p. 254). God's demonstration of love to us, despite the fact that humanity defaulted God's standard, makes His love for us to be more appealing and accepting, more than any other means one can use to convince his fellow humanity of God's love. God's demonstration of love on Calvary makes His love contagious to all believers in the whole Universe.

The Reason God Established a Relationship With Humanity

God loves humanity. It is because of His love for humanity that He establishes a relationship. He does not want to leave us desolate, because of the roaring Lion, the Adversary (1 Pet 5:8). It is through humanity's relationship with God that Satan's schemes can be made known to humanity. With God, humanity is protected from the hands of the Devil. Humanity can only be secured in the hands of God, because, by any other means, the security is likely to disappoint in the long run. Humanity, therefore, feels welcome to be secured in the hand of God, because of His love. "No earthly relationship is as strong as this love. Nothing can compare with it" (White, 1991, p. 301). God's faithfulness and the extent of His love cannot be measured (Jer 31:3). No one can fathom the limit of it. "With amazement the angels beheld the infinite love of Jesus, who,

suffering the most intense agony of mind and body, thought only of others, and encouraged the penitent souls to believe” (White, 1898, p. 752).

On that same note, according to Billy Graham, one should look at the Cross if he really wants to investigate God’s love for humanity. In consequence of His love, when falsely accused of blasphemous words and led to Golgotha to die with the criminals, Jesus did not retaliate to His accusers or resort to invite legions of angels from heaven for His defense (Graham, 2002, p. 321). Besides, it was the love of God that prompted Jesus to sympathetically say, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). This is one of the motivating statements that preeminently defines the love of God for humanity, even though human beings sin, and to bring conviction to the followers of Christ that vengeance is not ours but God’s (Deut 32:25; Prov 20:22; Rom 12:19).

Word of Admonition, Rebuke and Reprove as Persuasive in the Old Testament

Throughout the Old Testament God, directly or indirectly, through the prophets, gave words of admonition, exhortation, rebuke and reprove to humanity. They are used in the Bible for persuasive purposes; paramount for saving the perishing souls for the Kingdom of God. Though some people may misconstrue the redemptive reasons for which these words are used, it should be noted that they are reasonably used to stress the love of God and to make His love more persuasive and acceptable to the people. For instance, in the New Testament, the word *nouthesia* in Greek means admonition, which is synonymously related to exhortation, warning, cautionary advice, scold, reprove or discipline; to persuade or convince anyone or group of people who are to be called to

action for any issue at stake. *Nuthesia* with *paideia* “is a means of Christian upbringing in the household table (Eph 6:4b). It denotes the word of admonition, which is designed to correct while not provoking or embittering (cf. v. 4a “may parorgizo”) (Behm, 1964, pp. 948-1022).

In Exod 25:8, God said, “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” This is God’s persuasive word expressed in love to restore the lost relationship that existed in the Garden of Eden. According to White (1961), the Father says,

I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. I will exercise forgiving love toward them, and bestow upon them my joy. They should be to me a peculiar treasure; for this people who I have formed for myself shall show forth my praise. (p. 77)

These words are God’s persuasive expression of love to maintain the relationship He established from the beginning for the purpose of love. Humanity has to some extent reciprocated to God’s gesture by praising and obeying His command. Through God’s directions and guidance, Moses was able to execute God’s command for the construction of the Sanctuary through a man called Bezalel, noted as the first person endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit (Exod 30-35). It could be noted that God’s demand that the sanctuary should be made for Him to dwell among the people after the first created beings failed in the Garden of Eden, suggests that God loves human beings though they did not comply in keeping His commandments. This is a bold step that justifies that God’s love for humanity is inestimable or invaluable (2 Cor 9:14).

Expression of God's Love Through Covenantal Agreement

Despite the fact that humanity failed to keep God's Commandments, out of love, God persuasively used a covenantal agreement to compel humanity to reciprocate His love and relationship. In the English Old Testament, the word covenant is the translation of the Hebrew word *Berith*. The English word covenant means "to come together" with its root meaning from Latin *con* or "with" indicating convention or togetherness. According to Mackie (2007, p. 80), "Covenant preeminently defines membership in the people of God" (p. 80). Covenant involves relationship, promise, and expectation between humanity and God in biblical context. Through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, God once and for all showed His Covenant fidelity (Newman, 1997, p. 245).

The covenants that are referenced in this document are based on two basic covenants; namely the Old Testament and the New Testament covenants. The former is based on the Old Testament Covenant in the Mosaic Law, while the other one is focused on the New Testament Covenant, which is made perfect through Jesus Christ (Heb 8:7). God's intention in bringing both covenants to humanity's attention was to bring conviction to the human mind, that He loves us and to show the extent of His power to save humanity from the predicament of sin. He wanted humanity to be free from the bondage of sin, so we could be free through the merits of the precious blood of Jesus. The new covenant is capable to remove the sin which the old one was not able to (Heb 10:14). This makes it expedient for the new covenant that is made possible by Jesus to be highly acclaimed by the entire believers of this Universe.

However, it is on the basis of these facts, that God's intention for which the covenants were meant were misconstrued by some denominations to some extent. Some

Christians who have ulterior negative motives in using the Ten Commandments tend to say that the fourth commandment, as stated in Exod 20:8-11 is voided since the old Covenant has been replaced with the New Covenant. This idea is not a sound one, as Jesus clearly stated that He did not come to change or to destroy the Law or the instructions of the Prophets, but to fulfill them (Matt 5:17). The new covenant did not contradict the old one because the ancient one was pointing to the new one due to its completeness in perfection for life eternal. Paul saying that we are not under the Law does not mean that we are free to transgress the Law, but it rather meant that we were to keep the Law in its entirety in order not to be under the Law. An excellent explanation of what he meant is expounded more in the following statement: “Shall we sin because we are not under the Law (hupo nomon) but under grace?” In reference, he further said, “God forbid” (Rom 6:15); this is a clear indication that He supports the keeping of the Law. This is an affirmation of Jesus’ statement that anyone who breaks the Law or teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of God (Matt 5:19). One has to learn from what Paul meant by saying, “If you are under the Spirit, you are not under the Law” (Gal 5:18).

For instance, what Paul meant here was that, as a Christian, if I see a person who needs emergency help and needs to be taken to the hospital instead of my going to the Church on the Sabbath day, and because of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I can choose to take this person to the hospital rather than keeping the Sabbath as stipulated by the Law. This response is from the Holy Spirit. The Bible is written by human beings but through the inspiration and instruction of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if I refuse to help this person because of Sabbath keeping, even though I was inspired by the Holy Spirit, it

means that I subject myself to be under the Law. Furthermore, the teachings of Jesus based on the answers He gave when He was interrogated by the Pharisees for healing a sick person on the Sabbath day would support helping this person (Matt 12:10-12; Luke 14:1-6).

Keeping the laws set up by human beings as to how to observe Sabbath, humanity's interpretation of the Law, is not the teaching of Paul who followed Jesus' way of observing Sabbath that supports the providing of healing from sin and physical ailments. Paul's missionary methodology as he endeavored to win souls to the Lord was accommodative to what the Holy Spirit communicated to humanity. In the situation where someone needed immediate medical attention, it should be noted that the Law should guide, but it has no power to determine for us as we are impressed or moved by Humanity Who inspires and gives us power to do all things right (Phil 4:13). It is very crucial that one needs to be prayerful that the Lord will, through His infinite love, whisper and inspire humanity as to what to do as he endeavors to keep God's Law. Paul's statement that suggests that when we are in the Spirit, we are not under the Law indicates that Jesus' love for humanity is above the Law. The Spirit of God empowers us to do that which is more crucial than the Law and that is what Paul meant in the statement.

God initiated the covenants between Humanity and the people to convince them that the gulf, which was created as a result of sin, cannot be a stumbling block on their Salvation journey, provided they believe in Humanity. He called their attention to some specific promises and demands, indicating that reciprocity is the binding for the agreement. The covenant God made with the Israelites in Exod 19:5 was to let them know His love for them and to convince them to obey His voice, His command.

Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac according to the command of God indicated that Abraham was an obedient child of God. According to White (1995), "God's covenant, confirmed to Abraham as an oath before the intelligences of other worlds, testified that obedience will be rewarded." The Abrahamic covenant outlined in Gen 12:1-3 and Gen 17:1-5 demonstrates the blessings that a faithful obedient follower of God will receive. Therefore, this is persuasive language which can inspire people to be faithfully obedient to God's Word and thus be recipients of His blessings.

In my culture, if someone or a group of persons asks another person to do something which is right, where both parties will gain, though the person that is challenged will receive a special reward from the challenger, it is right. This means that the person, who initiates the challenge to the other party, is a friend of the one who is being challenged. God asking His people to obey Humanity by making promises to them and demanding from them certain things to receive the reward, indicated that God was saying that He is a friend to His people (Gen 17:2; Exod 19:5).

Theological Foundation of Biblical Model of Persuasion in the New Testament

The New Testament model of biblical persuasion is to be understood in the context of Christ's model of persuasion, John's model of biblical persuasion, Paul's model of biblical persuasion and in White's comments on persuasion.

Christ's Model of Persuasion

Jesus' model of persuasion is demonstrated through His sound preaching and teaching of the gospel message. He demonstrated through His life and work a biblical

model of persuasion worth emulating in the preaching and teaching of the gospel message by all believers.

In my culture, the people who are highly respected and valued are those who possess the qualities of honesty, trustworthiness, competence, courageousness, supportiveness, with a clear view of the future (Zigarelli & Goss, 2008, p. 23). All of these qualities and many others were seen in Jesus.

Jesus proved His honesty in the ministry. His authenticity and integrity were not corrupted like those of men. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and humanity” (Luke 2:52). He was consistent and firm in all His dealings with people as He taught and preached the gospel. “God calls each of us to be authentic, to be a genuine follower” (Zigarelli & Goss, 2008, p. 24). Jesus’ authenticity in teaching, preaching, and obeying the command as the Bible prescribed prompted God the Father to say during the time of Christ’s baptism, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3:17). The same word was reechoed during Christ’s Transfiguration in Matt 3:17 and Mark 9:7 saying, “This is my beloved Son, listen to humanity.” A closer comparison of the texts above with Is 42:1, where God the Father says, “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on humanity and he will bring justice to the nations,” demonstrates that Matthew and Mark believed that Jesus was the fulfillment of Isa 42:1. The inter-textual links portray Jesus as the faithful and trustworthy servant of the Father of Isa 41 and that humanity should give Him undivided attention, affection, heart, and their entire lives. Those words from God the Father (Matt 3:17; Mark 9:7) acknowledge Jesus as the beloved Son and the one who will bring justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1 brings more conviction to the minds of the

angels (1 Pet 1:12) and to the believers on earth that Jesus was faithful to the Father and that He is the only right person to listen to and to follow His examples. As the Father said those persuasive words to convince the world of who the Son is, it is interesting to note that Jesus affirmed His Divinity and relationship with the Father as He said, “I am the way and the truth and life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6, 7). The point being emphasized on is that Jesus is the right person to listen to and we should follow His example, and no one else.

Generally people like to follow someone who does not live the life of the Pharisees and hypocrites recorded in the Gospels. God expects His followers to be genuine in all their comportments, in all their relationship with others, and in doing His ministry. This is in affirmation of the statement that says, “He who wants to follow Jesus is expected to walk as Jesus walked” (1 John 2:6).

Jesus was Compassionate

Being compassionate, Jesus was able to influence people in the world as He made Himself available as a friend to the entire world. “Compassion is empathy in action, a feeling that moves on to actual service” (Zigarelli & Goss, 2008, p. 25). One may ask how did Jesus influence or draw people to Himself? In the Bible we read,

Jesus answered them and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of humanity shall give unto you: for humanity hath God the Father sealed.” (John 6:26, 27)

Jesus’ answer in verse 26 indicated that the people were persuaded to come to Him as a result of the food He provided them and not because of the real message Jesus had for them, which is revealed in verse 27. This suggests that to emulate Jesus’ method

of presenting the works of His Father is to be compassionate with people, provide their physical needs, and to complement their spiritual needs. This biblical method of persuasion, if practiced by the members of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Imo State, would allow Jesus' model of persuasion, embedded in the compassionate leading of the Holy Spirit, to transform, not only the members, but attract the community.

Christ's act of supplying the physical needs of humanity by feeding the crowd drew attention to the fact that humanity should depend on God for both Spiritual and physical needs. It is noted that Christ never performed any miracle without any genuine reason to draw attention to the tree of life, whose leaves are for the restoration of humanity to God (White, 1898, pp. 365-367).

For similar reasons that led the crowd to look for Christ, more than 150 non-Adventist students in Babcock University get baptized each year, because they are attracted to study some of the courses offered in Babcock University. In the course of their study, the message of salvation becomes their priority. The same experience is noted here at Andrews University, though the number of conversions is nothing to compare in size with the number that is converted at Babcock University each year. Just as people were looking for Jesus for the miracle of food (John 6:25), healing (Mark 2:1-12), and many other things they needed in life, in the process, they became converted as Jesus complemented the satisfaction of such needs with His teaching and preaching of the Salvation message. Many souls receive the gospel message as they are attracted by some of the Adventist schools and health care centers all over the world today. The Seventh-day Adventist churches in Imo State Nigeria will influence a lot of non-believers to accept Christ as the only source of their salvation, as they show compassion in providing

some of their basic needs, like schools and health centers, Jesus provided food to the crowd who were around Humanity according to their basic needs. According to Jas 2:14-20, it is not enough to give only biblical words to the people while their basic needs are food and clothing, but be compassionate with the people. “Give them something to eat,” Jesus said (Matt 14:16). This is an effective means of meeting the needs of the people to prepare the way for a clear path to accepting the gospel message.

The Teaching and Preaching Excellence of Jesus

It is noted that, through unprecedented excellence, Jesus captivated minds and captured hearts (Zigarelli & Goss, 2008, p. 27). The Bible indicated that, as He spoke, the crowds were perplexed due to how He taught them as though He had authority (Matt 7:28-29). Later, following Christ’s model, Paul said, “Whatever you do, do everything for God’s glory (1Cor 10:31).” “Love God enough to work for humanity in all things, excelling at everything to which you put your hand”(Zigarelli & Goss, 2008, p. 27). Paul was an early church leader, but it is said that he followed the example of Jesus. He entreated the Corinthians to strive lawfully day-by-day in seeking for piety and moral excellence. He made an emotional appeal to them to do away with any burdens that would discourage them as they pressed forward to achieve perfection through Christ (White, 1911, p. 315). When Christians follow God with excellence, others will follow them without much resistance. I see following Jesus with excellence as knowing what you are to convince your audience about; it means speaking to your audience in clarity and authority. If Christians could exhibit excellence in their teaching and preaching as Jesus did, without doubting, and support their teachings with biblical truths, they will

draw people to God as Jesus did. Church members in Imo state should be taught from the Word of God in order to prove excellence in presenting the gospel.

Christ's Gentility Made a Great Impact on His Audience

In Proverbs 25:15, we read, "A ruler can be persuaded through patience, and a gentle tongue can break a bone." In addition, 15:1 states that "A gentle tongue can break a bone." Gentleness is the fruit of the Spirit through which many people have been impacted today. Christ's gentleness in handling matters as He related and taught people made a great difference. According to Zilgarelli and Gross (2008, p. 29), one could see that Jesus influenced the majority of people with whom He interacted. His patience, gentle words, loving touch, and a smile persuaded and transformed His listeners. These qualities, incorporated into the evangelistic outreach, tempered with a cultural and appropriate biblical model of persuasion would do much to help the people in Imo State, Nigeria, to better comprehend God's love.

One could imagine from this scenario how Jesus gently revealed the truth to the woman at the well, despite the fact that, culturally, Jews were not supposed to speak to Samaritans nor was a humanity permitted to address a woman without her husband being present. Besides, the rabbis were not expected to speak to a lady of that status. All these were stumbling blocks, which could have hindered Jesus from making the truth known to the woman. In keeping with the culture, the woman refused to give Jesus the water to drink. She shared some genuine reasons for refraining according to their cultural belief; yet, Jesus persuasively, through His gentle approach, revealed the truth (John 4:14) that the woman had no husband. One could see that the woman focused on law, but Jesus gently focused on grace.

Besides the above biblical attributes through which Christ's model of persuasion is identified, it is noted that He performed miracles. These miracles recorded in the Bible were seen to persuade many in His audience. He demonstrated that He is the Messiah, as He used miracles to convince the people. His first miracle on earth, turning water into wine (John 2:1-11), raising of Lazarus and many other people from death (John 11:1-44; Luke 7:11-17), as well as healing the sick, and calming the storm while they were on the sea (Matt 8:23-27), incredibly convinced most people to acknowledge Humanity as the Messiah. Generally, miracles in nature serve as powerful weapons that can lead people to believe that something is true or real. In reality, Jesus performed many miracles according to John 20:30-31, which were not recorded in the Bible. The ones that were performed by Jesus and were written were to give evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus Christ the Son of God. According to White, (1875, p. 213), the wonderful evidences Jesus showed in the miracles He performed, affirmed His Messiahship. Indeed, "Every act of His life, every word spoken, every miracle wrought, was to make known to fallen humanity the infinite love of God" (White, 1917, p. 696).

Story Telling and Other Examples of Christ's Method of Persuasion

"Great stories shake people from their comfort zones and get them asking questions they never considered asking" (Zigarelli & Goss, 2008, p. 74). In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus used a parable of a persistent widow to teach His disciples not to give up in prayer; pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17). Such stories could be effective in convincing the people in Imo State, Nigeria, as to the importance of consistently presenting their petition to God, in regards to their needs from God. The story indicates that God is perfect and no

respector of anyone and thus the best Judge. If such a humanity, the judge in the story, can show a lack of favoritism because of private friendship, rank or the party he is associated with, according to what is explicitly explained in Jas 2:1-4, I am quite sure God's approach to issues of doing what is right for judgment will be absolute in His judgment, since He is perfect and not a respector of persons. According to Bonaventure's comment on Luke 18:7 as cited in Painter (2002):

If persistence in prayer softened the hardest judge and inclined the most unjust to do justice, how much more surely will it incline (the ear of) the holy and just God. Such a story told by Jesus and other similar stories in the Bible serve as good methods of influencing people using the biblical model of persuasion. (p. 96)

Such story or stories would be useful in communicating divine truth to the people of Imo State in Nigeria. According to White (1923a), "In parables and comparisons He found the best method of communicating divine truth" (p. 236). Also, Jesus loved to teach His lessons of truth by using parables to show how open His spirit was to the sweet influence of nature. With parables, Jesus delighted to gather the spiritual teaching from all surroundings of daily life (White, 1938b, p. 39). The following are some of the stories Jesus told based on the context of the lives of His hearers:

The Farmer	Matt 13:1-9; Mark 4
The Kingdom Of God	Matt 22
The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
The Lost Son	Luke 15:11-32

The following are some of the stories told about Jesus, presented to non-believers to assist them in believing in the Savior:

The Birth of Jesus Christ	Matt 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20
The feeding of The Five Thousand	Matt 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44

Zacchaeus, the Tax Collector	Luke 19:1-10
The Crucifixion of Jesus	Matt 27:32-56; Mark 15:21-41
The Resurrection of Jesus Christ	Matt 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-14

The New Testament includes many stories of the early believers. Some of the stories include the following:

Ananias and Sapphira	Acts 5:1-11
Saul's Conversion	Acts 9:1-19

In addition to the stories Jesus told and the stories about Humanity, the early believers used stories from the Old Testament to reach and convince of the truth. The following are a few of the most popular, even today:

Abraham's Obedience	Gen 22:1-19
Flood	Gen 6:1-9; 7; 8
Birth of Moses	Exod 2:1-10
Ten Plagues of Egypt	Exod 7:14-12:30
Crossing the Red Sea	Exod 14:21-31
The Fall of Jericho	Josh 6:1-27
David and Goliath	1 Sam 17:1-51
Fiery Furnace	Dan 3:1-30
Jonah and the Fish	Jonah 1:1-2:10

Each story as listed above has a specific impact and influence on people when they are used in teaching and preaching the good news of the gospel. They are useful methods through which souls can be touched and won for the Lord in the preaching of the gospel.

Use of Rhetorical Questions

Rhetoric was formulated by Greek and Roman rhetoricians, such as Isocrates, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian (Ede, 2008). Rhetoric was designed to involve the listener as well as the speaker. It was to be a practical approach to presenting a subject and allowing the listener to “make effective choices” (p. 9). Jesus used rhetorical questions to bring conviction to the audience. He asked questions that invited them to think and to questions—to interact with Humanity. When He asked, “Who of you convicts me of sin?” (John 8:46), the question actually revealed Jesus as God to the people. Jesus wanted them think about the fact that no one is said to be perfect except God (John 10:18). It indicated that He should be trusted and depended upon as the representative of God.

Theological Foundation of Biblical Model of Persuasion in the New Testament: Early Christian Church

The early Christians were not perfect, but they lived out a love relationship with each other. The fulfillment of Jesus’ request that His disciples should love one another so that people would know that they were from Humanity was the priority of the early Christian Church. The early Christians maintained a balance without becoming a sect and as a result they were not isolated from others. They lived in faith due to their gathering during the Lord’s Supper and, as a result, they enjoyed unity which was established by Christ (Alexander, 1996, pp. 17-19). This community life-love-experience is what is expected to take precedence among Seventh-day Adventist Church members in Imo State Nigeria in reaching the people with the Word of God.

John's Model of Biblical Persuasion

John's model of persuasion is focused on his unique eyewitness of Jesus Christ. An eyewitness is "One who bears witness by giving personal report of what he has seen" (Youngblood, 1995, p. 429). In criminal law, it is evidence from a witness who has actually observed an event that can be presented as testimony in court.

John used his inspiration from God and also more of his personal witnessing experience about Jesus to convince his audience of who Jesus is. John identified Jesus as the savior of the world (1 John 4:9), only through Humanity can the sins of the world be forgiven. He preached to the people to repent from their wrongdoing, so that they will be pardoned to inherit the kingdom of God. He told his followers that their pardon could only be sorted out through Christ's death. This Indicates that Jesus takes away the sin of the world, purchases pardon for all that repent and believe the gospel; John, through this, encouraged his audience to come for baptism after their repentance of sins. The crowd was coming to humanity in mass for baptism, owing to the effective means of his persuasion, which could be described as a result of his eyewitness of the gospel about Christ. John confirms his testimony about Jesus as he declares the appearance of God during Christ's baptism, in which God the Father bore witness for Humanity. In John 1:32, we read, "And John bore record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon humanity." The Greek word for "saw" (*theaomai*) portrays the idea of, to behold, view attentively, and to see with the eyes and these indicated that John based the point of convincing his audience on his personal eye-witness about Christ.

When somebody uses his personal experience as evidence to convince his audience, conviction usually follows.

Paul's Model of Biblical Persuasion

The moment Saul was converted on his way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19), his name was changed to Paul (Acts 13:9) and from there his model of biblical expression of persuasion began to be recorded, beginning with his first missionary journey from Cyprus. Paul's ministerial experience was interwoven with that of Jesus Christ to some extent, because Paul had many obstacles in his ministry like Jesus, yet he maintained his faith, zeal, and piety in the ministry.

Paul used words to build up both the minds of his audience and his followers in the faith. In 2 Cor 5:11, Paul indicates that, "since, then we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men." The word *peitho* in Greek means to persuade, induce one by words to believe, to make friends of, to win one's favor, to win over or bring about a change of mind by the influence of reason or moral consideration (Vine, Unger, & White, 1984, p. 469). In this expression, it is noted that Paul's intention was to convince the Corinthian Church that he was the genuine or undisputed apostle. He used friendly words to gain their favor. And to his followers in the faith, he admonished that we should not be weary in doing the right thing, since we will be rewarded in the long run with a good harvest, if we do not give up (Galatians 6:9). This is an encouragement that motivates his brethren to persevere as he did during his sufferings and persecutions for the sake of the gospel of Christ.

In Ephesus, Paul argued persuasively in their Synagogue (Acts 19:8-10) for three months. As a result, many were baptized in the name of Jesus, after which they received

the Holy Spirit. The expansive nature of that persuasion was referenced by Demetrius, a Silversmith, who advised his fellow artisans to be aware that Paul was persuading people to believe on a god not made with hands, a belief that would endanger their trade, that of crafting gods. Demetrius referred to this danger in the context of Paul's success in persuading listeners throughout Ephesus and Asia (Acts 19:26). His advice was that Paul should be sent away and not be allowed to continue talking in public or ever returning to their city.

Paul's Model of Re-visitation is Worth Emulating

The Spirit of Paul's perseverance in revisiting the churches after his first missionary journey indicated the level of his love for those churches and this of course defined the magnitude of the persuasive words and method he used to win the people for Christ, the only way to Salvation. In Acts 17:1-4, Paul was noted for his custom of entering and arguing back and forth to convince the people about the necessity of Christ's suffering and His death and resurrection. His persuasive engagement with the people tarried for three Sabbaths, indicated that he wrestled with the Thessalonians at length to ensure that his conviction prevailed at the end. In consequence of his persistency with such hard debate with the people, some of the Jews and many others in the city joined him and Silas to continue with the gospel commission.

According to White (1911), "Before pressing forward into new territory, Paul and his companions visited the Churches that had been established in Pisidia and the regions round about" (p. 205). The reason for this was to strengthen the churches that had already been established (Acts 15:41). Out of compassion, Paul consistently prayed for the

churches he established and empowered them to grow spiritually and courageously (1 Cor 12; Phil 1:3-6).

Paul's method of revisiting, teaching, and preaching in these churches kept the members sound in the faith. It is likely that the majority of the members in these churches did not apostatize, but 192 out of 203 new converts left the Church at Ilishun Remo Ogun State, Nigeria, where a prominent church leader engaged in evangelism near Babcock University when I was one of his students. During his evangelistic campaign in 1992, so many trusted this leader, but soon after the meetings ended, he went back to his office. There was no follow up. Paul ensured a follow up (Acts 15:41) after making new converts even from his first missionary journey. It is not enough to preach the Word and get people baptized. According to White (1955), it is the Spirit of God that teaches and enlightens the mind, the preaching of the Word, the reading of the Scriptures alone will not be able to change the character; as well as saving the souls, unless the Holy Spirit works in collaboration with the human agents of God (p. 30). Experience shows persuasion that comes instantaneously, is likely to end up with apostasy, if there is no backup with faithful gospel workers who resound the gospel message to the ears of the people from time-to-time. As the Bible says, our faith increases as we hear the Word of God (Rom 10:17). Persuasion involves reasoning and moral consideration (Vine et al., 1984, p. 469). Perhaps this is why King Agrippa said to Paul "Do you think that in short a time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" (Acts 26:28).

Use of Rhetorical Questions

Paul, like Jesus, used rhetorical questions to bring conviction to the audience. A rhetorical question could be defined as a figure of speech in the form of a question posed

for its persuasive effect without the expectation of an audible reply (Burton, 1996). It is said to be a question asked for a reason other than that of obtaining information in response to the questions asked. An example is found in Romans 3:1-9. Paul used rhetorical questions to stimulate thinking and get the attention of his audience, and then he presented the information he wanted to use to convince them. In verse 6, Paul asked, "If God were not entirely fair, how would He be qualified to judge the world?" This question obviously needs no answer from the audience, but it actually communicates to the audience that God is the only impartial perfectionist who is qualified to execute judgment for the world. His question in verse 9 gives a clearer reason for his rhetorical questions in this passage; that is, "What then? Are we better than them?" The motive behind Paul's emphasis in those questions, were to persuade his audience to accept the fact that everyone, both Jews and Gentiles, need the special grace of God, since all have sinned and have come short of God's glory (Rom 3:23). Such rhetorical questions used by Paul could enable a pastor or preacher to humbly and effectively communicate to any of their audience, who assumes that he or she has lost completely in consequence of sin. Such questions give both Jews and Gentiles equal opportunity to approach the throne of God with humility and total dependence on God's grace to pardon our sins. The method Paul used in the passage, especially in Romans 3:1, to convince his audience, rendered invalid that the Jewish belief of circumcision places them in better position for God's Salvation than the Gentiles.

Indeed, Paul used rhetoric in highly ironic ways, as a result of the gospel's constraint. According to Resner (1999, p. 84), a careful study of 1 Cor 1-4, revealed that Paul used a conventional type of rhetoric to persuade the Corinthian Church to accept

unity and to make the people have a rightful perception or view of themselves and their leaders. In verse 13, Paul asked the following rhetorical questions to present his arguments in persuading the Corinthians to focus on what is necessary: “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?” The idea behind these questions was Paul’s desire for the Corinthians to focus on the Cross events being proclaimed, but not be divided or be quarreling among themselves, because of who they think is the right person to follow other than Christ, who is crucified. His point here is that Christ is the only one that should be praised, followed, and depended on. Paul indicated that he and Apollos had one purpose in planting and watering of the seed, but the only difference that determines the whole thing is Christ, who makes the seed to grow. The questions asked in verse 13 also suggest the validity of Christ being followed and not Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, the subject of the quarrel.

Giving Thanks to God in all Circumstances
(1 Thess 5:18)

According to Graham (2002), “A happy life is not one filled only with sunshine, but one that uses both light and shadow to produce beauty” (p. 350). Persecution that is faced with unshakable faith in the Lord can become bedrock that can influence others to take their stand for God. It is noted that some notable musicians are mostly those who know how to create songs out of sadness or disheartening situations. Fanny Crosby is noted for her spirit, being joyful in Christ as she saw beyond what many of us can see and this motivated her to produce great gospel songs that have become part of the Christian faith experience today. However, as Paul and Silas were in a rat-infested prison in Philippi, they sang songs even though their feet were in stocks and their backs raw from

the jailer's whip; yet, their endurance led to the conversion of both the heathen prison warden and his entire family (p. 350). The Psalmist says that we have to give thanks to God for He is good and because His mercy endures forever (Psalm 107:1).

Paul, a minister of the gospel, meticulously learned true thanksgiving; even during his great adversity, he wrote, "Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Graham, 2002, p. 355; based on Eph 5:19-20). Paul's expression of thanks to God while in prison and suffering, served as a huge influence that led some people to repent and follow the Lord. Such expressions of thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess 5:18) are needed in the gospel ministry in Imo State Nigeria to motivate those who are weak in thanking God during adversity.

The use of the Word *Logos*

According to Heraclitus, one of the early Greek philosophers who lived in 500 BC (as cited in Kittel & Bromiley, 1964, p. 81), said that the *logos* is first stated to be that which establishes humanity in his true being. This statement affirms what John says in John 1:1-3, that in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word is also God since nothing was created without Humanity. In this passage, *Logos* means or refers to the Son of God (John 1:14), who by Humanity order and form was brought into the world (Kittel & Bromiley, 1964, p. 88). John used the word *logos* to indicate the deity of Jesus as the Word was in the beginning and was God and the creator as the text stated in verse 3. Besides, John used the Word to reveal the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son since both of them are of divine origin (p. 88).

Therefore, the explanation John gave in 1 John 1:1, by indicating, that which was from the beginning of which we heard, saw, touched and talked about concerning the Word of life, were all referenced to the Son of God, Jesus Christ; which was further made clearer in John 1:14, where the Word became flesh among us. In this paragraph, the testimony John gave in the first text above, has to do with group witnessing, justifying the claim of Christ's divinity and relationship as a Son to God the Father.

Ellen White Comments on Persuasion Leading to Conversion

White (1930, p. 23) noted the evils of persuasive associates and that was why she advised that we should carry our lights wherever we go, so that we would not be easily swayed away with their subtle schemes to deceive God's people. The Bible reveals in Mark 13:22 and Rev 13:13, how the false prophets and false Christs will come with their persuasive songs and miracles to deceive even the elect of God's people, if it would be possible. Being aware of the deceiving persuaders, the Church members in Imo State, Nigeria will be equipped with the word of God (Eph 6:11); so that they will not be taken unaware as the deceivers pass-by with their misleading techniques.

However, White made several impressive comments that clearly indicated the positivity of persuasion. The greatest gift of the blessing God gave to humankind is the gift of speech being manifested through persuasion. It is through the tongue humanity can convince and persuade others; through speech, one can praise God and it is through persuasion we can absolutely convey the deep and clear love of God which the Son exhibited on the Cross (White, 1923b, pp. 316-317).

Realistically, the power of persuasion is of vital importance for soul winning. It is a wonderful gift from God to those who would win souls to Christ (White, 1988). We are to meet the standard of Christ, not that of the world, in our method of soul winning. Christ's method of persuasion is embedded in tender persuasion and His earnestness in exhortation (White, 1938b, p. 95). Jesus spoke in love and sympathy to reach the souls He labored for. The most persuasive eloquence as indicated by White (1961, p. 295), is the word that is spoken in love, as such words are known for radiating light to the souls and bringing hope to the discouraged.

Men who are to present or to preach the message, should not do so as though they are to draw attention to themselves; self should be hidden in Christ. They may speak as those conscious of possessing power and authority from God and as His mouthpiece, but their discourse should be greased with earnestness and favor of persuasion that is focused on leading sinners to see their lost condition, as they implicitly hope to take refuge in Jesus Christ, the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world (White, 1946, p. 134).

In advising on eating habits (White, 1938a), it is better to eat two meals for health reasons, but if health will not be better with two meals as the case may be, three light meals should be appropriate. There is no Sanitarium connectedness in compelling one to eat only two meals. "Persuasion is more appropriate than force." (p. 177) The fact is that our body is the temple of God and this means if we abuse it due to intemperance, either by eating to excess of what is good or eating or taking what is injurious to our health, it means that we do not obey God's Law since our body is the temple of God as written in 1 Cor 6:19 and 2 Cor 6:16. It is necessary to eat or take moderately that which is good and

abstain completely from harmful substances, such as wine or tobacco which are noxious to our health, according to health principle and God's requirement.

The power of colporteur work (literature evangelism) needs persuasion. Just as sermons need persuasive impressions both in words and dressing (White, 1915, pp. 173-174), as also indicated in the Bible how the priests were to dress as they served the people (Exod 28:2), so the Colporteur work needs attention. According to White (1953, p. 108) the literature evangelist (colporteur) needs persuasive power, the power of prayer and the power of God's love in order to be successful in preaching and teaching the world of the soon coming judgment of God. The canvasser should be aware that since it is for the advancement of God's kingdom that they are laboring, God will educate them on how to labor without fainting (Isaiah 40:31). This type of work needs men who are persuasive in God's gift of speech, like Paul who argued persuasively in the Lord with the Thessalonians and led many of them to give their lives to Christ (Acts 17:1-4). With the power of persuasion, prayer, and total dependence upon God through the Holy Spirit, the evangelist's work will not or cannot, be without fruit (p. 108).

Summary

The personal journey that led to my interest in the use of persuasion when approaching non-believers came to tangible point when I read a book by McNeal (2000). The six components that he suggests should consider when examining my call to ministry are as follows: culture, the call, community, communion, conflict, and the commonplace. The years of serving as a literature evangelist and then a church pastor confirm that in each of these areas, God has demonstrated that I had been called to serve in the ministry.

The presence of persuasion as a part of the biblical practices has been validated in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The practices in the time of the early Christians, and in more recent times also support the use of persuasion as seen in the writings of Ellen G. White. The covenants God established with His people throughout the generations have included the gentle art of persuasion. If today's outreach by Seventh-day Adventists would follow these models, and more specifically, the model left by Jesus, that of providing more than biblical words, but a compassionate reaching out to meet the immediate needs, many would be influenced to accept the message of the gospel. White emphasized this approach in the book Acts of the Apostles. One of the primary examples was that of Paul and his practice of identifying with the people and their needs.

Persuasion is often misunderstood to refer to the use of force to produce change, but in the context of this project document it is used to mean meeting people where they are, identifying their needs, satisfying their needs, and then visualizing the needs being met on a continuous basis through the acceptance of Christ as their source of power. This persuasive approach leads to the extension of the invitation for the listener to make a free choice as to whether or not they will accept Jesus as their personal Savior.

CHAPTER 3

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theological foundation of my project and described how I became an Adventist in a predominantly Roman Catholic community. The present chapter explores the literature, summarizing the various views from scholars concerning the topic of my project: persuasion as a tool for evangelism. The chapter includes the historical, cultural, and religious background of Imo State in Nigeria and draws some possible connections to the misunderstandings that develop from using the term *persuasion*, both in the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.

The Historical, Cultural, and Religious Background of Imo State in Nigeria



Figure 1. Imo State

The highlighted portion in the above Map indicates the location of Imo State in Nigeria.

History of Imo State

Imo State was created out of Anambara State formally known as East-central State during the reign of the late military ruler in Nigeria, Murtala Muhammad in 1976. Imo State was named after the Imo River of which a part was split off in 1991 as Abia State, and another part which became Ebonyi State. Imo comprises of the following major cities: Owerri being the capital, Orlu, and Okigwe. The entire State is comprised of about 4.8 million people. The local language is Igbo, though many of the inhabitants are literate, can speak refined English and broken English in order to communicate well with non-Igbo speaking and good English speaking fellows in the state or other parts of Nigeria. Imo State, which covers an area of about 5,100sq km, lies within latitudes 4'45 N and 7'15, and longitude 6'50'E. It actually dwells between the lower River Niger and upper and middle Imo River. It is circumscribed on the east by "Abia" State, on the west by the River Niger and Delta State; on the north by "Anambra" State, while Revers State lies to the south (as cited in "The official website for Imo State, Nigeria," 2012, p. 108).

Nigerian-Biafran War

The so called Nigerian-Biafran War, which broke up in 1967-1970, affected Imo State and its indigenes in all aspect of progress and development. The war was a political battle as a consequence of attempted secession of the southern provinces of Nigeria for declaring themselves the Republic of Biafra. The war was as a consequence of economic, ethnic, cultural, and religious tensions between various peoples of Nigeria. During the war there was not much food for both young and adults. Although some countries of Africa, like Gabon, and some countries of Europe, were sending food to Imo state and

other states within the Biafran territories, people who were not even engaged in the battle died with kwashiorkor, a disease resulting from malnutrition, and particularly devoid of protein. The survivors are still suffering the effects of the war, even up till today.

Destruction of Roads and Buildings

Roads and buildings in many places in Imo state were destroyed due to bomb blasts. Many people became homeless in their father land both during and shortly after the war. Many people lost their lives in the process of walking several kilometers in search of free food said to have been sent by some philanthropist countries and being made available in various foods relief centers in Imo state.

Education Declined

During the Biafran War, education of the people of Imo state suffered up to zero level, though some people at their own risk managed to go to school during those periods, education was seen as something that was given a very little attention. It was not a priority because people were more concerned with how to survive the war than to invest in something they felt would not give satisfaction to their immediate needs. Indeed, it has been noted that since 1970 after the war ended, education in Imo state collapsed because of policies of the Nigeria govern to stiffen the strength of the Imo (the Biafran) people. (Biafra Free State, 1967)The people of Imo state in retrospect have declared education to be the crown jewel of the people, but things became so hard for them during and shortly after the war that most of them could only send their children to school by selling their lands. Worse still, most of them who braved the situation to acquire higher education ended up using their degrees to do other things than what they wished to do, like driving

mini taxies called “Keke Napep” or “Okada” or becoming traders in order to make ends meet for their livelihood. Presently, the good news is that during the inauguration on May 30, 2011, at 8:59a.m. Rochas Okorochoa, the governor of Imo state, declared free education in Imo to restore the people’s dream of education (Emma, 2011). Indeed, almost the entire people of Imo State and other neighboring states around Imo have started wishing that Rochas Okorochoa will become one of the presidents of Nigeria in the future in order to improve the standard of education in the whole nation.

Religion and Culture of Imo State

Religiously, Imo State has the largest number of Christian communities in Nigeria. It has 98% Christians and only 2% practicing traditional religions. The freedom of worship in Nigeria is observed more in Imo state, unlike other parts of Nigeria where people of different religions sometimes discriminate each other; such as the Northern part of Nigeria, where the Muslims quite often treat the Christians like domestic animals that accidentally find themselves in the midst of wild animals in the bush. The majority of Christians are from the Roman Catholic denomination followed by the Anglican Church. According to Meier (1999, p. 1), these two denominations believe that the Holy Bible is the word of God as he referenced to a booklet entitled “What You Should Know About the Catholic Church,” (p.19); which is sponsored by the Catholic Information Service, La Crosse, Wisconsin. Though not all of them believe the Bible in its entirety, some value tradition more than what the Bible says is the truth. However, one of the best ways of bringing conviction to their hearts is to present Jesus to them whom they claim to love and accept as their Savior, but have yet to understand what He (Jesus) wants them to do. What will bring conviction to their minds is the teaching of the word of God that is based

on the appropriate, cultural biblical model of persuasion, since the Bible is the common ground in which they can be reached as Meier referenced in his booklet (p. 19) as mentioned above.

Realistically, Imo State is culturally homogenous as it is a predominantly Igbo speaking state with slight dissimilarities in dialects. The state is noted for its cultural tradition and this is noticed in dress, music, dance, festivals, arts and crafts, and the traditional hospitality of the people (Adisa, 2012). Imo State has friendly and spotless surroundings with immense prospective for tourism and hospitality industries. Owerri, the state capital, was recognized as the cleanest city in Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Housing and Environment ("The official website of Imo State, Nigeria," 2012).

Persuasion

Quite often, due to inappropriate meanings attached to the usage of the term *persuasion*, some people become wary when the word is used or mentioned during speeches or sermon presentations. The reason is usually based on individual philosophical insights and impressions attached to the word persuasion. These are generally of a negative nature. However, it should be noted that the appropriate use of the term persuasion implies a presentation of evidence that validates whatever is being stated and creates an appreciation of the steps in the process of persuasion, making it invaluable in all spheres of life.

The Rationale for Persuasion

Persuasion comes to play when there is a necessity for the persuader to persuade the persuadee of what is necessary for humanity to know within his environment or what

will benefit humanity (the persuadee). Persuasion is not needed if there is no need for shedding light to the mind of the persuadee from the persuader of what he (the persuadee) has lost or is lacking. For instance, Jesus came as light because the entire world needs light to be saved. This light has to do with conviction (persuasion), which is the Revelation of God the Father to the entire world (Matt 11:27). Jesus came to reveal this “Light” (God the Father and Himself) and to lead the world out of its darkness in order to embrace the Light which is embedded in God’s Triune nature. Without persuasion, the good news would not have come to me (Aloysius) as a Gentile; but after God’s persistency indicating that Peter should kill and eat (Act 10:13; 11:7), conviction took place which gave birth to my conviction and conversion as a Christian today.

Definition of Persuasion

The Greek word for persuasion in the context of 2 Cor 5:11 as earlier indicated in chapter two, is “Peitho” which means *persuade*, “induce one by words to believe, to make friends of, to win one’s favor” to win over or bring about a change of mind by the influence of reason or moral consideration (Vine et al., 1984).

It is unfortunate that most times when the word *persuasion* is mentioned, many people, especially in the western world where persuasion is quite often used dogmatically, get disturbed or beg to attach a negative impression to it. The reason for this negative perception is that people think about powerful charismatic leaders, subliminal ads, news, presidential campaigns, the internet perhaps, with those innumerable Web sites shamelessly promoting products and companies; most times people think about the kind of strong effect persuasion has on societies which quite often spell out companies’ profits (Perloff, 2003, p. 3). Those are all negatives, but most people

are attracted to believe their persuaders when they anticipate that what they are persuaded to do is based on truth and that such will benefit them presently or in the long run. The word *persuasion* from its biblical point of view does not connote negativity or evil. It is only when it is misapplied that it becomes bad or evil. In giving counsels on eating habits, White (1938a, p. 177) indicate that “Persuasion is more appropriate than force.” That expression suggests that persuasion is not force as some people might have probably misconstrued.

Various scholars define persuasion from different philosophical perspectives. For instance, E. Anderson and Anderson (1971, p. 6), define persuasion as a communication procedure in which the communicator seeks to elicit a desired response from his receiver; while Bettinghaus and Cody (1987, p. 3) see persuasion as a conscious attempt by one individual to change the attitudes, beliefs or behavior of another person or group of individuals through the transmission of some communication. In another development, Smith (as cited in Perloff, 2003, p. 8), defined persuasion as a figurative or metaphorical action whose rationale is to achieve the internalization or voluntary acceptance of new cognitive states or models of overt behavior through the exchange of communications; while O’Keefe (1990, p. 17) sees persuasion as a triumphant intentional effort at persuading another’s mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of freedom.

The last definition by O’Keefe perhaps gives the related idea of the biblical model of persuasion which allows the persuadee a freedom for accepting or not accepting what the persuader communicates. Indeed, I see persuasion in biblical concepts as a means of using methods that draw attention to God and facilitate the awakening of a desire to gain

further knowledge, resulting in leading the hearer to Jesus. The Holy Spirit then transforms the individual into someone who demonstrates evidence of the presence of the fruit of the Spirit. Biblical persuasion is not based on a dogmatic approach. The Holy Spirit is the One who convinces the heart after the message has been born in the heart of the persuadee.

The Value of Persuasion

The significance of persuasion cannot be overemphasized as one could investigate from how it has been frequently used in the Bible and how some scholars emphasized its necessity. The function of persuasion is as important as blood to the life of human beings. Every statement in the Bible that draws attention to God is loaded with persuasion. I see persuasion as the motor that drives and keeps alive the gospel message we bear as the followers of Jesus. Some of the statements Jesus made that reveals persuasion as the major tool for the gospel message are as follows: “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” (Matt 28:19). Besides, He said, “Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49). These two statements and their ideas are centered on “Go” and “Why?” as indicated above, strongly implied the necessity of persuasion. The statement in Matt summarizes how important persuasion is in that it gives the synopsis of Jesus’ mission on earth as Luke 2:49; John 4:34 designated.

Besides, according to (White, 1923b, pp. 316-317), the greatest gift of blessing God gave to us is the gift of speech being manifested through persuasion. It is through the tongue humanity can convince and persuade others, through speech one can pray and praise God and it is through persuasion we can absolutely convey the deep and clear love

of God the Son exhibited on the Cross. With the power of persuasion, prayer, and total dependence upon God through the Holy Spirit, “The evangelist’s work will not, cannot, be without fruit” (White, 1953, p. 108). Russell once said, “What is distinctively human at the most fundamental level is the capacity to persuade and be persuaded; any preacher who fails to realize how the laws of persuasion can enhance his or her preaching may miss a great opportunity” (Black, 2006). Pastoral work, evangelist work, and colporteur work need men and women who are as persuasive as Paul who argued persuasively for the Lord with the Thessalonians and led many of them to give their lives to Christ (Acts 17:1-4).

However, out of 13 basic laws of persuasion Barry C. Black identified four as substantive ministry tools. Ethos, pathos, agora, and logos are recognized by Aristotle as categories that are found in the speech of all cultures and they inhere respectively in speakers, audience, and discourse. The genuine demonstration of some of these laws by the persuader actually determines to a large extent the legitimacy of the persuasion to the persuadee. These principles are intricately linked with the biblical model of persuasion, which is manifested through the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). I see them as appropriate tools that can thrive well when applied for biblical models of persuasion to reach the people of Imo state in Nigeria. According to Kennedy (1984, p. 15), “there are three universal factors in any rhetorical or persuasive situation: a speaker or writer, an audience, and a discourse.” In the same manner, according to Aristotle (as cited in Kennedy, 1984), “there are also three and only three modes of artistic proof: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*.” These categories as earlier indicated are found in the speech of all cultures and they inhere respectively in speaker, audience, and dialogue.

The Laws of *Ethos* in Persuasion

Ethos, the Greek word for character, refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of the writer or speaker. It has to do with the character of the messenger. “Ethos” is a rhetorical category, referring to the role that a speaker’s character has in any given rhetorical situation (Resner, 1999, p. 40). Nothing can substitute for the moral authority that comes when people perceive that our words are backed by deeds. Plato says, as cited in (Resner, 1999) “Character necessarily entails one’s real moral stature, even if no human being could perceive the difference.” Aristotle in the same manner supplemented what Plato says in (Resner, 1999) by recognizing that “whether one is virtuous or not, what counts in a persuasive speech is the perception of the speaker’s virtue on the part of the many hearers” (p. 23). Additionally, according to White (1871, p. 337), people who are in Christ’s stead beseeching souls to be submissive to God should by precept and illustration manifest an undying interest to save souls; it is by doing this they can influence others and motivate them to make heavenly things their priority. An evangelist should endeavor to be upright like Jesus – the Master that he follows to the extent of asking the same question Jesus asked His audience, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” (John 8:46).

Resner, (1999) says that “It is not the human preacher’s ethos which makes efficacious the gospel. Rather, it is God’s trustworthiness” (p. 107). This is in agreement with what the Bible says about our righteousness: it is like filthy rags before the Lord (Isaiah 64:6). There is no doubt about this since we can do nothing without Humanity who gives us power (Phil 4:13). However, according to White (1905, p. 494), the most conclusive argument validating the truth is the consistent Christian living. This means

that the message the preacher preaches should not contradict what he practices after preaching; that is the preacher's message should be in harmony with his character. From experience, many audiences begin to murmur and mock any preacher whose preaching or teaching does not harmonize with what he practices. Besides, it is unfortunate that many pastors in the past have lost their ministerial credentials or been fired from their ministry due to decisive discrepancies; for example, immorality and many other evil practices, all contrary to what they preach and teach in their ministry.

According to Murray, (as cited in Piper, 1990, p. 11) "A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God" What people need most is human holiness to be persuaded in the word of God. What happens to a great preacher who loses his reputation, tells how the ministry is placed in jeopardy as a result of the messenger's ethos which is disfigured. Edgar Guest said, "I would rather see your sermon than hear it any day" (Powell & Paton, 1988, p. 67). This statement calls attention to Christ's Sermon on the Mountain (Matt 5:13-14), which reveals the glimpses of the ethos of a preacher as he endeavors to convince people for the acceptance of the message. Realistically, *ethos* means "character" and may be defined as the credibility that the author or speaker is capable of establishing in his work. The audience is induced to believe what the speaker says because they have confidence in humanity, as a good humanity or a specialist on the subject he is dealing with (Kennedy, 1984, p. 15).

A preacher's persuasive sermon should be as persuasive as his lifestyle. What he preaches should be a reflection of his life. Paul's preaching was persuasive and besides that, the good news was that what won people's hearts was his life. The Ephesian elders raised an alarm when Paul left them. The reason for such reaction was not that they

would not hear Paul's preaching anymore, but "what grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again" (Acts 20:38). The people reacted the way they did because of what the character (*ethos*) of Paul communicated to their minds.

It could be noted that some peripatetic preachers can camouflage their character and as a result, yet quickly get their message across to their audience, but this will not be possible to a preacher like Pastor Dwight Nelson who preaches almost every week at PMC Church, where his *ethos* cannot be hidden from the people he preaches to, from time to time. In short, if it is not that the integrity of the preacher's life is the key element in persuasiveness, Pastor Dwight Nelson would not be able to retain and continue to increase the number of his congregation. A preacher like Nelson whose integrity is grounded in the biblical concept, will thrive well in Imo State Nigeria where culturally people respond more positively to preachers whose *ethos* define the authenticity of their message.

Besides, as Samaan (2012, p. 24) indicates in his writing, salt makes people thirsty for water, so we should cause people to be thirsty for the Water of Life—the only source who can satisfy every human being's insatiable spiritual thirst. The life or the character of a preacher should portray the qualities Jesus referenced to in Matt 5:13-16, "You are the salt and the light of the world" which also White (1958) describes as "vital energy"; the genuine believers diffuse vital energy, which is all-pervading and imparts new moral power to the souls for whom they work (p. 36). The vital energy that is all pervading and can be fruitful in witnessing could only come through the preacher or the evangelist by the indwelling Spirit of God, though it takes the preachers power of choice to become available to be used by the Holy Spirit.

In the same light, persuasion could be achieved through three levels of sermons according to Long and Farely (1996), by explanation, information and clarification. The meaning of the text is transmitted by proclamation; the message of the text is then transmitted through its power and finally through basic trust revealed from the preacher and the Church. Aristotle and Cicero affirmed what Long and Farely said (as cited in Resner, 1999, p. 34) that ethos is the chief proof in the winning of our hearers' favor. This is an indisputable fact as experience has revealed enough evidence that people respond more positively to speakers and preachers whose character can be trusted. This element of trust, Aristotle, Cicero, and Long, and Farely proposed as the main proposition through which to reach the audience is intricately related to the qualities or symbols Jesus used to describe His followers. He said that they are salt and the light of the world. Being the salt of the world shows that people will feel the good taste of His disciples in order to embrace the message they bear; being the light to the people reveals that people could consider the message as something reasonable and worthy of following when their expression of love reveals Christ in them.

One of the early Church fathers, Jerome, eschewed rhetoric as a potentially contaminating influence on the proclamation of the gospel (p. 2) and this is affirmed by what Plato said, (as cited in Resner, 1999, p. 33) that truth should be based on reality, but not on rhetorical construction and that words bear witness in as much as the speaker is seen as a witness according to Plato. Indeed, astute Sophists identified that their audience are strongly persuaded by the speech of a good person's life, rather than the speech that a person speaks. According to Cicero (as cited in Resner, 1999) "Wisdom without eloquence is of small benefit to states; but eloquence without wisdom is often extremely

injurious and profits no one” (p. 47). It should be noted that both wisdom and eloquence should be in commensurate balance so that the audience would make a proper judgment before taking a decision on what the preacher says. People could make better decisions when a speech is wisely and eloquently articulated (pp. 47-48).

The Laws of *Pathos* in Persuasion

The law of *pathos* will be appropriate to be incorporated to the biblical model of persuasion in Imo State Nigeria. The word *pathos* (Greek for suffering) refers to emotional appeal. It is comparable to an appeal to the audience’s sympathies and imaginations. It has to do with the possibilities used by the speaker to arouse the emotional feelings of the audience to persuade them to change from their wrong doings. “Pathos inheres in the audience and may be defined as the emotional reactions the hearers undergo as the orator plays upon their feelings” (Kennedy, p. 15). An appeal to pathos motivates the hearer not only to take action emotionally, but also to recognize with the speaker’s or writer’s point of view to consider what the speaker feels.

Besides using treat and warning, Piper (1990, p. 91) states that those who placed their priority for heaven, shudder most deeply at the horrors of hell. In the same vein, Edward (as cited in Piper, 1990, p. 93) pointed that the Church needs fear to restrain them from sin and to encourage them to preserve their souls before God. Quite often people accept the word of God as they ponder the consequence of what they thought would be their penalty. The statement “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Humanity (Luke 17:26) has been a motivating factor that has led many believers to remain focused on the good news of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and also to many non-believers to turn their lives to Christ. As people emotionally reflect on

what happened to the people of the past, many of them emotionally react to it and eventually turn their lives to Jesus as directed by the Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament, pathos appears in commonest form in the promises of eternal life or treat of damnation, which appears in subtler forms in some of the circumstances. Meanwhile, pathos calls to mind a meaning hidden in the verb to suffer—to feel pain imaginatively. Probably the most common method of conveying a pathetic appeal is through narrative or story which can turn the ideas of logic into something blatant and present. The ideas, viewpoints, and the sympathies of the speaker or the writer are implicit in the story and conveyed imaginatively to the audience. Indeed, pathos refers to both the emotional and imaginative impact of the message on an audience the power with which the speaker’s message moves the audience to decision or action. For example, Peter’s address to the crowd in Acts 2:22-37, where the crowd made a decision on how to change their lives after he narrated the story on how the Jews mistreated Jesus; though He (Jesus) was accredited to them by God the Father through miracles, signs and wonders was a typical example of where the laws of pathos is used to convince the people of their sins against God. The people were cut to their hearts as indicated in verse 37. The reaction of the people specified Peter’s viewpoints, which were implicit in his narrative.

Love should be exhibited from the viewpoints of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, but that should not negate the idea of telling the truth or calling sin by its name. A preacher’s efforts or attempts to convince the audience, could end up in making a rhetorical construction in the process of persuasion if he fails to base his arguments on reality, which is the truth according to Plato (as cited in Resner, p. 33). Peter’s application of

pathos as indicated in Acts 2:37 was based on truth and not on rhetoric, and this caused the people to cry for their Salvation by asking, “What shall we do”? The application of pathos in delivering a sermon or speech which elicits people’s response to repent from their wrongdoings is of paramount importance to every believer or non-believer. It should be noted that true repentance usually take place when a sinner has been provoked and convinced of his misdeeds, recognizing the serious condition, repents, and makes right the wrongs, all of which leads to his heart broken for what he has done.

Many people have a misleading idea that is based on a wrong notion that the law of God was changed when Jesus was resurrected on Sunday, the first day of the week. Some of them believed that since we are saved by the grace of God, there is no need to keep His Commandments as the Bible stipulates. All these beliefs and notions are not sound, as they are believed not to be rooted in biblical concepts. They are just rhetorical presentation that are not based on truth or reality, which is what sound persuasion should stand for according to Plato (as cited in Resner, p. 33)

The resurrection of Jesus being on Sunday did not contradict what He said in Matt 5:17; He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them. Besides, His love and grace abounding with humanity does not give humanity (humanity) the liberty to disobey God’s Commandments. In the Bible we read that “The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation” (Num14:18). This suggests that God does not compromise with sin for whatever gift He has given to humanity.

Believing that Sunday worship should be accepted due to human philosophical thinking, which is based on the notion that Jesus resurrected on Sunday, will be a fatal mistake since there is no evidence from the Scripture to support such ideas. He who says or believes that God's Law has changed or has been compromised, should note that God does not change (Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8). God will not do otherwise since He is not like humanity (Num 23:19); in this sense, He will probably not tolerate any mistake committed advertently or inadvertently when the judgment time comes. So the laws of pathos which is mainly to elicit the audience feelings is proper in persuasive preaching or teaching in order to bring the message to the hearers mind.

The Laws of *Logos* in Persuasion

Logos in Greek means "Word." In its context, it has to do with internal consistency of the message. It portrays the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence. In brief, "Logos is the use of logical proof" (Fletcher, 1992, p. 73).

According to Kennedy (1984, p. 15), "Logos refers to the logical argument found within the discourse." Indeed, according to Johnson (2002, pp. 99-100), the gospels are a clear redemptive persuasion of the good news. The accounts of the four synoptic writers give enough evidence and convictions of the word of God. The Gospels portray the fact that the word of God provides light and comfort to humanity and that the word serves as a weapon that is used to advance the kingdom of God, fight off temptation, and cast down everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Indeed, it is a sanctifying agent.

Logical Arguments in Logos

Logical arguments in logos as used in persuasion are in two forms. The inductive and the deductive; the inductive uses various illustrations to portray a general conclusion, while deductive enunciates premises probably acceptable to an audience and draws a deductive conclusion from the premises. In the New Testament, Jesus used parables in His inductive method of persuasion, which are drawn from the Jewish history, daily life and nature and these give logical arguments in His preaching and teaching. His inductive method brings several examples to view, but He rarely makes His conclusion explicit before the audience (Kennedy, 1984, p. 16). For example, when Jesus was posed with a question by an expert in the law about who his neighbor is, Jesus did not explicitly give the answer as the guru expected Humanity, rather He gave an inductive narrative parable as indicated in Luke 10:30-37, that a certain humanity was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho and unfortunately found himself in the hands of robbers who dealt with humanity mercilessly and left humanity half death. But after two prominent men from the Jewish background namely, a priest and a Levite saw humanity as they were passing through the same road, they took another course and did not express any compassion due to Jewish culture which did not encourage contact with dead body. Probably it was the Jewish culture that contributed to the Priest's and the Levite's negative impression of not helping the humanity who needed help. But a despised Samaritan according to Jewish culture did what Jesus intended His disciples to do to anyone who is in need, thereby revealing what He described as true neighborhood love which inductively resulted to the genuine answer He gave to the law expert.

Aristotle's Theory Based on Three Modes of Proof of Logical Argument

The theory of Aristotle, which is based on three modes of proof—logical, ethical and pathetic—was improved by Cicero. (*Orator* 69) into three *officia oratoris*, or responsibilities of the orator: to educate, to satisfy, and to move (p. 18). Indeed, Cicero actually acknowledged that logical argument is rarely enough to persuade an audience. He is shadowed in this by Quintilian (12.10.58-59) and Saint Augustine (*One Christian doctrine* 4.27-29). According to Augustine, (as cited in Kennedy, 1984, p. 18) clarifies that the Christian orator needs to please in order to maintain the interest of his audience, that they may be moved to action; that is not absolute because it is a slippery game which is often associated with sophists. Aristotle and Plato warn against this (Kennedy, p. 18); while Saint Paul explicitly rejects it as indicated in 1Thes 2:4 that though we are entrusted with the gospel by God, but we have to speak not to please humanity, but God who knows our hearts (p. 18). Actually I see nothing wrong if an orator articulates his message in a way that the audience will appreciate it, provided it does not negate God's initiatives as the Bible implied. One should not dwell on logic alone and neglect the truth which is the main proposition in any biblical model of persuasion.

What Augustine says is not probably totally wrong because pleasing humanity does not mean that all that pleases humanity displeases God. I believe that any means the speaker uses to reach an audience without any ulterior selfish agenda to achieve self-exaltation or to express human instinct but God's is appropriate to define as a biblical model of persuasion. It could be a slippery game associated with sophists as Aristotle and Plato warned against if the idea behind the presentation to the audience is not aimed at glorifying God but humanity. For instance: King Herod who made an oration as indicated

in Acts 12:21-23 focused on people's attention to himself (self-exaltation) which resulted in his instant death before the people is the type of pleasing the audience Aristotle, Plato and Paul were not comfortable with the usage in preaching or teaching the word of God.

However, one of the possible reasons why Jesus' Sermon on the Mount actually was a huge success was due to unity of thought and the logic framework detected in His presentation to the audience. One could imagine how excited the audience was as they were still dazed in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Audience was maintained throughout His Sermon on the Mount, (Kennedy, p. 63) as protested by Augustine that a Christian orator should please the audience in order to maintain the interest and attention of the audience which will definitely lead them to action (Kennedy, p. 18). Rhetoric devices – tropes, facts and themes Jesus used were not ornaments, but were practical within the thought, creating audience interaction and concentration.

I believe that for the audience to attach more importance to what the preacher says his interest has to be touched as Augustine indicated. Aristotle, Plato and Paul's warning against this does not mean that the audience interest is not necessary to be worked on in making oratory presentation; if arousing the interest of audience is not vital, there would have been no need for the Holy Spirit Jesus left behind for conviction of sin and for arousing interest in the mind of His disciples.

Experience has thought me through colporteur ministry that getting the interest of the audience for instance from the beginning of one's presentation is very significant. I perceived that majority of the people who became interested and finally bought most of the spiritual books I sold during my canvassing experience were possible when I first of all presented books that deal with health. Generally, people show more interest when

health books which seem to be more appealing to them are used to break their heart perception barriers. Getting the interest of the person to speak to right from the beginning prepares the mind of the audience for decision making either to refuse or accept what the speakers says at the end of any interaction or discussion.

Besides, admiring what people are interested in, for instance their cars, children, the settings of their environments and many others go a long way to arouse people's interest thus leading to making good decision when the message books are presented to them. I noted that it is difficult to take action for something we need without showing interest in the first instance.

In the same light, Tomkins and Karon (1962, p. 342) describe that interest functions to support the necessary, the possible, and also helps to develop the things that people need and widens the range of activities within their grasp. This proposition is very significant as it validates what Augustine says regarding how important Christian orator should work to please the audience interest in order to move them to action. Tomkins and Karon's conclusion that there is no human capability which can be accomplished in the absence of a sustaining interest (1962, p. 343) is paramount as I perceive that interest ignites every decision and action, taking in whatever is necessary and possible within the scope of humanity. The most important thing a Christian orator should endeavor to avoid focusing on is pleasing human inclinations that are not in harmony with God's as Paul puts it in 1 Thess 2:4 that "Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motive of our hearts."

Finally, although it is the Holy Spirit who convinces and directs every soul to make the right decision irrespective of how well, powerfully, and logically the message is

preached, yet the importance of being fully prepared as well as knowing the appropriate model to use cannot be overemphasized. The principles of persuasion should be properly followed in order to convey the message to the audience. If these principles are not followed, the truth of the message is likely to be lost during the time of presentation or preaching to an audience; such situations will give the enemy a chance to succeed in presenting his false message. According to Minnick (1968), “People may reject the truth and justice if it is presented by a bumbling and inarticulate speaker and the advocate of error speaks with craftiness and skills. Then folly may appear to be wisdom” (Minnick, p. 15), thus leading the audience to take the wrong decision. Of all that is said and done to persuade anyone to accept the gospel message, “All evangelistic activities must center in the person of Christ who alone knows how to really approach, understand, and persuade people to follow Humanity” (Samaan, 2012, p. 17). It should be noted that every human being who does not base his persuasive acumen in Christ is likely to be devoid of the most essential ingredient to persuade people for Salvation – the Holy Spirit, and such persuasion can only become rhetorical construction that lacks the truth for Salvation which is the primary aim of biblical persuasion.

CHAPTER 4
NARRATIVE OF PROJECT PLAN FOR BIBLICAL MODEL
OF PERSUASION IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

Introduction

The previous chapter described the history of Imo State and its religion and culture, identified some reasons to support persuasion as the model of choice for sharing the gospel in the region, explored definitions of persuasion and, the value of persuasion, and, finally, the chapter included a review of the perceptions of persuasion held by various scholars.

This chapter presents a description of the project plan that would be most appropriate if the model of persuasion were to be adopted to present the gospel to the people of Imo State. The project plan will include a) a two-part seminar to be presented that includes a biblically-based model and methods of persuasion, b) action plans for developing cordial relationships, c) an assignment in which participants will go out between the two seminars and explore the methods and report what worked and what didn't work. It will also include d) the preparation of a pamphlet suggesting methods of persuasion to be used when approaching Protestants, Roman Catholics, and/or Muslims with the Adventist message in Imo State, Nigeria.

This project plan as outlined in the previous paragraph, indicating methods and models, will be established through collaboration between Adventist members in Imo

State and the instructor. The proposed title is “Action Plan for Developing Cordial Relationships.” The aim is to enable the researcher to collaboratively harmonize a biblically-based model of persuasion to reach non-Adventists in Imo state. This project will incorporate the practice of providing for physical needs, following the example of Jesus. One such outreach will be a food bank to be established in Imo State, called *Abundance Pantrie*.

This project will allow for research to determine the success of the methods based on two basic questions: a) What are the most effective and appropriate ways for the Adventist members in Imo State to develop their skills in using a biblical model of persuasion and b) What are the most effective ways for youth, who are not yet baptized, to participate and develop their skills in the use of a biblical model of persuasion.

The first component of this project will commence with seminars from the fourth week of March to the second week of December 2017, while the second seminar will start from January of 2018 to the end of April of 2019.

The organization and management of this project demands that a number of tools be used for planning and assessment. The Logic Framework Matrix Approach (LFA) will be used to present the totality of the strategy in the project in a succinct manner. In other words, the Logframe is used in this project to explain the plan and the goal of the project to the reader.

The following is a brief explanation of the Logical Framework Matrix: The Logframe Analysis (LFA)) is an operative tool or technique which enables the participants to recognize and scrutinize problems to be able to explain purposes and actions which should be assumed to resolve any negative eventuality that might arise.

Realistically, organizers use the Logframe approach to experiment with the design of a proposed project to safeguard its significance, practicality, and maintenance. Logframe analysis is used as a key management tool during both application and assessment of a project. Logframe proposes the foundation for the groundwork of action procedures and the development of a monitoring system, and a framework for assessment of a project.

Logframe analysis is composed of four columns and four rows respectively. The top four vertical columns consist of project objectives, measurable indicators, sources of verification, and external factors, which could possibly influence the accomplishment or success of the project.

The objective column helps the planners identify the project objectives. The measurable indicator column basically serves as a mirror or indicator by which the objective success of the project can be quantified. The verification column, however, reveals the means –information or data to examine if the indicator truly serves the purpose of measurement for which it is meant or designed. The assumptions column addresses outside issues which are likely to exert influence on the project accomplishment.

Tables 1 and 2 indicate the objectives, measurable indicators, means of verification and important assumptions for the goals, purpose, and outcomes of the project, as well as the components of the first and second seminar and an additional presentation on health.

Table 1

Application of Logframe Matrix

Objectives	Measurable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<p>1) Goal: To develop a biblical model of persuasion in order to persuade the people of Imo State to accept the gospel and turn their lives to Jesus</p>	<p>Establishment of pantries in various communities in Imo State. Records of testimonies and words of appreciation from various communities in Imo State</p>	<p>The end of the year conference records Contributions by church members for the establishment of the pantry</p>	<p>Due to the active participation in this project, it is the hope that many people will decide to attend Bible studies that will commence after the first year of the pantry operation (2020)</p>
<p>2) Purpose: To motivate the church members to jointly participate in reaching the unreached in Imo State using a biblical model and method of persuasion</p>	<p>Unanimous feeling of appreciation among church members as they take part in the sharing of food, clothing, and pamphlets through the pantry</p>	<p>Monthly reports of the church outreach, and educational achievement made by church members during the seminar sessions</p>	<p>The participants will be more independent in witnessing for the Lord instead of waiting for the pastors and evangelists to preach. Many churches will begin to be established immediately after the first year of operation of the pantry (2020)</p>

Table 1—Continued.

<p>3) Outputs: The following outputs to be established:</p> <p>a. Teaching/training curriculum of biblical persuasive method developed</p> <p>b. Training of evangelistic persuasive ministry workers to take care of health and Bible studies</p> <p>c. The food bank, the Abundance Pantry will be an established part of the local ministries</p> <p>d. Assessment tools to measure success and the reliability of the project.</p>	<p>a. Eight topics on how to educate members to reach the people will be presented, beginning the first of January 2017 to the twenty-first of January 2018</p> <p>b. Individuals chosen to care for the health and moral teachings: eight medical doctors, ten pastors, and seven elders.</p> <p>c. Community eating habits and cleanliness of environment improved</p> <p>d. Assessment tools designed and implemented by the first year, 2017</p>	<p>a. Records of the proceedings affirming the helpfulness of the lectures from the people of the communities</p> <p>b. Indication of people asking for medical assistance from the Church in addition to the hospital</p> <p>c. Evangelistic reports</p> <p>d. Annual audit reports</p>	<p>a. The project will be acclaimed by the participants for its effectiveness in reaching people with the gospel. The project will become the model to be adopted throughout the state</p> <p>b. Individuals will be willing to release more funds in the near future to support such programs</p> <p>c. This project will create and enhance the spirit of team work from local church to the conference and the union levels</p> <p>d. Annual reports to indicate tremendous positive change in health and lifestyle of participants</p>
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Table 2

Logframe Matrix: Seminars

Objectives	Measurable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<p>First Seminar: 4hrs/day for 2 days during 9 months</p> <p>1. Training in fervent prayer and approaches to unity will take place for 4 hours, one day, in each location</p> <p>2. Training on “invitation method” will last 4 hours, one day, in each location</p>	<p>1. Attendance for topics: prayer, unity, invitations, contributions, the service of sharing, itinerant approaches, strategies for maintaining membership, creating assignments for seminar participants and an outline for health care lessons</p> <p>55 elders are selected to give orientation to the participants by the first of January 2017</p>	<p>1. The topics designed for the seminar are secured in the records</p> <p>The number of people selected to give lectures or talks are members made known to Church</p>	<p>1. Church members become more health literate</p> <p>More people will be attracted to join the selected groups</p>
<p>Second Seminar: 3 hrs/day for 6 days during 15 months</p> <p>1. Contributions by the members</p> <p>2. Funds to operate the Abundance Pantry</p> <p>3. The service of sharing food</p> <p>4. Itinerant approach</p> <p>5. Strategy to maintain</p>	<p>Dates for contributions set</p> <p>Monthly schedule for participation made available</p> <p>Geographical maps are provided</p> <p>Availability of</p>	<p>Conference records</p> <p>All the participants are personally informed about their functions</p> <p>Participant access to maps</p>	<p>Needed funding available</p> <p>99% of misunderstanding of what to do will be eliminated</p> <p>Attitude of friendliness becomes the</p>

membership 6. Creating an assignment for the seminar participants	visitation schedule for the participants Igbo language orientation greetings made compulsory for participants survey	Records reveal significant improvements in relationships Discoveries of the participants are quite encouraging	identification mark of Seventh-day Adventists in Imo State Conference approval at 100%
Health Care Message 1. Fresh air 2. Water 3. Coconut 4. Sunlight 5. Exercise 6 Temperance 7.Trusting God	Selection of eight medical practitioners-both male and female, ten pastors and seven elders for temperance work and lectures.	More medical skills are acquired as well as techniques for teaching temperance practices	Life span is likely to be improved as morbidity and mortality rate will be drastically decreased

Description of Strategy in Relation to the Overall Goal

The general goal to which this project focuses is to achieve a significant contextualized model of biblical persuasion to enable the participants to win more souls for the Lord in Imo State, Nigeria, and to be able to maintain the membership through constant and consistent relationships facilitated by the establishment and operation of the pantry as proposed in this project. The normal approach of preaching and teaching, which focuses on the invitation method alone, to convince the people would give way to the strategy being proposed in this project, which is replete with what can be described as a *personal relationship* ministry. In retrospect, creating enough room for interacting with people in Imo State before the presentation of the Good News of the gospel, specifically

the message of the three angels of Revelation, has not been effective as was expected, and I feel this has hindered the Church from progressing in winning more souls.

Purpose

The purpose of this project as earlier indicated is to bring conviction to the minds of people through a biblically-oriented persuasive model by the members of the Adventist church. This is a model that is focused on a love relationship. Indeed, the purpose of my project could be achieved by acknowledging the need and putting into practice what has been discussed during the seminars.

Outputs

The basic outputs as indicated in the logical framework of this project depicts the following: a) a biblical method of persuasion development, b) training to be prayerful and to be in unity, c) training to be able to invite others, d) training to empower, e) training to contribute, f) training to use an itinerant approach, g) training to be able to serve in the food bank, h) training to be able to maintain membership, i) training for education of traditional greeting, j) training to know simple health remedies, and k) putting into place an assessment detecting the best practices to implement in a given situation to guarantee the success and the reliability of the project . It should be noted that the successful execution of such activities will give rise to the achievement of the outputs of this project.

Contextualized Biblical Method of Persuasion Developed

The plans to educate church members and reach the people of Imo State are designed to be executed within the following time period: 2017 and 2019. Realistically,

these topics are carefully planned to meet the needs of the people. Each topic is to be addressed by the appropriate body or group that would be best suited to present it. Topics in the seminars that are not dealing with health issues, like biblical issues, such as the message of salvation and the Second Coming of Christ, will be presented by the pastors and appointed elders in the seminars. The health issues included in the seminars will be presented by the medical practitioners. The health lectures are designed to acquaint the participants with the simple health guides contained in the pamphlets that will be given to the people of the community in order to prevent disease within their environment.

The presentations of the various topics during the seminars will be designed to facilitate interaction with the presenters and to present the messages in a friendly manner. This process will create and enhance team work that has not existed among the Adventist circle in Imo State before. It will also enhance the youth and women's ministry in the state by being more inclusive than previously practiced as both groups are given the opportunity to participate in sharing foods, clothing and other free materials needed by the community members in the Pantry. The process serves as a basic training ground for both youth and women's ministry. In fact, it is the plan that this process will get all the Church members both young and old to be involved in God's work and be effective and attractive as it addresses the basic needs of all people.

Evangelistic Persuasive Ministry Workers Appointed and Trained

Each group appointed to participate in this process—the medical practitioners, pastors, and elders—will have the potential to provide satisfactory services as those selected to lead out will be qualified, have demonstrated prior successful experience in

the area assigned, and will have received specific training for the services needed. It is the plan that the pastors and elders appointed, for instance, will give meaningful lectures to boost the moral and faith of the Church members that are participating to gain knowledge in the seminar to reach more souls in Imo State. They will give Bible studies on Salvation and counseling lectures to the members in order to meet the various needs of the people in communities. Indeed, the demonstration of and spirit of team work in the process will be a unique witness to people within and outside the Church as everyone will appreciate how people from various walks of life use their different skills to contribute toward a common goal.

The Abundance Pantry Established

When the planning and appointment of the evangelistic persuasive workers have been completed, then the participants—Church members who volunteered to take the responsibility for the sharing of food to the community members at the pantry—will bring to reality the sole aim of this project, which is known as an action plan for developing cordial relationships. This particular aspect of the action plan will be achieved through the activities in the pantry. In the pantry, the members or the participants, will interrelate with the people and hear from them, if possible, regarding their problems, which will serve as a way to reach them in their homes during ordinary days that are not meant for pantry activities. The pantry activities will expose and enhance the intimacy between the Church members and the rest of the community members as they meet bi-monthly to interact in the pantry.

Assessment to Guarantee the Success and the Reliability of the Project

In fact, the assessment of the approaches as indicated in the Logframe would identify whether or not the activities function according to the intended plan. The measurable indicators will actually reveal if the project is making the progress desired. The succinct means of verification is identified by the positive records of the pantry establishment by 2020. It should be noted that the relationship between the Church members and those of other denominations will have improved, as well as improved eating habits, environmental cleanliness and morbidity. The mortality rate should have drastically decreased.

Important Assumptions

It could be realistically assumed that due to the active participation and cooperation of both the youth and the adult Church members working together toward the accomplishment of the project, many people will be enrolled for Bible studies. The participants will learn to witness without depending on someone else to follow up. Indeed, the project will be highly acclaimed by the participants in Imo State Conference due to its effectiveness in reaching the people with the gospel. It is the plan that the project will become a unique model of the century throughout the state and that the Church membership will be increased from at least 10% to 20% of the Imo State population of 4.8 Million.

Individuals will most likely be willing to release more funds in the near future without being compelled if the progress experienced serves as evidence of their motivation. Also, the project will definitely create and enhance the spirit of team work

among Adventists members and church workers. Church members, however, could become more health literate and this will impact their witnessing ability to reduce morbidity and mortality rates in the communities through their witnessing experience. Besides, 99% of the misunderstandings of what to do to spread the good news on a personal basis will be eliminated; attitude of friendliness will become the principal identifiable mark of the Seventh-day Adventists members in Imo State as their expressions of love radiate from their respective families, established pantries, and from the communities in which they find themselves and to the entire world as a whole.

Implementation of Strategy

Implementation of strategy has to do with foundation of activities and resource schedules. It is seen as the segment that brings the activities and outputs of the project into more existential reality. Observations reveal that most experts see implementation of strategy as an uphill task since putting things down is easier than implementing them (Malphurs, 1999, p. 175). However, all things are possible with God since one can do all things through Humanity who gives power, wisdom, knowledge and all that is necessary for the accomplishment of the plans God has for each person (Jer 19:11). God is there to intervene on behalf of His children and to help them through their prayers to achieve their goals by working with the strategies they choose to use (Robb, 1989, pp. 40-41).

Activities and Resources Schedule

When the arrangement of the activities and the schedule of resources are completed, the Gantt chart is then used to present the activities and the outputs of the project in a succinct manner to depict how each activity could be carried out according to

the time limit set to achieve the goal. A Gantt chart provides a standard design for exposing project schedule information through listing project activities and their compatibility from the beginning to the finishing dates in a calendar setup.

“An activity Schedule is a method of presenting the activities of a project, which identifies their logical sequence and any dependencies that exist between them, and provides a basis for allocating management responsibility for completing each activity” (European Commission, 2001, p. 36). Indeed, what should be done to bring the activity schedule to accomplishment is to transfer the principal activities already established in the Logframe matrix to prepare the schedule. The principal activities are subdivided into more segments so that each task could be easily identified and managed comfortably. Also, it is of paramount importance to stress that an activity schedule helps to define the milestones which provide the central foundation for monitoring the project execution at any given period.

The Gantt chart specifically indicates how the activities are run in the project each year as illustrated in Tables 3 and 4.

The Gantt chart is prepared in such a way that it gives the preambles of the Logframe in a more concrete way to help the planners in carrying the project activities without much hindrance. It allows flexibility in case the need arises. In fact, it serves as a good guide in leading the planners to exercise a valid assessment of the whole project.

Table 3

Gantt Chart: Activities During the First Year

Activities	Year One											
Result 1: Teaching Curriculum Developed												
Activity 1:1 Plan & create teaching implements												
1:2 Organize prayer, invitation, contribution, sharing and method of approach lessons												
1:3 Organize maintenance of membership education and traditional greetings lessons												
1:4 Organize health care lessons												
1:5 Organize Bible study lessons												
Result 2: Evangelistic persuasive ministry workers trained												
Activity 2:1 Educate Bible workers												
2:3 Educate health care workers												
Result 3: The Abundance Pantry established												
Activity 3:1 Placement procedures and venue												
3:2 Organizing committee												
3:2:1 Financial committee												
3:2:2 Building committee												
3:2:3 Counseling committee												
Activity 3:3 Seminars organized and carried out												
3:3:2 About invitation												
3:3:3 About contributions												
3:3:4 About sharing												
3:3:5 About method of approach												
3:3:6 About maintenance of membership												
3:3:7 About traditional greetings												
3:3:8 About health care												
3:3:9 About Bible studies												
Result 4: Assessment tools developed												
Activity 4:1 Assessment tools available												
4:2 Assessment tools executed												

A = Researcher B = Church members C = People in communities

Table 4

Gantt Chart: Years Two and Three

Activities	Year Two				Year Three				Person Responsible		
									A	B	C
Result 1: Teaching curriculum developed											
Activity 1:1 Plan & create teaching implements											
1:2 Organize prayer, invitation, contribution, sharing and method of approach lessens											
1:3 Organize maintenance of membership education and traditional greetings lessens											
1:4 Organize health care lessens											
1:5 Organize Bible study lessens											
Result 2: Evangelistic persuasive ministry workers Trained											
Activity 2:1 Educate Bible workers											
2:3 Educate health care workers											
Result 3: The pantry food bank established											
Activity 3:1 Placement procedures or venue											
3:2 Organizing committee											
3:2:1 Financial committee											
3:2:2 Building committee											
3:2:3 Counseling committee											
Activity 3:3 Seminars organized and carried out											
3:3:2 About invitation											
3:3:3 About contributions											
3:3:4 About sharing											
3:3:5 About method of approach											
3:3:6 About maintenance of membership											
3:3:7 About traditional greetings											
3:3:8 About health care											
3:3:9 About Bible studies											
Result 4: Assessment implements developed											
Activity 4:1 Assessment implement available											
4:2 Assessment implements executed											

A = Researcher B = Church members C = People in communities

Result one in the Gantt chart gives the teaching curriculum development with activity one which reveals four main activities that are discussed in the seminar meetings. Result two states the preambles of training of the persuasive ministry workers which includes the education of Bible workers that would be handled by appointed pastors and some selected elders and also health care workers that would be handled by selected professional medical doctors activities in result one and two are taken care of in the first quarter of the project. Result three presents the establishment of the pantry. The venue for the seminars will be at Central School Eke Nguru hall in Aboh Mbaise local government, and also several committees that will help to ensure the success of the project. Activity three also gives further subdivided activities that list nine topics that were comprehensively discussed during the seminar meetings with the exception of the Bible studies. Also, result four gives information of assessment implementation, availability and execution of the assessment tool to identify the progress of the project. Activities in result three and four are completed in the second and last quarter as indicated on the Gantt chart above.

Evangelistic Persuasive Workers

Persuasive evangelistic ministry workers, the medical doctors in particular, would train church members during the seminars to know how to better work with the people they come in contact with in the communities as they go out for personal or team work witnessing.

Education of Bible Workers

Education of Bible workers would be taught by 10 pastors and 55 selected elders from various Adventist churches in Imo State. They will train the church members to be well-grounded in the word of God, especially in the area of the Second Coming of Christ.

Placement Procedure or Venue

As earlier mentioned, the venue for all the seminars would be the Central School Eke Nguru Hall in Aboh Mbaise local government building. This is the appropriate venue for social activities, because many people like to attend any meeting held in this vicinity.

Organizing Committee

The Organizing Committee is the body responsible for special meetings outside the seminars. They are to organize a time and place for special groups of people to meet in regards to the progress of the project. For example, a special prayer group may spring up from the Church members and they decide to make more of a time sacrifice in prayer for the progress of the project.

The Building Committee

The Building Committee is responsible for taking care of the environment throughout the seminar meetings. They ensure that chairs and other equipment for the seminar are put in proper order for every meeting. They also do the work of providing publicity, circulating information regarding the meeting of seminar leaders and participants.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee plays a vital role in making efforts to see that there will be enough funds to run the entire program without financial constraints. The members of the committee usually meet with wealthy men and women in the Church before they attend the seminars. The reason is to let rich donors be aware of the importance of their contributions and the reward they will each get for supporting the work of God through their means.

Counseling Committee

This Counseling Committee will be comprised of the most elderly men in the Church, whether or not they have held offices in the church. What is important is that they would be well-grounded in the Word of God and have acquired knowledge of the lifestyle of Adventism. They will be noted for their firmness in teaching the truth and telling the truth at all times. They are to work hand-in-hand with those church members who have attended the seminars and have made a decision to teach the people on a personal basis. This committee also plays a vital role in offering intercessory prayer on behalf of the people involved in the project, especially those who will continue to give assistance for the furtherance of the project progression after its first five years of operation.

Assessment: Evaluating and Monitoring Procedures

It is advisable to ensure that every task be safeguarded with an assessment plan, an evaluation that is designed to identify the aspects of the project that lead to success and continuity. The main reason for evaluating and monitoring is to make the necessary

changes to produce a sustainable plan. As new possibilities to augment ministry growth and authentication are identified, they can be incorporated into the project. The regular post assessment process provides a review of the accomplishments of the project and helps to identify any contradictions in relationship to designed expectations. The assessment reports are to be used to better understand how to improve the design of similar programs and projects in future (European Commission, 2001, p. 63). The evaluating and monitoring process gives opportunities to the participants to learn from each other. It reveals to a large extent the progress and flaws of the project, thus helping the planners and the stakeholders to make the necessary adjustments for the progress of the project. The evaluation helps to identify the potential problems at an early stage and propose proactive solutions. Although, an evaluation instrument/tool measures the quality and quantifies results, it also allows for questioning and testing the assumptions of the project. Evaluation aims at having a clear analysis of the project and to know the present status and then proposes any difference that should be made to improve on what the project has made in retrospect years.

However, evaluation of this project is to focus on the design and the execution of the project to find out if the project meets the purpose and the objective for which it is designed—the validity of the project. Does it motivate church members to jointly participate to reach the unreached in Imo State using a biblical model and method of persuasion? Indeed, the evaluation procedure of this project is attached to the appendix.

Evaluating Criteria

The criteria of this project were to determine if what is proposed in the project did come to fulfillment. The evaluation should focus on determining if the method of using a

biblical model of persuasion as proposed to enlighten the church members in order to reach other faiths in Imo State was accepted by the members and was successfully implemented. The evaluation should consider the significance and the impact of the project on the participants (church members) and to the people of Imo State after the execution of the project—in the areas of spiritual growth, relationships, and eating habits. The project will be evaluated in comparison with the method of preaching and teaching method currently being used in Imo State. The effectiveness will be evaluated to discover if it is a more appropriate model to be adopted in Imo State as anticipated by the researcher. It will be evaluated to find out if it meets the need of motivating the Church members to be less dependent on pastors and elders alone in preaching and teaching of the message to the people. Also, it will be evaluated to determine if the project execution has made any impact in Adventist Church membership growth as well as in the establishment of more Churches in Imo. The descriptions of the tools being used are addressed in the appendices.

Reporting Developments

Specifically, setting up a reporting scheme is of paramount importance in order to determine or to have the picture of how the project execution is faring. This is usually done on daily basis by verifying through the indicators as indicated in the Logframe analysis. The activity lists and indicators can give a clear picture of the current position of the project as evaluated in comparing the milestones. The final report of each project will be collected and shared with the stakeholders.

Linkage to the Logframe

The evaluation of the project should be implemented according to the hierarchical objective structure of the project design. The Logframe is of immense value due to its provision of a systematic approach to every aspect of the project.

Finished accomplishments are equated with the strategy beginning from the end of the Logical Framework Matrix. It should be noted that the positive effect of the pantry establishments in Imo State, after the execution of the seminars, will actually prepare most of the church members to share their means as well as their time and energy in reaching the people for whom the message was intended. The reaction of the people toward the establishment of the pantry and the love identification mark of the church members who participate in the pantry will indicate positive results according to the assumption of the researcher. The model proposed in this project is likely to be the best model to be adopted in reaching the people in this area with the gospel. Again, the overall synopsis of the project's accomplishments are revealed and equated with the verifiable indicators in the Logic Framework to appraise progress, advancement made in activities, results, achievement of purposes and objectives. The project's organizing group will take a bold and careful look at several mechanisms of the project in order to give effective estimations of what has been achieved through the project so far. There will also be room for new ideas after the previous project assessment, subject to the resources indicated in the Logframe as a means of verification.

Then, the organizing and building committees will give the final analysis as to whether or not project execution qualifies to be the model to be adopted for soul winning in Imo state as the researcher proposes.

Two-day Seminar

The two-day seminar will include training for unity and an introduction to the invitation method.

Training for Unity

The first of the two seminars to develop the biblical model and methods of persuasion will last for four hours for each of the two days. The meeting will be held within the month indicated in result one and two on the Gantt chart for the first quarter. All the meetings will be held at the Central School Eke Nguru Hall in the Aboh Mbaise local government area. The primary aim is to train the participating church members to be in one accord, to pray together, and to wait on the Lord to receive power before anyone should go out to minister to the people; and to train them as to how to invite people from other denominations. The training on how to be in unity and to pray fervently for the success of the program will last, as previously indicated, for four hours each day. The training on how to extend invitations will also take four hours for completion. The importance of this is indicated in the prayer of unity Jesus prayed on behalf of His disciples before He left for heaven as indicated in Acts 1:4. Staying in one accord in Jerusalem prepared the disciples to learn how to speak in oneness and to love one another in agreement with what Christ advised them to do when He said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). Congregating together and harmonizing in one accord will empower and encourage each member of the church to be involved and active in Bible study with emphasis on the love of God for humanity. If this teaching is well inculcated in each member's mind and is practically demonstrated, it will serve as an opening door to people's hearts. The love of

God creates a common ground in which to interact with various denominations, both Christian and Muslim. The emphasis on the type of love that would break the barrier here is the love of Christ that invites both men and women to come to Humanity for deliverance; it is the love that takes away burdens, both physically and spiritually, as indicated in Matt 11:28.

The Invitation Method

The church members will be trained for four hours during one day on the technique of inviting people to attend meetings, to visit the pantry, and to open their hearts to God. This procedure will enable the participants to be able to ascertain and resolve the spiritual and physical needs of the people they come in contact with, as Jesus did with the Crowd when He said to His disciples, “Give them something to eat” as we read in Mark 6:37 and Luke 9:13 when physical needs arose among the people. The members should be trained to handle people’s spiritual needs as Jesus did when Nicodemus and the woman at the well met with Humanity (John 3:1-10; John 4:14). As a consequence of this process, trained members will become aware of the needs in various communities and determine to take action. The training provided will be known as the “Action Plan for Developing Cordial Relationships.” Some of the activities are described in the following sections.

The Second Seminar

The second seminar will take three hours on each of eight days per month as stipulated in the Gantt chart for the second and the last quarter of the project to accomplish the activities in result three and four.

Contributions by the Members

The first meeting of the second seminar will be based on how to empower the Church members to contribute for the progress of the project without any reservations. The baptized members in the Church will be taught how expedient it is to witness for the Lord by sharing their means and testimonies to the people of Imo State. A typical example of how this could be very helpful in sharing the Word of God to the people of Imo State is indicated by the tremendous increase in membership the early Church experienced as the members pooled their resources together to ensure that food and other means were distributed to all who were in need (Acts 4:32). Every member contributed his own quota as none of them claimed that whatever he had was owned exclusively.

Establishment of Abundance Pantries

As the members respond generously as a consequence of the second seminar, then, the expression of *love in action* will be incorporated with the establishment of a Pantry in various parts of Imo State where members from various Christian denominations and members of the Muslim faith can come and receive free food and clothing and other free materials. This process follows what has been observed here in the United States. This approach will be very effective since such expressions of love will be seen as unique to anywhere in Imo State and in Nigeria as a whole. Indeed, as briefly described in chapter 1, this institution of a Pantry serves as a means to get closer and develop better relationships with the people. In harmony with God's approach in restoring humanity to Himself through the institution of covenantal agreement between Humanity and humanity, the Pantry offers an opportunity for interaction and

togetherness. It is through this means that the church members and other denominational members in various communities in the state will set the ground work for relationships for preaching the gospel.

Funds to Operate the Abundance Pantry

The second meeting in the second seminar's section will also last for three hours. This section will deliberate on training the participants to contribute immensely as the fund to run this project will need to come from contributions. Indeed, the wealthy Church members all over Imo State will be more encouraged and empowered to contribute as each of them is moved by the Holy Spirit. It is interesting to note that many Adventist churches in Imo State are blessed with wealthy men and women who would be willing to give in order to support the work of God if they were invited to donate for a worthy cause, one that helps people and enhances the spreading of the gospel message.

The Service of Sharing Food

The third meeting of the second seminar will also last for three hours and it will deliberate on training the participants for the food sharing at the pantry. Though this service is based on the voluntary spirit of every participant, the goal is for all baptized members, some non-baptized members, and the youth to be trained to participate in the soul winning process of sharing food and clothing. This "an action relationship approach" Will provide opportunities to serve the people who will come to receive the free food. Winning souls for the Lord does not only require our resources but our entire being as well. Each member is expected to participate in the sharing of the food two times in a month. The food will be shared on Wednesdays of the second week of each month and on

the last Wednesday of the month, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. The reason for such a long period of service within the day is to accommodate the time constraints of church members and others who would only have time in the morning or evening period.

The adults and the youth involved in this program will be trained to be friendly and open-minded toward each person who comes to be served. They will be taught how to use kind words as Jesus, Paul, and other disciples did during their teachings and interactions with the people for whom they ministered. Maintaining an attitude of friendliness might not be easy, as the church members may have some problems, just as Jesus and His disciples had in their ministry. However, this process will prepare the church members involved in the two parts of the seminars to acquire enough knowledge on how to approach people in case they go out to minister to them in their respective communities.

Itinerant Approach

The fourth meeting of the second seminar will also take three hours. The focus will be on educating the participants to meet people in their respective locations to resolve their needs. Having acquired a deep relationship from the Pantry activity interactions within various communities, the church members will then move around to carry the message to the people as Jesus moved to listen to peoples' needs, showing compassion and sympathy, as well as healing the sick. According to White, (White, 1942) "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'"

(White, 1905, p. 143). From the context of the above quote, it is noted that Jesus did not minister by staying in one place.

The function of the Church is to not only provide a physical structure with pews and pulpit. It is not only to organize and conduct important meetings, though these are important. The priority should be focused more toward meeting people where they are, just as Jesus, Paul, and other disciples did during their missionary experiences (Macleod, 2011). Palmer (1998) stresses the need to teach people and not a subject. Sharing the gospel is no different; experience has shown that people find it difficult to search out the message of salvation unless someone takes an interest in them personally or cares enough about them to create an interest in taking action toward learning more about God. A church, a group of people, each with the training and motivation to reach out and teach individuals, can make a difference. For instance, during my canvassing experience as a literature evangelist, many of the people I visited in their houses and offices bought message books after I expressed gratitude for being allowed to visit with them. The conversations prior to offering the books for sale, included allowing them to share what was happening in their lives. Many even requested that I should come again with more message books. In fact, when I was selling books in Canada, some of the people who read the books and came to the Church at Edmonton, Canada, while I was canvassing there in 2010, confessed that had I not come to their homes they might not have gotten the opportunity to get such inspirational books, such as *The Great Controversy*, *Steps To Christ*, *Peace Above The Storm*, and *Angels Among Us*.

Jesus exemplified the necessity of relating with people and moving from one place to another to meet their needs (Matt 9:35). Jesus was the archetype of a peripatetic

missionary, seen later in the lives of the disciples. Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Tm and others engaged in travelling missionary experiences to fulfill the commission Jesus entrusted to them (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15).

Strategy to Maintain Membership

The groundwork for maintaining, sustaining members will include a study of the early church and how they evangelized the world, instructions on how to speak with authority, and the importance of health and temperance.

Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy's Itinerant Missionary Model

This seminar will focus on three basic issues: educating the participants to reach the community members, strengthening them to remain firm, and educating for excellence. The goal is for each participant to speak with authority before the people as did Jesus and His disciples.

Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy and others were itinerant missionaries. Their journeys are depicted in Figure 2. The map depicts the itinerant involvement of their missionary work. Today, though the Church as a whole may not get involved in such colossal or special missionary journeys, the model should be seen as a masterpiece to be adopted by the Church in order to respond to Christ's commission which says to go into the world to preach the gospel message (Mark 16:15). Though the movements and travels of the Church members to communicate the message to the communities might not involve going across the country, it will copy a great deal from the classic approach Paul and his colleagues adopted in regard to visitation and re-visitation of new converts.

Paul, with Silas and other apostles, revisited most of the churches and people they came in contact with during their first missionary journey and this attitude helped to

maintain and sustain the faith, growth, and stability of the church members they had earlier converted on their missionary journey. On Paul's third missionary journey, for instance, he went through Galatia and Phrygia and encouraged the disciples to remain resolute in the Lord (Acts 18:22-23).

Indeed, as indicated in chapter one and two, a lot of converts in the churches today renounce their beliefs when there is no adequate provision to ensure the maintenance of their membership after conversion has taken place. Just as plants and grass need sunshine and water on a daily basis to thrive, so also human beings need food for physical sustenance and the word of God for spiritual strength and growth. The Church members who are involved in the two seminars as indicated in this project will be adequately trained to visit and revisit most of the people in the community, the newly converted and those on the verge of making a decision. The personal contact will protect the contacts from being robbed of the message they have received. The individual interest will help to motivate the contact to keep looking to the Spirit of God to keep on burning in their hearts to yield good fruits as the Lord leads them.

Target Excellence to Speak With Authority

Church members willing to be trained as to how best to reach those needing the news of the gospel, members willing need to learn how to approach individuals and be willing to move from place-to-place in order to present the gospel message. They will follow in the footsteps, as it were, of Jesus and the early disciples. Though missionaries and preachers are not expected to be perfect before they go out to present the message to the people, yet it is necessary that each member should be well taught. The target will be excellence in his or her presentations. Jesus presented the message with an in-depth

knowledge of the Scriptures and proved excellence in His teaching and preaching. He captivated minds and captured hearts (Zigarelli & Goss, 2008, p. 27) to the extent that the people were wondering from where He got the authority and wisdom with which He was teaching (Mark 1:22).



Figure 2. Paul's missionary journeys set a classic example of visiting and revisiting. Source: (Williams, 2012)

Jesus trained His disciples to observe fasting and prayer before they interacted with the individuals they would help (Mark 9:29). In verse 30, it is noted that Jesus went further to teach his disciples as He avoided the crowd from disrupting His teachings and interactions with the disciples. The essence of emphasizing on excellence is to motivate the members to study and know the word of God to a certain level that would enable them to withstand and to speak authoritatively before the people.

Properly inculcated in the minds of the church members in Imo State, Nigeria, the acceptance of the people and their practices and the introduction to Christ presented with passion and deliberate steps, as outlined in the seminars, will lay the ground work for the Holy Spirit to open the minds of the people and lead them to the Cross.

Creating an Assignment for the Seminar Participants

The education of participants on how to use traditional greetings will be followed by an immersion into the local communities. The church members participating in the service offered by the Abundance Pantry program will be assigned to go out in twos to visit the community members from the various religious congregations in Imo State. It is the plan that wherever the food pantries have been established, there will be people whose physical needs are being met. This action approach is planned to prepare the recipients to learn about the Adventist Church and its message of salvation.

The church members involved in the outreach will learn how to break down some of the barriers to reaching out to the families in the community through learning how to use the community greetings; for example, in *Ibo* land the greeting, “Udo diri un na ezi n’ulo unu” literally translates to mean “peace be unto you and to your family.” This simple greeting in *Ibo* land softens and brings an opening to the heart of both old and young people when it is said good-naturedly or amiably.

The church members will distribute a survey to determine the reaction of the people in the community regarding how they see or value the role of the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They will, in addition, endeavor to find out more of what the people need besides the help they get from the food Pantry, such as meeting their spiritual needs. They will also be expected to get information concerning health problems

or family problems that could be addressed by a trained Seventh-day Adventist health professional or pastor. An analysis of the survey conducted by the church members participating in the Pantry and other outreach activities will provide the information needed to develop a strategy of persuasion to motivate those receiving assistance. Pamphlets and tracts explaining simple truths with biblical support and relevant illustrations will accompany the outreach as explained below.

The Pamphlet—Outline of Health Message

The pamphlet will include an outline of the various health messages approved by Seventh-day Adventist medical doctors in Imo State. The focus here is to convey to the people the simple remedies of how they can prevent diseases as they observe simple personal hygiene within their environment. This is very important because the majority of those who become sick in Imo State suffer from malaria, a common disease peculiar to West African countries. Although, in 2009, Imo State was declared the best state in Nigeria, noted for its cleanliness, as earlier indicated in chapter 3, the overall cleanliness cannot ensure adequate protection from mosquitoes since the breeding of mosquitoes still is rampant. The seminars will include training for the outreach workers who will enter the communities, connect with the people through the Pantry, and then provide training programs that will encourage the people to take cleaning more seriously and will teach the steps to take to avoid subsequent breeding of mosquitoes within their environments.

Cleanliness will be a part of all of the outreach training seminars. This measure is appropriate as many contemporary denominations in Imo State still commonly believe that cleanliness is next to godliness; a notion which was affirmed by some scholars as coming from the ancient Hebrew proverb writing, made official in the English language

by Francis Bacon in 1605. This claim has no specific affirmation in the Bible, but some scholars, like Wesley, and many Christians, acknowledge it as a means to distinguish the true worshiper of God from those who are not. Francis Bacon indicated in his writing that “Cleanness of body was ever deemed to proceed from a due reverence to God” (Simpson & Jennifer, 2008).

The pamphlet will consist of simple guide lines that can enable anyone who receives it to take care of their health by using the most common available materials within the communities, such as air, water, coconut water, and sunlight. Of course, temperance, exercise, rest, and trust in God will be included (White, 1905, p. 127)

The Importance of the air we Breathe

Air is the most basic element needed to sustain life. Unfortunately, air has been abused due to so many factors and exposures in various societies today and this affects life either for good or for bad. The people of Imo State will be taught the importance of breathing fresh air. Most of the problems that result as a consequence of poor air quality are due to indoor air. Most people prefer a communal life style in Imo State, which is appropriate to some extent, but there should be a limit. People need to have adequate space in order to enjoy and benefit from the free air God has given to humanity for life and good health. Living so congested in some homes increases the level of air pollution which often leads to sickness. This is especially dangerous when there is an epidemic in a congested living community like Imo State. According to Sundell (2004) there is increasing evidence that exposure to indoor air quality (IAQ) is the cause of excessive morbidity and mortality. At least 2,000,000 deaths occur yearly, especially in women and

children in the developing world, where indoor unvented burning of bio mass for cooking is the cause of the maladies people experience.

The use of Water

Water is another common material essential for human survival. It is as important as air. As humanity cannot survive without air, neither can they survive without water. Unfortunately, we do not realize the extent of the importance of water, much less of its usage. The simple required quantity of water that is to be taken by each person on a daily basis needs to be emphasized. Drinking at least 8 cups of water daily as required by health principles could make one feel great (Diehl & Ludington, 2011, p. 193) and inhibit some problems, such as constipation. Water helps with digestion and the absorption of food, maintenance of proper muscle tone, supplies oxygen and nutrients to the cells, gets rid of waste products, serves as natural air conditioning, and even helps those who are struggling with weight loss (Akers, Cornett, Savla, Davy, & Davy, 2012).

Coconut Water Usage for Intravenous Hydration

It has been noted that coconut is one of the common gifts to the people of Imo State; however, most people have not discovered the value of its use other than eating the coconut flesh. Coconut water has been discovered for its intravenous usage for medical emergencies. It is used locally to arrest urgent situations when there is no available resource for intravenous liquid to take care of patients who need intravenous hydration medical care. For instance, coconut water was used as a short term intravenous hydration fluid for a Solomon Island patient (Campbell-Falck, Thomas, Falck, Tutuo, & Clem, 2000).

In addition to providing an enjoyable eating experience, coconut contains a lot of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients crucial for boosting energy, slowing age, and maintaining good skin. It contains cytokinins and lauric acid which can diminish the aging of skin cells, as well as PH (potential hydrogen) levels. It helps keep the connective tissues robust and hydrated. Drinking coconut water on daily basis will tremendously help one struggling with high blood pressure and maintain HDL–high density lipids (good) cholesterol, because coconut water is highly concentrated with potassium and lauric acid which serve as natural treatments and the maintenance of good cardiovascular health for high blood pressure patient (Home Remedies Web, 2012).

Sunlight and Exercise

Exercise strengthens the heart, lowers blood pressure, lowers cholesterol levels, in the blood, strengthens bones and lifts depression (Swenson, 2004, p. 13). God introduced the necessity of exercise in the form of caring for the garden, as work (Gen 2:15). Sunshine is available almost daily in Imo State, yet the local people do not realize its importance. The good news is that everyone benefits from sunshine knowingly or unknowingly. The common benefit derived from sunshine is Vitamin D. The process of getting Vitamin D from the sun is as free as the air we breathe every moment in life. A lot of people probably avoid sunshine because of the fear they could get cancer as they overexpose their skin to the sunlight.

Care should be taken in regard to the temperate exposure to the sun as anything done inordinately could be dangerous. Research has shown that it is appropriate to spend at least a few minutes in the sunshine every day. A lack of attention to this instruction has caused some people depression (Diehl & Ludington, 2011, p. 197). I noted from

experience during my canvassing experience in most of the cold countries like Norway, Sweden, and Canada that people maintain their positive moods when there is sunshine. The result of their good mood actually was reflected in my heavy sales during those periods! The importance of sunshine to humans and plants cannot be overemphasized, and I see it as one of the inevitable gifts of God to all generation on this planet.

Lessons in Temperance

Apart from spiritual rest, as described in Exod 16:23 and 31:12, people should learn temperance and be able to apply it in daily activities. Many people have died or become sick for the fact that they were not able to realize their limits. Work is good for health and I feel that was why God probably initially instructed humanity to engage in it after creation Gen 2:15. Caution should be taken in order to maintain a balance.

Excessive work is not good for health. If machines that are not human beings need rest to function properly, it means that human beings need more rest to use their brains in order to reason well and even use the machine proportionately as a machine cannot determine when to rest in order to function well by itself.

Summary and Conclusion

The message of salvation is to be carried by individuals to individuals. The training seminars suggested in this chapter will include lessons on how to approach people and let them know the bearer of the gospel cares about them and their needs. Lessons on how to present Bible studies will provide knowledge of the Bible truths. Health principles will be taught. Air, water, and cleanliness are available worldwide, but coconut water and sunshine are more abundant in Imo State, Nigeria. The training of

workers who will participate in the Abundance Pantry programs will educate the community by teaching the advantages of following the health principles that include the proper use of air, water, coconut water, and sunshine. Practices of cleanliness will be included. This practical approach to reaching out to others will be the basis for the persuasion model proposed in this project document.

CHAPTER 5

THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

It is noted in chapter 4 that an action plan for developing cordial relationships was introduced and presented as a proposed biblical model of persuasion to reach the Roman Catholics, Muslims and even non-Christians in Imo State, Nigeria. The chapter presented a two-part seminar based on a biblical model and techniques of persuasion that explain action plans for developing cordial relationships and the process for creating assignments for participants to report their experiential investigations after interacting with people. The chapter also included highlights of the proposal for a pamphlet explaining the steps of persuasion to be used to approach various denominations within the state through health lessons taught by medical professionals and teachers. This current chapter summarizes the approaches to reaching people and meeting their needs as presented in chapter 4. It will further give a preview of what both the researcher and the participants will be taught and an analysis of the execution of the project. The chapter will conclude with a summary and recommendations.

The Report on the Project Implementation

Based on information I gathered from experienced pastors and members of the

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Imo State about the progress of Adventism, it is noted that a plan for a paradigm shift should be designed and implemented as indicated in chapter 4. Though Church memberships seem to be on the increase each year, the numbers are not commensurate with the entire state population increase. The fact is not that the Church is not committed to evangelistic outreach to the unreached but the paradigm of the evangelistic outreach is what needs to be analyzed and changed. The current practice of beginning a conversation by opening the Bible is not as effective as the model proposed and described in chapter 4, where relationships are established prior to presenting the Bible as God's Word.

The paradigm of the Abundance Pantry, established to provide food and clothing, will commence in May 2020. The plan is to continue the program for five years, into 2025, to verify its effectiveness in reaching the people with the Word of God. The essence of this model as earlier indicated in chapter 4 is to first interact on a practical level to establish rapport with the people before the Bible is opened.

Although the participation of sharing food and clothing to the community is open to all the members of the Church, all the active participants, from the year 2020 to 2025, who help to facilitate the program, will be given special recognition by the Church. The reason for this is to boost the courage of the participants who are more resilient in working for the Lord.

Training the Participants

The training venue will be the *Eke Nguru School*, a community primary school. This is neutral ground and it is located in the middle of *Eke Ahiara* junction and old *Eke*

Nguru Mket, on the expressway to *Aboh Mbaise*, the local government Head Quarters, making an ideal location for the pantry.

Words of Admonition

Selected elders and I will be responsible for the words of admonition for all the participants of the food sharing in the pantry. The participants will be properly instructed on how to talk to people, respectfully and intelligently (Prov 51:11). The participants will demonstrate love as described in chapter 4. The exhibition of their love to one another will portray the love of God that Jesus referred to in John 15:35, which is intended to be contagious to other people the disciples would come in contact with in their daily journey.

Health Teachings

The plan is for the health teachings or instructions to be taught by at least six Adventist medical practitioners consisting of male and female practitioners in Imo State. They will give lectures on how to use the available common resources in the community to maintain good health, such as water, coconut water, fruits, and vegetables, familiar gifts of God as succinctly described in chapter 4. After the lecture, it is believed that all the participants will help to spread the information during their interactive visitations.

The Ideal Sharing of the Pamphlets

The first pamphlet will be shared along with food and clothing. This first pamphlet will contain mostly health messages. After six months of operating the pantry, the second pamphlet will be shared. The second pamphlet will contain specific Adventist beliefs, rooted in biblical truths, such as the heavenly sanctuary, second coming of Christ,

death and resurrection, millennium and the end of sin, and the hope of a New Earth.

After Two Years of the Abundance Pantry

The participants who attended the two seminars and also participated in the distribution of food, clothing, and pamphlets in the Abundance Pantry process as described in chapter 4 will be asked to go into the community to make preliminary observations to determine the impact of the services being rendered in the communities. This process will be guided and monitored by selected elders in the Church who it is hoped would volunteer to serve as supervisors in the procedure. The aim of this survey is to help the instructor or the researcher to get the necessary information from the community through the participants in order to prepare messages according to the specific needs of the people. Also, the eagerness and positive excitement regarding the survey will indicate the degree of success of the Abundance Pantry component of the Action Plan.

Lessons to be Learned From the Project

Inefficiencies and Benefits of Team Work

One of the significant outcomes of this project will be to help in the identification of my inefficiencies in the area of health care. I need to better understand how to help people who are desperately in need of help and that is one of the reasons the five Adventist medical practitioners will be invited to take care of the health teaching and medical instructions for the accomplishment of this project. In fact, such interaction will help me better understand the relevancy of team work as demonstrated in Jesus' ministry as well as introduce additional health care possibilities. With the various individual

talents and skills, if a team of people can come together to achieve the best for the progress of the gospel, it will reinforce the importance of team work through the collaborative work of the Church members. The training as to how best to reach other denominations will be a part of the team work practices and the collaboration of church members should demonstrate that teamwork is a fundamental principle for unity in the church and for the benefit of evangelistic work.

Mysteries in the Ministry

The project indeed, will reveal that God is able to provide funds to run His ministry through various individuals. As He inspires some influential individuals to give without reservations, it will be demonstrate the mysterious ways of God. In fact, the conviction I have with the issue of individual contributions for the success of the project through the establishment of a pantry is that God can use people to provide for the specific needs of humanity just as he provided divine intervention and protection for the Israelites in the wilderness (Exod 17).

Testimonies

Sharing successes, providing testimonies, will motivate others to continue to give in support of the continuity of the Abundance Pantry as the names of most of the special donors for the success of the pantry will be frequently used in the Church for testimonies of how God has been using such contributors to provide the needs of people in various communities. People like to emulate the footsteps of those whose names are noted for doing good deeds with their means for the Lord. Just as sin is contagious among men so also doing righteous deeds is communicable among them.

Unique Talents of the Youth

The project is hoped to open eyes to visualize that the youth in the Church will be as useful as the adults when it comes to evangelism. Their presence and participation in the Abundance Pantry will ignite the spirit of other youth and the adults from other denominations to decide to attend Bible studies that will be offered after the first year of the pantry operation in some of the communities by 2021.

Discovering and Providing Basic Needs

It has been my experience that it is easier to get someone's attention from the beginning. In other words, the connection must be made when you first break the barrier of getting closer to them or making them get closer to you. Providing for their specific needs is one of the most effective methods; as stated earlier, it was one of the methods used by Jesus. The pantry project will provide the opportunity to help meet needs that they may not be able to provide themselves. Since human beings are prone to listen and accept what a speaker says if it has to do with solving their basic needs, physical and spiritual, the pantry project should prove successful in establishing relationships that lead to trust and then to sharing the gospel.

Reasons why People Were Looking for Jesus

I discovered that most of the miracles Jesus and His disciples performed and recorded in the Bible that made so many souls to turn their lives to God were based on meeting both the physical and spiritual needs of the people, such as provision of food and casting out demons from the possessed. People were searching for Jesus and He told them that they were looking for Humanity because of the food He had previously given

them (John 6:26). In fact, that was the basic reason that motivated me to use the food pantry to create rapport with the people in the community. Appetite for food has been powerful right from the time of Adam through to the temptation of Jesus, even to the present generation. It will continue to be the greatest need of humanity as far as life continues through all ages till Jesus comes the Second time.

Attitude of Friendliness

A culture or attitude of friendliness results from trust and friendships. It is the hope that this project for Imo State will result in friendships that allow the church members to share the Adventist doctrine more than ever in the history of the human race. The people from other denominations in the state also will start to accept the healthful eating and drinking habits of Adventism due to the rapport that was created among them.

Development of Courage

In fact, I hope to learn to be more courageous as I maintain the confidence that victory will be on my side as the project proceeds. Even when my efforts seem to be failing and the possibilities of achieving success seem bleak. I was encouraged by what Maxwell (1999) said, that “There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction” (p. 70). The participants of this project and all other members of the church who contribute toward the accomplishment of the project will indeed be excited, especially those who may feel that the church has neglected them.

Conviction That Faithful Work Will be Rewarded

Working for a reward is not necessarily the right motive, but the belief that the

execution of the project will be successful will create a more positive attitude and will make it possible to present the message. The reward will be the souls who accept the message through the influence of the Abundance Pantry that will be used to break the social barriers to reach various denominations. People tend to believe the speaker when they feel that the person can reach their physical and/or spiritual needs. The process of interaction and the provision of human needs was one of the methods Jesus used. He often interacted with others and provided their needs before He invited them to follow Humanity (White, 1905, p. 142). What is articulated in this project is what the people need to satisfy their yearnings. Although, the needs of human beings are insatiable and cannot be satisfied by one person or group of persons, God can use the participants in this project to respond to the basic yearnings of all humanity.

Difficult to Discern the Total Contribution

Indeed, as I continue to formulate the plans for this project and can only imagine the results, I find it difficult to fathom the extent of influence this project will have within the communities in Imo State. The impression and scope of the project axiomatically signals to me that, if the project is faithfully implemented and maintained in Imo state, that the majority of the people will probably turn their lives to Christ, the primary motive for the project.

Participants can Minister on Their own

The participants will learn to be more independent in witnessing for the Lord. Instead of waiting for the pastors and evangelists to preach the good news, they will have been trained and will have had the experience to trust God and be bold enough to reach

people with the Word of God anywhere they find themselves. This is the motive behind this project which is embedded in Christ's commission to the Church "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" Mark 16:15.

Indeed, the members will learn to exhibit the attitude of friendliness in this assignment and be knowledgeable enough on how to approach the people in case they go out to minister to them in their respective communities. The fear of not knowing what to say by each member who wishes to go out to witness will be a past event as boldness and clear knowledge of what to teach will typify their teachings and presentations.

Conclusion

This world will soon come to an end, judging strictly from the fulfillments of prophecies. Statistics reveal that the only prophecy that is yet to come to fulfillment is the good news that is yet to reach all parts of the world. Of course, assessing the growth of Christianity in Imo State may not be easy. It is often difficult to pinpoint any part where the message from the Bible has not reached, yet people need to be convinced of the truth due to various misinterpretations in the Bible. The strategy of the Abundance Pantry used in this project has contextualized a new approach which will be suitable to reach people in various communities in Imo State. The former way of calling people to receive or listen to the word without first of all capturing their interest will be a thing of the past as the classic approach articulated in this project to reach the people for evangelism is used. There will be a strong rapport between the Church members and the people in the communities. Hopefully, with the application of the strategy used in this project, it will be found that the lifestyle of people in the communities will change due to the application

of health care lectures, reflected in their eating habits and the cleanliness of their environments.

Besides, as a consequence of the continual application of the project strategy, many people will turn their lives to Christ for baptism and this will lead to the establishment of more churches in the community. Again, the majority of church members who participate in the project will probably continue to proclaim the good news through the operation of the original pantry and the establishment of new ones. The education of health care due to positive responses shown by the people in the communities will continue. The pastors in most of the churches in Imo State will work with the laity in visiting those who are newly converted in order to strengthen their faith, but the shared approach will lighten the pastor's work load. In fact, if the model articulated in this project is faithfully implemented, evangelism will be sustainable and probably be made easy in Imo State, Nigeria.

Preaching and teaching of the good news is not something to do without total dependence on God. To bring conviction to many hearts is only made possible by the Holy Spirit. Preaching and teaching should be done with humility and implicit trust in God. Christ's success in persuading people emanates from His love and humility and His relationship with the Father. He obeyed the Father and humbled Himself as He died a shameful death on the cross on behalf of poor sinners. Judging from human perspectives, the poor should die for the rich, but Christ turned that notion upside down by showing that the richest should die for the poorest. Obeying the father and dying such a death on the cross communicates how humble and how great He loves the Father and humanity. Thus the act of persuading people with the Word of God should be characterized with

love and humility as Jesus demonstrated even to the Cross. Persuading people for the word of God should not be dogmatic in nature. Preaching the good news with a dogmatic approach would not yield long lasting effects on the hearts of the hearers, because such approaches to persuasion are usually devoid of the Holy Spirit.

Besides, Christ was successful in teaching and preaching because He mingled with them, discovered their needs and solved them accordingly. Discovering the social needs of people and being able to solve them gives a sure key to unlock the barrier that makes a distinctive difference. In fact, one thing that should not be forgotten in the history of humankind is that every act of teaching and preaching has the intention to convince or persuade the hearer. This convinces me that every effort God made to reach humanity both written and unwritten should probably be seen as an act of persuasion that comes from conviction because all points reveal to humanity how great God loves humanity. The lesson that should be learned from God's efforts to reach humanity is that He gives humanity the power of choice to decide and to choose from any conviction He brings to his heart. Therefore, pastors, evangelists, and church members should learn to present the gospel message with the love of God, which guarantees fairness in persuasion and conviction to the hearers.

Judging from my observation and investigations while preparing this project, I believe that the people of Imo State will respond positively as a consequence of the strategy or model being articulated in chapter 4 which starts with getting familiarized with the people before the presentation of the message. This strategy, if adopted by the church members and leaders in other parts of Nigeria, could make a difference. Viewing the need to reach people socially and culturally as essential to establishing rapport and

using a plan similar the pantry will encourage a positive response, similar to that expected from the people of Imo State. Generally, people like free food or free gifts provided such gifts are of good quality. Through the Abundance Pantry, the quality gifts the people will be provided will motivate them to respond to the message without much hesitation.

With great anticipation that the application of the project will meet the expectations of the people's needs, it is necessary to recommend that the project should be replicated and be distributed to some other districts and conferences within Nigeria and be used as a biblical model of persuasion for the proclamation of the gospel message. Of course, before this action is put in practice, the model must have been properly tested. It is the hope and prayer of the researcher that the Abundance Pantry project in Imo state will prove worthy to be taken to other states in Nigeria.

If the project should prove to be less successful than anticipated, the dedicated participants should not give up. They should continue to work closely with the pastors and evangelists be posted within their locality. This idea will help to maintain the contact and membership status of the new converts.

The participants will also be able to review the health lessons they learned during the seminars if the medical doctors are invited back to provide current updates in health principles. Thus continued health education will not only benefit the people in the communities who receive the services but the participants and the church members as a whole.

Recommendations

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists needs to utilize this project as a biblical model of persuasion in its plans for evangelism. The moment the church leaders accept and begin to use this as a tool, there will be a tremendous change in the church's model of preaching of the gospel message. In fact, there will be more souls turning their lives to the Lord for baptism. Making people to turn their lives to Jesus is seen as the primary motive behind the commission that says, go and make disciples by teaching and preaching to all nations. The fulfillment of this commission cannot and will not thrive in a vacuum, it must come through making genuine efforts to bring conviction to human hearts either by spoken words or unspoken words which boils down to nothing but persuasion.

Indeed, the fact that many people do not feel comfortable when persuasion is mentioned due to the dogmatic approach used does not mean that we should shy away from being assertive in teaching and preaching the Gospel, the Good News of the Three Angels.. More research is needed concerning ethical boundaries on persuasion that will properly distinguish between coercive and non-coercive persuasion because God created human beings to be free agents in making choices. Ideally, human beings generally do not choose coercion since individually we all have confidence that we are the ones responsible to choose that which is for our best interest.

APPENDIX A

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEMINAR

I. THE WORKERS

A. Directors :

The Principal Director – Aloysius Ntiwunka

The Assistant Director:

B. Speakers:

1. Prayer and Invitation:

Apart from the principal director – Aloysius Ntiwunka, the prayer and the invitation process would be taking care of by ten selected elders of the Church from the four ESNW (East, South, North and West) geographical Cardinal areas in Imo State.

2. Contributions:

Contribution instructions would possibly be handled by elders in various Adventist Churches who have had basic education in accounting but are retired from their active service career

3. Sharing:

With the instructions of the assistant principal director of this project, the sharing procedure would be handled by reputable ushers and deacons in the Church. Of course, the head of the women ministry and some other active participants in the women ministry will have enough to say since they seem to be more knowledgeable of what majority of the community members require livelihood.

4. Methods of Approach:

The methods of approach which seems to encapsulate the main purpose of this project will be handled by the principal director. The fact is that here the main points to be discussed and executed during and after the seminar will be given by the principle director in a nutshell.

5. Maintenance of Membership:
Four first elders from ESNW of the Churches in Imo State will participate in this process. Each of the first four elders will give their views concerning the best possible ways membership of any convert will be retained after conversion has taken place. Indeed, each of their views will be subject to scrutiny by the principal director and other participants of the seminar as their views are expected to harmonize with biblical model of maintaining membership.
6. Traditional Greetings:
Two elders who are in their 70's and are very conversant with traditional norms will handle this process.
7. Health Care:
Health instructions will be done by eight medical practitioners constituting both male and female.
8. Bible Studies
Seven pastors will prominently function in this section with the PD (principal director) presiding over the topic being discussed.

II. LESSON OUTLINES

- A. Overview
 - Prayer and Invitation
 - Contributions
 - Sharing
 - Method of Approach
 - Maintenance of Membership
 - Traditional Greetings
 - Health Care
 - Bible Studies

B. Section Outlines

Section 1: Prayer and Invitation

Purpose: The purpose is to train the participating church members to be in accord in prayer for the success of the project and also to know the technique of inviting people from other denominations to give attention to the activities the project provides.

Objective: The objective is to pray so that the members of the community will be impressed by God in listening to sound message

Section 2: Contributions:

Purpose: The purpose is to raise funds from among church members and participants to provides enough materials needed to run the pantry

Considerable Outlines

- a. Being generous frees one from materialism
- b. Being generous will make one feel better about himself/herself
- c. He who sows sparingly reaps sparingly
- d. He who sows generously reaps generously

Section 3: Sharing:

Purpose: The purpose is to get all the church attendants both baptized and none baptized involved in participating in serving the Lord

Considerable Outlines

- a. People who work for the Lord in God's kingdom have benefit package that is out of this world
- b. Workers in God's kingdom do not labor for perishable food but for eternal (Jn 6:27-29)
- c. Jesus saw potential in every human being (Isaiah 46:10)
- d. God rewards honest worker
- e. True work success is laboring in God's righteousness, love, and truth

Section 4: Method of Approach:

Purpose: The aim is to educate the participants to know how to use kind words to break the barrier of entering to people's homes before communicating the message

Considerable Outlines

- a. Soft words can break a bone (Prov. 25:15)
- b. Kind words are like honey (Prov. 16:24)
- c. Investigations through close friends in the various communities
- d. Avoidance of words that can possibly lead to debate or unnecessary argument
- e. Of course, depending on God for every method of approach used

Section 5: Maintenance of Membership

Purpose: The purpose is to educate the participants as to the necessity of revisiting of the people they may come in contact with to avoid possible drop outs of new converts

Considerable Outlines

- a. Intercessory prayer
- b. Make provision for revisiting of new converts
- c. Nurture the spirit of love
- d. Consider every new convert as your “own sheep”

Section 6: Traditional Greeting

Purpose: The purpose is to let the participants to be conversant with the proper traditional greetings and dialects to be spoken during Bible teachings and visitation time

Considerable Outlines

- a. Necessity to know appropriate dialect of each community due to dialect variations
- b. Consideration of sex in greetings
- c. Consideration of age in greetings

Section 7: Health Care

Purpose: The purpose is to educate the participants how to pass simple health care message to the people during their course of interactions in the communities

Considerable Outlines

- a. To be conversant with simple free health remedies God has given to human kind
- b. To be knowledgeable of benefits of cleanliness
- c. Good health opens more doors for the gospel message

d. To intimate people the necessity of eating according to biblical principles

Section 8: Bible Studies

Purpose: The purpose is to properly enlighten all the participants to be more profound in bible knowledge to be able to incorporate the basic doctrine into their Bible teachings.

APPENDIX B

THE FIRST PAMPHLETS

Title: The Secrets of God Health

- A. The secret of good health is in the hands of humanity through Divine providence –Part One
 - 1. Obedience to God’s instructions (Gen 1:29-30)
 - 2. Balance your activity with the amount of rest that is commensurate with it
 - 3. Laughter helps to maintain both mental and physical state of mind
 - 4. Endeavor to accompany and make friends with those who will make you to maintain your daily upbeat.
- B. The Secret of Good Health is in the Hand of Humanity through Divine Providence –Part Two
 - 1. Eating Habits – make fruits and vegetables parts of your favorite dishes
 - a. Fruits and vegetables contains antioxidants that fight against cancer
 - b. Fruits and vegetables are good for eye maintenance
 - c. Fruits and vegetables are good for skin maintenance
 - d. Fruits and vegetables are good for hair maintenance
 - e. Minerals and Vitamins from fruits and vegetables are essential for immunity and weight management of the body
 - f. Fruits and vegetables are essential for heart health- can lower the risk of stroke and heart disorders
 - g. Both fruits and vegetables serves great purpose in digestion and constipation since they are sources of dietary fiber
- C. The Secret of Good Health is in the Hand of Humanity through Divine Providence- Part Three
 - 1. Eating Habits- besides eating fruits and vegetables, it is advisable to observe these:
 - a. Engage yourself in exercise: exercise strengthens heart muscles, lowers high blood pressure, lowers risks of heart diseases, increases energy, and endurance, burns excess calories, increases sense of well-being, reduces stress, relieves anxiety and depression and invariably improves quality of sleep.
 - b. Endeavor to drink enough water at least 6 to 10 glasses of water each day
 - c. Endeavor to take enough air – air energizes the blood, relaxes the mind, kills germs, helps to clean the lungs, improves the immune system etc.
 - d. Above all, trust in the Lord (Jn 8:38)

APPENDIX C
THE SECOND PAMPHLETS

The highest expectation everyone should hope to embrace –Christ’s Second Coming

1. Christ’s Purpose of Coming
 - a. To take His followers home (Jn 14:3)
 - b. To judge the world and to reward each person according to his deeds (Rev. 22:12)
 - c. Only those who love humanity and keep God’s commandments will He will take to heaven
 - d. His judgment will be based on His Commandments (Jn 14:15; Ex 20)
 - e. His first coming was typified with the fulfillment of the Rev of the Father and the Law as the Father’s transcript (Matt 5:17)
 - f. None of the items in the 10 Commandments will be compromised with in God’s judgment
 1. No item in the 10 Commandments will be annulled (Matt 5:18)
 2. The Law is established for ever (Psalm 111:8)
 3. Grass and flowers withers but the word of God cannot (Isa 40:8; Luke 16:17; 21:33).

APPENDIX D
BIBLE STUDIES

Lesson Number 1: Authenticity of the Bible

Reason: The aim is to establish confidence in people's minds in order to accept the Word of God

Outline

- a. Internal evidences of Bible authenticity
 1. The records of the synoptic writers supported the gospels
 2. Christ's claims about His lives found in the New Testament
 3. Witnesses are evidenced by good character and lack of motive
 4. The credibility of the witness is supported by the number and consistency
 5. Evidences of the gospels support the authenticity

- b. External Evidences of the Bible (Archaeological Perspectives)
 1. Archaeology and history approves the validity of the Bible and the reality of God
 2. References by Josephus to John, James, and Jesus in writing his Antiquities
 3. The gospel records are supported by external sources in history

Lesson Number 2: Similarities between the Bible and Quran

Reason: The aim is to accentuate on common grounds between the Muslims and Christians to break the barrier of not listening to each other

Outline

Common grounds between the Bible and the Quran

A

B

The Bible	The Quran
1. Teaches that there is only one God (Gen. 1:1)	Teaches that there is only one God (Quran 6:1)
2. Only God should be worshiped, no Idol (Matt (4:10; 1 Cor. 8:4)	Only God should be worshiped, no Idol (Quran 2:163; 3:64
3. Teaches the grace of God (Jas 4:6)	Teaches the grace of God (Quran 4:17)
4. The word of God is axiomatically inspired by God without any reservations (2 Pt 1:20, 21)	The word of God is self-evidently inspired by God (Quran 39:27-28)
5. More blessings good reward for anonymous charity to the poor (Matt 6:3-4)	More blessings or good rewards for anonymous generosity to the poor (Quran 2:271)
6. Vengeance is for God (Rom 12:19)	It is better to exercise patience for God to revenge rather than (Quran 16:126)

Lesson Number 3: The Three Angels Messages

Reason: The Aim is to reveal the true God to be worshiped and His true worshipers.

Outline

- a. Those who worship the true God must worship Humanity in Spirit and in Truth (Jn 4:24)
 1. Those who believe in God and keep His Commandments are the true worshipers of God.
 2. Does the one who says he knows and loves God but do not accept to keep His Commandments a true worshiper of God?
 3. The entire stipulations of the 10 Commandments of God should be the focal priority of any true believer or worshiper of God
 4. Worshiping true God requires truthful (correct) decision

- b. Those who worship false gods do not care about what the scripture says
 1. Many people intentionally ignore what the Bible says and follow what tradition says
 2. Unfortunately Some of the false worshipers are yet to discover the truth in the Bible
 3. Both the deceiver and the deceived will be given the same punishment when Christ comes the second time.
 4. The principal deceiver (Satan) will be made to go on vacation for one thousand years before the final imposition of God's wrath on humanity and those he deceived
 5. The only time available for any sinner to repent is when one is still alive not after his death or when Jesus comes the Second Time to take the believers to His kingdom.

Lesson Number 4: The Love of God

Reason: The aim is to highlight on God's love and to motivate people to love God and their fellow human beings.

Outline

- a. Rev of God's love to humanity
 1. Through creation
 2. The Son was given as ransom to the entire world (Salvation)
 3. The heavenly sanctuary sacrifice by the Son on behalf of our sins
 4. Provision of guiding Angel to everyone
 5. Provision of prophecy – written words
 6. Establishment of standard of morality
 7. God's promise of eternal life

- b. How to respond to God's love
 1. Laying emphasis in relating to Humanity
 2. By counting all it cost to follow Humanity and relinquishing all for Humanity
 3. By loving Humanity and loving our fellow humany beings
 4. By trusting and obeying all He says according to the scripture (Jn 14:15)

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