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ABSTRACT

STRATEGY TO EVANGELIZE THE AHANTA MIDDLE CLASS

by

Andrews Laurence Ewoo

Adviser: Bruce Lee Bauer

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: STRATEGY TO EVANGELIZE THE AHANTA MIDDLE CLASS

Name of researcher: Andrews Laurence Ewoo

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D. Miss.

Date completed: June 1994

The Seventh-day Adventist Church appears to have grown dramatically in Ghana. Of the four fields in Ghana, the Central Ghana Conference was organized in 1933 and has a membership of 88,380. The South Ghana Conference, organized in 1987, has a membership of 38,573. The North Ghana Mission, organized in 1968, has a membership of 3,479, and the Mid-West Ghana Mission, organized in 1986, has 27,308 members. Of the total union membership of 157,532, Ahantas form 1.9 percent. Not even 5 percent of the total union membership is of the middle class who control the economy of the country.

This Doctor of Ministry dissertation suggests a Sequence Evangelism Seminar as a viable strategy for

reaching the rich Ahanta middle class who will help to expand the work of God in Ahantaland.

Chapters 1-4 of this project lay the foundation for the development of a strategy to evangelize the Ahanta middle class by analyzing:

1. The cultural identity, historical importance, religious practices and traditional beliefs, and characteristics of the target group
2. The biblical, Spirit of Prophecy, and historical basis for the suggested strategy
3. The methods the early Christian missionaries used in evangelizing the Ahanta and why they failed.

The last chapters of the project deal with six suggested principles and practices which should be applied in evangelizing the Ahanta middle class. Provision is made in strategy for the involvement of the educated laity in order that they may reach out to their contemporaries. Training seminars and a step-by-step approach of the strategy is explained in easy-to-follow steps so that the laity can be part of this team approach.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

STRATEGY TO EVANGELIZE THE AHANTA MIDDLE CLASS

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

by
Andrews Laurence Ewoo

June 1994

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMC	Ahanta Middle Class
CGC	Central Ghana Conference of SDA Church
MGM	Mid-West Ghana Mission of SDA Church
NGM	North Ghana Mission of SDA
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist Church
SES	Sequence Evangelism Seminars Strategy
SGC	South Ghana Conference of SDA Church
WAUM	West African Union Mission of SDA Church

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One historical statesman, in expressing his appreciation to his gallant soldiers, said, "Never in the annals of history, never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." This is true for me and my family--so large a family helped by so few genuine people. To God be the glory, for He alone has done this.

The Lord always uses people to help His children. My deepest thanks and appreciation go to Mildred Taylor who sponsored me from Liberia to Andrews University to realize my dreams in ministry. Thank you Millie, Dr. & Mrs. Donald Blake, and Mrs. Pearline Johnson for your kindness and support.

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I thank my Coloma SDA church family who supported me morally, physically, and spiritually, realizing that the

blood that binds us together is thicker than any ocean that separates them from the Ewoos of Ghana.

To my wife, Elizabeth Ewoo, quiet, but a spiritual giant, a woman of fasting and prayer, and to all my children--Dina, Hannah, Amram, Ellen, and Seth--I owe all my gratitude. I want to pay special tribute to my son, Seth, who always encouraged me to finish quickly so that we could go home. To all Ghanaians at Andrews University and in the Berrien Springs community, I want to express my heart-felt appreciation. May God bless all who blessed me with their love and support.

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this Doctor of Ministry dissertation lies in the attempt to develop a strategy to evangelize the Ahanta middle class in the Sekondi and Takoradi areas. For background information, I describe realities in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Western Ghana, especially among the Ahanta. Realities are not always what we want to hear, discuss, or know about. But realities help us to look at things more critically than before, and to find concrete solutions to real problems.

This dissertation does not claim to be the first or last word on the realities of the church in Ahantalands. Three things have driven me in this project: (1) compassion for my people, the Ahanta, (2) a compulsion to reach the neglected Ahanta middle class, and (3) a zeal to respond to the gospel commission.

Our mission as a church is to bring all of the people of the world, both the rich and the poor, under the authority of Christ. It is to bring social, economic, and political relations under His authority. In truth, many Adventist ministers and laymen in Ghana shy away from any outreach to the middle class because they are classified as secular. Many pastors seem to believe that evangelizing and

winning the middle class is not possible. This problem needs to be solved by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana.

In this project, I believe that if "with God all things are possible," then it is possible to evangelize and win this secular people-group--the Ahanta middle class. If salvation could come to the house of Zacchaeus, then the Ahanta secular middle class can have salvation too, if given the same opportunity as Zacchaeus had. Delos Miles suggested that "if we are to pattern our evangelism after Jesus, we shall have to take the initiative with the Zacchaeuses who are up the sycamore trees of our world."¹

Purpose of the Project Report

The purpose of this project report is to outline Sequence Evangelism Seminars to reach out, prepare, win, and nurture some Ahanta middle-class members in order to broaden the base of support for the Seventh-day Adventist work in Western Ghana.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church appears to have grown by leaps and bounds in Ghana. There are four fields in Ghana. The Central Ghana Conference, established in 1894 and organized in 1933, is the leading conference in Ghana. According to 1993 West African Union Mission statistical figures, the Central Ghana Conference has 217 churches with

¹Delos Miles, How Jesus Won People (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1982), 126.

a membership of 88,380.¹ The South Ghana Conference, organized in 1987, has 113 churches with a total membership of 38,573. North Ghana Mission, organized in 1968, has four churches with a membership of 3,479. Mid-West Ghana Mission, organized in 1986, has 70 churches and a membership of 27,308. The total membership of Adventists in Ghana is 157,532 out of a national population of 16 million. The ratio is one Adventist to 101 Ghanaians. Thank God for the efforts of able ministers and lay workers.

But the questions I want to address are: Is that all the SDA Church in Ghana can do? Where is this growth most rapid and why? What class of people make up this growth? Why is it that 90 percent of our congregations in Ghana worship in classrooms? The answers to these questions form the crux of the project. To me, there is an omission, if not neglect, on the part of the SDA Church in Ghana. The gospel commission is to the rich, the poor, and all people, tongues, and tribes. But certain classes of people and tribes in Ghana have not been reached yet. There is much room for improvement.

The SDA church growth in Ghana is basically among the Ashantis in the Central Ghana Conference. The Ashantis were the first to accept the Adventist message. The greater percentage of the membership in the South Ghana Conference,

¹West African Union Mission Statistical Reports, comp. Emmanuel O. Abbey (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 1993), 6.

Mid-West Mission, and North Ghana Mission is of this tribe. One basic reason behind this Ashanti growth is that many rich middle-class cocoa farmers, who accepted the message, support the church with their means. They invested in evangelism, church buildings, and education. The Ashantis in the Central Ghana Conference have more institutions and therefore a more educated membership than all the other tribes put together. Next in growth are the Brongs in the Mid-West Mission. Twenty percent of the membership in this mission are rich cocoa farmers who support the church with their means. They sponsor evangelistic crusades and help to build churches and schools. Between these two fields, Central Ghana and Mid-West Mission, there are three secondary schools and a vocational school. These institutions have contributed immensely to the training of leadership. The result has been many supportive middle-class members.

Church growth in the South Ghana Conference is basically among the Gas. This is the elite tribe in Accra, the seat of the government. Every member is of the educated middle class, with a well-paying job. The only Adventist college--Valley View College, for the training of ministers and other church workers--is in Accra. The membership in Accra contributes almost 70 percent of the total tithe income of the South Ghana Conference. Church growth in

these areas is rapid because of the caliber of membership who support the work with their means.

Because of the financial strength in the Central Ghana Conference, Mid-West Mission, and Accra, all Union and Division investments in institutions and evangelism are in these places. But what about other cities like Ho, Takoradi, Sekondi, Cape Coast, Tarkwa, and Axim, to mention a few? None of these cities has a SDA church building or an institution.

The church in Koforidua, the capital of the Eastern Region, has no decent church building. Members sit under a shed in the hot sun because there is no room in the 40 foot by 20 foot church building.¹ The city churches in Sekondi and Takoradi have no church buildings. The parsonage in Takoradi serves as the meeting place for the church. The Sekondi city church meets in a zinc house. The church in the city of Cape Coast has no church building. I can mention many more cities and towns where the Adventist work is only trying to survive. Why?

The few members in these city churches are of the lower class who cannot contribute financially to the church as would middle-class members. What is the cause of this condition? The church has made no investment into church buildings, education, or evangelism among the elite. How

¹Pastor J. Amfo, District Pastor of Koforidua, telephone interview by author, 23 December 1993.

can a church thrive without schools? How can a church attract the elite when members worship in classrooms in the heart of the city? How can a church thrive when there has been no intentional effort to reach out to the middle class who control the economy? My guess is, what is good for Accra and Kumasi is good for Cape Coast and Takoradi.

My dream has been to come up with a strategy to evangelize the Ahanta middle class in the Sekondi and Takoradi areas. I have entitled this approach Sequence Evangelism Seminar Strategy (SES). It is not the only way of reaching out to the middle class, but I am optimistic that with the blessings of the Holy Spirit, conversions will occur. Conversion of some middle class will contribute to numerical growth of the church in Ahanta, and thus to financial growth. One of Paul's secrets of success in his missionary work, in addition to the blessings of the Holy Spirit, was the presence of some middle class such as Lydia (Acts 16:14) in the church. Cannot such a method be ours too?

Justification of the Project

The justification for this project is that the SDA work in Ahanta has been neglected by the church. This neglect, as I have stated, is in the areas of education, evangelism, and church buildings. There is only one SDA middle school in the whole of Ahanta. There is not a single secondary educational institution in this whole field. Not one

congregation in Ahanta has a church building. All foreign or visiting evangelists and soul-winning experts are sent to Kumasi or Accra, but never to Takoradi or Sekondi--the twin cities of Ahanta. According to Elder Essiam of the Takoradi SDA Church, there has never been any conference-sponsored evangelism since 1960.¹

Second, there is neglect of the Ahanta middle class. Is it not God's plan that all classes of people should be reached with the gospel? The gospel commission is for all classes of people. If the Holy Spirit could open the hearts of Zaccheaus, Cornelius, and Joseph of Aremathea to the gospel, then the Ahanta middle class are redeemable too. Peter said that "in every nation, whoever fears the Lord and works righteously is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:35). It is true that some Ahanta middle class have become secularized, but does that mean that they have to remain separated from Christ in this era of global mission? Success in evangelism among them should not be entirely "by the number of them who might say yes to Jesus Christ. Rather, being faithful to the gospel and to our opportunities to share it is success by God's standards."²

Another justification for this project is that Ahantaland is a geographical area that little has been

¹Elder Essiam of Takoradi, telephone interview by author, 2 September 1993.

²Miles, 104.

written about by the SDA Church. Whereas the Ashantis and the Gas have Adventist literature and tools to evangelize their own people, the Ahanta Adventists have no written work for use to reach out to their own people. Perhaps this is because it is a minority tribe and thus numerically insignificant.

This project also seeks to prepare tools for the ministers and laymen to use in evangelizing the Ahanta middle class. This project further seeks to challenge the Adventist leadership in Ghana to pay at least some attention to the Ahanta and to make similar investments in education and evangelism among the Ahanta that have been made for other regions. We need a new vision that includes Ahantaland!

Description of the Project Report

This project report is based on a historical literature review about the Ahanta, questionnaire surveys, personal interviews, and personal experience as an Ahanta by birth. This report has six chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the Ahanta and their history. In this chapter, the historical significance of the Ahanta tribe is described. Chapter 2 is an overview of the Ahanta's religious practices and beliefs which can help the Adventist Church to identify the possible areas of commonality that may be used as a bridge in reaching out to the middle class.

Chapter 3 gives a vivid description of the characteristics and felt-needs of the Ahanta middle class. By identifying their needs, a better strategy to meet those needs is developed. It is not possible to develop an outreach strategy for a class of people without knowing their behavior and lifestyle. It is only after discovering their basic felt-needs--what Dr. Jon Paulien defines as "a need felt wherever life does not fully meet a person's expectation"¹--that those needs can be used as the basis for developing an effective strategy to satisfy those needs. This is the key to the whole project.

Chapter 4 gives the biblical, Spirit of Prophecy, and historical basis for reaching out to the middle class. The fact that God used men like Abraham, Joseph, and Daniel to impact nations is a sufficient biblical basis to reach out to the Ahanta middle class. Christ, our example, broke through all social barriers, sharing His ministry with the poor and the rich, the powerful, and the learned. Paul had a strategy of reaching out to the elite in the Greek cities before reaching out to other places. He enlisted the support of the enlightened and the well-to-do officials and wealthy families before reaching out to the villages. Such a strategy is worthy of emulation.

¹Jon Paulien, "The Gospel in a Secular World," in Meeting the Secular Mind, ed. H. M. Rasi and F. Guy (Berrien Springs, MI: AU Press, 1985), 25.

Chapter 5 gives a concise historical survey of the early Christian missionaries who made contacts with the Ahanta, examining the methods each church used to Christianize the traditional Ahanta. The strengths and weaknesses in their methods are also identified either to improve upon or to delete in our methodology. In addition, the work of the Adventist Church since 1950 is examined.

Chapter 6 explains the Sequence Evangelism Seminars strategy (SES) which describes the six phases of reaching out to the Ahanta middle class: the medium, the church, the community, felt-need seminars, bridge seminars, and the response seminars.

The conclusion describes my hopes and doubts, as well as my recommendations to the SDA leadership in Ghana. I have the hope that the SES strategy will work and yield positive results. On the other hand, I am also aware of possible hindrances that can arise. But taken together, victory is in sight.

Limitations of the Project

Everything human has limitations. I am aware that conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. The SES strategy is a method which can be effective only with the blessing of the Spirit. If there is no desire in the hearts of the leaders to use this method, for if the leadership fails to give it full financial and moral support, progress will be limited. It will, of course, be difficult for an uneducated

gospel worker who might have the zeal, but not the training, to use the materials. However, training can make a difference.

In conclusion, I would like to appeal to all my readers and the leadership of the South Ghana Conference in particular, that we are living in the last hour of history. In an hour like this, the words of Jesus are even more relevant: "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt 24:14 KJV).

If we have the thirst for the middle-class contributions to Annual Harvest festivals then we must have a more thirst for the salvation of their souls. It is imperative that we reach out to the Ahanta middle class with the gospel. The commission is ours to respond to. Our response should be: Lord, send us!

CHAPTER ONE

AHANTA IDENTITY AND HISTORY

In this opening chapter, I explain the identity and historical importance of the Ahanta since gospel communicators must take seriously the cultural identity, and the historical significance of the recipients before relevancy can be achieved. "A person's religious and cultural conditioning affects the way he or she relates to Scripture."¹ I believe that any gospel presentation devoid of the cultural identity and historical insight of its recipients is flawed and cannot meet the needs of its hearers. Relevancy should be the key word.

It is also impossible to plan a strategy for a group of people like the Ahanta middle class without knowing who they are. Knowing who the Ahanta are, and where they came from is crucial in the development of any effective strategy. With that knowledge about them, we can then meet them where they are in order to lead them into a deep relationship with

¹Jon Dybdahl, "How Culture Conditions Our View of Scripture," Ministry, January 1988, 7. For further reading, see Hans-Ruedi Weber, Experiments with Bible Study (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 2-42. He says that we are all victims of "Gutenberg captivity." Walter Wink, Transforming Bible Study (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980).

God. This is an Adventist viewpoint, and this is why our frontier missionaries are orientated before being sent out.

Their Identity as a People Group

The Ahanta¹ are one of the twenty-two identifiable tribes in Ghana. With only about one hundred thousand people, the Ahanta are a relatively small group when compared to the large Akan tribe of 4,300,000 people. Even though the Ahanta are a distinct tribe, there are cultural similarities between them and some of the sub-groups of the Akan tribes, like the Ashantis and Akwapims. Barbara F. Grimes identifies the Ahanta as "a strong language community with no Scriptures."²

The Ahanta are divided into two geographical groups-- the Western Ahanta and the Eastern Ahanta. The Western Ahanta are found from Cape Three Points to Axim. (See figure 1). Settlers in this area are basically subsistence farmers and fishermen. Their chief agricultural products since 1930 have been copra (which since 1978 has been affected by a wilt), and palm oil, which is now a thriving industry.

¹See figure 1, showing the geographical area occupied by the Ahanta. They are bordered on the east by the Fantis, on the north by the Wassaws, and on the west by the Nzimas.

²B. F. Grimes, ed., Ethnologue Languages of the World, 11th ed. (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1988), 229.

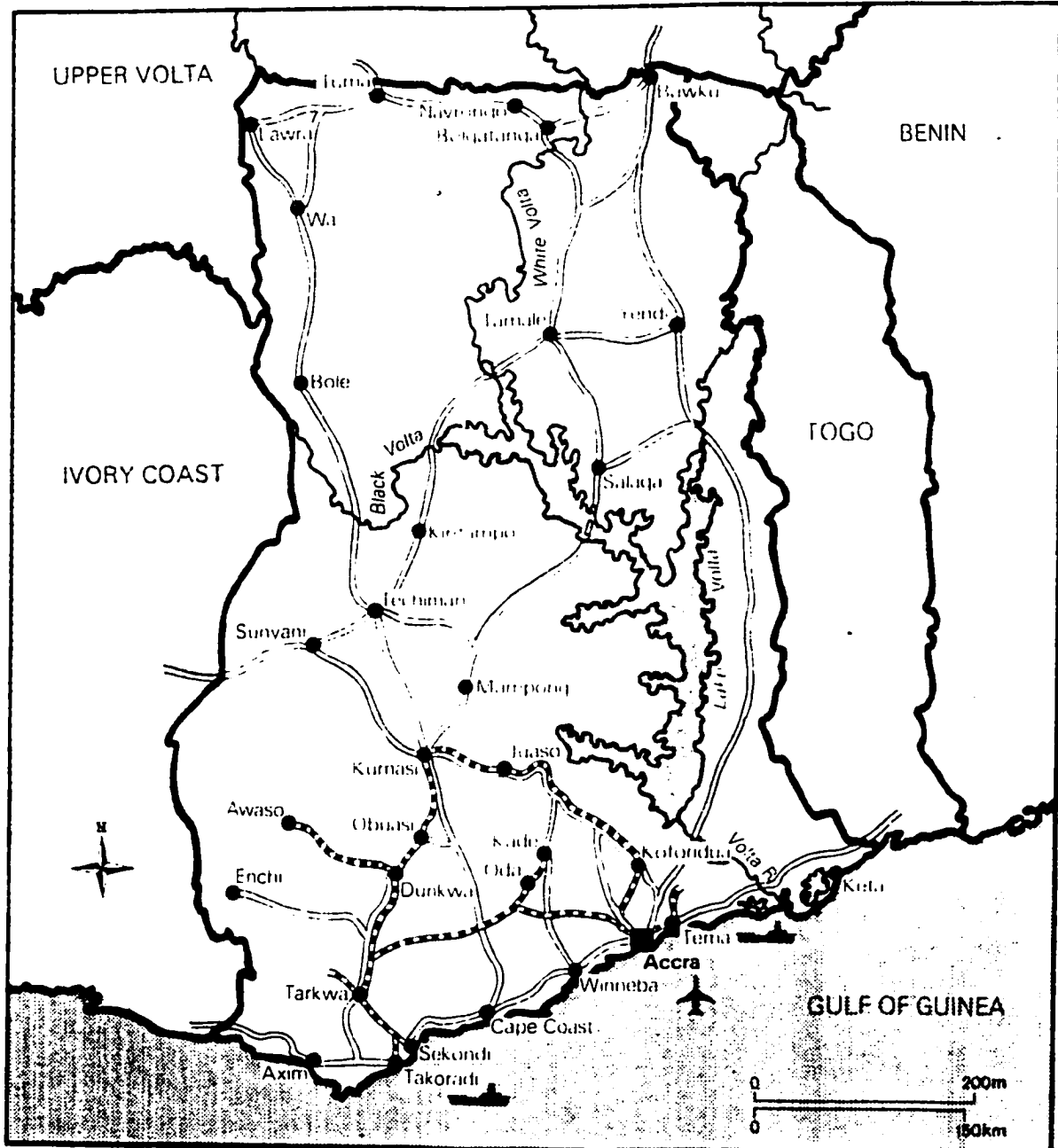


Figure 1, showing the geographical area occupied by the Ahanta. They are bordered on the east by the Fantis, on the north by the Wassaws, and on the west by the Nzimas.

The Eastern Ahanta are found from Akwidaa to Sekondi. Sekondi and Takoradi are the twin capitals of Western Ghana and also of Ahantalands. The Eastern Ahanta are mostly city dwellers who have somehow moved away from traditional subsistence farming to professional and industrial-type work, though some subsistence farmers remain. The Ahanta middle class, who form the cream of Eastern Ahanta, are mostly teachers, nurses, doctors, accountants, and beer and textile distributors. They control the economic, social, and political life of Ahanta communities. This project is aimed at this class of people.

Being city dwellers and industrial workers, these middle-class Ahanta are preoccupied with wealth and materialism and have become individualistic. They consider themselves self-sufficiency and often look down upon the very traditional system from which they came. The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church has not impacted much this people group. Maybe because much is not known about them. A greater percentage of the Ahanta middle class know little or nothing at all about the SDA church much as they know about the Anglican, the Methodist, and the Roman Catholic churches. These churches have cathedrals in the cities.

One positive way to call the attention of the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Ghana to this neglected people is to briefly explain their history. It is to challenge the SDA church to evangelize the

Ahantaland, especially the middle class members living in the Sekondi and Takoradi areas. Why? Because we need to!

Their Historical Importance

This section presents a brief historical account of the Ahanta tribe. The purpose of this project report is not to give an extensive and detailed historical account of the Ahanta but to develop a strategy to evangelize the secular Ahanta middle class of today. However, it is not possible to develop a strategy for a group of whom little or nothing is known. If they do not know about the SDA church, the SDA church must know about them.

By knowing the historical background of the Ahanta, where they came from, what they used to believe and do, and how the passing of time has influenced their beliefs and practices, then and then alone can a meaningful strategy be planned for an outreach to them.

The Ahanta are believed to have moved from the interior to the coast some centuries ago. Many historians, such as George MacDonald¹ and Day Otis Kellogg,² have written extensively about this historical tribe. George MacDonald asserts that all the tribes now inhabiting the Gold Coast originally came from the interior, having been gradually

¹George MacDonald, The Gold Coast Past and Present (New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 142-5.

²Day Otis Kellogg, "The Gold Coast," The Encyclopaedia Britannica, (1899), 1:421.

pushed towards the coast by the powerful Arab tribes who invaded their territories in order "to enroll [people] beneath the banner of the Moslem faith."¹

During the same period that the Ashantis and the Fantis were moving from the interior southward toward the sea, the whole coastline of what is now Ghana was peopled with the numerous branches of several tribes, each divided from the others by differences of speech, habits, manners, customs, and superstitions. Among these coastal peoples were the Ahanta and the Nzimas.² Kwamena B. Dickson quotes Bosman as saying that before 1690, "the countryside of Ahanta 'regaled the eyes with the pleasant prospect of numerous villages well peopled.'"³

Gordon Mackay Haliburton also confirms the fact that "both the Ahanta and Nzima came from inland some centuries ago."⁴ This historical fact is evidenced by the fact that there are many cultural similarities with the larger Akan tribes who live inland, especially the Ashantis. In fact, the kingship and chieftaincy systems, the matrilineal system

¹MacDonald, 142-5.

²Ibid.

³Bosman, quoted in Kwamena B. Dickson, A Historical Geography of Ghana (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 11969), 58.

⁴G. M. Haliburton, The Prophet Harris: A Study of an African Prophet and His Movement in the Gold Coast 1913-15 (Longman Group, 1971), 71, in Extracts from Record Book of Axim District, 1914-30 (Accra: National Archives of Ghana).

of inheritance, the levirate marriage system, and the traditional beliefs of the Ahanta and of the Ashantis are very similar if not the same.

If it is true that the Ashantis accepted the Adventist message because of the similarities of their traditional beliefs and some biblical beliefs, and if the Ahanta have the same beliefs as the Ashantis, why then did the Ahanta not accept the same message when it was brought to them? Could it be that it was because of some factors of omission?

Day Otis Kellogg, as far back as 1899, identified the Ahanta as "a territory on the Gold Coast of Africa,"¹ which also helps to authenticate the fact that the Ahanta are no recently emerged tribal group, but are as old as the other significant Akan tribes.

They were identified by historians as one of the Akan tribes "who were numerically and dominantly [the] best-known group of people"² in the 1600s, along with the Ashantis and the Nzimas. If the Ahanta were the best-known group of people in the 1600s, why is it that they are the least-known group of people in the 1900s? Furthermore, the Ahanta, as far back as 1600, were "an independent kingdom who were

¹Kellogg, 1:421. The author describes the Ahanta as an independent country in the 1800s. The reason was that all the Ahanta coastal towns were trading centers. The Dutch and the Portuguese had forts and castles in every coastal town. The Ahanta were a distinct tribe independent of the Nzimas.

²MacDonald, 142-5.

noted for their skills, being one of the finest and most intelligent of the tribes."¹

Moreover, in the 1600s they played a very significant role in the Gold Coast trade with the Europeans. Standing today along the coast of Ahantaland are many European forts which at "the end of the 17th century became centers of a thriving gold trade."² George MacDonald recorded in 1898 that such Ahanta towns as Cape Three Points,³ Acoda (now spelled Akwidaa), Dixcove, Sekondi, and Takoradi were all slave trade centers as far back as the seventeenth century.⁴ Thus, the Ahanta, as far back as 1600, were an identifiable tribe. They were actively involved in the slave and gold trade with the Europeans. Akwidaa, Dixcove, Sekondi, and Takoradi served as important trade centers. Sekondi and Takoradi (port cities) which are still trade

¹Encyclopedia Britannica, 1971 ed., s.v. "The Ahanta."

²MacDonald, 204.

³Cape Three Points still stands today as a lighthouse to guide mariners from the Ivory Coast to the Takoradi harbor. Akwidaa is my birthplace. The remains of Fort Dorothea still stand on the coast of Akwidaa. Akwidaa was once a gold and diamond mining, and trading center. The gold and diamond mining pits are still there. Railway lines which were used to ship slaves, gold, and other commercial items are still visible in the forest of Akwidaa.

⁴MacDonald, 142-5. Takoradi is still a port city with many business houses, providing employment for thousands of Ahanta middle-class. The forts and castles which were used for slave trading are still standing in Sekondi, Takoradi, and Dixcove. Few of them are currently used as government offices and tourist centers.

centers, are presently populated with rich middle class members who know little or nothing about the Three Angels message. What could be the cause? Could it be a neglect?

Neglect by the SDA Church

I would say it is a neglect. The Ahanta tribe is presently seen by both the larger Akan tribe and the Seventh-day Adventist Church as very insignificant and unimportant. Among the local languages spoken on radio Ghana, Ahanta is largely neglected.

Today the Ahanta are viewed only as a sub-group of the Nzimas. They are seen as very insignificant, and are neglected by both government and the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. Many Ahanta towns have no pipe-borne water or electricity. The roads are not passable during the rainy season because of deep potholes. Between Sekondi and Axim there is only one clinic serving nearly 100,000 people. The neglect by the government might be because the one-time gold trade center now contributes nothing significant to the national economy. Presently, the only produce from Ahantaland is coconut and palm oil. The historic castles and forts, which have not been maintained and are in ruins, attract no tourists, unlike those in Cape Coast and Elmina.

The SDA Church does not have a single higher institution of learning in the whole of Ahantaland. About 98 percent of the SDA churches in Ahanta worship in government classrooms. There has never been any investment

into large scale evangelism, education, or church buildings. If Ciro Sepulvedo's analysis is right that "Mrs. White consistently insisted that the basic role of our school was to perpetuate the mission of making disciples and leading people to Christ,"¹ then how could our church thrive in Ahanta without schools and church buildings? What then shall we do with such a counsel? Follow it!

Being an Ahanta, I feel obliged to share the Adventist message with my people who were once the leaders and controllers of the "headquarters of the trade in sophisticated gold on the Gold Coast."² My purpose has been to develop a strategy to evangelize my people, especially the middle class.

Success in this might bring success to the SDA Church in Ahanta. I would also like to challenge the West African Union Mission, South Ghana Conference, and the local Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership in Ghana to make an equal investment in reaching the Ahanta people, especially the middle-class, as they have done with the Ashantis and other tribes. A political neglect may be acceptable to any Christian but not by a Christian church like ours. We must all men till the last man, and all woman till the last woman. Chapter 2 discusses the religious beliefs of the

¹Ciro Sepulvedo, "Principles or Practice?" Adventist Review, November 25, 1993, 17.

²Ibid., 143.

Ahanta which could serve as good entry points to reaching the middle class in the twin cities.

CHAPTER TWO

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND BELIEFS AMONG THE AHANTA

This chapter presents a brief look at the religious practices and beliefs of the Ahanta in order to help us identify possible areas of commonality that may be used as a bridge in introducing Adventism to them. Their traditional religious practices and beliefs are critically examined for the purposes of relevancy in the communication of the gospel to the targeted group--the Ahanta middle class.

Traditional and Religious Practices and Beliefs

What a person believes has a great impact on how he or she behaves and responds to new beliefs. As Wayne T. Dye said, "Every culture has some standard of right and wrong."¹ These ideals, he suggests, may, in essence, closely parallel the decalogue; but these ideals may be applied with widely varying emphasis in the real-life situations of different cultures. The essence of each of God's commandments may be clear to people in different cultures, but the edges are often defined differently.

¹Wayne T. Dye, "Toward a Cross-Cultural Definition of Sin," Missiology 4 (1976): 27.

This is true of the Ahanta. The Ahantas' belief in a Supreme Being, predestination, sin and judgment, heredity (the transmission of qualities from parents to offspring through birth), God as Judge, God's birthday, sacrifices, and ancestors have a great impact on their day-to-day behavior. Some of their traditional and cultural ideals are parallel to some biblical ideals. There are some basic commonalities between their religious beliefs and practices and Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and practices. I believe that the SDA Church should use these points of commonly held beliefs to reach the Ahanta middle class with the Three Angels' Message.

It has been argued by many that Africans have a religious ontology (the study of beings) and epistemology (study of the nature of knowledge, its origin, foundations and limits). Many believe that religion is all-pervasive in the African society, and also that many Africans seem unable to explain life without reference to the sacred. Their communal activities and institutions are inextricably bound up with religion and the sacred. Writing of the Akans, Dr. J. S. Pobee writes that society hardly draws any distinction between the sacred and the secular.¹

This is not the same thing as saying that African religion is sacralist, that is, so preoccupied with the

¹J. S. Pobee, Toward an African Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 44.

sacred as to prejudice the material well-being of the community and to impede man's control over his environment. "The sphere of the supernatural is much broader in the Akan context than in any European or American context," suggests Dr. Pobee.¹ In the following sections, some of the spheres of the supernatural in the Ahanta context are examined.

The Supreme Being--God

It is generally recognized that there are two fundamentally different types of divinity in African religions. These two are what Benjamin C. Ray calls "the one creator god," who is usually remote from daily religious life, "and the many lesser gods and spirits" which are constantly involved in everyday religious experience.² According to Dr. P. A. Sarpong, "African Theology dogmatizes in three main categories of supra-natural beings--the Supreme Being, ancestral spirits, and the supra-human lords."³ To the African, Sarpong observed that:

The Supreme Being is, indeed thought of as being Supreme in everything. He is at the centre of the African's life. He is believed to watch over him, and give him all that he possesses. His is communal

¹Ibid., 44.

²Benjamin C. Ray, African Religions, Symbols, Rituals, and Community (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 50.

³P. A. Sarpong, "African Theology and Worship," The Ghana Bulletin of Theology, 4, no. 7 (December 1974): 3-4.

worship properly so-called, since everybody without exception is subject to him.¹

Among the Ahanta, three major spirit-beings are highlighted in their daily activities: the Supreme Being, the gods, and the ancestors. The Supreme Being is called Yeze Nyamenle which literally means "Our Father God." The etymology is as follows: Yeze in Ahanta society is a title given to elders. Yeze Asuano, for example, was so called because he was the chief adviser to the chief of Akwidaa. Yeze literally means "our father" and therefore anyone in society who is addressed in this way is presupposed to be a father and plays a particular and important role in the traditional hierarchy system. The singular is Meze, which is how children address their fathers and every senior member of society. The idea of father underlies the dependence of the members of society on such a person.

The etymology² of Nyamenle is rather interesting. Nyamenle is the personal name of God. Nya in Ahanta means "get or receive." Me means "me" and Nle is from the root which means "in need of nothing." Nyamenle therefore

¹Ibid., 4.

²All etymological references in this section can be found in my first work, "Adventism Among the Ahanta," edited by Prof. J. S. Pobee, in my thesis at the University of Ghana, Legon, 1984. This work also contains the full details of some traditional beliefs and practices which are not mentioned in this project.

literally means "receive me and you will lack nothing."¹ It suggests a total dependence on God. Receiving God as one's Father assumes that one will not be in need of anything. Other Akans philosophize: "Asase tetree Nyame ne hene (Vast as the World, or universe is, God is King)."²

In order to understand the deep meanings of this term for God, notice the following Ahanta proverbs:

1. Enya Nyamenle a ne wouwie.³ This literally means that "when one has God, all is done; there is no need of anything else."

2. Nyamenle ye peza akolo alea.⁴ This literally means that "God is the chewer of the fowl's food." It holds that birds have no teeth to chew and it is God who chews the bird's food before it is digested. These proverbs show how deeply the Ahanta believe that all creatures are completely dependent on God for their well-being. They use proverbs like this when they see themselves in a situation of helplessness, within which one can do nothing by oneself to save a situation.

¹Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 9 January 1982.

²Sarpong, 4.

³Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 12 January 1982. He expounded to me several Ahanta proverbs which previously I never had understood.

⁴Ibid.

3. Another interesting proverb which highlights the Ahanta's beliefs in providence and total dependence on God is Nyamenle elekunu woa, eni ye mboane, which literally means that "unless God kills someone, man can do nothing to harm one." It shows the confidence they have in the Supreme Being. God or the Supreme Being, to them, is essentially the Creator who holds the destinies of humankind in the palm of His hand. Therefore, whatever happens is predestined by God and nothing happens to the Ahanta that is not predestined by God. Even before an enemy can do any harm to someone, God will have to sanction it. When one dies a tragic death, they say, Ezae enkrabea, "it is one's own destiny."¹

The Ahanta, then, had the notion of a Supreme Being or God who is omnipotent and omnipresent before the advent of Christianity in Ahantaland. They place Nyamenle above all other spirit-beings. This is illustrated by the saying Nyamenle etumi de kezi tela bozome dee, "god is more powerful than the lesser gods." This is why, even when one dies under the curse of a harsh deity, the Ahanta believe that one's ultimate destiny is controlled only by God.

God's Providence and Predestination

The Ahanta have a strong belief in the providence of God. They believe that we must respect God, because His

¹Ibid., 15 January 1982.

ways are unsearchable, which they express in the proverb Nyamenle nwo yevele.¹ Even though God is in control, we are still responsible for our actions. God's providence is seen both in adversity and prosperity. God does not cause adversities, but He allows them to befall His children. Adversities like barrenness, still-birth, loss of a spouse, or loss of a child happen only with the permission of God. Even though some adversities are caused by natural laws, yet the Ahanta believe that all events are guided by God's general providence.

The Ahanta also believe that God has a special love for His children which includes all humankind except the wicked. This special providence brings prosperity to men in the form of a good harvest, healthy children, riches, and old age. To the Ahanta, the special providences of God overrule natural laws, such as storms, and lightning. Lightning kills only when one is predestinated to die by that means. To the Ahanta, nothing takes place by chance. There is no such thing as luck.

For the Ahanta nothing good or bad can happen to God's child except by predestination. Their concept of predestination, however, has nothing to do with humanity's ultimate salvation in the biblical sense, because they believe that we shall all be judged individually in the end by God. Their concept of predestination only deals with

¹Ibid., 13 January 1982.

present life situations. Their beliefs concerning providence and predestination are very similar to Calvin's theological disposition on these subjects.

According to Calvin in his Institutes, God's will operates on four levels: (1) that which God wants and causes or does; (2) that which God wants but does not cause or do; (3) that which God does not want and He prevents; (4) that which God does not want but does not prevent or allows.¹ To Calvin, the wicked suffer because they deserve it, but when an innocent person suffers, it is for his or her own good.² For many, Calvin's views pose the problem of theodicy. The query is: how can one justify God for creating Lucifer who became Satan? The Ahanta, however, do not accuse God of the evil around them. Rather they place the blame on evil forces. Because "god does no evil. He cannot commit evil."³

God and the End--Awedie

Awedie, "the end of time," to the Ahanta, is a time set by God during which He will bring everything to an end. All humanity, including all good and evil men and women, will

¹John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, vol. 20, book 1, ed. John T. McNeil (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988) 210-224.

²Ibid., 210-224.

³P. P. Dery, "Traditional Healing and Spiritual Healing in Ghana-Christian Attitudes," The Ghana Bulletin of Theology 5, no. 6 (June 1973): 43.

receive their rewards on that final day. This end, to the Ahanta, is known only by God. Neither the elders nor the ancestors have any control or knowledge of the events of the Awedie.

To the traditional Akan,

Every person, before coming to this world, may have laid down the time and mode of his death. These may also have been determined for him by God. Among the Akan this forms part of the person's Hyebea or Nkrabea. It is an extremely difficult task trying to alter a person's destiny. Destiny embraces illness as well.¹

God's Relationship to Man²

According to the late Papa Eyiso, the Ahanta believe that Nyamenle (God) was at one time very close to humans, but a woman pounding corn with a long pestle hit the skies where Nyamenle dwelt and thus caused Nyamenle to move away. This legend suggests that humanity lost its closeness with the Supreme Being through its own doing.

Despite His being far away from humanity, the Ahanta say that Nyamenle da soro naso enwo debela m'okolozo, ("God is in the sky above yet sees everything being done on earth"). Their belief that God is far from man demands a mediator to bridge the gap, and it is the ancestors who fulfill this basic need. The Ahanta also believe that it is still possible to return to God. They believe that one can

¹Ibid., 44.

²Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 16 January 1982.

return to God through the ancestors, by making the right confessions, retributions and sacrifices.

Lesser Spirit Beings and Other Beliefs

Ancestors¹

The ancestors play an important role in the traditional religion of the Ahanta. The ancestors are seen as lesser spirit-beings who are worthy of worship by the living. This is because they are believed to serve as intermediaries between the living and the Supreme Being. According to Dr. Peter A. Sarpong, in African thought, "the ancestral spirits are and remain human beings with a different, of higher and more blessed mode of existence from ours, not worshipped but venerated."²

They are called Yenlamo in Ahanta, which literally means "our grandparents." In Ahanta, Yenla means grandfather or mother and Mo is the third personal plural. In order to become an ancestor one must be sixty years or older before death, should have had many children and grandchildren, and owned property. Those who are quite old at death yet who have made no impact on society while living are called Enimboane, which means "a useless one."

¹Papa Assuano of Akwidaa, interview by author, 18 January 1982, Akwidaa. Papa Assuano was the senior elder and advisor of the chief of Akwidaa. He was the Kingmaker of Akwidaa. In this interview, he explained to me how Ahantas venerate their ancestors.

²Sarpong, 4.

Both males and females who meet the standards become ancestors at death. The chief and the elders in the village, although living, are called Nanamo (i.e., the living ancestors), because they are seen as the intermediaries between the living and the dead.

At death the ancestors are still considered a part of the community who, though they have moved on to the spirit world, are still actively involved in the day-to-day activities of the living.¹ They punish the wayward and are believed to intervene in human affairs by punishing with death those who mismanage the legacy of the deceased bequeathed to them. P. P. Dery confirms that:

Ancestors too are supposed to be disease-causing agents. But like the good spirits they cause diseases as punishment for man's misdeeds, especially with regard to the veneration and cult due to them.²

Among the Ahanta, each clan has an ancestral spokesman who, at a certain time, becomes possessed, bringing information from the spirit world. These spokesmen are able to predict the future and also explain the cause of a death if the cause was not known. When someone is in a coma and is at the point of death, the clan members and the ancestral spokesman run to the cemetery to invoke the ancestors to return the spirit of the dying one, who is believed to be on

¹Papa Assuano of Akwidaa, interview by author, 17 January 1982, Akwidaa.

²Dery, 44.

the way to the spirit world.¹ Therefore, any Christian religion that denies and rejects ancestral worship is frowned at by the average traditional Ahanta.

The State of the Dead²

To the Ahanta, all the dead are seen as lesser spirit beings either for blessing or curse to the living. This belief underscores their respect for and worship of ancestors, and sacrifices for the dead. Three days after burial, a sacrifice is made for the departed soul. The dead are buried with towels, soap, and powder as if they are only travelling to another world.

The Ahanta believe that both the wicked and the righteous dead go to the same place--Asamando--the graveyard, at death. They however also believe that when a good person dies, he or she becomes God's agent of blessing or cursing to the living. When a bad or wicked person dies, his or her punishment is postponed until the day of destruction, when there is a resurrection and the day of punishment in Abonsame seneenu ("in Satan's fire").

Ahanta see hellfire as a future event, at the last day, when God will judge the bad people and send them to "hell"--seneenu. There is no heaven or hell for anyone at the time

¹Papa Assuano of Akwidaa, interview by author, 3 February 1982.

²Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 7 February 1982, Akwidaa. This was a new insight for me about my people's belief in life after death.

of death. All the dead remain on this earth until the final day--Awedie.

The Ahanta Concept of Sin¹

To the Ahanta, there is none good, no not one. Therefore, there must be sacrifice to appease both the Supreme Being and the lesser spirit-beings.

Even though there is none good, yet there is the power of choice available to be good or bad. Goodness is by choice as is evil-doing. This choice available to humanity has many factors. One such supreme factor is the providence of God.

God has naturally made some people good--Nyamenle wole-ebowo--which literally means "God made him good." This providence of God overrules all other factors that can affect one's behavior.

Interestingly, it is not God who made evil. That is also a choice influenced by evil forces such as the lesser gods, witches, and ancestors. Evil forces are the cause of drunkenness, incest, and murder. Satan is the mastermind behind all vice as evidenced in their expression, Abonsame seke dee baaba, which literally means "Satan can spoil good things of God."² Satan tempts us to sin but he does not force us into sin. Evil forces have no influence in

¹Ibid., 5 February 1982, at Akwidaa. The concept of sin and judgment was related to me during this interview.

²Ibid., 19 February 1982, at Akwidaa.

humanity's response to temptations. To the Ahanta, Satan and his agents do.

The Ahanta see sin as an isolated act. Individuals who have not committed any grievous crime are considered to be good people. There are unintentional and intentional sins. Intentional sins include murder, incest, rape, stealing, and beating of parents or elders. Each of the above crimes can only be pardoned by the Supreme Being--Nyamenle mowo soro, our God in heaven--by means of a special sacrifice. The sacrifice should be in the form of a goat, ram, roosters, and eggs.

In the past, Ahantas prescribed a "ban" from the locality if one did not accept responsibility for one's sin and make the necessary retribution or sacrifice.

Unintentional sins such as an insult, retaliation to an aggressive attack or ridicule of any kind, or fighting a friend are pardoned by paying a certain fine. If one committed adultery with someone's wife, a fine was imposed on the man. But if a girl became pregnant before her puberty rites, the man was to pay a fine to the father of the girl. In addition to the fine, the young man and the young girl have to sacrifice a white ram to the chief of the community.¹

The reason why intentional sins call for sacrifices are that such sins as incest defile a whole family and the

¹Ibid., 19 February 1982.

community, therefore a ram must be sacrificed. Rape is an individual responsibility and the individual defiles himself and the woman. Both must therefore be shaved and take ritual baths for seven days. A crime like murder defiles the whole community as well as the land. A he-goat, a ram, and three roosters have to be sacrificed to purify the land and the people.¹

Heredity

Another influencing factor on behavior is heredity. The Ahanta believe that the lesser spirit-beings can influence behavior. This is why children are named after deceased relatives who lived well.

"As a mother is, so is the daughter" is also a strong belief of the traditional Ahanta. This belief is expressed in the saying that Oholo awo anloma--the crab does not give birth to a bird.² If one's parents were thieves, it is no wonder if the child also steals. If the parents were drunkards, children are not to blame if they become drunkards too. Because of this belief, Ahanta parents thoroughly investigate before giving a daughter for marriage, because whatever the parents of the bridegroom

¹Robert Baidoe of Katakori, interview by author, 21 February 1982 at Akwidaa. He was the son of a local fetish priest.

²Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 22 February 1982, at Akwidaa.

are, so will the son or daughter be--like father, like son; like mother, like daughter.

Other factors which do not have as strong an impact on one's behavior are peer-group pressure and the influence of one's relatives. Relatives like uncles and aunts could possibly impact a nephew or a niece's behavior, yet heredity is the most deciding factor in an individual's behavior. If one's parents were good and were providentially made good, there can be no evil influence on the child's personality. The Ahanta strongly believe that no one should follow the multitude to do evil.

Sacrifices for Sin in Ahanta¹

In African societies, "wherever there is religion, there is sacrifice."² The Ahanta believe that we sin against either the Supreme Being or the lesser spirit-beings. The answer to sin therefore is sacrifice or punishment.

The Ahanta strongly believe that there is no forgiveness unless there is the shedding of blood. It is blood and blood alone that purifies the culprit, blood that reverses a curse, and blood that seals one's vow not to

¹Robert Baidoe of Katakori, interview by author, 24 February 1982, at his home at Katakori. Baidoe was the son of the local fetish priest called Papa Abaka. He explained to me the whole concept of sacrifices the Ahanta perform both for purification and for appeasement.

²Sarpong, 7.

repeat a particular act. "There is the idea of substitution, the life of a beast given in exchange for the life of a man."¹

Sacrifices are made on behalf of the culprit to appease God and His intermediaries and to purify and cleanse whatever has been defiled by an individual's action. There are different kinds of sacrifices which include going without unleavened food for days and taking ritual baths for a certain number of days, during which time the culprit abstains from sex, smoking, and the drinking of alcoholic beverages. These sacrifices can only be made by the elders and the fetish priests.

If one is guilty of incest or murder, one has to offer two he-goats. On a Friday, the two goats are taken to the holy grounds which are always fenced. There is always a cottonwood tree in the center of the holy grounds as a symbol of the Supreme Being. The culprit, his or her family members, and the priest enter the holy grounds barefooted, with the culprit carrying one of the goats on his or her shoulders.

Upon entering the holy grounds, the culprit confesses his or her sins while bearing the animal on his or her shoulders and lays it thrice on the ground. He or she is given a knife and slays the animal. The priest collects some blood and pours it on the feet of the culprit and also

¹Ibid., 8.

on each of the relatives' feet. The carcass is taken to the center of the holy ground and is skinned. Some parts are left there under the holy tree (cottonwood tree) and the priest takes the rest and shares it among the elders.¹

Fowls can also be used for sacrifices, but in all cases blood has to be applied to the culprit's feet or the tips of the ears. Sickly animals are never to be used for a sacrifice of appeasement of any kind. The sacrifice must be without blemish and it should be made on a Friday before the God-Day.² This is done by gathering the blood and applying it their feet. It is believed that this purification act by the family heads will affect all the members of the family represented there.³ The rationale behind this practice is that, in the African thought, "sin has a social dimension."⁴

¹Robert Baidoe of Katakori, interview by author, 22 February 1982 in his home at Katakori. During this interview he narrated to me how a young man who in 1979 slept with his wife on a forbidden ground was made to go through all the rituals.

²Baidoe of Katakori, interview by author, 23 February, 1982 at his home at Katakori. He explained that the God-Day is Saturday, Nyamenle Kwame Hile. This will be explained further in the section dealing with God's Birth Day.

³Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 22 February 1982. In this interview, he explained to me that this practice of sending a live goat into the forest ceased by the 1960s. It was discovered that people who did not believe anymore in rituals went after the scapegoat and killed it for food.

⁴Sarpong, 43.

The second goat remains outside the holy ground, and after the sacrifice is made, the culprit lays his or her hands on the goat's head and after a libation by the priest, it is carried by a strong man into the forest. If the culprit is of age, he or she carries his or her own "scapegoat" into the forest and leaves it there, not looking behind as he or she returns home. This live goat is called Salaha-muzulo wuane (the cursed or scapegoat). No one is to kill or catch it because it becomes a sinbearer once the rituals have been performed as described above.¹ However, one's destiny is not affected by these isolated acts and the sacrifices that go with them. God is the one who will give a final judgment. To the Ahanta, God is the one who will determine one's destiny at the end of the world, an end which no one knows.

The Ahanta believe in concrete rather than abstract things. Once sacrifices for appeasement are made, there are certain concrete evidences such as healing, having many children, prosperity, and longevity that should follow thereafter. If evidences of such blessings are not observed, confessions and sacrifices are repeated. This

¹For further reading on the subject of the biblical Sanctuary and atonement which helps to understand the sacrifices on the day of Atonement, similar to what the Ahanta do, read Frank B. Holbrook, ed., 70 Weeks, Leviticus, Nature of Prophecy (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1986), chapter 7, 198-228; Ellen G. White, Christ in His Sanctuary (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1969). This is a compilation from the writings of Ellen G. White.

time, the culprit has to go to the shrine of the priest or priestess to perform the second rituals of sacrifices.

God as Judge¹

Another religious ground of commonality is the concept of God as a judge. It is one of the strong attributes of God. To the Ahanta, God judges the living, and His associates are the ancestors. God judges only the living, not the dead. If someone steals, the thief is cursed in these words, Nyamenle koduwa kakew', which literally means "God will pay you" for your deeds. The implication is that if a criminal does not acknowledge his or her crime and make the necessary retribution and sacrifices, he or she comes under the curse or the judgement of God even in this life. The result of such negligence will be an untimely death through an accident, lightning, snakebite, or otherwise.²

The Ahanta also believe that God as a Judge cannot be approached by the living. Therefore the living need an intermediary. These intermediaries are the angels of God (Nyamenle abofo), the ancestors, elders, priests, and most recently, have also included Christian ministers. It is believed that when any of these intermediaries approach God

¹Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 26 February 1982 in his home at Akwidaa. During this interview, Papa Eyiso, who was also my uncle, explained to me the Ahanta concept of God as the sole Judge of all humanity.

²Ibid.

with the people's petitions and sacrifices, God will surely answer. This belief is one of the reasons for the deep respect and worship of ancestors. The Christian minister is also seen as an intermediary; however, he is less feared by the people than are the fetish priests who are the spokesmen for the ancestors. The Ahantas believe that sacrifices for pardon and to reverse a curse can only be performed by these fetish priests, particularly when dealing with a harsh deity, because of their ability to communicate with the ancestors and the lesser gods.¹

The Ahanta see disease, such as tuberculosis, as one of the punishments that comes not from God, but from the ancestors and lesser gods. They believe that such a disease is the result of a hidden evil act not confessed. They also believe that a curse has no effect on anyone who is innocent. However, if there is an unconfessed guilt, the curse that is sure to follow can affect every member of the family who benefitted from the stolen item. Multiple deaths in a family are seen as evidence that a curse is in effect.

God as Creator and His Day

Don Richardson, in his book Peace Child, indicates that in every culture, God has placed some kind of a bridge for

¹Robert Baidoe of Akwidaa, interview by author, 27 February 1982, in his home at Katakor.

the gospel to penetrate that culture. This bridge Marvin Mayers calls "the functional equivalent."¹

My people believe that God is not only the judge of mankind, but is also All-Powerful (because He is more powerful than the lesser spirit-beings), All-Knowing (because He knows the destiny of all), Omniscient (because He sees the deeds of all), and is also the sole Creator of all things. These attributes are very similar to the biblical attributes of God.

The Ahanta have day names in both the masculine and feminine² and believe that God also has a day name in relation to creation. The Ahanta day names given to their new-born babes are as follows in Table 1.

¹Marvin Mayers, Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross-Cultural Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 130.

²I was born on Tuesday, and my Ahanta day name is Kwamena. My parents used to call me Ewoo Kwamena. Ewoo is my family name but Kwamena is my day name. By the name one bears, the Ahanta can tell the that day one was born. To the Ahanta, my success in life is very much determined by the day on which I was born.

TABLE 1
AHANTA DAY NAMES

<u>Male Names</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Days of week</u>	<u>English Translation</u>
Kwasi	Akosua	Boro	Sunday
Kodwo	Adwowa	Kizile	Monday
Kwamena	Abena	Kyoko	Tuesday
Kwaaku	Akuwa	Maanle	Wednesday
Yaw	Yaa	Kulo	Thursday
Kofi	Afuwa	Yale	Friday
Kwa-ame	Ama	Folo	Saturday

Nyamenle-Kwa-ame, that is to say, God-Saturday, is believed to have done something unique on Saturday from the beginning of all things. The Ahanta therefore call God by the same name they would call a male son born on Saturday. This belief adds some sacredness to Saturday (God's day) and the name Kwa-ame.¹

From my experience as an Ahanta, my people do not perform any rituals on Saturday, yet they believe that it is God's day. As much as possible, the traditional Ahanta

¹K. Owusu-Mensa, The Akan God of Saturday (Ghana: Advent Press, 1990), 21.

would keep from committing any grievous crime on Saturday because it is a high day. In some Ahanta villages no one goes to the farm on that day. It is believed that going to the farm on Saturday is disrespectful to Nyamenle Kwa-ame, with many believing that one can be punished by the intermediaries through a snakebite for working on Tweduampong Kwa-ame hile kezile (the dependable God of Saturday's great day).

Friday is another high day which precedes the God-Day and is the day for the ancestors and the lesser gods. On Friday, sacrifices are made to the ancestors seeking a blessing for the land and for the children. Yeze Nyamenle Kwa-ame (Our Heavenly Father of Saturday) is the God who blesses children.

Friday, therefore, serves as a preparation day for Saturday which is God's birthday. People go to the farm to gather food. It is believed that children born on Saturday are special children since they are providentially made good by God. However, children born on Fridays--called Kofi--are stubborn children because they were born on a "bad day"--Ehile tane. When a family has several children born on Friday, it is an indication of a bad omen.¹

Interestingly, most of the sacrifices for crime are performed either on Friday or Saturday. Serious crimes such

¹Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 28 February 1982, at his home at Akwidaa.

as murder, incest, rape, etc., can only be appeased on Friday, whereas peace sacrifices are sometimes made on Saturday. Sunday, to the Ahanta, is a day of Satan. It is believed that people born on Friday or Sunday will be stubborn by nature.¹

The Lesser Gods²

Belief in gods was and still is a real part of Ahanta traditional religion. Gods are seen as the protectors of the sea and land. A bumper harvest and a catch of fish are attributed to the appropriate gods. Special days are set aside in veneration of the gods. For example, my informant told me that there is no fishing on Tuesdays in the Akwidaa area out of respect for the sea god, Abone. At Akwidaa, there is no farming on Wednesdays and Fridays out of respect for Kamesa and Osui, gods which protect the land and provide the fertility of the land.³

The Ahanta see the gods as dependent on the Supreme Being (Nyamenle Kwa-ame). In making libation, which is their traditional prayer, the Ahanta call on the name of the Supreme-Being thus: Yeze Nyamenle moho Soro--"Our God father in heaven," before proceeding to the names of the seven

¹Ibid., 3 March 1982, at Akwidaa.

²Robert Baidoe of Katakori, interview by author, 5 March 1982, in his home at Katakori. He revealed to me the powerful deities of the locality.

³Ibid., 3 March 1982, at Katakori.

deities. The gods, they believe, can kill and also bless. They can make fertile a barren woman and can also cause a bumper harvest or catch of fish.

These deities, according to my informant, are very "heavy" in the exhibition of their powers. Any religion, therefore, which teaches the non-existence of gods Awozome,¹ is frowned on by the Ahanta. These traditionalists believe that all powers, both visible and invisible, are subject to the supremacy of God, but not the lesser gods. However to deny them is offensive to their beliefs. This could be used as a bridge to explain the fall of Satan and his angels rather than to deny or reject it.

The Annual Thanksgiving Festival--Kundum

The Ahanta have an annual festival called Kundum. It is the peak of all religious activities of the year. It is a festival which involves sacrifices for the families and the community. On this day, the chief, barefooted and half-dressed with no shorts, carries a white-colored ram to the holy grounds. Upon entering the holy grounds, he makes confession on behalf of himself, his family, and his subjects. He then lays the ram down and slays it. All the heads of the families in the community gather there and the blood is applied to their feet. It is believed that this

¹The singular for god in Ahanta is Bozome, "the heavy one." The plural form of gods is Awozome, "the heavy ones."

purification act by the family heads will affect all the members of the families represented there.¹

After this part of the atonement is completed, sometimes a live goat is sent into the forest as a sinbearer as explained earlier.² Then the white ram that was slain is shared among the family heads. The remainder of the blood is carried to the stool room and sprinkled on the king's stool to purify it. After this, the chief/king declares seven days of feasting and celebration.

This is also a period of reconciliation,³ Papa Eyiso disclosed to me. Family members in conflict are reconciled, families are reunited, and there is a reunion of communities. On this occasion, many come from afar to observe this festival of reconciliation, reunion, and purification.

This is a belief which is very similar to the Biblical Day of Atonement, a belief that Adventists could use to communicate to the Ahanta the Good News of the sanctuary service.

¹Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 5 March 1982, in his home at Akwidaa. Papa Eyiso was one of the kingmakers of the Akwidaa district.

²Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa in that interview explained to me that this practice of sending a live goat into the forest ceased by the 1960s. It was discovered that some people who did not believe in rituals went after the scapegoat and killed it for food.

³Papa Eyiso of Akwidaa, interview by author, 5 March 1982.

Summary

Having looked at some of the Ahantas' basic religious beliefs and practices, the obvious question is: Could any of these beliefs serve as a point of entry in reaching out to the Ahanta? I believe that the answer is a definite yes.

First of all, their belief in God as an all-knowing, all-seeing, and all-powerful God is very similar to biblical teaching and could be used as a point of entry in reaching out to them.

Second, their belief in the God of Saturday is a very significant point of commonality which could serve as a point of introducing the seventh-day Sabbath to them. The presentation of the gospel in relating to the Kwa-ame-God would surely get their attention, even the attention of the secularized middle-class members.

Third, their annual festival, Kundum, is another point of entry because it is very similar to the biblical Day of Atonement. The Ahanta middle-class, even though they have become secular in their beliefs and practices, pay particular attention to this festival. They see the festival as one that reunites families, brings reconciliation, and binds the community together. The Adventist Church should make a concerted effort to present the message of the sanctuary service, especially during the festival which is normally held in September.

In summary, I believe that there are enough entry points that the early Christian missionaries could have used to evangelize the Ahanta. The SDA Church could have positively used and still can use the three traditional beliefs emphasized above as entry points to evangelize the Ahanta.

Chapter 3 examines the characteristics of the target group--the Ahanta middle-class, and how those characteristics could be used in the development of an effective strategy to evangelize them.

CHAPTER THREE

CHARACTERISTICS AND FELT-NEEDS OF THE AHANTA MIDDLE CLASS

It is not possible to develop a strategy of outreach to a class of people without knowing their characteristics, behavior, and lifestyle. It is only after discovering their basic felt-needs, what Dr. Jon Paulien defines as "a need felt wherever life does not fully meet a person's expectation,"¹ that those needs could be used as the basis for developing an effective strategy to satisfy those needs. This, I would say, is the core and the key to this whole project.

Ahanta Middle Class Defined

Sociologists use the term "social stratification" to describe the process of dividing societies into classes. In Ghana, this process is based on a person's social position, occupation, wealth, and privileges. G. K. Nukunya, a Ghanaian sociologist, suggests that social stratification in Ghana is "the hierarchical ordering of people in a society differentiated according to their wealth, power, prestige

¹Paulien, 25-40.

and privilege."¹ According to Ghanaian sociologists like Max Assimeng and G. K. Nukunya, the middle class has ranked as the largest class in Ghana since the 1960s when Ghana attained her economic boom and political peak.

The Ghanaian middle class may be defined as those who have made it to the top through inheritance from a deceased uncle or father, or through education which provided a decent, well-paying job. They may also be successful businessmen and women, who are rich through profit-making jobs, or they may be successful farmers, fishermen, or landlords. The middle class, also known in contemporary Ghana as "the elite," are those who have managed to rise noticeably above the rest of the population in terms of wealth, power, prestige, and privilege.² The dimensions of social class in Ghana are similar to what Coleman suggests:

Class of money [where] money is both cause and symbol.
 Class of job [where] occupation is a factor in deciding social class.
 Class of education [where] your education just helps you to get where you want to go in occupation and income.
 Class as social identity and life style [where] personal appearance, taste, manners,

¹G. K. Nukunya, The Social Structure of Ghana, vol. 4 (Legon, Accra, Ghana: University of Ghana Press, 1991), 1.

²Ibid., 12-15. He uses the definition and terminology of S. F. Nadel found in Nadel's article, "The Concept of Social Elite" in International Social Science Bulletin 7 (1955):413-24. Ghanaians' definition of middle-class is not how much education a person has, but how much wealth, power, and fame the individual has. If one has no education at all but has wealth in the form of estates, such a one is considered a big man or woman.

wealth and how it is spent, and the image created-all are recognized as part of the picture.¹

The middle class in Ghana has a general superiority complex which is often rewarded by deference from the poor who look up to them for support and counsel. Few have college degrees. Some have specialized training and have an education equivalent to the ninth grade. Although many have received no formal education, they still command respect in society because of their wealth. They control resources such as land, stores, and vehicles in the community, live in mansions, and provide their children with a most privileged status in society. The middle class have power. They have what Melvin Tumin calls:

The five sources of power--positional or role power, power in possession of goods and services that enable the possessors to purchase what they want. Power in skills and abilities--craft skills, medical knowledge, economic expertise. Power in personal qualities such as guile, charisma that enable some to persuade others to do their bidding or to seek their favor; and power derived from force that one commands and with which one can threaten others and cause them to do their bidding, out fear.²

In contemporary Ghana the obvious groups which sociologists have identified as having the above description are the elite upper and the middle class members. The elite upper-class are the politicians and senior government

¹Richard P. Coleman and Lee Rainwater, Social Standing in America: New Dimensions of Class (New York: Basic Books, Publishers, 1978), 29-79.

²Melvin M. Tumin, Social Stratification, the Forms and Functions of Inequality (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 71.

officials, including those from the military and the police, high-court judges, university chancellors, and engineers. University lecturers, college teachers, medical doctors, lawyers, architects, accountants, and professionals of similar standing, businessmen, chiefs, landowners, landlords, and the clergy constitute the elite middle class. This middle class also includes store owners, distributors for beer, cigarettes, and textile supplies, successful farmers, and fishermen.

Leo Kuper calls the two classes "the African bourgeoisie--the class which owns the means of production--and consequently wields political power."¹ He categorizes them into two--the bourgeoisie, and the petite bourgeoisie. The top are the chief executives, bankers and financiers, and politicians. The petite bourgeoisie are the petty traders, the professionals, the clerks, and the salesmen.²

It needs to be mentioned, however, that the Ghanaian middle class could be described as the upper-middle class in the Western social stratification.

The Ahanta middle class in the Sekondi and Takoradi cities and in other urban towns fit into the above definitions and descriptions, and share four main characteristics with the rest of the middle class in Ghana.

¹Leo Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie, Race, Class, and Politics in South Africa (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 3.

²Ibid., 3.

These characteristics are social, political, economic, and religious.

Social Characteristics

The Ahanta middle class have power, prestige, and influence in society because of their access to what people consider important. They have access to all the essential items of information concerning the national economy and politics, understand them, and react to them most effectively. In other words, they understand all the "goings on" in the country and in the community, and would not only oppose those who go against their interests, but "could take steps to lessen those likely to adversely affect them and take advantage of those which are in their interest,"¹ as Nukunya would put it.

Taken together, these middle-class members constitute what in Ghana is referred to as "big men and women," or in the local parlance, obi te yie, literally meaning "those who are living well." In the words of Laswell, they are "those who get the most of what there is to get."² According to Nukunya, their wealth, measured in assets and income, puts them in a position to "acquire the goods and services they want; power gives them the ability to command and influence

¹Ibid., 16.

²H. Laswell, Politics: Who Gets What, When, How? (New York: World Publishing Corporation, 1962), 13.

the actions of others, and they have their way in difficult situations."¹

Because of their wealth, society expects them to have power because they could use their wealth and influence to acquire the labor and services of others who are either their dependents or employees. They have the means to purchase things, which raises their status in society.

The middle class endeavors to marry within its own class. Divorce is not very common among them for fear of losing the respect of the community. Spouses overlook infidelities for economic and prestigious reasons. A classic example of a middle-class marriage is described by Christine Oppong in her book the Middle Class African Marriage.² She states that to marry a middle-class man gives prestige, and many women make tremendous sacrifices, even in the face of abuse, to be the wife of a lawyer, a doctor, a rich farmer, or an accountant.

My wife was raised by a middle-class farmer--Mr. Ackah Aku--her step-father. He had as many as seven wives with more than twenty children. Many of the wives bore his name just for prestigious reasons but not for actual family life,³ she said.

¹Nukunya, 2.

²Christine Oppong, Middle Class African Marriage (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 50-70.

³Elizabeth Ewoo, interview by author, 15 August 1993, at Berrien Springs, MI.

One of the greatest social problems within this class is extramarital sex, which results in many children being born outside of marriage. Women may use "coquetry and actual offers of sex to win the favors of men in this class,"¹ Nukunya says. Some middle-class men do not even know the number of children they have. A typical example is the case of Mr. Kofi Yeboa of Sunyani, in the Ahafo Region of Ghana. Georgina Wiredu told me during an interview that she met a lady at a birthday party in Montreal. She introduced herself as Georgina, a daughter of Mr. Kofi Yeboa, "superman"--so called because of his wealth and power in society. The other lady also introduced herself as the daughter of the same man, but they had never known each other. Neither had they known that they were half-sisters. "We hugged each other and shed the tears of joy,"² she said. Georgina's father, was a rich farmer in Sunyani, who had so many children that he did not know who the mothers were of some of his children.

A child of the middle class is called Dadda ba, which literally means a rich man's child. These children attend the best schools and are privately tutored by outstanding teachers in the community. House girls care for the children's needs at home. My wife served as a house girl

¹Nukunya, 82.

²Georgina Wiredu, interview by author, 10 May 1993, in her home in Montreal, Canada.

for Mr. Ackah Aku, a rich farmer at Akwidaa, for well over twenty years. "He refused to send me to school because of his children's welfare," she said. "Being an orphan, I had no choice but to do as he wished until the appropriate time."¹

Because of their preoccupation with business and money-making ventures, many middle-class people have little or no time at all for their children. In 1978-79, a middle-class member by the name of Asiedu brought me three of his children to live with me at Koforidua for educational purposes. Sometimes we did not see this father for several months even though he was in town. His whole time was spent on money-making ventures and trips.

One social responsibility that the Ghanaian middle class takes very seriously is to care for the extended family. According to Christine Oppong, a person who is a first-generation literate or graduate may come under greater financial pressure from relatives than someone with two or more generations of literacy in his or her family, especially if the previous generations attained high levels of literacy.²

A single middle-class member can have as many as twelve family members living with him or her. In my questionnaire

¹Elizabeth Ewoo, interview by author, 15 August 1993, at Berrien Springs, Michigan.

²Oppong, 56, 61.

that I sent to 250 selected middle-class members in the Sekondi-Takoradi area, about 75 percent of the respondents indicated that they each had more than five relatives living with them. Typical examples include: thirty-two-year-old businessman John Xeafiade, a Roman Catholic who lives with twenty-two relatives in the city;¹ a forty-five-year-old middle-class woman, Mary Afriyie-Nyarko, not married, who has six relatives living with her in the city; and twenty-one-year-old Japheth O. Amankwa, who has four relatives living with him.²

Social Lifestyle

Many middle-class members live very unhealthy lifestyles. Except for a few Christians, most drink a lot of beer, schnapps, and whisky, which are called the rich man's wine. A locally distilled gin called "Akpeteshie" is widely used by the lower class. About 5 percent of my questionnaire respondents indicated that they would be interested in stop-smoking and stop-drinking seminars.³

Because of their smoking and drinking habits, many Ahanta middle class suffer various health problems. Hypertension and heart attacks are common causes of untimely death among the middle class. From my survey, I found that

¹See appendix A for the questionnaire.

²See Appendix A.

³See Appendix A.

in lucrative positions are looking to receive bribes. Some are quite reluctant and some are known to be totally opposed to the practice.

Because the middle class belong to the social clubs where the top political officials also hold membership, everything is within their reach. This opportunity and privilege increases their influence in society. They serve as the mouthpiece of the common people.

Taken together, this group and the upper-class political officials constitute what in Ghana we refer to as big men and women, or in another parlance obi te vie, "those who live well"¹ (as alluded to before), who live above the law and social circumstantial difficulties and hardships. Their social status adds to their power, control, and influence.

Within the middle class, there are considerable differences in wealth, power, and prestige. Symbols normally associated with this class of people include cars, home-ownership, televisions, videos, etc.

However, Nukunya discovered that there are people with high academic and professional qualifications whose professions may give them respect and prestige but very little wealth.² On the other hand, contractors, business

¹Nukunya, 17.

²From my questionnaire responses, I found that 92% of the middle class who responded do not have telephones in their homes, which is an indication that they cannot afford

executives, and industrialists may be quite wealthy and possess all the status symbols that go with the elite, "though some of them may not have high educational qualifications."¹ A typical example is Mr. Ackah Aku of Akwidaa, who was a powerful man in the community yet could not read or write.²

To maintain their social status, many middle-class members violate the norms and laws of society. When people are sidestepped in the production process, or when meaning is taken out of the work process for either labor, management, or wealth and social acclamation, "then the norm of social justice is violated."³ Because of their control over law enforcement agents such as the police, the middle-class members can break certain laws and get away with it.

Religious Characteristics

It is almost impossible to be involved in making money and to be religious as well. Many of the middle class are nominal Christians. Many live the life of what Allan R.

the cost of installation. Many secondary-school teachers, despite their influence and prestige, do not have televisions in their homes because they cannot afford the cost.

¹Nukunya, 19.

²Elizabeth Ewoo, interview by author, 15 August 1993, in Berrien Springs, MI.

³Bob Goudzwaard, Idols of Our Time (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 54.

Brockway calls "the secular saint."¹ He defines the term "secular saint" as a "religionless Christian" who knows very well that "Christianity is not only for Sunday but for Monday through Saturday, yet really had little notion of what to do about it."²

These nominal Christians use God as a stop-gap who fills up "the space between what man can do and absolute truth and goodness, between imperfection and perfection."³ Knowing that God is good, they do not attribute natural catastrophes to His doing. To them it is God who explains the incomprehensible phenomena in life. It is not God who causes catastrophes, but He allows them to happen. God could stop evil or prevent it if He chose. There is a tension between what God can do and cannot do, and what Satan can and cannot do.

This dilemma has led many middle class into the absurd problem of determining what is God's will and what is not, thus setting themselves in the place of the definer. This condition makes many of them very vulnerable to religious deception. They flock to false prophets in search of answers to life's absurdities and dilemmas.

¹Allan R. Brockway, The Secular Saint (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1968), 7.

²Ibid., 7-8.

³Ibid., 52.

The middle class live in constant tension between what Brockway calls "total permission and ironclad necessity or incomplete obligation."¹ They are caught up between two poles: one of permissiveness (to do what they want to do with their riches), and the other of poor health (which is the consequence of unhealthful living).

There are also class, cultural, and traditional barriers such as litigation, chieftaincy disputes, bribery and corruption, drinking at social and funeral gatherings--behavior which greatly hinders Christian endeavors. As Dr. Oosterwal would describe it, they feel "freed from an unholy bondage to man-made powers and traditionalism,"² yet tradition requires them to perform certain responsibilities such as helping their extended families.

Such a life is far more taxing than a life lived in either permission alone (license), or necessity alone (bondage). They are caught in between living within society, which has developed social norms designed to govern intrapersonal relationships, and Christian principles which are often in conflict with these societal norms. The only option, to many, is to give up religion of all types and live a life of secularism--a religionless life.

¹Ibid., 118.

²Gottfried Oosterwal, "The Process of Secularization" in Meeting the Secular Mind: Some Adventist Perspectives (Berrien Springs, MI: AU Press, 1991), 48.

These people are not naive. They know the dangers of pleasure, but they enjoy the exciting life even though it means standing always on the brink of disaster. As Brockway would put it, "The center of his life is not at the very edge of his life."¹

At religious festivals like the annual Thanksgiving service, the affluent middle class are invited to chair the function. They make heavy contributions to religious groups during fund-raising programs. Many literally build church buildings for their denominations. However, because of their wealth, they sometimes dictate to the church and its pastorate.

In the secular world the middle class are powerful and always in control. Many want to exercise the same power and control in the religious arena as well. The threat to leave the church or not contribute often makes it difficult or impossible to discipline these members of the congregational churches.

A typical example is Mr. A. Adjei, a rich, middle-class businessman, whose influence was powerfully felt even in the Labone Seventh-day Adventist Church, the largest SDA church in Accra.² According to Isaac Eshun (now residing in

¹Brockway, 121.

²Mr. Isaac Eshun, interview by author, 16 August 1993, in his apartment on the campus of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. Isaac Eshun was a member of the Labone SDA Church in Accra, Ghana, where Mr. Alex Adjei was also a member. Mr. Alex Adjei was a businessman and a politician.

Berrien Springs), who was a member of the same church, Mr. Adjei wanted to be on every committee and also to be the chair. He wanted everyone to know what he was doing for the church. His main concern was to exercise power and control, and to make a name for himself. He was pre-occupied with fame and popularity. Mr. Isaac Eshun stated that this man's presence in the church was an intimidation to the pastor who always had to side with him, sometimes at the displeasure of the entire church membership.¹ He was an "untouchable" member as far as discipline was concerned.

The middle-class Christians do not talk about their beliefs. They may contribute to evangelism, but they do not participate in witnessing and the giving of Bible studies. As Brockway would put it, "he does not talk about Christ to his neighbor; he is Christ to his neighbor, he is the 'Word made flesh'."² They have nothing to share about their faith except what they have done for Christ.

Political Characteristics

Because of their wealth, prestige, or education, the middle class act as government spokesmen if government policies are in their favor, and then act as the people's spokesmen if they want to express their own

¹Ibid., 22 August 1993, at Berrien Springs, MI.

²Brockway, 134.

dissatisfactions. They read and understand the national newspapers and explain the content to those who care to know them.¹ Many are chiefs of their hometowns and villages, yet they live in the cities and rule in absentia.

Their Felt-Needs

How can the Ghanaian Adventist minister surmount the many barriers that secular people erect in order to protect themselves against the unwanted influence of the Adventist message? A good way to start, according to Dr. Jon Paulien, "is to deal with secular people the same way Jesus dealt with them."² Delos Miles has said that "there must be a point of contact with sinners, if we are to evangelize them."³

Christ met them at the point of felt-needs--that place in their lives where they were searching for something better. "He suited his message to meet the needs of the individual with whom he was dealing,"⁴ says Miles. Some of such identified are fellowship, meaning in life, values, personal dignity and identity, need for messiah, and abundant life. Ellen White said:

¹Nukunya, 19.

²Jon Paulien, Present Truth in the Real World (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assoc., 1993), 127.

³Miles, 55.

⁴Ibid., 56.

Many efforts, though made at great expense, have been in a large measure unsuccessful because they did not meet the wants [needs] of the people of the time and the place. It requires a knowledge of human nature.¹

From the responses to my questionnaire and from the above characteristics analysis, certain felt-needs stand out as basic in the lives of the Ahanta middle class. Foremost is the fact that many of them are intent on justifying the purpose for their existence. They realize that an abundance of wealth and material things does not give life's fullest satisfaction. There is a feeling of emptiness which they try to fulfill by excess drinking and womanizing. One basic underlying factor which has surfaced from the questionnaire responses is the need to discover that they are still loved by God.

Second, they appear self-sufficient, yet they are hostages of stress. They are workaholics and may give the false impression of leading a well-balanced life without God. This shows sheer ignorance, or denial of their spiritual need. Over 98 percent of my respondents indicated that they needed a religious seminar to know more about Christian living.

Third, many of them are under heavy burdens of guilt. Many feel guilty about the means used to reach their present status--the dubious means they employed to acquire their

¹Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1948), 297, 92.

wealth through litigation or a twist of the law in their favor.

Fourth, they have tremendous family problems. The extended family responsibilities, coupled with the responsibility of the many children they have, often create tension in their lives and in their homes.

Fifth, to maintain the class status quo, many have become enslaved to such social evils as smoking and drinking. Many of them long to know that they are loved; on the other hand, they want to discover the ability to love others.¹ They are generous to people and even to churches. This is not because they love those they help, but because they wish to make a name for themselves.

Summary

It is clear from the above descriptions that the middle-class members are powerful in the contemporary Ghanaian society. A redirection of the economic, political, social, prestigious, and influential powers of this group would bring great strides and success to the Adventist work in the Ahanta subregion of Ghana.

Many in the Ahanta middle class are now disillusioned with the unfulfilled promises of science and materialism. Deeply disappointed by traditionalism and religion, and

¹Isaac Obeng of Montreal, Canada, interviewed by author, May 21, 1993, in his home in Montreal. He said to me, "Remember that we are still human beings who need love from all."

instances of conditional love by friends and society, they seek to alleviate their positions of bondage to alcohol, lust, passion, loneliness, and emptiness. This was evidenced in the questionnaire responses.

Many have turned to cults and the occult, to extreme hedonism, and astrology, all of which are spreading fast in Ghana. However, when they find no solutions in these, which will never satisfy, some are driven to the point of despair.

They need to be reached with the message of hope. We need to find an effective strategy to reach them and win them for Christ. The identified felt-needs could be used as an entering wedge to reach the Ahanta secular-minded middle-class. A new method of evangelizing them is very crucial.

David L. Olsson has quoted Bill Hybels that:

It is too easy for a church to settle for unproductive, obsolete methods of evangelism and to feel satisfied that it has fulfilled its outreach obligation despite their sterility. Much of what passes for evangelism today does not meet the specifications of the Greater Commission.¹

In our world today, witnessing, should not be an occasional unpleasant activity, but a way of life: By knowing and meeting the identified felt-needs of people we want to witness to. There are biblical, Spirit of Prophecy, and historical basis for this proposition. The next chapter gives enough evidences why we should evangelize the Ahanta middle-class as we have done the lower class.

¹David L. Olsson, Church Leaders Handbook (Chicago, IL: Willow Creek Association, 1993), 20.

CHAPTER FOUR

BIBLICAL, SPIRIT OF PROPHECY, AND HISTORICAL BASIS FOR REACHING THE AHANTA MIDDLE CLASS

Introduction

In this chapter, I want to strongly establish a biblical basis for reaching the Ahanta middle-class with the Advent message. In the past, there has been a neglect on the part of the SDA ministry in Ghana, but this neglect should not persist because there are biblical, Spirit of Prophecy, and historical reasons in reaching out to this class of people.

Perhaps we should ask why the Ahanta middle class has been so neglected? My experience as a Ghanaian and as a SDA minister leads me to think that it is because they are looked upon as materialistic, worldly, polygamists, and an unredeemable group of people who have no time for God. But this is not true because experienced mission practitioners,¹ who have worked with the secular-minded, have found that secular people can also come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. They are, as Hunter will put it,

¹Ford Donald Soper, Robert Schuller, George Hunter III, Jon Dybdahl, Bruce Lee Bauer, Gottfried Oosterwal, and Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church are a few of those.

"incurably 'religious'."¹ My questionnaire responses indicated that they need a Saviour too. My questionnaire responses indicated that some of the Ahanta middle class have a daily prayer to Nyamenle Kwa-ame-"Saturday God", this is because they are indeed incurably religious. The gospel of salvation is for all--for all have sinned and all need to be saved. I want to establish this fact on a theological, Ellen White (Spirit of Prophecy), and historical basis.

All theological literatures, whether evangelical or orthodox, repeatedly stress that the divine-human encounter never occurs in a cultural vacuum. No culture or a people group is exempted. The Ahanta middle class are no exception. They are a people group with unique characteristics. They too need to be saved. The supra cultural biblical message must therefore be communicated through the forms of their culture and needs in order that it may be received, understood, and responded to intelligently.

It must be stated that a person's understanding of biblical concepts is conditioned by his or her culture. The

¹George G. Hunter III, How to Reach Secular People (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 42. For further reading on this subject, read Kenneth Chafin, The Reluctant Witness (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1974), chapter 6.

Ahanta middle class live in a concrete historical situation, in a culture from which they derive not only their language, but also their patterns of thought and conduct based upon their educational exposure, their methods of learning, their emotional reactions, their values, interests and goals.

Padilla has said that either "God's word reaches man in terms of his own culture, or it does not reach him at all."¹ As Costas would put it, "The scriptures are contextual from beginning to end,"² speaking to the needs of its hearers. P. G. Neefjes suggests that "to have a good impact, Christianity in Africa must be indigenised: i.e. the Central core of its faith must be presented to the African in his own way of life."³ The middle class in Ghana generally, and the Ahanta, in particular, are of a different culture with unique characteristics. Even though they belong to the national culture, they have different needs and values, and therefore form a subset within the entire cultural setup. I agree with Miles that "those who want to share Christ with others will find a way. If our want to is

¹Rene Padilla, The Contextualization of the Gospel, in Readings in Dynamic Indigeneity, ed. C. H. Craft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979), 290.

²Orlando E. Costas, "Contextualization and Incarnation," Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 29 (1979): 23-30.

³P. G. Neefjes, "The Impact of Christianity in Ghana with special Reference to the Roman Catholic Church," The Ghana Bulletin of Theology, 4, no. 7 (December 1974): 46.

strong enough, we shall somehow discover the how to."¹
There are biblical, spirit of prophecy, and historical reasons why we should discover the "how to." Because history and scripture show that it can be done!

Biblical Basis

The Bible is, beyond doubt, a dynamic witness to God's purpose to meet individuals wherever they may be, and to communicate with them in their concrete historical and cultural situation. It is also God's purpose to reach the middle class in Ghana wherever they might be, because God meets people at their own level and cultural setting. In this chapter, I am trying to establish the fact that God in Old Testament times used men like Abraham and Joseph to achieve His purposes. The same is true in the New Testament times and during the early church period. On the same basis, God can use the Ahanta middle class.

In the Old Testament, the first man God called, in whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3, NKJV), was not a man of the lower class. Civilization was surprisingly advanced in his city of Ur, and the social order, in some respects, was admirable.

Matthew Henry suggests that the command which God gave to Abram is much "the same as the gospel call by which ALL

¹Miles, 61.

the spiritual seed are brought into covenant with God."¹
Does this not include the Ahanta middle class? If God needed Abram for such a mission to be a blessing to all men, He surely needs the middle class in the western subregion of Ghana to be a blessing to others who are in bondage to materialism.

Joseph was more useful in the hands of God when he was among the higher class of Egypt than when he was a mere slave. By his position in the palace of Egypt, God used him to save not only the Egyptians from starvation, but also keep Israel from perishing. In the same vein, it could be said that God can use some of the members of the Ahanta middle class who might respond to the gospel call to save men and women who are their contemporaries from spiritual starvation.

Although a secular man or woman experiences his or her lostness in a particular way, it is necessary to state that the gospel that saves secular man or woman is identical with the gospel that saves all humankind. King Solomon for example made an impact on the secular Queen of Sheba. This indicates that knowledge and riches blessed by God can be a tremendous channel of outreach to people of the same class who are secular-minded.

¹Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, vol. 1 (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1971), 84.

If some members of the Ahanta middle class could be evangelized, what an impact they could make on their contemporaries! Solomon testified that "the poor man is hated even by his own neighbor; but the rich has many friends" (Prov. 14:20, NKJV). Middle-class converts will most likely bring not only many friends to Christ, but also some of their extended family members who virtually depend on them.

Spirit of Prophecy Basis

I believe, as do others like Ellen G. White, that it is not worldly wisdom, but God-given wisdom that enables us to present the truth in such a manner that it will reach the higher class, who when converted to the truth will exert an influence in its favor, and who will help to sustain it with their entrusted influence and means. The present situation of the SDA membership among the Ahanta fits what Ellen G. White once said: "Plans and efforts have been so shaped in many fields that the lower classes only are the ones who can be reached."¹ She strongly suggested that we must "plan to reach the best classes, and we will not fail to reach the lower classes."²

¹Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1941), 553.

²Ibid., 553.

Ellen G. White further suggests that the gospel call is to be proclaimed to all who have an active part in the world's work:

To the teachers and leaders of the people; those who bear heavy responsibilities in public life, lawyers and judges, to physicians and teachers, and to public officers and businessmen. But methods may be devised to reach the higher classes who need the light of truth as well as the lower classes. Plan to reach the best classes.¹

The obvious question is: Why such an appeal? Ellen White gives two reasons. First, she suggests that we should go to the middle class, to teach them as Christ did, because they will accept the truth and as surely as such honest souls will be converted, their "means will be consecrated to the Lord's service, and there will be an increase of resources for the suffering fields."² She added further that some of the middle class will be impressed by the Holy Spirit to invest the Lord's means in a way that will advance His work. They will fulfill His purpose by helping to create centers of influence in the large cities.³

What better reasons for reaching out to the Ahanta middle class than the aforementioned ones? A third reason which could be added is that thousands of the wealthy middle class have gone to their graves unwarned, because they have

¹Ibid., 555.

²Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1948), 9:101.

³White, Evangelism, 558.

been judged by appearance and passed by as hopeless subjects. There has been an undeniable neglect of the middle class by the SDA Church in this part of Ghana.

The present situation in this subregion of Ghana is that churches seek the help and wealth of the rich middle class but not their souls. Churches run to them when a need arises but little is done to save their souls from destructive lifestyles and sin. This is the aim of this project--a soul-saving strategy for the middle class.

Historical Basis

One might ask the question: Were the early Christians middle class? This is a question that needs to be addressed. Robert H. Smith, in his sociological analysis of the New Testament, presents some profound answers to this question. He quotes Martin Hengel that "Jesus was Himself a skilled worker from the middle class."¹ He discloses that the majority of the adherents in the whole period up to Emperor Constantine were "members of the middle class."² To Smith, it is even a mistake to think that the members of earliest Christianity came primarily from the lowest ranks of society, from the unemployed or underemployed.

¹Martin Hengel, quoted in Robert Harry Smith, "Were the Early Christians Middle Class?" Currents in Theology and Mission Journal (October 1980): 273.

²Ibid., 273.

Pliny, one of the early Church Fathers, is quoted by Smith to have said that at the beginning of the second century, Christians in Asia Minor were "members of every class and were primarily city dwellers and were beginning to penetrate the countryside."¹ Robert Grant stated that the Christian movement, as a whole in all the years up to Constantine, was not "a proletarian mass movement, but a relatively small cluster of more or less intense groups, largely middle class in origin."² Wayne A. Meeks adds that "both early Judaism and early Christianity were mostly urban movements, streetwise and cosmopolitan."³ He further states that "something new was emerging in the private homes where believers in "Jesus the Christ" gathered, in the townwide gatherings for the Lord's Supper that a wealthier householder sometimes made possible."⁴ Meeks quotes Robert

¹Ibid., 275.

²Robert M. Grant, Early Christianity and Society (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 11.

³Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, Jews and Christians in Antioch: In the First Four Centuries of the Common Era (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 1.

⁴Wayne A. Meeks, The Moral World of the First Christians (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1986), 119. For further readings on the subject see: Peter L. Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism, Social Research 21(1954), 479, observed: "The attitude toward the world largely determines the inner social structure of the sect. Bryan R. Wilson, Magic and Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Movements of Protest Among Tribal and Third-World Peoples (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), classifies different types of sect in terms of their "response to the world" (p. 21).

M. Grant as saying that "the triumph of Christianity in a hierarchically organized society necessarily took place from the top down."¹

John Stambaugh and David Balch also noted that members of the upper classes were relatively few in those days, but they were conspicuous because they controlled the wealth and political power of the empire. Among such class were "local aristocracies like Dionysius in Athens (Acts 17:34) and Erasmus in Corinth (Rom 16:23), both of whom are represented as Christian converts."²

Diversity in thought and style was a fact from the beginning of the Christian movement. All kinds of people became disciples of Jesus and still do. There were the downtrodden Mary Magdalene class of people, and also the high-classed Joseph of Aramathea and Nicodemus group. The church needed and still needs prodding, but it has always had leaders and communities committed to crossing

¹Robert M. Grant, quoted in Wayne A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 52.

²John Stambaugh and David Balch, The Social World of the First Christians (London: Anchor Press, 1986), 112. For further readings on the subject, see the following authors: I. A. Mckay, Houses, Villas, and Palaces in the Roman World (Cornell University Press, 1975), 212-217; Bruce W. Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome (Princeton University Press, 1980), 3-20; Ronald F. Hock, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship (Fortress Press, 1980); Wayne A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 22-23, 59-61; Ramsay MacMullen, Roman Social Relations (Yale University Press, 1974), 69-72, 132-135.

boundaries, whether they were geographical, cultural, or social, for in Christ there is no poor or rich.

Roland J. Sider has stated that: "God does not work exclusively through impoverished, oppressed people; when we want to effect influence, prestige, and power."¹

Roland Allen discloses some of the strategies Paul adopted in his missionary activities in the Judeo-Roman world. He observed that all the cities and towns in which Paul planted churches were centers of Roman administration, Greek civilization, Jewish influence, or of some commercial importance. These centers, he stated, were the great marts where the "material and intellectual wealth of the world was exchanged."² Even though Paul was led by the Holy Spirit, it seems to be a rule, which may be unhesitatingly accepted, that he often targeted centers of Hellenic civilization and Jewish influence which were strategically placed along the great trade routes.³ Meeks adds that "Antioch where the Pauline missionary group originated was an important

¹Roland J. Sider, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger, foreword by Dr. Kenneth Kantzer (Dallas: World Pub., 1990), 49.

²Roland Allen, Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours? (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 1989), 13.

³Ibid., 16.

administrative and commercial center."¹ "Paul was among those who depended on the city for their livelihood."²

Paul seized strategic points because, as Allen put it, "he had a strategy."³ As he was led by the Spirit of God to unentered areas, he always found strategic locations which could become a center of Christian life. Why did he adopt such a strategy? Allen noted that the promoters of the Christian movement did not spend time in preaching to the ignorant and the conservative rustics of the villages but began "by enlisting the support of the enlightened and the well-to-do officials and commercial families."⁴ Cannot such a strategy be ours too?

As Paul drew his largest reinforcements from the middle classes of the society,⁵ so too can the SDA Church among the Ahanta draw her reinforcements from the middle class; but the Ahanta middle class must first be reached with the gospel. Such is the strategy I hope to employ in the Sekondi-Takoradi areas. In Paul's days, the cities where education and work went hand in hand (as it is in Sekondi

¹Meeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch, 1. For further readings on this subject see: J. Z. Smith, "The Social Description of Early Christianity," RSR 1/1 (1975), 20.

²Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 9.

³Ibid., 17.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 23.

and Takoradi) were the first to come under the influence of the new religion.

The middle-class converts, even though they were few, served as Paul's financial supporters, thus enabling him to reach out to the other provinces. Second, he enjoyed the security of these middle-class men and women of repute. Should not such a strategy be ours to reach out to the powerful and influential middle class in Sekondi and Takoradi?

We must never be motivated by a need for their monies but must always have a deep concern for their souls. In Ghana today, I believe that God is calling for earnest, humble workers who will carry the truth to these higher classes. In the present socio-economic situation in Ghana, it is not by a casual, accidental touch, or invitation to chair the annual harvest that such people can be drawn to Christ. There must be, as Ellen White attests, "a strategy, and a decided effort to be put forth by God's ministers, those who will not be discouraged by circumstances."¹

Sider cautions that we must oppose the view that "God never uses rich, powerful people as his chosen instruments. He has and does,"² he concludes. It is theologically sound to assert that God does not have class enemies, even though He hates and punishes injustice and those who neglect the

¹White, Testimonies to the Church, 6:78-80.

²Sider, 49.

poor. The powerful Ahanta middle class can be used by God as His chosen instruments.

At the Lausanne meeting held in Pattaya, Thailand, in 1980, it was established that the "Gospel applies equally to the affluent, who are poor in their relationship to God."¹ The Word of God challenges people everywhere to choose between God and mammon. It is our duty to present the Good News and leave the consequences with the Lord of the Good News. Undeniably, the way of conversion may seem to be particularly difficult for the affluent. Rita Mataragnon and Frederick Ferre admit that "wealth and status can influence the acceptance of religious beliefs and practices."²

However, we can gather inspiration from the example of our Lord Jesus Himself in our efforts to reach the rich with the gospel. As Christians and custodians of the oracles of God, we share the view of the Lausanne covenant that:

There is only one Savior and one Gospel, Jesus Christ being Himself the only Godman, who gave Himself as the only ransom for sinners [including the Ahanta middle class]. The gospel of Jesus Christ is God's answer to man's basic need. By faith in Christ, man is transferred from a relationship with God where he is

¹Lausanne Occasional Committee, "Christian Witness to Secularized People," in Lausanne Occasional Papers, no. 8, Thailand Report, 16-27 June 1980, 14.

²Frederick Ferre and Rita H. Mataragnon, God and Global Justice: Religion and Poverty in an Unequal World (New York: Paragon House, 1985), 139.

under the anger of God, to a relationship with God where he is under the grace of God (Eph 2: 7-8).¹

To assume that the rich Ahanta middle class would not accept the Adventist message because of their secularism, and then neglect them on that basis is an attitude of defeatism. Such an attitude paralyzes our faith and curbs our courage. The questions to be addressed by the Ghanaian ministry should rather be: What can God do through us? What is the goal of our work now in contemporary Ghana? Do we see opportunities which the emergence of this secularized class has placed before us? Do we view them with the compassion of Jesus? What different approach, other than the old methods mentioned earlier in chapter 5, could we use to reach the middle class, not only in the western subregion, but in Ghana as a whole?

To borrow the words of the Lausanne Evangelism Committee:

We may live in the last hour of history, but, exactly in that hour, the words of Jesus are even more relevant: This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Matt 24: 14).²

Pieter G. R. de Villiers quotes Galica as saying that the evangelizing of the Church must be integrally liberating. It must transform "selfish, unjust, and sinful persons, groups, families, and societies into a just

¹Lausanne Occasional Papers, no. 8, article 3, 12.

²Lausanne Occasional Papers, no. 8, 31.

community"¹ that will qualify for incorporation into the kingdom of God.

If the assessment of the Ahanta middle class is true that they are selfish, unjust, and sinful, then there is the need to evangelize them in order to transform them into a just community, fit for the kingdom of God.

Historians have observed that Protestantism was closely linked to and found its main supporters among the rising bourgeoisie--a class whose interest lay in replacing feudal concepts of wealth, holding with a system based upon a competitive, rationalized meritocracy devoid of inherited privilege. Calvin's success was basically due to the financial and moral support he received from the city administrators. Franklin Charles Palm asserted that John Calvin and Martin Luther were "the guiding spirits of the Protestant Reformation by their doctrines who deserve to be known as the Messiahs of the Middle Class."²

Marshall Fishwick and Ray B. Browne revealed that by the seventeenth century, Protestantism had to contend with the growing concentration of private capital and emerging ideology that held that "wealth and property were both God's

¹Galica, quoted in Pieter G. R. de Villiers, Liberation Theology and the Bible (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1987), 52.

²Franklin Charles Palm, The Middle Classes Then and Now, (New York: McMillan Co., 1936), 46.

reward to the just and a sign of membership among God's elect."¹

What would have happened to Martin Luther had he not been kidnapped by his rich friend Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, for safekeeping at Wartburg Castle? It is hard to reach the affluent middle class with the gospel, but once converted, they are of tremendous value to the cause of God.

The challenge of global mission is that in every town, city, and village there are persons who would embrace the truth if it were brought before them in a judicious manner.² Therefore they must be reached. This judicious manner is what this project seeks to achieve. If the eschatological events are imminent, then surely the taking of the gospel to the Ahanta middle class has an even greater importance now than ever before.

The secularized Ahanta middle class have taken the lion's share of the material wealth in the Ahanta community. They are the privileged few in society. Yet they are destitute and spiritually bankrupt. The gospel has not impacted them. They need the gospel, too. Delos Miles has said that "even the intellectual and wealthy and highborn need to be born again. And Nicodemus is a representative

¹Marshall Fishwick and Ray B. Browne, The God Pumpers: Religion in the Electronic Age (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State Univ. Popular Press, 1987), 33-44.

²White, Testimonies, 2:113.

that all such persons can be saved."¹ The Lord's command is, "Go!"

Christ--Our Example

There is no evidence in the ministry of Jesus that the poor had any monopoly on the kingdom of God. Jesus addressed Himself to all Israel, even to the affluent. There are no passages in the Bible that exclude all affluent people from the kingdom of God. Even Luke, who recorded some of the sharpest warnings against riches, tells in the Acts of the Apostles of wealthy people who joined the Christian community. He emphasized that their attitude to wealth was changed when they met the transforming power of the gospel, and this led to action (Acts 4:34). Should not the Ahanta middle class be given the same opportunity?

Jesus broke through all social barriers, sharing His ministry with both the poor and the suffering as well as the affluent, the powerful, and the learned. As His followers, we are commissioned to do the same, because the gospel applies equally to the affluent, who are rich materially, but poor in their relationship to God, and also to the poor. Paul's method and approach can be ours. John Calvin's strategy of using the city magistrates can be ours also. Let me cite one classical example of the impact one middle-class person has had on the Church and in the community in

¹Miles, 42.

Ghana. John Essiam from Asanta in Western Ahanta is a businessman. He has successfully organized the local fishermen and farmers into a working team called "PODA"-- Potential Organized Development Agency.¹ Through their efforts, this team has built a secondary school, a church building, and a parsonage, feats that the Takoradi and Sekondi SDA city churches cannot even begin to match.

This example confirms Delos Miles "trickle-down" theory of evangelism which states that:

When I get the vital message of the kingdom of God to the king, president, prime minister and others high in the government of such nations, I have, in God's sight, gotten His message to that nation or kingdom.²

My vision, expectation, and anticipation is to see the Takoradi and Sekondi city churches, and those in the municipalities, become self-sufficient and self-supporting as this single church in Asanta. One way to this vision is the conversion of some middle class members into the SDA church, who in turn will help to spread the good news to other places through their financial support.

David J. Newman has suggested that "if you are to reach secular people, you must spend much time with them."³ It

¹John Essiam of Takoradi, telephone interview by the author, 23 June 1993. He also sent me a copy of "PODA" magazine containing all their various projects being undertaken at Asanta and in Takoradi.

²Miles, 70.

³J. David Newman, "Reaching the Secular Mind," Ministry, November 1993, 6.

is true that it takes a longer time to win one, but the one won can have a greater impact than twenty of the lower class. This is not to downgrade the lower class members of the SDA church. Miles' "house theory" of evangelism contends that "we should reach the key person in that socioeconomic unit in order to effectively reach all of the other members of that unit."¹

This project in the hands of the SDA ministers should contribute to the conversion of some middle class members, thus to a numerical growth of the church, and to financial growth and stability, so that ultimately all the churches in Ahantaland may be financially self-supporting. If not converted at all into the SDA Church, a bridge of interest and friendship will be built between the participants and the church. Such a friendship will open up opportunities to the SDA Church with those who have power and wealth.

In summary, I will say that on the basis of the Old Testament, Ellen White, the New Testament, and history, we are obliged to take the Advent message to the Ahanta middle class now as we have done to the non-elite in the past. If their monies are needed for the Lord's work, so are their souls.

Delos Miles has empathetically stated that "if we don't believe persons are worth saving, we shall not so much as

¹Miles, 71.

lift one finger to save them."¹ But is our mission not the same as that of Jesus, to seek and to save the lost? Delos Miles quotes Francis Thompson as saying: "Christ is the Hound of heaven who pursues us down all the labyrinthine ways of life."² If we are to pattern our evangelism after Jesus, we shall have to take the initiative with the Zacchaeuses who are up the sycamore trees of our world. Surely, the rich Ahanta middle class can be saved. All we need is a new method of approach.

It is hoped that this chapter has convinced all my readers, who have passion for the lost enough, that we ought to work for the Ahanta middle class. The next chapter looks at the strategies the early missionaries used to evangelize the Ahanta. Chapter 6 examines a suggested new method which could be used to evangelize the Ahanta middle-class.

¹Ibid., 14.

²Francis Thompson, quoted in Miles, 126. For further readings on Jesus dealt with people in order to heal, save, and win them, see: Norman L. Robinson, How Jesus Christ Saves Men: A Study of the Atonement (London: James Clarke & Co., 1965); David Seabury, How Jesus Heals Our Minds Today (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947); Raymond Calkins, How Jesus Dealt with Men (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952); Paul Tournier, The Meaning of Persons (New York: Harper and Row, 1957); John R. W. Stott, Basic Christianity (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY

This section presents the coming of early Christian missionaries to Ahantalanda, where the light of the gospel began about A.D. 1400. A brief historical account of the early Christian missionaries is crucial because it helps us to know the strategies they used and how effective those strategies were. It answers the questions: What has been done earlier on by Christian missionaries? What should have been done which was not done? Are there other ways of approaching the target people?

The Early Christian Contacts

The largest Protestant denominations in Ghana which made contact with the Ahanta were the Anglican Church, the British Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Catholic Church was there long before any of the Protestant churches. The Twelve Apostles Church came in the 1900s as the first spiritual church in Ahanta. P. G. Neefjies, writing of their impact, observed that "the Christian missionaries offered one image of Christianity--in its pluriformity since

they represented so many denominations already confusing enough."¹

The following sections explain what each of these churches did, the strategies which each used to Christianize the Ahanta, and the effect of those strategies.

Knowing the strengths and weaknesses in their methods of evangelizing the Ahanta will serve as an eye-opener in the development of a strategy to evangelize the modern Ahanta.

The Roman Catholic Church

The Portuguese brought Catholicism to Cape Coast as early as 1471 as the first Christian church in the then Gold Coast, now Ghana.²

The Catholic Church used two basic strategies to reach out to the Gold Coastians: education and church buildings. They built schools and churches in the cities and towns, especially along the coast where slave trading had taken an immense proportion of the populace. By this method, many

¹Neefjes, 32.

²David B. Barret, World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World A.D. 1900-200 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 321.

Fanti¹ children in the Central Region became educated through their schools and consequently became Catholic Christians.

However, the missionaries did not trust the local people with the governing of the local churches. All liturgies were done in Latin. There was no indigenization. Furthermore they allowed the members to retain their old customs, such as practicing traditionalism alongside Christianity. Their Christian education did little to change the practices of the people.

Even though a few Ahanta gained their education through Catholicism, they remained in their traditional practices and beliefs. Until the sixties, the Catholic Church had very little impact among the Ahantas. By 1970, the Catholics had 1,144 primary schools, 292 middle schools, and ten teacher-training colleges, with a membership of 1,060,944, throughout Ghana.² Of this number only 2 percent were of the Nzema and Ahanta tribes.³ This increase was due to the fact that in the 1950s, the late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, made education compulsory for all school-age children. Many of the Ahanta

¹Fanti is one of the Akan tribes in the central region of Ghana.

²World Congress Country Profiles, "Status of Christianity Country Profile, Ghana" (Prepared for the International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland, July 16-25, 1974), 5-6.

³Ibid., 1.

who responded to this attended primarily Catholic, Anglican, or Methodist schools and eventually became members.

By 1979, Catholic membership had risen to 1,430,000.¹ The same author disclosed that "The south [of Ghana] is, to a large extent, Christianised, yet much of this is nominal. Revival is needed,"² he concludes. Johnstone's 1992 statistical figures show a growth of 2.2 percent with a membership of 1,849,000. This figure is 18.7 percent of the national Christian membership.³ Ahanta and Nzema membership put together is about 1.5 percent of the entire membership.

The Anglican Church

Anglican missionaries arrived about A.D. 1752.⁴ It was the first Protestant church to reach the Gold Coast. During the early years their missionary activities were confined to Cape Coast, the capital of the Central Region. By 1960, 26 percent of the whole population of Ghana claimed

¹P. J. Johnstone, Operation World: A Day-to-Day Guide to Praying for the World (Bromley, Kent, England: STL Publications, 1987), 190.

²P. J. Johnstone, Operation World: A Handbook for World Intercession (Bromley, Kent, England: STL Publications, 1979), 177.

³Ibid., 1993 ed., 241.

⁴Barret, 324.

to be Anglicans because the Church had spread to other parts of the country.¹

Anglican basic strategies were no different from those of the Catholics. They used education and church buildings in reaching out to the Ahantas in the Sekondi and Takoradi areas. Whereas the Fantis (the coastal tribe which shares borders with the Ahanta) made use of this opportunity, the typical Ahanta did not. It was not until the 1950s, when Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of the Republic of Ghana, made education compulsory, that the Ahantas began to respond to education.

According to a Lausanne report of 1974, the Anglican Church had 239 primary schools, 76 middle schools, and three teacher training colleges in Ghana by 1970.² Only about five of these are still found in all Ahanta. By 1987, the total adult membership of Ghanaian Anglicans was 64,000.³ The 1992 statistical figures show that there are 160,000 Anglicans in Ghana.⁴ Both Nzema and Ahanta membership put together is less than 1 percent of this number, which indicates that the Anglican impact is very minimal.

¹Ibid., 321-6.

²World Congress Country Profiles, 4.

³Johnstone, Operation World, 1993 ed., 190. The 1993 statistics on p. 41 indicate the changes in figures over the period of six years.

⁴Ibid., 241.

The British Wesleyan Church

The British Wesleyan Methodist Church was one of the Protestant churches which had a large impact on the Ahantas. The first Methodist missionary came to Cape Coast in 1835 as the second Protestant church.¹ From there the church expanded to Takoradi and Sekondi and to other Ahanta towns. Robert W. Wyllie confirms that the dominant mission, which enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the mission field in the Southern and Central Ghana for almost three-quarters of a century, was the Wesleyan Methodist.²

Unlike the Anglicans, the Methodists used, in addition to education,³ singing, funeral services, church buildings, and local preachers. Local tribal leaders were made heads of the local church. Catechists were locally trained people who had some elementary education. As an incentive, each local church was given autonomy to govern its own affairs.⁴

¹Barret, 325.

²Robert W. Wyllie, Spiritism in Ghana: A Study of New Religious Movements (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1980), 6.

³Harris W. Mobley, The Ghanaians Image of the Missionary: An Analysis of the Published Critique of Christian Missionaries by Ghanaians 1897-1965 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 143. In this book he states that the Methodist missionaries acknowledged that their schools were "the nurseries of the

⁴Catechist Kwamena Kwaw of Akwidaa, interview by author, April 25, 1982, in his home at Akwidaa. Even though he was not a trained church worker, he was appointed by the Dixcove Bishop to be in charge of the Akwidaa Methodist Church. Because he was a teacher as well, he had a tremendous influence in the community. His preaching in the local dialect attracted many people to the church.

Priests from Sekondi and Takoradi visited the local churches only when there was a need for baptism or funeral services. This permissiveness had its advantages and also its disadvantages. One great advantage was that the church became indigenized. Local converts could respond to the gospel in their own dialect. Second, many villagers went to church to hear the gospel preached to them by their own people in their own language.

The disadvantage was that the freedom which was given to the local churches led to Christianized traditional religion. Polygamous and levirate marriages, and idol and ancestral worship were allowed. Professed Christians could wear talismans around their necks. Instead of giving indigenous forms biblical meanings in order to create what missiologists call a "dynamic equivalence church," the Methodist Church gave indigenous meanings to indigenous forms. Pagan jargons such as "heaven helps those who help themselves" became Christian jargon, thus justifying the use of talismans to protect oneself from evil forces.

It is noteworthy to mention that by 1970, the Methodist Church had 746 primary schools, 229 middle schools, and six teacher training colleges all over the country, claiming about 5 percent in the Western region.¹ According to

¹World Congress Country Profiles, 4.

Johnstone, the adult membership by 1992 was 193,058.¹ Out of this number, about 1.5 percent were of the Ahanta tribe.

The Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church came to the Gold Coast in 1838, through the activities of the Swiss Basel Missionaries.² They began their mission work among "the Gas and the Twi-speaking people [the Akwapims] in the southeast of the country."³

The Presbyterian Church had very little impact on the Ahanta simply because their concentrated efforts were among the Akwapims who lived on the Aburi Mountains, a very appealing climate for the Europeans. By 1987, the Presbyterian Church had an adult membership of 132,860.⁴ Not more than 0.5 percent were Ahanta. The 1992 figures show that the Church has 179,000⁵ members nationwide with a very significant number in Ahanta. It is not a denomination of the westerners, particularly the Ahanta and the Nzema.

Evaluation of the Early Churches

What spiritual impact did these denominations make? Notwithstanding the above impressive figures, Dr. Gaba

¹Johnstone, Operation World, 1993 ed., 241.

²Barret, 326.

³World Congress Country Profiles, 2.

⁴Johnstone, Operation World, 1987 ed., 190.

⁵Ibid., 1993 ed., 241.

thinks that "Christianity did not have any appreciable impact on Ghana."¹ P. G. Neefjes is of the view that:

The peoples of Ghana were not presented with a single image of Christianity but with a variety of images which developed into a kaleidoscopic multitude with the emergence of the spiritual churches.²

P. G. Neefjes observed that the early missionaries created some problems to Ghanaians:

1. Christianity broke into tribal society, undermining the Ghanaian concept of a family as a unit. Converts were isolated from their families to live on the mission compound.

2. There was tension between traditional and Christian society. Christians sometimes intentionally opposed and broke traditional laws.

3. While the school was an instrument for evangelism in the hands of the missionary, the indigenous Ghanaian saw it as a way of entering into the mysteries of Western technological civilization. It was branded as a "colonial education."

4. Christianity remained an alien body in Ghana society. Even though education improved health services, agriculture and technological skill, and dispelling ignorance, yet it remained a foreign body and was considered

¹C. Gaba, "The Impact of Christianity in Africa," in Lecture Course in African Studies (University of Science and Technology Press, Kumasi, Ghana, 1970/71), 9.

²Neefjes, 36.

an intruder into traditional African Culture.¹ The failure of the above-mentioned churches to come to grips with the traditional practices and beliefs of the Ahanta was very apparent by the 1950s. Their concept of mission was to introduce Christian teachings in a culture without changing that culture. They did what Michael C. Kirwen would call an "adaptation that preserves the essential integrity of the culture, its values, institutions and customs."² The situation became worse than the period of the Protestants and the Catholics when the Twelve Apostles Church came in the early 1900s from the Ivory Coast.

The statistics in table 2 show the present national status of the various churches which had early contact with the Ahanta. Not more than 2 percent of the Christian population of the mainstream Protestant churches and the Catholic church are Ahanta. The impact was in the areas of education, colonization, and westernization, but not in spirituality. However, the Twelve Apostles church has more Ahanta membership than all the other churches.³

The statistics in table 2 show the membership of each of the churches in Ghana. The Catholic church has the

¹Ibid., 37-41.

²Michael C. Kirwen, African Widows (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 143.

³The reason why the Twelve Apostles church had such impact among the Ahanta is explained in the next section which deals with the "Coming of the Twelve Apostles church."

highest membership of 1,849,000, followed by the Presbyterian church with a membership of 840,000. The Twelve Apostles church, which was the prominent church among the Ahanta since the 1920s, has a membership of 125,000. The Seventh-day Adventist church has a total membership of 383,000. This figure apparently includes non-baptized members.

TABLE 2
MEMBERSHIP OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN GHANA

Church	Congregation	Members	Affiliated
Catholic	3,080	980,000	1,849,000
Anglican	313	80,000	160,000
Methodist	2,467	193,058	330,787
Presbyterian	1,791	179,000	814,000
12 Apostles	1,500	80,000	125,000
Seventh-day Adventist	380	130,000	383,000

Source: P. J. Johnstone, Operation World: A Day-to-Day Guide to Praying for the World (Bromley, Kent, England: STL Publications, 1993), 241-2.

The Twelve Apostles Church--Nackabah

Prior to World War I, the Church of the Twelve Apostles arose as the first of Ghana's many spiritual churches. Robert W. Wyllie identifies these churches as the "spiritist" churches whose attention was "to healing and

spiritual protection."¹ This group, popularly referred to in the Western Province of Ghana as Nackabah, is practically unknown elsewhere, particularly among the Ashantis, Gas, Ewes, and Northerners. One can say that it is a religion of the Southern Ghanaians. This group's official name, according to C. G. Baeta, "derives from the practice of Prophet Harris to appoint twelve apostles in each village to look after the needs of the flock."²

Prophet William Wade Harris was a Grebo (Kru) from Liberia who came to the Gold Coast in 1914. He first settled in the Axim and Appolonia districts, and from there made visits to other Ahanta towns.

He had several converts among the Ahantas and the Nzimas too, but those who contributed to the spread of the church were Grace Tani and John Nackabah of Essuawua, near Enchi, a border town with the Ivory Coast³ Both Grace and John were Nzimas. John Nackabah in turn won and baptized John Hackman, an illiterate pagan, and an Ahanta by tribe.

According to Gordon Mackay Haliburton, the Nzimas, Sefwi, and Ahanta languages were the dialects of the Anyi-Baoule cluster of the Kwa group. This group belongs to the Akan family, who mostly received the Twelve Apostles

¹Wyllie, 16.

²C. G. Baeta, Prophetism in Ghana (London: SCM Press, 1956), 9.

³Ibid., 9-10.

beliefs.¹ After the deaths of Grace Tani and John Nackabah, leadership passed onto John Hackman, who made his headquarters at Kadjabir, a town in the heart of the Eastern Ahanta. He established himself as the bishop and prophet of the church. Bishop Hackman later transferred his powers and leadership to his nephew, Samuel Kofi Ansah. At the time of Hackman's death, Kofi Ansah was only a minor prophet stationed at a small village called Aboadi.²

Bishop Ansah was a mild man, and like his uncle, utterly illiterate. By the 1920s the Twelve Apostles Church had become one of the leading churches in Ahanta with four district headquarters: (1) Ahanta district, head-station at Kadjabir, with thirty-three substations; (2) Fanti district, head-station at Kromentyne near Saltpond in the Central region of Ghana, with sixty-five substations; (3) Nzima district, head-station at Ankobra Mouth; and (4) Gwira-Wassaw district, head-station at Essuawa.³

The Twelve Apostles Church claimed to subscribe to the same articles of faith as the Methodists. C. G. Baeta discovered that Mr. Nathan, one of the leading personalities of the church, recalled that Prophet Harris recommended

¹Haliburton, 71.

²Baeta, 9-11.

³Ibid., 11.

"those whom he had brought away from idols to Christianity should join the Methodist Church."¹

C. G. Baeta discovered also that in the six years following Prophet Harris's visit in 1914, and as a result of his ministry, the Methodist Church to the Apollonia area baptized more than 36,000 adults who had been converted from heathenism. In 1920, the Methodist church had as many as 15,000 ready for baptism. There was a close association between the Methodist and the Twelve Apostles churches.

Converts were not taught before or after baptism. Emphasis, according to Baeta, was upon the activity of the Holy Spirit in enabling certain men and women "to predict future events, warn of impending misfortunes, detect evil-doers and, above all, to cure illness."² All other matters were excluded.

When Prophet Nathan was asked by an interviewer to put in a nutshell what the church stood for, his reply, without any hesitation, was "we are here to heal."³ From all indications, this church thrived very well among the Ahantas. Even now every Ahanta town or village has a "Garden" with one or two prophets. The obvious question is: How could the church of illiterates succeed more than did

¹Ibid., 15.

²Ibid., 15-16.

³Ibid., 15.

the more organized Western churches? The secret was in the method of approach.

The Twelve Apostles Church applied six different strategies¹ in their mission to the Ahantas. Healing was foremost through the use of "holy water" and "Florida water"² (a perfume which was believed to have an aroma that could drive away evil forces responsible for ailments). Other methods of healing were the laying of hands and anointing the sick with olive oil. The converts called themselves Kyiribentoa,³ which means that they needed no Western medicine for healing, but prayer. This method of healing was a very attractive approach not only to the illiterates but also to the elite. Even though the elite did not join the faith, they turned to the prophets in times of sickness, especially ones of evil omens.⁴

¹Haliburton, 71-80. In this book, the author gives an extensive account of the activities of the Prophet Harris and his followers in the Western Nzima as well as the Western Ahanta areas during the early 1900s. He gives a detailed account of the methods Prophet Harris used in healing, casting out demons, and evangelizing the Nzimas and the Ahantas.

²Prophetess Oduku Asua of Akwidaa, interview by author, April 27 1982, in her home which is also her "Garden" at Akwidaa. She said "Florida water" is to ward off evil forces.

³Ibid., 24 June 1983, in her "Garden" at Akwidaa. She emphasized the fact that people who believe in Jesus should not depend on Western drugs for healing. "God is able," she said.

⁴Ibid. She stated that "only God can cure diseases inflicted by evil forces."

Second, there was the casting of demons, something that had plagued the traditional Ahantas for years. If there was a church that could cast out demons and deliver people from evil spirits, then it was worth joining for protection against the evil forces.¹

Third, they held public evangelism. When a patient who had been healed was being baptized, they used the occasion for evangelization. Since their baptism was by sprinkling, it could be done in public for all to see. This was accompanied with singing, dancing, and the shaking of gourds.²

Fourth, they introduced certain religious prohibitions, but only in principle and not in practice. Members were forbidden to eat shark fish, pork, snails, and snakes.³ Such a lifestyle made the adherents different from the members of the other churches. In principle, they outlawed polygamy and illicit sex, but in practice they did it; even some prophets were guilty of having illicit sex with married women who happened to be their patients.⁴

¹Baeta, 16-17.

²Haliburton, 71-72.

³Baeta, 19-20.

⁴I was a witness to one incident in 1979 when a prophet was caught in the act of defiling somebody's wife against the woman's will. His reason was that he had healed her daughter so such an offer was in order. This indicates the degree of corruption.

Fifth, they gave out talismans to their members to wear around their necks and waists to ward off evil spirits. The fear of being bewitched drove many of the elite class to the prophets.¹

Sixth, their women covered their heads with calico headkerchiefs specially blessed by the prophet. Wherever they were they could easily be identified from the non-believers. Another factor was their association with the Methodist Church, the only Protestant church the Ahantas liked to join.

In summary, the Twelve Apostles Church thrived among the Ahantas by the charismatic encounters with evil forces and healing. But to what extent did the Church impact the Christian lifestyles of the believers? None at all. Even though there were 32,000 believers, all in South Ghana by 1987,² 99 percent did not know anything about the Word of God. A great number of this group, more than half, were of the Ahanta tribe, but were mostly illiterates. Their prophets could neither read nor write, nor could the members. Has the Bible not said that God's people perish for lack of knowledge? Believers of this faith and the nominal Methodist members became almost impervious to the

¹Prophetess Oduku Asuah of Akwidaa, interview by author, 26 April 1983, at her "Garden" at Akwidaa. She is a prophetess of the Twelve Apostles Church at Akwidaa. I had the opportunity to interview her about talisman when a cousin of mine was admitted to her "garden" for healing.

²Johnstone, Operation World, 1987 ed., 190.

Adventist message when it was presented to them in the 1950s.

Today there are 1,500 Twelve Apostles congregations in Ghana, mostly in the South. The total membership in 1992 was 125,000. About 45 percent of this membership can be found among the Ahanta.¹

The Coming of the Seventh-day Adventist
(SDA) Church²

The Seventh-day Adventist Church came to Ghana in 1898. Unlike the other Protestant churches mentioned earlier, no missionary introduced Adventism. It was started by a man who picked up a piece of Adventist literature at the seashore at Apam, a fishing village in the central region of Ghana.³

The Seventh-day Adventist Church came to the Ahanta from Kikam in the Nzima district in 1950. By the 1940s the church had been well established at Kikam, with primary and middle schools. It was in these schools that students were

¹Ibid., 1993 ed., 242.

²The history of the coming of the Adventist church to Akwidaa was related to me by S.D. Intsiful, Antwi Baidoe, the late J. K. Ewoo, J. K. Amoako, and William Cobbina, who were the pioneers and converts of the church school in 1950. I had an interview with them in 1980 at Akwidaa when I was doing my first research at the University of Ghana, Legon, under Prof. J. S. Pobee. In 1957, I was a student of the same school.

³For a detailed account of the history of the Adventist church in Ghana, see K. Owusu-Mensa's book, The Akan God of Saturday (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 1990), 1-20.

trained to become teachers of the faith. It is even believed that the early Adventist missionaries who came to the Gold Coast began their work first at Shama and then at Kikam. In fact, the first two ordained ministers of the church were from Kikam and Shama. The church did not thrive very well among the Nzimas and the Shamaians. This, in part, was because of the strong hold of the Twelve Apostles Church.

One of the pioneers of this school of evangelism was Mr. Daniel Cudjoe, an Ahanta and a native of Akwidaa. He saw the need to bring Adventism to his own people. In consultation with the chief, the late Nana Akronoma XIII, and the elders of Akwidaa, a primary school was opened in 1955.¹

The first seven pupils were initially housed at the late Papa Adjobia's house. The young school moved from home to home. After managing alone for some time, Mr. Cudjoe requested the help of the General Manager of SDA schools in Kumasi in the Ashanti region. Two teachers were sent to establish the school which also was the first church.

In 1956, the first evangelistic crusade was conducted at Akwidaa by the late pastors A. Agyei and I. A. Benson, to augment the efforts of the teachers and pupils. This was

¹S. D. Intsiful of Akwidaa, interview by author, 26 April 1982, in his home at Akwidaa. Mr. Intsiful was the head teacher of the Akwidaa SDA Primary School.

the second attempt the church made to evangelize the Ahantas at Akwidaa.

To accelerate the spread of the Adventist message, another method was adopted. In December 1956, the first Adventist camp meeting was held at Akwidaa, during which the first seven adults won during the crusade were baptized. To make the occasion more grand, the SDA Training College choir came from Bekwai in the Ashanti region, to sing at the camp meeting. This gave a boost to the young church and school.

The local chief, who chaired the Sunday function to end the camp meeting, became so impressed that he made a promise of a vast land for an Adventist school to be built. In addition to this, he pledged that he would organize the local people to build the structure. All the campers as well as the townspeople were so inspired that, only a week after the camp meeting, work on six classrooms was begun. This increased the school enrollment as well as the church membership.¹

The church adopted singing as another method of outreach. Choirs and singing bands were organized by the teachers. Members and non-members were attracted to the singing band. In the evenings and at dawn, the choir went down town to sing and preach. Many young people were attracted to the church. In 1959, another camp meeting was

¹David S. Intsiful of Akwidaa, interview by author, 3 April 1982, at his home at Akwidaa. He was the head teacher of the Akwidaa Primary school at the time of the interview.

held at Yaakor, a town fifteen miles from Akwidaa, during which the Akwidaa choir and singing band were featured. Yaakor became the second Ahanta village which accepted the Adventist message.

Akwidaa, after becoming the center of Adventism, sought ways of reaching other Ahanta towns with the Adventist message. In 1970, Isaac Kwam, a member of the Akwidaa church, sowed the seed at Bonsosua. In 1974, after receiving their training from Mr. Daniel Cudjoe at Half Assini in the Western Nzima area, John Donkor and Isaac Eshun, who were both from the Akwidaa church, returned to Akwidaa to help evangelize the surrounding villages and towns.¹ In 1976, John Donkor was appointed a resident literature evangelist at Agona Ahanta. Donkor succeeded in establishing a church in this town.²

In 1976, the message spread to Abura and Princess Town, both in the Western Ahanta, through the literature sold by John Donkor. In 1982, he evangelized Busua, one of the paramuncies (the seat of the traditional chiefs of the

¹Isaac Eshun, interview by author, 22 August 1993, in his apartment at Berrien Springs, Michigan. Being a member of the two-man evangelistic team, he was able to narrate how some of the churches were established in the locality.

²John Donkor of Akyinim, interview by author, April 25 1982, in his home at Akyinim, a village one mile from Akwidaa. Mr. Isaac Eshun, a student at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, confirmed this historical information when I interviewed him too. He was on Donkor's evangelistic team at the time.

Western Ahanta). In the same year, churches were established at Dixcove and Achowa.

The SDA church in Takoradi owes its origin to Mr. Daniel Cudjoe, who sowed the seed there in 1959.¹ The strategy which was applied here was home Bible study.² Like Akwidaa, the church began in the home of the late Mr. Yalley who was a very rich Ahanta in Takoradi. In 1963, the church bought a house, which was one of Mr. Yalley's buildings, at the cost of L4,000.00 (pounds sterling). This house has since served as the church and a parsonage. In 1973, the Takoradi church evangelized Sekondi. In 1976, another church was opened at Kwesimintim. By and large, the tiny seed that Mr. Daniel Cudjoe sowed at Akwidaa spread to many Ahanta towns and villages. If the Seventh-day Adventist church came as early as 1950s, then why has the church not thrived as it should? Why are there no educational institutions and church buildings?

Reasons Why the SDA Church Did Not Thrive in Ahanta

It can be seen from the above historical evidence that the early church in Ahanta used education, singing, camp

¹Agboado of Takoradi, interview by author, April 25 1982, in his home at Takoradi. Mr. Agboado was one of the foundation members of the Takoradi SDA Church. During this interview, he furnished many historical facts about the SDA churches in the Takoradi area.

²Agboado of Takoradi, interview by author, April 25 1982, in his home at Takoradi.

meetings, literature, and public evangelism as the methods for evangelizing the Ahanta. The obvious question is: Why did the church not thrive very well among the Ahanta the way it did among the Ashantis? Several reasons could be given for this failure.

First, if the early Protestant churches were permissive to the extreme, the SDA church was very strict in its life style, to the extreme. The early converts were very fanatical in their food laws. Since all the early converts were youngsters, dependent upon parental care, there were constant rifts between parents who were not members and the young converts. This situation posed a great hinderance to the growth of the church, especially among the elite and the few middle-class members.

The second reason was the strong hold of the Twelve Apostles Church in Ahantaland. Their permissiveness to certain traditional practices, their miraculous healing, and casting out of demons had won the confidence of the people, but posed a blockade to the Adventist message.

Third, funeral services posed another great hindrance to church growth. Among the Ahantas, funeral services are held on Saturdays. The SDA church required members not to attend funeral services on Saturdays, even if it was the funeral service of a parent. Members who disobeyed were disfellowshipped from the church. This prevented many middle-class members from identifying with the church

because of the traditional belief in ancestral worship. Whereas the Methodist and the Twelve Apostles Churches allowed it, it was seen as an anti-traditional and de-cultural law being initiated by the SDA church.

Fourth, the SDA church declared that traditional religion was unworthy and should be abandoned in favor of a search for grace and personal sanctification. All the traditional festivals, including the annual kundum¹ festival, were branded as pagan practices. People who were seen (by special spies sent by the church leaders) participating in any festival were disfellowshipped. I was on the Akwidaa SDA church board when such an action was taken against a member in 1974.

These strict rules led to separatism. Non-believers were seen as people who were lost. Parents became enemies of the church. The church became a repulsive agent instead of a winning agent. Emphasis was on lifestyle rather than on Christ. Fairly soon, all the other Christian churches became enemies. Needless to say, no responsible person in society wanted to identify with a church like this.

A fifth reason was the method of evangelism. It is true that public evangelism had played both a major and a significant role in the growth and expansion of the church,

¹Kundum festival is the annual peak of all the traditional festivities. It is a festival of cleansing, reconciliation, and family reunion as described in chapter 2.

but the method was unattractive to the middle-class members. The lay preachers who did most of the preaching were ordinary people. They had no public-address systems, and no podiums to preach from, but spoke from tables with a kerosene lamp on top. This was the same method which the Twelve Apostles Church had been using and was not attractive to the society elite. It was not possible to attract the middle class by that method.

In the cities, evangelism was not consistent. According to Elder Essiam¹ of the Takoradi church, the last tent evangelism held in the city was in 1960. There is total neglect even with this obsolete approach of evangelism.

Another factor which has led to the present situation is the lack of church buildings. The Ahanta middle class have some social and economic clout. They want to associate with something or a group that is of a higher reputation. To associate with a church worshipping in a classroom is an insult to their prestige and status. They belong mostly to the Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Methodist churches which have cathedrals in the cities.

Even Akwidaa, which was the first to receive the Advent message, has no church building. Takoradi and Sekondi churches have no decent church buildings. Of all the

¹Essiam of Takoradi, telephone interview by author, 2 September 1993.

churches in Ahanta, 98 percent of the members worship in government school buildings, places which can never attract middle-class members to worship. Whereas the Methodists and the Anglicans can boast of cathedrals, my church cannot boast of one simple structure called a church. One underlying factor is the rate of poverty in the church. About 98 percent of the church membership is of the lowest class. Such a condition of the membership has gravely impeded the growth of the church, especially among the middle class.

I would attribute the poverty in the church to the lack of educational institutions in the subregion. A large percentage of the membership are semi-illiterate, with no academic qualification of any type. There is only one middle school in the whole of Ahanta, and that is the one which has been at Akwidaa since 1960.

The church has no institution of any kind, such as a teachers-training college or vocational school, or technical or secondary school in this subregion. Students who come in contact with SDA elementary schools in Takoradi, Akwidaa, and Agona Junction are lost to the Anglican, the Roman Catholic, and the Methodist churches which have institutions of all kinds in the subregion. Once these students attend these institutions for professional training, they join these churches, instead of the Adventist church with which they had an earlier contact.

The Present Status of the Church

On February 4, 1993, the secretary of the South Ghana Conference shared with me the following figures and statistics as listed in Tables 2 and 3 below. There are presently four districts in both the western and the eastern Ahanta, which are the Axim, Agona Ahanta, Takoradi, and Sekondi districts. There are approximately seventy organized churches and companies in all four districts. There is a total membership of 3,309 which is 9.16 percent of the total membership of 36,124 of the entire South Ghana Conference. The per capita income of the Ahanta membership was C1,633.00 (Cedis), which is equivalent to U.S.\$2.72 for the whole year of 1992.

The comparative statistics of the churches in Ahanta for 1991 and 1992 are shown in table 3. The total tithe income for the Conference for 1991 was U.S. \$224,549.¹ The Ahanta church membership could contribute only U.S. \$7,220.17, which is 3.2 percent of the total tithe income. Could it be that this is one of the many reasons why there is a neglect of evangelism in the area? Compared to the Accra districts which contribute almost 60 percent of the

¹General Conference of SDA, "129th Annual Statistical Report-1991," Africa-Indian Ocean Division, 6.

tithe income of the Conference, there is legitimate reason to evangelize Accra city.

TABLE 3
COMPARISON OF CHURCH DISTRICTS IN AHANTA

Year	District	# of Churches	Membership	Tithe in dollars
'91	Axim	12	721	670.00
'92	Axim	12	738	837.42
'91	Agona	12	546	1,633.33
'92	Agona	12	546	2,133.99
'91	Takoradi	20	892	3,083.33
'92	Takoradi	20	1,101	3,733.34
'91	Sekondi	14	706	1,833.33
'92	Sekondi	14	924	2,305.00

Note: South Ghana Conference Statistical figures, compiled by the Church Ministries Department, 1993. The local currency of Ghana is in Cedis. One U. S. dollar is equivalent to 800 cedis.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF CHURCH GROWTH IN SOUTH GHANA
 CONFERENCE FROM 1982-1992
 (Money Amounts in Dollars)

Year	Churches	Membership	Tithe
1982	50	9,861	119,471
1983	51	11,373	229,536
1984	55	14,824	126,472
1985	68	20,815	163,370
1986	90	24,062	227,508
1987	93	26,298	171,216
1988	95	29,910	189,119
1989	100	33,135	129,572
1990	110	36,124	360,991
1991	113	37,127	224,549
1992	113	37,888	394,641

1982-92 Annual Statistical Reports, compiled by the office of archives and statistics of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist church.

From the statistical figures in table 4, it can be seen that growth has reached a plateau. Not one church was added to the sisterhood of churches in the whole of 1992. The same is true on the conference level.¹ The total tithe income for 1992 was \$9,009.75.

One basic reason why the church is not growing in Ahanta, especially among the city dwellers, is that the one-time Ahanta animists and traditionalists have become secularized. Even though they have religious inclinations, they are not church-oriented. If they go to church at all, it is for prestige. Since the SDA Church has been using the same methods used forty years ago, dynamism in attracting and winning the secular-minded, if at all, is lost.

The greatest challenge to the Adventist Church in this subregion is not the threat of traditionalism and superstition, but secularization. There is indifference, neglect, and a feeling that Christianity is irrelevant. Authentic faith is disappearing, even among the members in the countryside. As our pioneers were confronted with the challenge to present a new message to an old world, we are confronted with the challenge to present an old message to a new secularized world. There is an urgent need for another

¹See table 4 on p. 122.

strategy to reach out to the many rich middle-class Ahanta in the twin cities. Of the 3,309 members in the whole Ahantaland, only 15 are of the middle class. The purpose of this project was to develop a strategy for reaching the middle class.

The General Conference ten years statistical report of the South Ghana Conference in table 4 is indicative that the church and membership growth in this conference has severely been affected by secularization. These statistics show a decline in the membership growth in the entire South Ghana Conference from 1986. This is the period when Ghana was going through political and economic crises. As the conditions changed, the people changed as well. But the methods of evangelism remained the same. Tent evangelism lost its effectiveness.

There was an increase in membership of 15 percent in 1983. By 1985, membership grew to 40 percent, but growth began to decline from 1986. Membership dropped from 40 percent to 15 percent in 1986. Growth between 1989 and 1990 was only 2 percent. There was an overall increase of 761 members in the whole of 1992 compared to a 6,000 membership increase in 1985. Giving per capita for 1992 was \$10.00 for the whole year. If there was such a decline on the

conference level between 1986 and 1992, what growth could be expected of the Ahanta districts where evangelism is not a matter of concern to the conference?

One basic reason for the decline in membership growth is that, as the society becomes secular and more sophisticated, the methods of evangelism which were used in the 1950s do not attract as many non-believers as they did then. As people become secular, new methods have to be applied in reaching out to them. Ellen G. White counsels that as gospel workers, "we must learn to adapt our labors to meet men where they are."¹

A better strategy to reach this class of people is crucial. Why? Because the Ahanta SDA membership can no longer continue to depend on outside financial help to survive. The churches in this subregion can no longer continue to worship in classrooms. What if the Ghana government bans the use of school buildings for worship? If the Lord has blessed the middle class with riches, it is our duty to help them to put these riches to a rightful use. Indeed, it is crucial. But how? Which is the right method to be used? Christ's method alone is the right method. This is the strategy that is developed in this project. To

¹White, Gospel Workers, 301.

meet them where they are and lead them to a deeper relationship with Christ, who, in fact, is their greatest need.

The identified felt-needs in chapter 3 could be used as the entering wedge to reach out to them. Ellen White has counseled that:

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people [the middle-class members]. The Saviour 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."¹

By meeting their felt-needs as Christ did for the people of His time, the secularized middle class could be led to a deep relationship with Christ, who in fact is their real need. Dr. Philip Samaan has said that "this is the new evangelism we need."² When a need is felt, information that promises help in meeting that need is perceived as interesting and useful, and more often than not, it will get a person's attention. If their "Safety, Love and Belonging,

¹Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1941), 143.

²Philip G. Samaan, Christ's Way of Reaching People (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1990), 38.

and Esteem needs"¹ could be met, there would be an opening door to reach them.

The time when the SDA Church used pulpits, camp meetings, singing bands, choirs, and even tent crusades to reach the Ahanta is over. I am in perfect agreement with Delos Miles that "we must begin where persons are, rather than where we would like for them to be."² Dr. Bruce L. Bauer has said that:

The first step then in effective communication is to find out what the hearer considers productive of personal happiness. Even before telling him what I think he needs to hear and know I must speak to his desires, I must speak to his interests.³

In the next chapter, I candidly explain my suggested strategy of communicating the gospel to the Ahanta middle class, taking into consideration their desires and interests.

¹Charles H. Kraft, Christianity in Culture (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 86.

²Miles, 55.

³Bruce L. Bauer, "Communicating the Gospel Across Cultural Lines in English School Bible Classes" (M.A. thesis, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, 1974), 17.

CHAPTER SIX

SUGGESTED STRATEGY TO EVANGELIZE

THE AHANTA MIDDLE CLASS

Introduction

In chapter 3 we examined the characteristics of the Ahanta middle class. From the previous chapter we also saw the methodologies the early Christian missionaries used to evangelize the Ahanta middle class. The early missionaries, including the SDAs, could not win the middle class because their methodologies did not meet the identified needs of the Ahanta middle class. Is there another method or approach that could be used to meet their needs in order to lead them to Christ? I feel strongly that there is. This chapter offers a suggested strategy for reaching the Ahanta middle class.

The important question is, what can we do to win the secular Ahanta middle class? At the time of Christ the Romans were secular and materialistic. How did the early Christians reach out to the secular-minded of their day?

Could we also ask: How did the Adventist pioneers reach the secular-minded of their days? Did they have

unique methods or special theological approaches? Did they possess some intriguing novel literature? Did they have evangelistic equipment better than we have today?

Or did their success depend mainly upon a particular strategy which they used as the Spirit led them to reach the better educated and sophisticated leaders in the society of their time? The answer to this last question is a positive yes. They had a strategy. The Apostle Paul, for example, had a strategy: "Paul varied his manner of labor, shaping his message to the circumstances under which he was placed."¹ He said of himself that:

Though I be free from all men, yet I have made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law; to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you (1 Cor 9:19-23).

Ellen White counsels:

God's workmen must be many-sided men, not one-sided men, stereo-typed in their manner of working, unable to see that their advocacy of truth must vary with the class of people among whom they work and the circumstances they have to meet.²

¹White, Gospel Workers, 118.

²Ibid., 119.

How was our Lord able to reach individuals of all classes, types, levels, and categories--from the highest to the very lowest, from fishermen and lepers to rich young rulers and Nicodemus, from groveling prostitutes to wealthy businessmen, from blind beggars to centurions? Ellen White has noted that the people of Christ's time were "more heathen than Jewish, they were absorbed in earthly things, and cared not for the great interests of spiritual life."¹

True, they respected and followed Him partly because of His miracle-working abilities, but "He could also challenge their thinking by His questions, proverbs, and parables."² This was Jesus's method, a strategy. Those of us who live in the 1990s with rapid secularization taking place on a global scale, need to learn to adapt our labor to the conditions of the people, and meet them on their level. For too long we have preached to the non-believers in Ahantal and on our terms not taking into cognisance whether we were meeting their needs or not; now we have to take the message to them on their terms--meeting their felt-needs. The methods we use today for evangelizing the middle class in Ghana need to be rethought, and we need to do some plowing

¹Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), 334.

²H. M. Rasi and Fritz Guy, eds. Meeting the Secular Mind. This is a selected work of the Committee on Secularism of the General Conference of SDA (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981-85), 120.

and sowing of seed in fields where we have never before worked.

We need to see the middle class as Christ would see them, as God's children who are redeemable, and use an appropriate method to win them to Christ. My suggested strategy to evangelize the Ahanta middle class, based upon their needs, is to use "Sequence Evangelism Seminars" (SES). The SES strategy is aimed at reaching the unreached Ahanta middle class with a well-planned witnessing approach that utilizes seminars related to the changing circumstances--the felt-needs and conditions of this class of people.

The ministerial approach should become more of an incarnational ministry--"need-oriented," sharing and caring ministries rather than the "church-oriented" approach which the early SDA church planters in Ahanta used in the 1950s. The SES strategy sees the church not only as God's holy fortress where sinners come for safety, but also as the salt and yeast of a world that must mingle with the secularists in order to lead them to a deeper relationship with the Lord.

The SES Strategy

Edward R. Dayton has defined strategy in broad terms as "an over all approach, a plan, or a way of describing how we

will go about reaching our goal or solving our problem."¹ The SES strategy looks for a range of possible means methods, and various operations that will accomplish the objective of evangelizing the Ahanta middle class. It is a friendship-oriented approach. We must become friends with people before we attempt to lead them to a conversion experience with Christ. This is a strategy that will meet the Ahanta concept of "Odo me a bra ansaana waha Nyamesem,"²--show me your love before you talk to me about your God.

What is the rationale behind the SES strategy? It is based, first of all, upon responses to a questionnaire that I conducted. In addition, there are eleven reasons why I suggest this approach of reaching out to the Ahanta middle class.

1. The cost of running a top notch evangelistic crusade in Ghana today is about 2 million Cedis (\$3,000.00). The statistics in table 2 show that the entire tithe of all the districts in Ahanta in 1992 was under \$9,009.00. How could these members raise \$3,000.00 for just one campaign? Any of the suggested SES seminars for one hundred

¹Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser, Planning Strategies for World Evangelization (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Company, 1990), 13.

²The Ahanta do not pay attention to anyone who does not show friendship. To build a trust bond with an Ahanta is done only through friendship and genuine concern for people. It is friendship before trust.

participants with materials in their hands will not cost even \$200.00 since the materials are already available at the Advent Press at very reasonable prices.

2. A venue for tent crusades in the cities is hard to find. To rent a hall is very expensive, and often hard to find, but the seminars can be held in decent classrooms and in homes. Delos Miles quotes Michael Green as saying:

One of the most important methods of spreading the gospel in antiquity was by the use of homes. It had positive advantages; the comparatively small numbers involved made real interchange of views and informed discussion among the participants possible. The sheer informality and relaxed atmosphere of the home, helped to make this form of evangelism particularly successful.¹

3. Seminars will be scheduled three nights a week or less instead of the six nights a week that is usual for tent crusades, because the Ahanta middle class is so busy.

4. Heavy rains in Ghana can hamper the smooth running of a tent crusade, but seminars held in homes or classrooms can be held all year round without weather interruptions.

5. More seminars can be held simultaneously in different places since locally trained members will be conducting these seminars instead of depending on outside experts. My trainees will be the experts.

6. For years past, it has not been possible to get the Ahanta middle class to come to tent crusades because their needs were not met by those meetings. They will come to a

¹Michael Green, quoted in Miles, 114.

seminar because it will meet their needs, and is suitable for that social class. For example, in 1989 when I was pastoring a church in Monrovia, Liberia, the adviser to the country's president attended one of my seminars for eight weeks. No invitation could bring him to a tent crusade. When I asked what motivated him to come nightly, he gave three reasons: (1) Many of the participants were important people that he knew in the community. (2) The seminars were relevant to his personal and family needs. (3) The class was small and that made him feel comfortable. Delos Miles quotes Soren Kierkegaard as saying: "The many sometimes hinders the one from coming to Christ; the masses sometimes prevents the individual or the few from getting into his saving presence."¹ This is one thing that tent crusades do to people like the Ahanta middle-class who want to be dealt with on a one-to-one basis.

7. A classroom set-up helps produces unity, oneness, and friendship between the participants and with the church members.

8. Converts from the SES approach are usually quality members in terms of financial support for the church. Between 1985 and 1987 I personally experienced this in Monrovia. Through health and revelation seminars, doctors, lawyers, nurses, and managers joined the Better Living Church, and in two years the one time poor church,

¹Soren Kierkegaard, quoted in Miles, 115.

worshipping in a classroom, became the leading church financially in the Liberia mission with the best church building.

9. Converts from the seminars tend to stay in the church because they know what they believe. The seminar approach gives the participants time to study for themselves, ask questions, and allows time for discussion. Once a decision is made, the participant becomes committed to that decision. Moreover, because they were invited by their contemporaries and friends in the church, they tend to stay because of the friendship and encouragement that they experience. The SES strategy is based on friendship evangelism with the results that new converts join their friends as members. Many converts from tent crusades tend to leave the church because once the evangelist leaves, the bond with the church breaks as well, because they have no friends to encourage and nurture them. In Liberia, many of my tent crusade converts left the church the very day I left town, but that was never the case with seminar converts.

10. Public antagonism against the church during tent crusades is eliminated in seminar situations. In one crusade in Monrovia, a sermon on the mark of the beast caused great agitation and commotion in the tent which led to injuries. But never once did I have such an experience in a Revelation seminar, even though the same topic was taught.

11. Perhaps the paramount reason why I feel the SES Strategy is right for the Ahanta middle-class is that the seminars meet the felt-needs of the people. The interest of the participants is sustained because of the benefits.

Finally, in these times of our church's history, when money is becoming crucial in meeting the needs in the Russian republics and Europe, we must use evangelistic methods that do not require outside funds. Our methods must be indefinitely reproducible--with those won in turn being able to witness to their contemporaries. It is this continuity, Miles says, which "leads to spiritual addition, reproduction, and multiplication as called for by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2."¹ Ghana has in the past depended on appropriations and personnel support from the Africa-Indian Ocean Division for evangelism. We need a method which is not dependent on external funds and experts. One such method is the SES strategy. It is a method that the ministers, as well as the few professionals in the church, can use to reach out to their contemporaries in the community.

The SES strategy is a felt-needs approach based upon my questionnaire findings. Below I have described the six

¹Miles, 60. For further readings on this subject, see: Robert E. Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revel Co., 1980; Bruce Larson, Ask Me to Dance (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1972); James A. Ponder, Motivating Laymen to Witness (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1974).

phases of the strategy, namely, the medium (the teacher), the church, the community, the felt-needs seminars, the bridge seminars, and the response seminars.

The Medium

Robert J. Spangler suggests: "It takes an Einstein to win an Einstein, not an Einstein-like method."¹ He explains that the method may be important, but the medium is more important. To him, when "the medium becomes the message, there is a rare combination that has unlimited potential in reaching secular minds."²

Could it be that the church in Ghana is placing more emphasis on the message than on the medium? Ellen White has stated that "the cause of God needs teachers who have high moral qualities and can be trusted with the education of others, men who are sound in the faith and have tact and patience."³ More emphasis should be placed on the medium than on the message that we hope to communicate to the secular mind. The Ahanta middle-class secularists will believe what we are more readily than what we say. The medium must therefore model certain characteristics.

¹Rasi and Guy, 119.

²Ibid., 119. Jon Dybdahl also, writing of the Japanese, said that, "for the Japanese, the Bible is authoritative if it is a coherent system, if it is applicable to everyday life in many areas, and if the teacher embodies the message," in "How Culture Conditions Our View of Scriptures," 9.

³White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:583.

In the past, the emphasis of the SDA church planters among the Ahanta has been on the message, not taking into accounts who the medium was. Such an approach made it difficult for the Advent message to be attractive and acceptable to the middle class. My goal is to impart to my trainees all the knowledge I know about this strategy. One phase of the SES strategy which is vital and of utmost importance to me is the training of the medium--the communicator of the message. In my training programs,¹ will teach the following characteristics which are very essential to a religious teacher. This is because:

It is not better methods, but better men--men who know their Redeemer from something more than hearsay--men who are willing to be nothing in order that He might be everything.²

Characteristics of the Medium

Richard W. Leshner stated that "the way to improve teaching is to improve the teacher."³ P. G. Neefjes suggests that "the personality of the preacher or teacher, his cultural background and that of his listeners play an

¹See "Training the Church" in the next section for the method of teaching that I will use. About this subject see A. B. Bruce, The Training of the Twelve (New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, 1979), 11-18, 39. In this book, he acknowledges a three-fold division of training that forms the foundation for the calls or invitations given by Christ.

²Robert E. Coleman, quoted in Samaan, 39.

³Richard W. Leshner, Tips for Teachers (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1980), 38.

important part."¹ Dr. Lesher highlights some important biblical characteristics which every religious teacher who wants results must possess.

1. "To know and teach the truth."² Ignorance is a terrible limitation. No religious teacher should tolerate that handicap. The Ahanta elite wastes no time with someone who does not know what he or she is doing. Ignorance has been one of the many problems the SDA church in Ahantalanda faces. Because many of our ministers and members are not of the elite class, they cannot win the "Einstein" in society. Knowledge in the truth and the skill to impart it is very vital in reaching out to the Ahanta middle class.

Kent R. Hunter is of the view that the medium must be "a student of the Word, seeing the Bible not only as an academic resource but as the power of their salvation and a blueprint for living."³

¹Neefjes, 32.

²Lesher, 69-71. Under the section, "What Jesus Said about Teachers," Lesher amplifies seven biblical characteristics of a religious teacher who wishes to influence others.

³Kent R. Hunter, Moving the Church into Action (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 83.

"How do we presume to teach when there is so much that we ourselves have not learned to know?"¹ asks Locke E. Bowman, Jr.

The medium must be able to "effectively communicate the Scriptures--teach others."² By teach, Bill Hull means the "ability to transfer knowledge, convictions, and passion concerning values."³ Ellen White adds that the teacher must "go to bottom of every subject he seeks to teach."⁴

2. "Practice what you teach." A discrepancy between words and actions raises questions about the credibility of the teacher. To the Ahanta, words and actions must agree. The Ahanta will say "Mikilabe" which implies, "I am watching your actions." They believe more in actions than in words, and the medium must bear that in mind. This is because: "Everything we do teaches, values are caught more than taught. Character and conviction, must head the list of qualities that make communication most powerful."⁵ As Hunter puts it, the mediums "need to be Spirit-filled leaders in word and deed. Their lifestyle should reflect a

¹Locke E. Bowman, Jr., Teaching for Christian Hearts, Souls, and Minds (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990), 4.

²Bill Hull, The Disciple-Making Pastor (Tarrytown, NY: Fleming Company, 1988), 204.

³Ibid., 204.

⁴White, Evangelism, 479.

⁵Hull, 204.

solid commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord."¹
 Ellen White says simply that the teacher must be "a doer of God's word."²

3. "Be what you practice." The teachings, the actions, the thoughts and feelings of the teacher should all harmonize. Hunter suggests that the medium must be an "edifier, edifying people, not critical or punitive."³ Dr. Leshner observed that a consistent teacher is so because he is a unit, made whole by Jesus Christ. Pretense of any kind will turn off the Ahanta middle class who themselves are living double lives. The teacher must be a model to them. He must possess the three marks of a good teacher-- "faithfulness, availability, and teachability."⁴ These must be the characteristics of the teacher.

James D. Berkeley has said that the man who speaks "wisely and eloquently but lives wickedly may, instruct many who are anxious to learn, (though he is "unprofitable to himself)."⁵ He adds that "they would do good to many if they lived as they preached."⁶ Medium, aim at that!

¹Kent Hunter, 82.

²White, Testimonies, 6:153.

³Kent Hunter, 83.

⁴Howard G. Hendricks, Teaching to Change Lives (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987), 52.

⁵James D. Berkeley, Preaching to Convince (Waco, TX: World Books Publisher, 1986), 76.

⁶Ibid., 76.

4. "Be humble." There should be no superior feelings or actions. The students being taught should not be used for an ego trip. They must be taught only for their benefit. The Ahanta have nothing to do with anyone they find pompous and proud--"Enimo hulu enwo" as they say it. Christ's humility must be emulated by the teacher.

Bill Hull calls it a "self-denial, a sustained willingness to say no to self so I can say yes to God."¹ The medium must consider himself or herself as "the servant of the people" saying to them, "I am here to serve you."² According to James P. Dretke, honesty and humility are the qualities which are "at the heart of every testimony"³ or teaching. Hunter defines true humility this way: "Without Christ I can do nothing. But with Christ I can do everything."⁴ I am of the same view that the word "Christian" can be broken into two words: "Christ" and the suffix-"ian". I would say what Hunter has said that taking "Christ" from the word "Christian," I am left with "ian"--without Christ "I Am Nothing."

Ellen White's counsel is: "Forget self."⁵

¹Hull, 111.

²Ibid., 81.

³James P. Dretke, A Christian Approach to Muslims (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1976), 69.

⁴Kent Hunter, 84.

⁵White, Testimonies, 5:31.

5. "Be Balanced." The Ahanta believe in concrete things and principles which apply to everyday life such as family life, health, prosperity and the future. The teacher of the SES seminars must be balanced in his presentations, not overemphasizing doctrines such as the Sabbath against the family welfare. The family and child training are becoming an increasing concern to the average Ghanaian.

The method of the early Adventist workers among the Ahanta was more truth proclamation than the well-being of the people. Their approach was more church-oriented than people-oriented. This turned off many from accepting the truth. Hunter counsels us to emulate the example of the disciples who "zeroed in on change of the heart."¹

Our approach to evangelize the Ahanta middle class should be people-oriented rather than church-oriented. Being balanced in teaching therefore calls for tact and skill in dealing with student's embedded faults [may be faulty beliefs] and errors.² One must be careful "not to heedlessly wound the self-respect of others."³ Do not pressure to convert, but persuade. It is better to "begin where your students are"⁴ before leading them to where you want them to be.

¹Kent Hunter, 22.

²White, Education, 279-80.

³White, Testimonies, 5:30.

⁴Bowman, 7.

6. "Be new and fresh." The medium must blend both the new, fresh gospel thoughts with the old traditional beliefs of the Ahanta. The medium must lead the students from the known to the unknown. For example, the medium can build on the Ahanta belief in the Saturday-god to teach the biblical Sabbath and the God of creation. The new fresh thought must enliven the old traditional truths already embedded in the beliefs of Ahanta.

Dr. Leshner quotes Bruce's statement in the Expositor's Greek Testament that the teacher must have "a view not to gnosis [knowledge] but to practice; the aim not orthodox opinions but right living."¹ The teacher must aim at the students' daily lives, not just to convert them to a set of beliefs. If we are satisfied with head knowledge only and do not seek a lifestyle change, then we are no better than some of the early Christian missionaries. The early missionaries aimed at making the Ahantas professors of the Christian faith but not converts and active practicing Christians. Such an approach only led to Christianized paganism. To be fresh is to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit."² Howard G. Hendricks is of the view that there is "the law of the teacher" which is this: "If you stop growing

¹Ibid., 71.

²White, Testimonies, 6:153.

today, you stop teaching tomorrow."¹ The medium must be fresh in knowledge daily.

7. Avoid "the flaw of the excluded middle."² This is a statement that Paul Hiebert uses to explain the Western two-tiered view of reality--religion and science. This Western worldview has gravely affected the SDA ministerial view in Ghana because of the Westernized Adventist theology which does not take the African culture into consideration. Neefjes rightly observed that the "Missionaries had a wrong approach to spirit powers. Denial of such powers is scientific and Western, but not specifically Christian."³

This Western view has a blind spot that has made it difficult for many SDA pastors to understand, let alone answer, problems related to spirits, witchcraft, and ancestors.

The SDA ministry in Ghana is used to presenting Christ through rational arguments, not by evidences of His power in the lives of people who are sick, possessed, and destitute. In particular, the confrontation with spirits that appeared so much a part of Christ's ministry belongs, in the minds of many ministers, to a separate world of the miraculous--far from ordinary everyday experience. Dr. Jon Dybdahl has the

¹Hendricks, 27.

²Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," Missiology 10, no. 1 (January 1982): 35-47.

³Neefjes, 45.

conviction that "one of the reasons we have seen fewer conversions than expected in many Third World situations is that western evangelists have failed to grasp this two-fold thrust of evangelism."¹

One of the greatest cultural gaps between the SDA ministry and many traditional religionists is found along this dimension. As Paul Hiebert puts it, many tribal religionists see "the world as alive. Not only humans, but also animals, plants and even rocks, sand and water are thought to have personalities, wills and life forces."² The medium should be aware that the Ahanta would turn a deaf ear to any teaching which denies the existence of these spirit beings. This is because the impact of these evil forces are seen in everyday life. The power of Christ to deliver from evil omens must be emphasized. Charles H. Kraft has stated that "Christian messages and even demonstrations concerning faith, love, forgiveness and most of other truths of Christianity are not, likely to have nearly the impact on such peoples as messages concerning and demonstrations of spiritual power".³

¹Jon Dybdahl, "Faith and Healing," an unpublished article written for the Institute of World Mission (SDA Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, 1993), 1.

²Ibid., 42-43.

³Charles H. Kraft, "Allegiance, Truth and Power Encounters in Christian Witness" in the Power Encounter and Dual Allegiance (Fuller Theological Seminary, CA: 1991), 3.

Delos Miles has said that "power encounters in evangelism"¹ is unavoidable. The Thailand Lausanne statement says that:

We know that we are engaged in a spiritual battle with demonic forces. Evangelism often involves a power encounter, and in conversion Jesus Christ demonstrates that he is stronger than the strongest principalities and powers of evil by liberating their victims.²

Vaughn Allen, writing from the Adventist perspective, has revealed that some of the demonized Christians are members of the remnant church. "They are spiritual brothers and sisters who sit next to you in church from Sabbath to Sabbath, but who, unfortunately, have been caught in Satan's net."³ The medium must not be in this flaw of the excluded middle. He must bear in mind that even the African Christian lives in two worlds--the visible and the invisible. Therefore, the need for Christian witness to deal effectively with spiritual power is obvious from the fact that in most parts of the two-thirds world, large numbers even of those who have "committed themselves to Christ continue to seek spiritual power from non-Christian diviners, curers, priests, fortune tellers and the like."⁴

¹Miles, 35.

²Lausanne Occasional Committee, Bulletin No. 20, September 1980, 7.

³Vaughn Allen, Victory on the Battlefield: Setting Captives Free (Brushton, NY: Teach Services, 1993), 70.

⁴Kraft, "Allegiance, Truth, and Power," 5.

8. The medium must be a man or woman of prayer. Peter A Sarpong stated that "prayers play a major part in African worship and theology. It is a means of solving disturbing problems of life--childlessness, disease, poverty, death, etc."¹ If the middle-class members can see evidences of Christ's power being demonstrated by the SDA ministers, coupled with the traditional belief in the Saturday-God, the potential for conversion to Adventism will be enormous. "True answers to prayers bring glory to God"² and help unbelievers to believe. To Dr. Dybdahl, "we need demonstration evangelism which allows God to work in confirming his Word to those who are seeking to understand what it means to follow Jesus Christ."³ This is possible through faith-healing prayer.

Wesley L. Duewel counsels that:

We need a new intense and radical commitment to prayer, leaders who know and prove the power of prayer, congregations growing ever more mighty in prayer. We need prevailing leadership to mold a new congregation of prayer warriors.⁴

If we will succeed in reaching out to the secular-minded Ahanta middle class, then we the teachers need to

¹Sarpong, 6.

²Ibid., 47.

³Dybdahl, "Faith and Healing," 8-9.

⁴Wesley L. Duewel, Mighty Prevailing Prayer (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press of Zondervan Publishing Association, 1990), 23.

prevail in much prayer. Flora L. Plummer summarizes the spirit the medium must have in the following words:

The spirit of compatibility, of love, of faithfulness, of courage, of patience, of enthusiasm, of sympathy, of reverence, of prayer (emphasis supplied), of discernment, of thankfulness, of wholeheartedness, and of punctuality.¹

A Christian teacher, doing all he or she can to be heard with intelligence, pleasure, and obedient response will succeed more "by piety in prayer (emphasis supplied) than by gifts of oratory. He ought to pray for himself, and for those he or she is about to address, before attempting to speak."² To Mark Finley, the medium who is conducting teaching life-changing seminars should do four things:

"Commit the class to prayer. Know your material thoroughly. Reveal a warmth and friendliness in class. Let people know you really care about them."³

Using the words of Robert Coleman, the medium who wishes to effectively confront people with the gospel must apply, in addition to prayer, "gentleness with the weak,

¹Flora L. Plummer and G. R. Nash, The Spirit of the Teacher (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987), 5.

²Berkeley, 76.

³Mark Finley, The Caring Church: A Leader's Guide to Materials for Use in the Caring Church (Siloam Springs, AR: Concerned Communications, 1990), 12.

severity with the strong--these are the marks of a sensitive evangelist"¹ (soul winner).

Teaching Methods to Use

The teaching method which the teacher must apply is the one that leads the students to find significant meaning in the truths presented. These truths must relate to actual life, and must lead the student to make a commitment to act. The Ahanta believes in acting out and trying to live up to any belief they are convinced is right. This is the reason why the early Adventist converts appeared fanatical to the unbelievers. This is another reason why it is difficult to convert them from what they have held to be true for so long.

To achieve such a commitment from an Ahanta middle class, the teacher should apply certain teaching methods. One of such methods is to discuss specific details of the lesson being taught. Each class session should lead the students to find new insights in the Bible that relate to their traditional beliefs and their secular felt-needs. Emphasis must be placed on practical ideas which will lead them to make commitments to live out what they have learned.² These were Christ's methods of teaching and it

¹Robert E. Coleman, They Meet the Master (Huntingdon Valley, PA: Christian Outreach, 1973), 61. Delos Miles uses the same quotation in his book, How Jesus Won People, 19.

²Miles, 16.

is safe to emulate His example. In every seminar, the teacher must lift up Christ as the sole solution to all problems of humanity.

Dr. Lesher cautions: "The devil's style of learning in religion is information only; but Christ's style is information followed by corresponding behavior."¹

Traditionally, the Ahanta likes storytelling to explain the point the teacher wants to establish. Sometimes the teacher can use stories or illustrations to make clear a biblical truth--not a story merely to entertain, but one that will make the lesson being taught understandable and unforgettable. Jesus used a lot of parables to establish unforgettable truths.

Jesus in His method of teaching also asked a lot of questions. According to Dr. Lesher, Jesus used questions "for the purposes of rebuke, response, information, obvious answers and self-answer."² The teacher must emulate the Master's example. The teacher must ask thought-provoking questions about new truths. At the close of a session, the teacher must ask an interesting question about the next lesson, "in the hope of catching a nonstudier's interest."³

It is important also to note that Jesus not only used questions, but He answered questions as well. He even

¹Ibid., 18.

²Ibid., 74.

³Ibid., 76.

answered what could be called "wrong questions."¹ Christ never postponed an answer to any question. Delos Miles has said that "evangelism is listening to someone until he tells his UC (Ultimate Concern), then you tell him about your J.C. (Jesus Christ)."² Questions are one way of hearing someone's ultimate concern. The Ahanta becomes suspicious if answers to questions are postponed. Marie McIntyre cautions teachers "never to disregard a student's questions."³ By asking and answering questions in class, the students become involved. Such involvement, according to McIntyre, "comes about more like a contagion than an enforcement."⁴

Marlene D. Lefever said this about questioning and discussion:

Questioning and discussion stimulates interest and thinking, and helps students develop the skills of observation, analysis and logic. Discussion allows students to hear opinions that are more mature and perhaps more Christlike than their own; discussion stimulates creativity and aids students in applying what they have learned to everyday situations.⁵

¹Ibid., 76.

²Miles, 44.

³Marie McIntyre, Aids for Grade School Religion Teachers (Noll Plaza, Huntington Valley, PA: Our Sunday Visitor, 1972), 49.

⁴Ibid., 12.

⁵Marlene D. Lefever, Creative Teaching Methods (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1986), 224-5.

This is the aim, the goal, and the purpose of the SES seminars. It is to lead the Ahanta secularists from a life of secularization to one of Christlikeness. Christ's method of questioning and discussion therefore is a method worthy of emulation.

Goals for the Teacher

The teacher of the truth must have two goals--a short term and a long term goal. The short-term goal is basically to impart the knowledge of God and His will to the students. The purpose of this knowledge is to develop a character that is Godlike, and this development of character is a divine-human cooperation that leads to ultimate salvation.¹ As a long-term goal, the teacher must focus his or her eyes on "salvation in the kingdom of God."² Anything that does not contribute to this goal, according to Leshner, "has no place as a short-term goal in the class study."³

The connection between the study and salvation or conversion to Adventism is the development of a Godlike character. This must be the teacher's basic goal, so that when a participant becomes an Adventist, that convert will be a good Christian. Ellen G. White affirms that "the great

¹Leshner, 8.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

aim of the teacher should be the perfecting of Christian character in himself and in his students."¹

To achieve this goal calls for a thorough preparation. The teacher's preparation for each session must include "a spiritual preparation that will make him humble, teachable, and loving."² It also calls for a basic teaching strategy which will contribute to the achievement of both short-term and long-term goals.

Strategies to Achieve Goals

Knowing the truth is one thing but a strategy to teach and impart that truth in a way that will win people's confidence is another. Marie McIntyre counsels that "the religious teacher should evaluate self through an analysis of personal modes of communication."³ This self-evaluation in human relations includes what she calls "the animate phases of non-verbal communication."⁴ She defines these animate non-verbal communication devices as:

The body posture and dress; facial expressions; geography--i.e., movement of the body away from or towards the object of communication; hand clasp or hand shake; gestures; control maneuvers such as: use of silence, eyebrow raising, throat clearing, finger snapping, finger raising, shoulder shrugging, head

¹White, Counsels for Parents, Teachers and Students Regarding Christian Education (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1913), 68.

²Leshner, 13.

³McIntyre, 122.

⁴Ibid.

shaking, winking, frowning, eye closing, smiling, nodding, folding of arms.¹

A great caution should be exercised by the teacher in the use of these animate non-verbal communication devices because of cultural differences.

For example, thumbs up in one culture means a sign of achievement or encouragement, but in the Ghanaian culture, it is a profane non-verbal communication sign. Therefore, the appearance and the attitudes of the teacher are of utmost importance. After all, imaging Christ, which should always characterize the teacher, is no small challenge. McIntyre affirms that "the Confraternity [brotherhood] of Christian Doctrine can be as good as its teachers make it."² The teacher must remember that human relations are often conditioned by non-verbal communication.

Another strategy worthy of note, among the actions that influence character, is the very act of speaking. Ellen White cautioned that "words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words."³ Nagging and scolding, even in the face of provocation, should have no place in any

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., 118.

³White, Desire of Ages, 323.

session. "Listening, giving and forgiving should be the elements to be aptly applied."¹

Actions speak louder than words. And since words spoken also have power to react on human character, the medium who wishes to impart to others the words of truth must model the truth presented in mannerism, behavior, capability, mental perception, and spirituality. If the teacher will find the time to prepare and be self-disciplined, the Ahanta middle class will find the time and the self-discipline to listen and positively respond. The period when any teacher could say something from Scripture and get a response from the Ahanta is over. It now takes an "Einstein to win an Einstein, not an Einstein-like method."

The Church

The second vital phase of the SES strategy is the preparation of the local church. Russ L. Potter stated, "If you focus first on the people you have, they'll then reach the world beyond."² Jesus focused first on His disciples. He first taught them about unselfish love, and about how to serve; then He sent them out to reach the world. Ellen White counsels that there should be "in every church well organized companies of workers."³ According to

¹Leshner, 40.

²Russ L. Potter, Sequence Evangelism (Siloam Springs, AR: Creative Christian Publishing, 1990), 1.

³White, Evangelism, 112.

Locke Bowman, this strong ministry of teaching in the churches "depends on lay involvement, not just as participants in classes or groups but in planning and leadership as well."¹

However, before sending out these companies of workers, Lesslie Newbigin counsels, "The marks of the cross will have to be recognizable also in the lives of its members"² if the church is to be the authentic presence of the kingdom. The true life of the church is found where the mission of Christ is happening and the members bear the scars of His passion. One pastor is quoted to have said that he was afraid to bring in new members because his church was full of jealousy, hatred, and lack of true Christian love.³ Truly, a prepared church can accept new people and nurture them so that they too can influence others. An unprepared church opens a back door for the new members to leave.

Roy C. Naden rightly observed, "It is only people who feel accepted and accept themselves just as they are, who are able to reach out and accept other people just as they

¹Locke L. Bowman, Jr., Teaching Today: The Church's First Ministry (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 203.

²Lesslie Newbigin, Mission in Christ's Way (New York: Friendship Press, 1987), 18-19.

³Potter, 3.

are."¹ Church-growth researchers suggest that this preparation of the church involves "Healing and Training."² When the members are spiritually alert, when they have been trained in the methods of soul winning, then they can be trusted with the work of reaching out to others.

Preparing the Church Spiritually³

If the SDA Church in Ahanta will be able to break through to the secularist middle class, then the pastoral and lay leadership should have the same dream as the North American Division Leaders have--spiritual life. Such a dream will do two things:

The vast majority of Adventists will perceive our message as Christ-centered, relevant, and joyful, moving our religious experience toward an authentic, vibrant spirituality characterized by the observable presence of the Holy Spirit....[And] the character of the local church will be transformed, with the majority of the congregations described by their members as mission-driven, inclusive, and accepting.⁴

There must be a revival in the church where the members seek to be true to the Lord and desire to become a Christ-

¹Roy C. Naden, Your Gifts (Berrien Springs, MI: IPD 1989), 5.

²Russ L. Potter, Seminars for Reaching People Who Live in the Real World (Siloam Springs, AR: Concerned Communications, 1990), 3.

³To read more what the church should do in reaching out to the secularists, see Anthony Campolo, A Reasonable Faith: Response to Secularism (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1983), 157. Campolo counsels the church to be a listening body to the secularists' questions and provide answers.

⁴"NAD Leaders Share Their Dreams," Adventist Review, November 25, 1993, 6.

centered community if there is to be any credibility in witness. There must be "no dichotomy between the profession of the church and its practice. Because, "being precedes acting, and seeing must accompany hearing."¹ A week of revival must be set aside "for heart searching, praying, and fasting before the launching"² of the SES strategy.

Importunate prayer must be emphasized. A team of prayer warriors should be organized. Wesley Duewel has suggested that:

We need prayer warriors who feel the slavery, the absence of any eternal hope, and the doom of the unsaved; who feel the transforming power, joy, and glory from Christ of the saved.³

During this week, the church must operate "wholly within the framework and system of believing prayer which God has ordained."⁴ This is vital because a church without an intelligent, well-organized, and systematic prayer program "is simply operating a religious treadmill."⁵

During this week, there must be "less talking, and more sincere, earnest prayer."⁶ Every member must make a consistent effort to clear the King's highway by confession,

¹Lausanne Occasional Committee, no. 21, 1982, 57-8.

²See a suggested program outline for a spiritual week of revival in appendix B.

³Duewel, 23.

⁴Rasi and Guy, 121.

⁵Ibid.

⁶White, Evangelism, 112.

repentance, and forgiveness, "following peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14, KJV). Any strategy for reaching out to the secular-minded must start with earnest prayer, faith, love, and the hope that God's people will themselves be blessed and become a blessing. This is what I mean by spiritual preparation.

Evangelism in general is a spiritual battle, and unbelief, hate, and indifference can create a field of resistance. "Faith and prayer, on the other hand, can contribute to an atmosphere of expectancy and response,"¹ says James D. Berkeley.

Training the Church

I agree with J. R. Spangler that:

If we can motivate the few learned individuals, sophisticated thinkers, brilliant minds within our ranks to personal witness for Christ, we would be able to reach more readily the secular-minded people.²

Bowman cautions that "the essential lay involvement in the church's work of teaching cannot happen without strong encouragement and support from the clergy."³ The question is: Who gets selected? "Those who have the proper character, faithfulness, and gifts and have a burning desire for the work"⁴ is the counsel of Bill Hull.

¹Berkeley, 144.

²Rasi and Guy, 121.

³Bowman, Teaching Today, 203.

⁴Hull, 241.

If indeed it takes an Einstein to win an Einstein, then the members must be trained to reach out to their own professional and social contemporaries. Doctors must be trained to use the SES strategy to reach out to their fellow doctors, lawyers to lawyers, businessmen to businessmen, nurses to nurses, and so on. It has been suggested: "Reaching intellectual and educated individuals with the Adventist message can be accomplished more readily through peers who have a vital connection with the Lord Jesus Christ."¹

Before launching the SES strategy in any district, besides the spiritual preparation, I will call for a training program for the middle-class men and women in the church, for three week ends. Only the selected trainees will undergo this training. The training should take six sessions, with each session taking three hours.

The Training Methods

Bill Hull has suggested that "the pastor is well advised to imitate Christ as a teacher, rather than his successful colleague."² But how did Jesus teach His disciples? How he taught them is crucial to me. Bill Hull has summarized Jesus's teaching method in six steps: "Tell

¹Rasi and Guy, 123.

²Hull, 190.

them what. Tell them why. Show them how. Do it with them. Let them do it. Deploy them."¹

I will follow these principles in my training program. I will explain to the trainees what the SES strategy is about and its effectiveness, using the Monrovia experience as an example. I will give them my vision for middle-class evangelism, explaining to them the reasons--especially the theological and financial reasons why they should be reached with the Advent message.

I will take them step by step into how to conduct each seminar. I will make available to each trainee the materials for each seminar. I will use them as seminar participants and demonstrate how to teach the lessons, emphasizing eye contact, body language, use of questions, and making appeals for decisions. After my demonstration I will group them into smaller groups of fives, with each trainee teaching a group in turns, following the example of Jesus.

Each participants should take a written test on the characteristics of the medium, the teaching methods, goals for the teacher, strategies to achieve goals as indicated in this project. The second phase of the training program will be to group the members into smaller groups for the trainees to teach them in the church. Because the church has gone through a revival, it should be a healthy exercise.

¹Ibid.

In the training program, emphasis should be laid on the desire for self-preservation, recognition and self-expression, acceptance, and appreciation. These are some basic needs of the Ahanta middle class.¹ These qualities are also motivating factors for mobilizing laymen for service. I will emphasize these principles in the trainees during the training program in order that they will be able to use them effectively to reach out to the Ahanta middle-class during the seminars. The goal is to set before the trainees a vision of what the church would be like with many new members and abundant love. "Make sure you have a plan; explain the plan to them; present a model of how you plan to work out the plan,"² suggests Bill Hull. They will stand by the plan and work with it.

After the training program, the members will provide a group of names to be invited for the felt-needs seminars and a date will be set for a district wide program when all the trained personnel will begin the first phase of the seminars, either in their homes, classrooms, or halls. I [the trainer] will be available to each medium in case of emergency, serving as their mentor. Bill Hull says "When the trained disciple maker is deployed, he will have more responsibility, more freedom, but will maintain the

¹See "Social Characteristics" of the middle class.

²Hull, 25.

relationship to his mentor as well."¹ This training strategy will be from local to district, district to regional, regional to national levels. In 1985 when I was the South Ghana mission evangelist, we organized evangelism training seminars on all levels. After the training, a date was set during which all the churches in the mission began the "New Life In Christ" crusades. After three weeks of evangelism, 1500 were baptized mission-wide. In six months, 6000 souls were won.²

Ellen White says that such a training plan is "good generalship [of the pastor] and the result will be found far better than if he should seek to perform the work alone."³ The pastors must train the intellectuals in the church to use this method to reach out to their contemporaries.

Kent Hunter counsels that "quality leadership is one of God's greatest gifts for the congregation that wants to go through the servant change to become a church in action."⁴

¹Hull, 210.

²See the 1984-85 Annual Statistical Reports, compiled by the office of archives and statistics of the General Conference of SDA. Membership in 1984 rose from 14,824 to 20,815 by the end of 1985. Such growth has not happened since.

³White, Evangelism, 357.

⁴Kent Hunter, 88.

He adds that such "leadership is a key for moving a church."¹ Bill Hull has observed that "the pastor is the trigger mechanism that sets the process into motion."² He adds: "The best way and the right way to grow a church is to improve the members' penetration ability. Target an unreached group, develop a plan, recruit personnel, and go for it."³

During the spiritual preparation and the training of the church, even during and after the SES seminars, the seven basic requirements and recommendations of the Lausanne Committee for world evangelization for any church that seeks to reach the secular-minded must be applied. These are:

Vital patterns of worship, regular Bible teaching, fellowship and caring groups, every-member ministry utilizing all the gifts of the spirit, a sense of God-consciousness, expectancy that God will work, and a constant measure of joy.⁴

Emphasis must also be placed on the fact that we should allow the Holy Spirit to use us. We must not try to use the Holy Spirit. The success of the SES seminars will depend basically upon the unction of the Holy Spirit on the teachers, the entire church, as well as the participants.

Because SDAs have a tendency to isolate themselves from segments of society, the SDA Church in Ghana is out of touch

¹Ibid., 88.

²Hull, 83.

³Ibid., 113, 250.

⁴Lausanne Occasional Committee, no. 23, 1980, 12.

with the middle class. If our church is to reach them with the Word of God, we have to mingle with them. As Kenneth O. Cox puts it, "We can't pull a brand out of the fire without getting our hands warm."¹ It is time to break away from our concept of isolation from the world and mingle with them to meet their felt-needs. Let us be the real salt of the earth!

The Community

The target group for the SES strategy is the Ahanta middle-class in the Sekondi and Takoradi areas. I sent 350 questionnaires to the Takoradi and Sekondi city churches to be given to the middle class members who they knew in the community. I also gave 150 different questionnaires to the few middle class members and pastors in all the Ahanta churches soliciting their views about a possible strategy to evangelize the Ahanta middle class. Of all the questionnaire, I received 98 percent responses from the community survey, and 100 percent responses from the church members. The responses to the questionnaire have given me the basis for this strategy and some idea of who can be invited to the seminars.

Another method of research which I will use in the future is to do a community survey. Use the members in the church to reach out to their contemporaries in the community

¹Rasi and Guy, 79.

with survey sheets finding out the felt-needs of the community members. How do you find out what their needs are? Hunter suggests:

One of the best sensitivity-building exercises is to ask a group of people from your church to canvass a random sample of houses in your community. Ask, 'What could a church do to help people around here'?¹

David J. Newman in an editorial in Ministry magazine points out: "If you are to reach secular people, you must spend time with them."² Using the words of Wolfhard Touchard: "Make yourself visible at their clubs, their offices, and their homes. Build acquaintances before you invite them."³

Conducting a survey will enable the members to meet the secular middle-class members where they are and on their own terms. This calls for a church that will practice incarnational ministry. In the past, because we were afraid that we might be contaminated by the world, we withdrew into fortress-type enclaves and mentalities. Now we have to go to the people. Believers are the salt! If the salt does not penetrate the food, it will not be effective.

Another method is to approach the local media people with confidence and enthusiasm. Show them your overall

¹Kent Hunter, 37.

²Newman, 6.

³Wolfhard Touchard of Berrien Springs, interview by author, 8 December 1993, in his office at the James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. Wolfhard Touchard is a specialist in seminars.

seminar planning and scheduling arrangements so they can envision the scope and sequence of what you are offering your community. If possible and when it becomes necessary, purchase radio time to give it regional impact. By such publicity, members of the middle class, who always want to identify with popular events, will respond.

The Felt-Needs Seminars

This is the first phase of making friends for God. It is also the third phase of the SES strategy. In our endeavor to reach the secular Ahanta middle class, we must remember what Kenneth O. Cox said in his article "Evangelistic Problems and Suggestions": "People will not change until they want to change and until they see that a change is beneficial in terms of their basic needs and desires."¹

Therefore, as we think of reaching the Ahanta middle class, we need to find out how we can meet the needs they have. Why? Because their felt-needs must become our entering wedge. These needs may not be their greatest needs. But we can get their attention and awaken a desire only as we minister to their identified felt-needs. Felt-needs are the point of contact.

Mark Finley in his article "Target and Tactics in Meeting the Secular Mind" suggested: "It is only programs

¹Kenneth O. Cox, quoted in Rasi and Guy, 82.

that meet their felt-needs--such as the Five-Day Plan to stop smoking, the Stress and Management workshop, and Family Life programs that will capture their interest at all."¹

Dr. Gottfried Oosterwal confirms that there is ample evidence that "people respond more wholeheartedly to the gospel of Jesus Christ if they experience it as relevant to their particular needs."² Dr. Jon Paulien adds: "The basic point of contact between Christian and secular people is the point where a specific solution of the gospel can be applied to a felt-need."³

The best response will be achieved when communication is directed to an area of felt-needs as an entry point. When a need is felt, information that promises help in meeting that need is perceived as interesting and useful, and it will get a person's attention. Dr. Paulien accurately states that "every human being needs to find release from one's own failure to live up to a self-imposed standard."⁴

My questionnaire responses indicated that many Ahanta middle class have become prisoners to stress, smoking, drinking, and workaholism. A release from this lifestyle of

¹Mark Finley, quoted in *ibid.*, 103.

²Gottfried Oosterwal, quoted in *ibid.*, 59.

³Jon Paulien, quoted in *ibid.*, 37.

⁴*Ibid.*

bondage is necessary before the gospel can be presented effectively.

"By seeking to serve people, it is possible to move from their felt-needs to their deeper need concerning their relationship with God."¹ All secularists, even if they seem indifferent or too derogatory, have such needs. Somehow, we must show them how the Adventist message meets these needs. Marlene D. Lefever rightly observed that as people move from one level to another, they "are motivated by their lowest unfulfilled need"² before they aspire to self-actualization needs which the gospel provides.

We need to learn to speak of salvation in ways other than those to which we have been accustomed. To the secular people, as Robert M. Zamora puts it in his article "The Gospel of the Abundant Life," "Salvation from this world is not an acceptable solution; salvation in this world is."³ If the Ahanta middle class could be saved from their felt-needs here and now, then they can hope for salvation from this world through the gospel. In my questionnaire responses mentioned earlier, over 73 percent requested a stop-smoking seminar, 98 percent requested health seminars, 85 percent stress seminars, and more than 90 percent requested family enrichment seminars.

¹Lausanne Occasional Committee, no. 21, 23.

²Lefever, 107.

³Robert M. Zamora, quoted in Rasi and Guy, 131.

If it is true that "felt-needs sequence evangelism endeavors to meet people in an atmosphere where personal relationship and confidence can grow,"¹ then it is a good entering wedge. The purpose of these seminars is to establish confidence and build friendships with people.

The question people of this class are asking is not, "What must I do to be saved?" Instead, they complain about stress, and ask: What can I do about it? How do I handle my children? How can I quit smoking and drinking? How can my health improve? Felt-need seminars offer answers to all of these questions.

Two felt-need seminars which can be used as an entering wedge are Breath-Free and stress reduction seminars.² These felt-needs seminars are based on questionnaire responses. Thomas Neslund is of the view that "the time has come for the Adventist Church to move beyond smoking cessation and begin to take direct action to oppose the spread of smoking worldwide."³ What then should be done? "The church should work to prevent people from smoking. The church should help current smokers to quit,"⁴ he suggests.

¹Ibid.

²For the purposes of this project, these seminars are not developed anew in the project. I would recommend the already-prepared seminar materials which are available in Adventist Book Centers.

³Thomas Neslund, "Exporters of Death," Adventist Review, December 16, 1993, 15.

⁴Ibid.

By offering such felt-need seminars, the SDA Church will become a place where the Ahanta middle class would probably turn for help in many areas of life, rather than turning to spiritualists and occultic religions which are gaining ground in Ghana. The completion of this phase of the SES strategy will create confidence and friendship for the second phase--the bridge seminars.

The Bridge Seminars

The fourth phase of the SES strategy is the bridge seminars¹ which provide the crucial link between physical felt-needs and spiritual felt-needs. These seminars help the participants to consider spiritual answers to life's questions. These two suggested seminars--Family Wellness and Positive Parenting--are to serve as links between the felt-need seminars and the response seminars. They are to help the church to continue meeting people's needs while presenting the solutions that last forever.

Jesus' three-and-one-half-year ministry was the bridge He laid down between heaven and earth; a bridge between sinful man and a holy God; a bridge stretching from hell to heaven. "Whosoever will" (Rev 22:17, KJV) could find a

¹The suggested bridge seminars are Family Wellness and Positive Parenting seminars. I suggest that the medium acquire the already prepared materials and use them. The purpose of this project is not to prepare new seminar materials but to suggest the sequence of using the prepared-materials. Christ must be presented as the center of family life in both seminars.

place on that bridge. And He takes them from precisely where they were all the way to reconciliation with God. As a body of believers, we can meet people at whatever point of interest or disinterest they may have. That was Christ's method. By meeting their needs, we can lead them along the bridge, which is Jesus, toward God. This is why the bridge seminars must be Christ-centered. Whenever the church is reaching out in love to meet physical, mental, and social needs, it is forming a bridge of spiritual concerns. Our task as the church is simply to help people from their present concerns to more ultimate concerns.

My questionnaire responses show that family life is a major concern of all the middle class. Over 90 percent indicated their interest in marriage and child rearing seminars. Every average Ghanaian middle class is very much concerned about his or her family because of continuity of traditional family heritage. If we can help them find positive solutions to their family problems, many will respond to the Advent message.

The Response Seminars¹

The suggested response seminars are "How to Make Christianity Real," and Daniel and Revelation seminars. The first suggested Response seminar--How to Make Christianity Real--is nondoctrinal in its approach, making it the perfect follow-up choice to the bridge seminars. This seminar takes a look at: The power of personal faith, the steps to Bible studies; finding God's will, and handling discouragement. This seminar will blend the felt-needs of the participants and show them step by step how to accept Christ. It is only when Christ has been accepted as Saviour that the SDA doctrine will become meaningful and acceptable. Dr. Maurice Bascom has cautioned that "when people accept doctrinal and prophetic truth before accepting Christ, they have a new set of opinions, but their hearts remain unchanged."²

The Daniel and Revelation seminars are doctrinal. Once friendship has been established through the felt-needs and bridge seminars, the new friends now have confidence in the

¹The response seminars are "How to Make Christianity Real" and the Daniel and Revelation seminars. The first one is a positive seminar that brings out the practical, yet often-neglected steps involved in experiencing a vibrant, living Christianity. The material prepared by Dr. Roy Naden, School of Education at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, is an excellent one to be used. The materials can easily be ordered through the Advent Press in Accra, Ghana. Daniel and Revelation seminar materials are also available at the Advent Press in Accra, Ghana.

²Maurice Bascom, Adult Sabbath School Lessons. Biblical Models of Soul Winning (Silver Spring, MD: Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of SDA 1994), 41.

church's ability to provide answers to their doctrinal questions. The response seminars provide the tools to meet this quest for spiritual answers. It is the climax of the SES strategy which already has gone through five phases.

How to Organize a Successful Seminar

Learning from the mistakes of the early Adventist church planters, we need to plan these seminars to meet the tastes of the middle class. There should be three phases to each seminar--the invitation, the banquet, and the graduation. Each phase is of great significance to the outcome of the entire strategy.

The Invitation

First, secure a date and place for the seminar. It is not wise to have the first felt-need seminar in the church. Mark Finley counsels that "church locations may not always be best for conducting a seminar."¹ In the choice of the location, the following questions must be addressed: Is the community accustomed to going there? Will the middle class feel comfortable there? Is it a neutral location where the non-religious will feel relaxed? Will members of other faiths be comfortable there? The location could be a civic auditorium, public meeting room, or a local school classroom or auditorium.

¹Finley, 7.

Having announced the date, let members submit names for invitations. All invitations must be personal and signed by the pastor. It must bear the name of the invitee, which makes the invitee feel important and accepted. This is a basic need of the middle class who feel lonely and rejected by the Christian community. The invitation letter should be carried by people of the same social status in the church to those in the community, bearing in mind that it takes an Einstein to win an Einstein. The invitation letters must go out four weeks before the set date. These letters must indicate the dates, and the hours of the seminar, as well as the venue.

Wolfhard Touchard suggests that the invitation must indicate the benefits of the seminar. It must clearly state why the invitees should adjust their lives and times to come to the seminars.¹

A week prior to the set date, reminders must be sent to all the invitees. Again the reminders must be personalized and hand-delivered by the members.

The Opening Night

The opening night should be a grand one. The room for the seminar should be decorated, thus meeting the tastes of the secular, materialistic invitees. The teacher, the

¹Wolfhard Touchard, interview by author, December 8, 1993, in his office at James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

trained team members, and the church members who invited the participants must be there an hour earlier than the set time. The lessons and all the necessary materials must be set in order on the tables.

As the invitees come in, welcome each warmly. Ask the members to shake their hands. Hand shaking is of a cultural significance among the Ahanta. Let them sit at tables facing each other, thus creating an atmosphere of friendship. The Ahanta have a sense of commonality and sharing of ideas, and the seminar set-up should indicate that cultural value.

Introduce yourself as the teacher of the seminar, as well as the team members. Let each participant introduce himself or herself to the class members. Take the participants through an orientation of the study materials.

Guidelines for Class Discussion¹

After the introductions and the orientations, share with the participants some guidelines that should apply during the seminar.

1. Anyone at anytime may raise his or her hand to ask questions or make a comment. This keeps the seminar from becoming a one-man show and encourages class discussion. The Ahanta middle class dislike the imposition of ideas.

¹These guidelines are abstracts from the Teacher's Manual: Revelation Seminar (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub., Assn., 1985), 3.

This will give them room to ask general questions without fear.

2. All questions and comments must be directed to the teacher only. No one person may dominate the class time with his or her personal questions or comments.

3. Love, kindness, respect, and courtesy must be shown to all in the class.

4. The teacher has the right to limit discussion.

5. Close every session with a short devotional. The devotional must be short and related to the topic of the seminar session. This is not a time for doctrinal lessons, but rather an opportunity to display how the loving truths of God apply to and enrich one's life. These truths can do the same for the guests,¹ suggests Mark Finley.

Some Cautions

Because you are dealing with secular-minded people, care must be taken not to offend them in your presentations.

1. Do not be biased, preaching or teaching Adventist doctrines.

2. Do not denigrate any religious group down in your presentations.

¹Finley, 13.

3. Do not be judgmental. "Jesus was not a negative preacher who sought to build himself up by tearing others down."¹ Such should be our attitude.

4. Do not use the term "we Adventists" and "non-Adventists."

5. Avoid such statements as "Ellen White says" (whether she in fact said it or not), or "the Spirit of Prophecy says." Such Adventist expressions can easily offend the middle class, making them suspicious of your intentions.

The Banquet

The purpose of the banquet is for fellowship. Fellowship and socialization are basic needs of the secularists. The banquet also gives an opportunity for each participant to testify to the benefits of the seminar. In my experience, such testimonies encouraged many to make positive decisions for Christ. For example, in one seminar in Monrovia, one man who was the manager of Sabena Airlines made a decision for baptism. His decision influenced almost the whole group of participants to take similar decisions. Of the twenty-seven participants, twenty-three were baptized--all middle-class members.

The banquet should be on the last Sunday of the seminar, prior to the week of graduation. This allows the teacher a week to formulate the right approach in visiting

¹Miles, 57.

and helping participants to make decisions. Appeals to give up smoking, alcohol, and to accept Christ as saviour always had positive responses in all my seminars. Bascom says that "in every relationship with a nonbeliever the time comes when we must appeal for a decision."¹ Participants are to be encouraged to bring their families to the banquet. The rationale behind this is to give the teacher an opportunity to know them, visit with them, and invite them to future seminars.

Graduation

The graduation is the climax of each of the SES seminars. The graduation for the response seminars should be held during the last Sabbath of the seminar. The graduation for the felt-needs and bridge seminars should be held in the halls where they were conducted. However, the same closing ceremonies, such as the banquet, should be held for all the seminar programs.

During each seminar, the names of all the participants and their friends and relatives should be gathered in order to invite them to the graduation service. Again, The reason for this invitation to the graduation services is to get to know people and invite them for future seminars.

The response seminars graduation should be a very joyful yet solemn occasion. The joyful aspect of this

¹Bascom, 45.

program include the singing, commendations, encouragements, testimonies, and the support the teacher will give to each participants. The program for the graduation service is usually different from a normal divine worship service since the teacher uses the opportunity to explain the benefits of SES seminars to the invited guests. The teacher should have two participants ready to give testimonies and invite a good choir to sing for the service that day. During this part of the program the invited guests should be invited for subsequent seminars. Ask for names from the pulpit and let your helpers write down those names. From my experience in Monrovia, during graduation services, I had enough names for the next seminars without sending out invitation letters.

The solemn part of the graduation is the message for the day. The preacher must present Christ as the only solution to life's problems like stress, family, and health instead of smoking and drinking. It must be a message of hope, followed by a solemn appeal for people to give their lives to Christ. The sermon should come after the distribution of diplomas to the participants. I usually preached a powerful evangelistic sermon on Christ and His saving power. Baptism can follow the graduation. From my experience in Monrovia, the graduation program brought more people to church. The end result was that many middle-class members who attended the program enrolled for future

seminars. Many joined the church because of their friends who were already in the church through the seminars.

Summary

In conclusion, I want to express and re-emphasize my optimism that the SES strategy really works. In 1985 I pastored a church whose membership had dropped from 800 to 75. They were worshipping in a classroom. The total church funds for the past year was only \$21.00. The church's monthly tithe income was only \$150.00. But with the help of a sponsor, the SES strategy was introduced. Within a period of two years, the church membership rose to 450, and the tithe increased to \$1,200.00 per month. The members themselves built a \$450,000.00 church building that could seat 700 people and that congregation became the leading church in the whole mission.

All these things were possible because the seminars, with the blessing of the Lord, brought in doctors, accountants, managers, and other of middle-class members. The one-time poorest church became the financial backbone of the mission. The same Lord can multiply that kind of experience.

We are living at the end of the age. Although it would be more comfortable to retreat as we anticipate difficulties in evangelizing the secular Ahanta middle class in Ghana, there is the assurance that the One who sent us is on our side. "He is bigger than the challenges that face us. We

therefore can be bold and seize the day,"¹ Dr. Jon Paulien assures us.

With the blessing of the Holy Spirit upon the trained "Einsteins" in the church, the SES strategy can be a powerful evangelistic approach to reach out to not only the Ahanta middle class, but also to the entire middle class of all Ghana. This can be a new era of evangelism in Ghana.

¹Paulien, 112. Ellen White in Testimonies to the Church, 4:537, also encourages gospel workers not to give up to despondency. Her encouraging words are: "We entreat the heralds of the gospel of christ never to become discouraged in the work, never to consider the most hardened sinner beyond the reach of the grace of God. He who turns hearts as rivers of water are turned, can bring the most selfish sin-hardened soul to surrender to Christ."

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is imperative that every person making a gospel presentation to the Ahanta middle class should first of all realize that in the initial presentations, the wants that are felt most and for which the SDA Church has the most obvious effective answers should be stressed. There are other needs and other values which the Ahanta can relate to, but it is a wiser strategy, in dealing with the Ahanta middle class, to initially stress those needs which are most felt and those whose solutions can be most clearly seen.

The first step in approaching the Ahanta is to know and understand their cultural identity. This is what chapter 1 sought to do, explaining the identity of the Ahanta tribe, and their historical significance.

The second step is to know what they believe in order to build from the known to the unknown. There are many traditional forms and practices that can be used as bridges to introduce the Ahanta to the biblical message. Many Ahanta forms can be utilized in explaining and carrying the gospel message to them. In chapter 2 I gave an overview of the Ahanta's religious beliefs and practices, some of which are very similar to biblical teaching.

The third step is to know the characteristics and the felt-needs of the target group. By knowing and meeting those needs, you create an atmosphere of trust and friendship which makes it easier to communicate the gospel to them. "Like a salesman the [gospel communicator] must constantly confront himself with the question: 'What does my customer want.'"¹ This is what Chapter 3 is all about. It is a principle which could be used in reaching out to any people group.

Fourth, as Christians, we must have a reason for doing what we want to do. We must stay within biblical and SDA boundaries. We must have a biblical, Spirit of Prophecy, and historical basis for our methodology of soul winning. In chapter 4, I have listed several reasons why the Ahanta middle class must be evangelized, realizing that these reasons apply to every unreached people group in our world.

Chapter 5 looked at the strategies other Christian missionaries used in evangelizing the Ahanta in order to ascertain the effectiveness of those methods and to determine what could be done to improve on them.

We must bear in mind that as time passes, people change. What, therefore, was effective in previous years might not be effective now even with the same people group. We must learn to adapt our methods of labor to the conditions of the people. We must learn to meet people

¹Bauer, 17.

where they are. In chapter 6, I gave a suggested step-by-step methodology to use in evangelizing the Ahanta middle-class. I realize that the SES strategy may not be the only method of approaching and evangelizing the Ahanta middle-class, but I am very optimistic that this strategy will be blessed by the Holy Spirit in reaching many with the Good News. Based upon this conviction, I would like to make the following recommendations to the leadership of the West African Union Mission, the South Ghana Conference, the ministers working for the Ahanta, the local SDA churches in Sekondi and Takoradi in particular, and to all the SDA churches in Ghana.

This Doctor of Ministry project specifically targets my own people, the Ahanta middle class. However, the principles suggested by this study can also be used by others who want to reach out to middle-class members in different places. Therefore my appeal and recommendations have a wider application to all who have the evangelization of the rich middle class at heart.

1. The SES strategy is one method which has never been effectively tried in Ghana. I feel strongly that it is time to try it. We should remember that we are fighting a battle--a battle between faith and unbelief. God commands, and we hesitate. A voice from above urges, "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22). Unbelief responds, "Is not there some other way?" We do not have to linger long on our past

neglect and failures. "Every failure on the part of the children of God is due to their lack of faith,"¹ says Ellen White.

2. The West African Union Mission should appoint a SES coordinator under the umbrella of the church ministries department to promote evangelism among the middle class.

3. The Union should set aside "seed money"² for the printing of SES materials suggested in this project.

4. The South Ghana Conference should also appoint an SES strategy coordinator within the church ministries department.

5. The South Ghana Conference should also have "seed money" to support evangelism among the middle-class in their territory.

6. Every local church should have an SES coordinator and a team of seven to recruit and train personnel to evangelize the middle class. This team should also serve as

¹White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1941), 657.

²Seed money is an amount a rich member in a local church or the Union or Conference Church Ministries Department can invest into SES materials with the understanding that offerings will be taken during the seminars to pay off the cost of the materials. This money should therefore be paid back to the investor within a year or after enough offerings have been received to purchase additional SES materials. For example, when I was in Liberia, Mildred Taylor purchased seminar materials with her own funds, but the offerings from the rich participants attending the seminars were enough to buy materials for eleven more seminars which I conducted for nearly 400 people.

prayer warriors, supporting the pastors in this great endeavor. Every local church should also have "seed money" for the purchase of SES materials.

My appeal to my fellow ministers in Ghana is that we should have confidence in the Lord that this strategy will work. We should not focus on the mountain of impossibilities such as finance, and the fear that the secular-minded middle class will not respond to the gospel, but we should look to the mountain Mover who has commissioned us to go. "All power is His" to win.

I want to conclude with Ellen White's encouraging words to the church:

We entreat the heralds of the gospel of Christ never to become discouraged in the work, never to consider the most hardened sinner beyond the reach of the grace of God. He who turns hearts as rivers of water are turned, can bring the most selfish [Ahanta middle-class], sin-hardened soul to surrender to Christ.¹

We can depend on this assurance! God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply. Amen! Amen!

¹White, Testimonies to the Church, 4:537. In her book Evangelism, Ellen White counsels gospel workers that "we should plan to reach the best classes, and we will not fail to reach the lower classes." In other words, if the SDA work in Ghana as a whole is to survive financially, we need to take this counsel seriously. If we reach the middle-class and their means are consecrated to the Lord's service, there will be an increase of resources for the entire field of the South Ghana Conference. All we need is faith and trust in the Lord of the work. With Him all things are possible. This strategy worked very well in Monrovia Better Living SDA Church, Liberia. Through seminars, many middle class joined the Better Living Church, boosted the financial status of the church and also of the Liberia Mission. It can happen in Ghana as well.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A
Survey Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your name? _____
2. What is your sex? _____ Male _____ Female
3. How do you find real happiness in life? Do you think about it a lot; do you think about it some; did you used to think about it but don't now; have you never thought about it although you think it is important; or have you never thought about it and it just isn't important to you?

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Used to, not now</u>	<u>Never, but imp.</u>	<u>Never, not imp.</u>
How can you find real happiness in life?	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you think about what the purpose of life is?	1	2	3	4	5
What about why there is suffering in the world?	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you think about what happens after death?	1	2	3	4	5

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A fair amount</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>
4. How much do you think you could learn about life from religious teachings -- a lot, a fair amount, only a little, or nothing?	1	2	3	4

5. In the following statements, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. You can just give me the number of your answer.

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Can't</u> <u>Say</u>
If someone does not succeed in life, you can be pretty sure it's his own fault	1	2	3	4	5
Some people are born lucky and others are born unlucky	1	2	3	4	5
A person's ideas and beliefs are greatly influenced by how much income he has	1	2	3	4	5
If one works hard enough, he can do anything he wants to	1	2	3	4	5

6. Which of these statements comes closest to expressing your belief about God?

I don't believe in God	1
I don't believe or disbelieve in God, I don't think it is possible to know if there is a God	2
I am uncertain but lean toward <u>not</u> believing in God	3
I am uncertain but lean toward believing in God	4
I definitely believe in God	5
I am uncomfortable about the word "God" but I do believe in something "more" or "beyond"	6
None of the above expresses my views	7

7. Do you picture God as having a human form? Yes No

8. How do you picture God?
9. Which of these two statements comes closest to your view of God's influence on your life?
- God has left each of us completely free to decide our life 1
- Our lives are completely decided by God 2
10. Do you feel that God answers prayers? _____ Yes _____ No
11. Tell me which of the statements comes closest to your views on life after death?
READ ALL STATEMENTS.
- I don't believe that there is a life after death 1
- I am unsure whether or not there is life after death 2
- I believe that there must be something beyond death,
but I have no idea what it may be like 3
- There is life after death, but no punishment 4
- There is life after death, with rewards for some
people and punishment for others 5
- The notion of reincarnation expresses my view of
what happens to people when they die 6
- Other (specify): _____

12. How often, if at all, do you attend church or synagogue meetings?
- Never 1
- Several times a year or less 2
- About once a month 3
- Several times a month 4
- About once a week 5
- Several times a week 6
- Every day 7

28. Are you now married, widowed, separated, divorced, or never married?
- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Married | 1 |
| Widowed | 2 |
| Separated | 3 |
| Divorced | 4 |
| Never married | 5 |
29. How many years has it been since you were (last) married (widowed, separated, divorced)?
- Years: _____
30. How many wives do you have? (Circle answer)
- 1 2 3 4
31. What work do you do?
- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Government | 1 |
| Self-employed | 2 |
32. How long have you been employed at your present job?
- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Less than six months | 1 |
| Six months to one year | 2 |
| Two to three years | 3 |
| Four to five years | 4 |
| More than five years | 5 |
33. How many children, if any, do you have? (INCLUDE NATURAL, ADOPTED AND STEPCHILDREN)
- Number: _____
34. If any children: What is the age of your oldest child?
- Years: _____

35. How many servants do you have? (Circle number)

1 2 3 4 5 6

36. How many family members are living with you? (Circle number)

1 2 3 4 5 6

37. How often did you attend church or synagogue most of the time up to age 15 -- nearly every week, approximately once a month, several times a year, or hardly ever?

Nearly every week	1
Approximately once a month	2
Several times a year	3
Hardly ever	4
Don't remember	5

38. Were you raised on a farm, in a small town, or in a city (most of the time up to age 15)?

On a farm	1
Small town	2
City	3

39. Do you go to church? Yes No

40. Which church normally? _____

41. Which denomination did your mother belong to?

No religious beliefs	1
Agnostic	2
Atheist	3
Humanist	4
Protestant	5
Roman Catholic	6

42. What denomination did your father belong to?
- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| No religious belief | 1 |
| Agnostic | 2 |
| Atheist | 3 |
| Humanist | 4 |
| Protestant | 5 |
| Roman Catholic | 6 |
43. Are your (natural) mother and father still living?
- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Both parents living | 1 |
| Mother deceased | 2 |
| Father deceased | 3 |
| Both parents deceased | 4 |
44. If mother living: All things considered, how close is your relationship with your mother now -- quite close, pretty close, not very close, or not close at all?
- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Quite close | 1 |
| Pretty close | 2 |
| Not very close | 3 |
| Not close at all | 4 |
45. If father living: Is your relationship with your father quite close, pretty close, not very close, or not close at all?
- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Quite close | 1 |
| Pretty close | 2 |
| Not very close | 3 |
| Not close at all | 4 |
46. What is your date of birth? _____
47. Is there a telephone in your house/apartment? Yes No

48. What sickness bothers you most?
- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| High blood pressure | 1 |
| Backache | 2 |
| Diabetes | 3 |
| Heart disease | 4 |
| Other _____ | 5 |
49. Does any family member suffer any of them? Yes No
50. Do you smoke? Yes No
51. Do you drink beer or any alcohol? Yes No
52. Which is your favorite?
- | | |
|------|---|
| Fish | 1 |
| Meat | 2 |
53. Which is your favorite?
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Palm soup | 1 |
| Groundnut soup | 2 |
54. Which health seminar would help you?
- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| How to stop smoking | 1 |
| How to stop drinking | 2 |
| How to deal with stress | 3 |
| How to be healthy | 4 |

Thank you very much and may God bless you

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE TO MEMBERS
OF THE SEKONDI AND TAKORADI CHURCHES

APPENDIX B

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Sex: M F Age: _____

1. Marital Status: How long have you been married? _____ yrs.
 (1) Single How many children have you? _____
 (2) Married How many relatives live with you? _____
 (3) Divorced How long have been an Adventist? _____

2. Where were you baptized? _____

3. How did you become an Adventist?

- (1) By Birth
- (2) Tent Crusade
- (3) Home-Bible study
- (4) Revelation Seminar
- (5) Health Seminar

4. Have you attended a Health Seminar before?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

If yes, please indicate year: 19____

5. Have you attended a Revelation Seminar before?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

If yes, please indicate:

Year: 19____

Location: _____

6. What is your employment?

- (1) Government
- (2) Private
- (3) Other _____

7. What is your average income per month? _____

8. How many friends do you have who are not Adventist? _____

9. Suggest 3 ways that can be used to reach them:

- (1) Revelation Seminar
- (2) Stop-Smoking Seminar
- (3) Stop-Drinking Seminar
- (4) Health Seminar
- (5) Family Enrichment
- (6) Child Raising Seminar
- (7) OTHER _____

THANK YOU. GOD BLESS YOU

Suggest 3 ways that can be used to reach the professionals listed above:

- a. Revelation Seminar
- b. Stop-Smoking Seminar
- c. Stop-Drinking Seminar
- d. Health Seminar
- e. Family Enrichment
- f. Child Training Seminar
- g. OTHER _____

THANK YOU. GOD BLESS YOU

APPENDIX C
PASTORS QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX C

PASTORS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Pastor: _____
 2. How long in ministry? ____
 3. When ordained? 19__
 4. Number of churches pastoring now ____
 5. What is the total membership in your district? _____
 6. How many of the following professionals do you have in your congregation:
 - (1) Doctors ____
 - (2) Lawyers ____
 - (3) Sec. School Teachers ____
 - (4) Pharmacists ____
 - (5) Nurses ____
 - (6) Other Teachers ____
 - (7) Business men/women ____
 - (8) Chiefs ____
 - (9) Accountants ____
 - (10) Military/Police Officers ____
 - (11) Landlords ____
 - (12) Car Owners ____
 7. What is the total quarterly income of your district? _____
 8. What is your monthly salary? _____
 9. Are you living in a parsonage? Yes No
- How many church buildings are in your district? ____

APPENDIX D
SUGGESTED REVIVAL PROGRAM

APPENDIX D

SUGGESTED PROGRAM OUTLINE FOR A WEEK OF REVIVAL

1. *Song Service* *To be led by a singing group*
2. *Welcome*
3. *Opening song*
4. *Scripture reading* *A scripture of promise*
5. *First season of prayer in groups of twos*
6. *A musical selection* *A choir*
7. *Testimonies* *Three persons*
8. *Sermon*¹
9. *Second season of prayer in groups of threes*
10. *Special Prayer session by pastor and elders*
11. *Closing song*
12. *Benediction*
13. *Fellowshipping--members' interacting with one another.*

¹The sermon should be one of correction, rebuke, reconciliation, and hope. The sermon should not be more than 25 minutes. This is to allow enough time for prayer and fellowshiping.

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