A Comparative Study of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the United Methodist Church with a Strategy for Enhanced Adventist Membership Growth in Cote D'Ivoire

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ABSTRACT

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH WITH A STRATEGY FOR ENHANCED ADVENTIST MEMBERSHIP GROWTH IN COTE D'IVOIRE

by

Elie Weick-Dido

Adviser: Gorden Doss
Problem

Seventh-day Adventists first reached the French colony of Cote d’Ivoire around 1920. In 1946 the Church was organized with only 17 members. By 1985, the membership was 2,057 and in 2000, there were 7,215 members. By comparison, the Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire was established in 1924 and in 2000 had 1,350,000 members. Both Seventh-day Adventists and Methodists have conducted with mission in the same context where 20.8 percent of the population was Roman Catholic in 2000, Muslims represented 38.7 percent, and the French cultural influence was strong. Yet, Seventh-day Adventists have experienced a much slower church growth than have the Methodists in Cote d’Ivoire and Seventh-day Adventist in other African nations. The
lack of good quantitative growth suggests a need for more qualitative and spiritual growth.

Method

This dissertation addresses the causes of the slow growth of the expansion of the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire. To achieve the objective, the following procedure was taken: Scriptures were studied to lay down the raison d’être of church growth. The writings of E. G. White were consulted for her experience and appropriate application was made to Cote d’Ivoire. Information about Methodists came from the Conference of the United Methodist Church in Cote d’Ivoire. Statistical information on church growth was provided from the former West Africa Union, the Sahel Union, Cote d’Ivoire’s local Conference and the annual statistical report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. A comparison was made with the United Methodist Church to identify potentially helpful perspectives and strategies for the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire. My personal opinion as an Ivorian and as one of the first national administrators was also utilized.

Results

The studies have revealed the following causes of slow growth: failure to follow holistic missiology, failure to grasp the opportunity left by William Wade Harris, communication problems, failure to meet challenges of French secularism, Islam and animism, failure to make religion a family matter, lack of personal evangelism, leadership instability, legalism, fanatism, and exclusivism.
Conclusions

This study was made to show the growth struggle and to challenge the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire about its responsibility toward the Great Commission. The research ends by proposing a strategy to enhance growth, both qualitative and quantitative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire.
Andrews University
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A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

By
Elie Weick-Dido
May 2007
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. vi

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

  Statement of Problem ...................................................... 1
  Purpose of the Dissertation ............................................. 2
  Justification ................................................................. 2
  Limitations .................................................................... 5
  Definitions of Terms ...................................................... 6
  Personal Experience ........................................................ 9
  Description of the Project ................................................. 11
  Methodology .................................................................. 12

II. CHRISTIANITY IN COTE D’IVOIRE ................................. 14

  Historical and Cultural Context ....................................... 14
  Religious Context ......................................................... 20
  Modern Missions in Cote d’Ivoire .................................... 23
  William Wade Harris ...................................................... 25
  The United Methodist Church ........................................ 27
    Brief History ............................................................. 27
    Causes of Success ...................................................... 30
      Education System ..................................................... 31
      Health System ......................................................... 33
      Cultural Considerations ........................................... 34
      Leadership ............................................................. 35

III. SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN COTE D’IVOIRE .......... 36

  Brief History .............................................................. 36
  Pre-Organizational Era: 1920-1946 .................................... 39
  Missionary Leadership Era: 1946-1986 ............................ 40
  Post-Missionary Leadership Era: 1986-Present .................. 41
  Education System ........................................................ 42
  Causes of the Slow Growth ............................................. 44
    Failure to Follow Holistic Missiology ............................ 44
    Failure to Grasp Opportunity Left by William Wade Harris 46
Methodology ................................................................. 132

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ....................... 135

   Conclusions .............................................................. 135
   Recommendations ..................................................... 137
   Reformation ......................................................... 137
   Spiritual Formation .................................................. 138
   Small Groups Ministry .............................................. 139
   Promotion of Education ............................................ 139
   Empowering Ministers .............................................. 140
   Health Ministry and Community Services .................... 140
   Organizational Interrelationships ............................... 141
   Evangelism for Muslims .......................................... 142

Appendix

   A. Worksheet Spiritual Formation Development Plan .......... 144
   B. Leading Discipleship .......................................... 186
   C. The Map of Cote d’Ivoire .................................. 194
   D. William Wade Harris, the Prophet .......................... 195

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................... 196

VITA ................................................................. 205
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Seventh-day Adventists first reached the “French colony of Cote d’Ivoire around 1920.”¹ In 1946 the Church was organized with only 17 members. By 1985, the membership was 2,057 and in 2004, there were 9,490 members.² By comparison, the Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire was established in 1924 and in 2000 had 1,350,000 members.³ Both Seventh-day Adventists and Methodists have conducted their mission in the same context where 20.8%⁴ of the population was Roman Catholic in 2000, Muslims represented 38.7%,⁵ and the French cultural influence was strong. Yet, Seventh-day Adventists have experienced much slower church growth than the Methodists in Cote d’Ivoire and Seventh-day Adventists in other African nations. The lack of quantitative growth suggests a need for more qualitative growth.

⁵Ibid.
Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of this study is to propose some reasons for this slow church growth and to develop a specific strategy for Cote d’Ivoire that links quantitative and qualitative growth. Such a strategy will provide ideas and principles for administrators, pastors, evangelists, and church members to use as they take advantage of the opportunities to share their faith and to initiate a dynamic revival in worship and fellowship.

Justification

After a presence of about eighty-five years in Cote d’Ivoire, the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not show significant growth. Christianity is always one generation away from extinction. Failure to evangelize, will lead to extinction. No wonder, in order to keep alive what He has started, Jesus delivered His Great Commission so that the church would continue to grow after His ascension. The Great Commission emphasized two points: evangelizing and making disciples. “Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of this that I am with you always, even to the end of the world” (Matt 28:19-20, LB). This method of reaching people where they are will be effective if it is implemented. The proclamation of truth and salvation must result in the numeric growth of the people of God. However, the growth must also be seen in qualitative terms, because the call to conversion is a call to newness. This newness is, in reality, in the process of dying and rising again. The responsibility of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not only to proclaim its unique doctrines, but to convey a call from God and to facilitate a response from the people, thus result in spiritual growth.
The Adventist Church is a missionary movement at its core. Talking about the ever-widening influence of the Gospel, Ellen White wrote that: “Everywhere the light of truth is to shine forth, that hearts now in the sleep of ignorance may be awakened and converted. In all countries and cities the Gospel needs to be proclaimed. Churches are to be organized and plans laid for the work to be done. ... This Gospel missionary work is to keep reaching out and annexing new territory, enlarging the cultivated portions of the vineyard. The circle is to extend until it belts the world.”¹ She also emphasizes the sacredness of the mission in these terms: “The mission of Christ’s servant is a high honor, and a sacred trust.”²

Pastors and laymen in Côte d’Ivoire must understand that the Church will achieve its mission only if it makes evangelism the focus of its activities (Matt 5:13-16; 1 Pet 2:9-12). God’s faithful people have always been aggressive missionaries, consecrating their resources to the honor of His name and wisely using their talents in His service.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was the first Protestant Church to enter Côte d’Ivoire, and that in 1920. The World Christian Encyclopedia notes that “Protestantism did not enter Côte d’Ivoire until after World War I,”³ but many of the Protestant churches that entered Côte d’Ivoire after the Seventh-day Adventist Church have experienced better growth. “The first British Methodist missionary arrived in 1924. Other missions

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followed soon afterwards; the Mission Biblique (France) in 1927, and the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA) in 1930.”¹ Today, the United Methodist Church, which is the largest Protestant denomination in Cote d’Ivoire, “has more than a million members,”² “the Assemblies of God have 70,000; the Missionary Christian Alliance 72,663, and even the very recent Baptist Oeuvres et Missions 60,000 and the Reveil Church 30,000.”³ All these churches are growing and the “Protestant work is characterized by comity agreements which tend to give to the principal churches a regional orientation.”⁴ Protestantism is not the only one with missionaries in Cote d’Ivoire; Catholicism also has a strong presence. “Catholicism is localized largely in the south where it first came in 1687.”⁵

Islam is growing in numbers largely because of the influx of foreign ethnic groups from Mali, Niger, Guinea, and Burkina Faso. “The principal agents of its propagation are itinerant traders and small businessmen. Its strength is in the northwest, the Malinke and the Bambara being 70% Muslim and the Senoufo and Minianka 30%.”⁶

With a population of many different ethnic groups, there are cultural and traditional diversities within each denomination.⁷ Furthermore, because of religious

¹Ibid.
²Eglise Méthodiste Unie de Cote d’Ivoire, 4.
³Ibid., 15.
⁴Barrett, 407.
⁶Barrett, 406.
⁷Johnstone and Mandryck, 208.
practices through syncretism, and leadership power struggles, the various Protestant missions and churches do not work together. Often, a lack of commitment to full-time service or evangelistic zeal exists in many congregations.

As one of the first Ivorian administrators of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire, personal experience has proven that Ivorians like the Adventist message, and if only pastors and church members could unite their efforts to preach it and live it, conversions could follow.

Limitations

Studies of this kind on Cote d’Ivoire are few. Ivorian theologians, historians, and even churchmen have not yet come up with a strategy to evangelize the country. By the mid-century, according to The World Christian Encyclopedia, Christians and Muslims could comprise 50 percent of the country’s population each\(^1\) and African traditional religions remain very influential. Pioneering is not an easy task. This project is limited to the growth strategies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire, but may be of benefit to the Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders and members across West Africa, particularly the countries that form the Sahel Union Missions. Comparisons are made only with the United Methodist Church, although valuable perspectives would result from comparison with other Christian groups.

\(^1\)Barrett, 407.
Definitions of Terms

**Acculturation:** “Sometimes regarded as synonymous with socialization. The process by which one adopts in an active sense, or is forced to adapt in a passive sense, to another culture. An example is motivating or acquiring with certain values, beliefs, names, dress and custom to adopt different values, beliefs, names, dress and customs.”¹ For Paul Hiebert, there is a fundamental difference between learning a primary culture and learning a second culture.² He explains that “we are raised in the first and enculturated into its ways as we grow up. Then we learn by observing and imitating and are taught informally and formally how to think and act. Later, as adults, we are acculturated into the biculture.”³

**Animism:** “The belief that personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces have power over human affairs and, consequently, that human beings must discover what beings and forces are influencing them in order to determine future action and, frequently, to manipulate their power.”⁴ Animistic beliefs are not organized into logical content but consist of loosely related sets of beliefs and practices, often contradictory that are not used to present a coherent view of reality but to produce immediate results.

**Autochthonization:** Synonymous with Indigenization.

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³ Hiebert, 230.

Contextualization: A mode of communication that involves utilizing the worldview of the host culture to provide a framework for the questions and needs of that people and as a guide to emphasizing the “message.” The “message” is the Gospel and the “cultural gifts” are the vehicles. In this mode, people become the medium of expression. This means of cross-cultural communication “aims to be faithful to Scripture and relevant to culture.”

Contextualization deals with the worldviews that shape people’s beliefs and allegiances. If the Gospel is proclaimed in alien languages and cultural forms, the people will not understand it and will reject it as foreign culture. Paraphrasing Paul Hiebert, here is a process by which contextualization takes place: First, in the translation of the Bible, individual translators might often translate passages in ways that are conformed to their own personal theological positions rather than the text itself. Second, because Christians have to deal with old customs, there is a struggle between their new life in Christ and much of their culture. Third, the Church becomes increasingly the manifestation of the kingdom of God within its sociocultural context. Finally, the Church develops its own theology by applying Biblical truth to the issues it faces.

Cote d’Ivoire: Official name of Ivory Coast in French. In the past, the name of the country was translated in the official languages of the UN: Spanish would say Costa de Marfil; English Ivory Coast and Portuguese Costa Davorio, etc. Delegates of Ivory Coast have been confused at international meetings and did not know that someone was talking about them. During the Congress of the first political party (PDCI-RDA) led by Felix

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Houphouet Boigny in 1982, it was decided that the French version of the country’s name should not be translated. Since then, Ivory Coast is officially “La Cote d’Ivoire.”

*Culture*: A “set of norms, standards, notions and beliefs. It is the ideational code underlying behavior, a comprehensive plan for living a purposeful, harmonious and successful life; and in many aspects, it is a unique plan of living.”¹

*Cross-cultural missionaries*: Christian full-time workers sent by their denomination or organization to work among peoples of a different culture, either within their own country or abroad.

*Enculturation*: The Evangelical Dictionary of the World Mission describes enculturation as a “learning of a culture through growing up in it. It is a process that begins from the moment of birth in which the cultural rules and pathways, values and dreams, and patterns and regulation of life are passed on one generation to the next.”²

*Harrism*: Movement generated in Cote d’Ivoire by the preaching of William Wade Harris, a former Methodist originally from Liberia.

*Inculturation*: “The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about “a new creation.”³

²Moreau, 309.
Indigenization: “Being born into a part of a particular place or environment refers to bringing something (a thing, action, idea, or value) out of one culture and into another culture. Mexican food, though once found only in certain areas of the United States, can now be found in New Jersey, North Carolina and Boston. It has been indigenized.”

Protestant Methodist Church: The very first Protestant church that was introduced in Cote d’Ivoire by British missionaries was the Methodist Church. The church was officially called the “Protestant Methodist Church” until 21 October 2002, when the church joined the Worldwide United Methodist Church. The new official name is “The United Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire.”

10/40 Window: The area of the world between latitudes 10° and 40° north of the equator covering North Africa, Middle East, and Asia. The window has in view most of the world’s areas of greatest physical and spiritual needs, most of the world least-reached peoples, and most of the governments that oppose Christianity.

WMMS: Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.

Personal Experience

Early in my ministry, I understood the importance of evangelism. God requires people for every phase of the work of global witness to be in evangelism. Even before I became a pastor, in fact, soon after my conversion I was complaining to the Lord that very few “fish” were being caught, even though the first thing Jesus taught his followers was that he would make them fishers of men (Matt 4:19; 5:10). After my initial impact

1Neely, 6.

among my immediate family and friends, most of the potential catch of fish now seemed
to swim off and get out of range. It was a revelation and releasing point in my
controversy with the Lord when I suddenly realized that it was Jesus who had promised
to make me a fisher of men, not that I should have the ability to make myself one. It was
a promise, not a command, if I fulfilled the condition of following after him. As a pastor,
bringing people to Christ was my prime objective. Consequently, I have tried to live a
Christian lifestyle that other could admire. The Lord has promised to make us fishers of
men. We must allow Him to equip us for the accomplishment of His purpose. I believed
that if I was going that way, my church members should also follow.

I discovered that most sheep are parochial; they love looking in and not out.
Something of this tendency is inevitable, since it is necessary for each one of us to watch
over our own souls and to develop our own spiritual lives. As a pastor, I could have very
little to give if my own soul was not healthy before the Lord. I understood that world
mission as a theoretical discussion, stance, or slogan should never be allowed to take the
place of real, front-line evangelism, so church planting at home is necessary to keep our
feet on the ground to fulfill the Great Commission. A discipleship program, therefore,
aimed at producing witnesses for world evangelism should be a subject high on the
training agenda. A global perspective should result from the discipling of the saints, and
home evangelism should be done in the light of the global vision (Rev 5:9, 10).

I have tried to share these ideas with members and fellow ministers during my
seventeen years of ministry in Cote d'Ivoire, serving as intern evangelist (at that time, a
pastor who was not yet ordained was called an evangelist), pastor, youth and personal
ministry director, and president of the conference. Church members must understand that
the task of the Church is evangelism and that the goal of evangelism is church growth. The church is both the instrument and the purpose of evangelism. Therefore it must be awakened for the fulfillment of its biblical calling. This conviction and primacy of the church arises from the theological and strategic role that it has in God’s program for the world as revealed in the Scriptures. It is not possible to separate the pastor from the church. It would be trying to separate the sunlight from the sun. As is the pastor so are the people. Only he who is on fire for God can set his people on fire, and only a pastor on fire for God can also inspire and enthuse other pastors. Therefore, first, it will take a united effort, between members and pastors, and secondarily, among pastors to carry out the Great Commission purpose in Cote d’Ivoire.

**Description of the Project**

Chapter 1 of this dissertation is introductory and spells out the problem, justification of the project, my personal experience in Cote d’Ivoire Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and the methodology of research. It also provides the definition of some terms that are used in the dissertation and brief information about Cote d’Ivoire.

Chapter 2 presents a brief overview of the history of Christianity in Cote d’Ivoire. It elucidates the historical and cultural context of the work of modern missions and discusses the ministry of the Liberian preacher, William Wade Harris. The chapter particularly focuses on the United Methodist Church and the causes of its success.

Chapter 3 discusses the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire, including the pre-organizational era, the missionary leadership era from 1946 to 1986, the post-missionary leadership era from 1986 to the present situation, and the causes of its slow growth. This chapter also compares the methodology of the
Methodists to that of the Seventh-day Adventists in Cote d’Ivoire. From the comparison between the two denominations, potentially helpful suggestions are drawn for enhancing Seventh-day Adventist mission in Cote d’Ivoire.

Chapter 4 develops the Biblical and theological purpose of the Church and the Adventist mission theology. It suggests that if the wholistic philosophy of Adventist mission is understood and implemented in Cote d’Ivoire; if the social and the spiritual elements that are worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism are harmoniously put together, the Church can reach its goal.

Chapter 5 proposes church growth strategies that can help the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire to understand its role in the Great Commission.

Finally, chapter 6 gives a conclusion to the research. It outlines recommendations for implementation as a driving method of church expansion and growth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire. This research develops a spiritual formation manual to guide future leaders and church members in their actions to enhance the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire.

Methodology

This dissertation addresses the causes of the slow growth of the expansion of the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire. Most of the resources that were used came from the James White Library at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan; the library of the Cote d’Ivoire Embassy, Washington, DC; the library of the University of Chicago; the library of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois; the library of the Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, and materials from the headquarters of the United Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire. Other materials came from inter-library loan services
from universities around North America and Cote d’Ivoire and from my personal library. Direction was sought from advice of church growth strategists. To achieve the objective, the following procedure was taken:

1. Scriptures were studied to lay down the raison d’être of church growth.

2. The writings of E. G. White were consulted for her experience and appropriate application was made to Cote d’Ivoire.

3. Information about the Methodists came from the Conference of the United Methodist Church in Cote d’Ivoire.

4. Statistical information on church growth was obtained from the former West Africa Union, the Sahel Union, and the Cote d’Ivoire Conference. The annual statistical report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was also used.

5. A comparison was made between the United Methodist Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church to identify potentially helpful perspectives and strategies for the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire.

6. My personal experience as an Ivorian and as a Seventh-day Adventist was also utilized.

It is my expectation that the results of this research project will stimulate leaders and members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire to be more involved in evangelism, and to find ways of promoting the effective recruitment of Ivorians to the Seventh-day Adventist Church without compromising Adventist essentials.
CHAPTER II

CHRISTIANITY IN COTE D’IVOIRE

Historical and Cultural Context

Cote d’Ivoire is a square-shaped land, that lies on the West African Atlantic coast and covers an area of 322,463 square kilometers¹ (124,503 square miles, refer to map in appendix C). The country’s name became officially accepted in “the French form in 1982, to avoid confusion over translations into various languages of United Nations.”²

Little is known about the original inhabitants of Cote d’Ivoire. Evidence indicates that the present people entered in a series of small migrations between the “10th and 18th centuries. Most of them came from the north after the breakup of several empires in the Western Sudan, but some of the later migrations came from the east and west near the coast.”³ Until the European conquest in the nineteenth Century, the history of the Cote d’Ivoire can not be separated from that of West Africa as a whole. Harrison believes that “the southern terminals of the trans-Sahara trade routes were usually located on the northern fringe of Sudan, and from there supplemental trade extended as far south as the

³From a TV discussion on Cote d’Ivoire history with Dr. Niangoran-Boua, historian and drumologist, University of Cocody, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, 2 February, 2001.
edge of the rain forest. The more important terminals grew into major commercial centers and were nuclei around which the several Sudanese empires developed.¹ Through their control over trade, assisted by a strong military machine, these empires were able to dominate and extract tribute from neighboring tribes and states, sometimes over an extensive area.

The Sudanese were renowned in Africa and Europe for their administration based on the central authority of a supreme chief or king, their prosperous commerce, and their Islamic centers of learning. Gouilly states that "Islam was introduced into the Western Sudan by the Arab traders from North Africa, and spread rapidly after the conversion of many of the important rulers. By the 11th century, the Sudanic empires had embraced Islam, and from there it spread forth into the northern areas of Ivory Coast where the influence is felt to the present time."² The earliest of the Sudanic empires, Ghana, flourished in the area north of Cote d’Ivoire from the fourth to the thirteenth centuries. At the peak of its power, it extended control over the territory from the Atlantic to Timbuktu.

From the oral tradition, Niangoran-Boua stipulates that the "Mali (Mandingo, Malinke, Mende), the triple ‘M’ empire, grew out of the decline of the empire of Ghana into a powerful Moslem state which reached its peak in the early part of the 14th


century.”¹ At one point, its territory included the northwest corner of the present Cote d’Ivoire around Odienne.

However, Mali’s slow decline starting at the end of the fourteenth century came about through internal discord and revolts by vassal states, one of which, Songhai, grew into its own empire. Two hundred years later, the demise of Songhai, also through internal discord, brought about a period of tribal warfare and virtual chaos, which spurned most of the migrating of people southward toward the forest, actual Cote d’Ivoire, where they hoped to find shelter and security.

While empires rose and fell in the open savanna of western Sudan, the people of the forest region to the south lived in virtual isolation from each other and from the rest of the world. Five great states flourished in the pre-European era in the present Cote d’Ivoire and served as a source of great pride for its inhabitants: The Kingdom of Kong was founded in the eleventh century in the north central Cote d’Ivoire by the pagan Senoufo, who fled and forced Islamization under the spreading Mali Empire. T. D. Roberts says that “it became a prosperous and well known center of agriculture trade, and crafts and became Islamized sometime in the 17th or 18th century after the Dioula Moslem overthrew the Senoufo rulers.”² In 1888, Kong was reported to be a large and wealthy urban center comparable to the Muslim cities in West Sudan. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by Samory Toure, who in the late 1880s tried to establish a Muslim empire by subdividing local rulers and resisting penetration by the French.

¹Niangoran-Boua.
²Roberts, 9.
As is commonly observed, the contemporary African states boundaries are artificial in that they do not correspond to ethno-historical division. With a population of 18,301,200 in 2005, Cote d’Ivoire is made up of sixty ethnic groups commonly grouped into “five main languages clusters: Akan, Mande, Kru, Gur and Lagoon.” Jean-Noel Loucou adds that “recent data of structure of the country’s population is as follows: 27 percent Baoule, 22 percent Bete, 15 percent Senoufo, 15 percent Malinke and 21 percent others.”

Ethnic differences are, in part, related to geographic regions. The Akan peoples, including the Baoule, Agni, and Abron are largely located in the central region and along the eastern coast of Cote d’Ivoire. The Abron Kingdom of Bondoukou was Islamized in the sixteenth century by Dioula traders who settled there, and it became a Muslim cultural center equal to Timbuktu. Its many Koranic schools and a university attracted students from all parts of West Africa. The two Agni Kingdoms, Indenie and Krinjabo, and the Baoule Kingdom at Sakasso were established around 1740 in east central Cote d’Ivoire after a quarrel with the rulers of Ashanti, which caused a number of Akan groups to move west.

The Mande group includes two subgroups: the Northern Mande (the Dioula, Bamana, and Malinke) and the Southern Mande (the Wan, Beng, Mwau, Gouro Dan, Gban, and Toura). Immigrated from Liberia, Guinea and Mali, these peoples are located at

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3 Johnstone and Madryck, 208.
in the center west of the country. In the north (along the borders with Mali and Burkina Faso), is the Gur or Voltaic group, comprising primarily the Senoufo, Koulango, Lobi, and smaller groups such as the Gowin, Site, Degha, Samogho, and Gonja. The Lagoon people, including the Abe, Abidji Aboure, Mbato, Avikam, Nzima, Ebrie, Jakjack, Eotile, and Alladjan, are named for their location next to the costal Lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean. Roberts writes that “the eighth parallel, which lies about midway in the country, roughly divides the country between the Savanna woodland region (and the Savanna peoples) and the dense forest region (and the forest peoples).”

Historians agree that Cote d’Ivoire was therefore “originally made up of numerous isolated settlements that represent sixty distinct tribes.” It is also worth noting the significant number of immigrants from other African nations, as well as from Asia and Europe who have come to Cote d’Ivoire. P. H. Haeringer maintains that “a considerable number of immigrants travel from the poorer countries north of Cote d’Ivoire to the more developed Southern part of the country, particularly to the capital Abidjan.” Such large numbers of immigrants seeking work have caused friction and even riots in times of economic hardship. These are the peoples who form today the population of Cote d’Ivoire.

The majority of African cultures exhibit a strong patrilineal bias for purposes of reckoning affiliation and descent. There is, however, no direct correspondence in which

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1Roberts, 55.


the paternal side of the family is emphasized in political and ritual matters, and with urbanization industrialization, and westernization, that patriarchal dominance within the African culture has gradually lost its importance. Gulliver underlines that "urbanization and industrialization in Africa south of the Sahara accelerated the movement of peoples from the countryside to towns and cities in search of employment." While there, they tend to adopt Western culture. The African peoples who inhabit the vast geographical expanse of sub-Saharan Africa are diverse culturally and ethnically. No single language for social organization, economy, custom, myth, or legend is common to all indigenous African peoples. For Gerd Baumann, "the diversity of African peoples and their cultures, both within and between geographic regions and nation-state boundaries, is considerable with cultural differences exceeding similarities."

Resulting from the rich ethno-linguistic mosaic of Cote d'Ivoire, the cultural framework includes micro civilizations, each of which has developed its own ethnic code and particular esthetic expressions. In families, mothers transmit moral principles and social laws to girls, while elders train boys to work and to take responsibility in life. These elders have traditional educational systems and ways to transmit moral and social values. B. Holas says that "the impact of [indigenous African] religion on the Ivorian society of traditional type is such that the daily life of the village is affected."

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Every artistic production such as traditional dance, ceremonies, and paint has a mystical dimension. However, Ivorian daily life is today transformed by modernity and socio-economic options. Everything is highly materialistic. The proliferation of cultural formulae could constitute an obstacle to national cohesion; but in the name of a motto that is precious to Ivorians, “unity in diversity,” Cote d’Ivoire favors a national culture that is open to world realities and that increases the national conscience and unity.

Religious Context

Most Ivorians practice local religions, which are sometimes infused with elements of Christianity or Islam, or both. Islam and Christianity are practiced in a variety of forms throughout the country, as different social and spiritual problems bring forth a variety of responses. Islam has been practiced in the far north for roughly seven centuries, shifting its appeal over this time from its strength as a world religion and its basis in written testaments to its symbolic importance as an alternative to European religions. Christian missionaries arrived at the coast in the seventeenth century but did not win converts in large numbers until the nineteenth century. Christianity’s appeal was strongest among educated Ivorians and those who sought advancement through European contact. Christian holidays are officially recognized, but Muslim celebrations are also held, and, as in many areas of national life, tolerance is the general attitude toward the practice of religion.

Religious practitioners have also earned substantial goodwill through the services they offer their communities, especially in health and education, and by their overall contribution to the social harmony.
African religions have maintained their credibility because they provide effective explanation for many of life's dilemmas in ways that can only be understood in their cultural context. Local religions reassure people that they are living in harmony with the universe and that this harmony can be preserved by maintaining proper relationships with all beings. For this reason, separating religion from other aspects of life serves to distort, rather than clarify, its meaning.

According to most local belief systems, spiritual beings (a creator, ancestral spirits, and spirits associated with places and objects) can influence a person's life and luck. This a major premise on which belief and practices are based. The distinction between the spiritual and the physical worlds, in Western secular terms, is unimportant in the face of what is interpreted as overwhelming evidence that physical events may have spiritual causes.

Lineages are also important in understanding the organization of many Ivorian religions. The spiritual unity of the descent group transcends distinctions among unborn, the living, and the deceased. In this context, religious differences are not based on disagreement over dogma or doctrine. Rather, groups living in different social and physical environments encounter different spiritual and physical dangers, and their religious needs differ accordingly. This diversity accounts, in part, for early missionaries in West Africa who often described the spiritual chaos they encountered, when they were actually observing different social groupings, each with different spiritual obligations to ancestral and other spirits, acting in accordance with common beliefs about the nature of the universe.
Religious groups in the country include Islam, the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant churches, and traditional indigenous religions. Major Protestant groups include the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Assemblies of God, the Southern Baptist Church, the Autonomous Church of Celestial Christianity of Oschoffa, the Union of Evangelical Church of Services and Works of Cote d’Ivoire, the Unification Church, the Jehovah’s Witness, the Harris Church, the Church of Jesus Christ for Latter-day Saints, the United Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire, the Coptic Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Interdenominational Church, the Yoruba First Baptist Church, the Church of God International Missions, and the Baptist Church Missions. Other include Buddhism, the Baha’i Faith, the Church of the Prophet Papa Nouveau (a syncretistic religion founded in the country in 1937 that combines Christian doctrine, traditional indigenous ritual, and practical concern for social, political, and economic concern for Africans), the messianic Church, the Bossonism (the traditional religious practices of the Akan ethnic group), the Limmoudim of Rabbi Jesus (a small Christian group, the origins are unknown), and the Movement of Raelis. Many religious groups in the country are associated with American religious groups.

According to the recent national census conducted in 1998 among citizens, “27.4 percent are Muslims, 20.7 percent are Roman Catholic, 15.4 percent practice traditional indigenous religions, 8.2 percent are Protestant, 3.4 percent are of other Christian affiliations, 1.9 percent practice other religions, 1.6 percent are Harris, and 20.7 percent are without religious affiliations.
Foreigners living in the country are 70.5 percent Muslim, 15.4 percent are Catholic, with small percentage practicing other religions.1

This religious environment helps the understanding of the introduction of modern Christian missions in Cote d'Ivoire.

**Modern Missions in Cote d'Ivoire**

Although he may not have had people like Ivorians in mind, Martin Luther wrote, “Resistance to the Gospel was akin to spiritual madness. Demented, mad irrational people may rant, be abusive and reject it. Such a response to the Good News could only be attributed to madness.”2

When the Gospel is rejected, there are several possible causes: communication might have been flawed, the culture of the recipient might not have been respected, or adaptations might not have been made. Donald McGavran observed that “people everywhere like to become Christians without crossing barriers of race, language, and class.”3 Resistance on the other hand, often results when one culture is forced to give up its identity and merge with another in order to come to Christ. This is precisely what happened to French Catholicism in Cote d'Ivoire. Along with Christianity, the French brought colonialism around 16874 and with the lack of consideration for the local

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3Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 223.

cultures, Catholicism in Côte d'Ivoire disappeared for years with the closing of the French outpost in 1787.

Christianity is a relatively recent religion in Côte d'Ivoire. Although Christianity preceded Islam in North Africa, it was blocked by the Sahara and came to the Gulf of Guinea much later. Dessare writes, “Christianity in Côte d’Ivoire is predominantly the religion of urban, literate, middle-class Southerners. Most strongly Christianized groups are the Agni and the Lagoon cluster peoples; the least Christianized are the Mandingo (traditionally under Islamic influence) and those northern groups, such as the Senoufo, which have been under Mandigo influence.”

The expansion of Christianity in Côte d’Ivoire has experienced several periods of progress and backsliding. E. F. Gautier argues that “Catholicism first came to the Ivory Coast in 1687 when Father Gonsalvez and Father Cerizier landed in Assinie on the southeastern coast.” The Church disappeared for a century, however, with the closing of the French outpost there in 1787. Christianity was revived “in 1843 when the first French Governor Bouet-Willaumez signed an accord with the Agni king Amatifou, he invited the missionaries in to proselytize and agreed to pay for their maintenance in return for educational work.” M. Bee adds, “In 1895, Governor Binger asked the Society of African Missions of Lyon to undertake the education of native populations of Ivory

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2Gautier, 28.
Coast.”¹ In 1905, however, the French law on separation of Church and State ended this cooperation. The first Catholic churches were established around 1845 in the southeast and in Korhogo in the north. A preparatory seminary was opened in Dabou and the first African was ordained in 1934. Today, most of the Europeans in Cote d’Ivoire are Christians, and they form an important of the Christian community. The French community alone, which has “from 10,000 to 50,000,”² is Catholic.

As they entered the country, Catholic missionaries started to evangelize the coastline with little success. Bureau stipulates that “it was with the coming of Harrism, a neoprottestant movement founded by William Wade Harris around 1912 that changed the direction of the missionary movement.”³ Roberts also supports Bureau by writing that “Harris came to the country and left a distinctive mark on Ivory Coast Christianity.”⁴

**William Wade Harris**

Protestantism was introduced in Cote d’Ivoire in 1913 through the ministry of William Wade Harris. Harris “was born around 1865 in Liberia; his village was Grebo of Half Graway near Cap Palmas and the Ivorian border.”³ He was brought up Methodist and claimed to have received a call from the Angel Gabriel who commanded him to go to convert the pagans of Cote d’Ivoire. He traveled mostly along the Lagoon areas, first in

⁴Roberts, 136.
the district of Lahou, and then in the district of Grand Bassam, and the Nzima Country in Ghana. According to Roberts, “Harris wore a long white gown and a turban, went barefooted, and carried a bamboo staff with a cross, a small Bible and a calabash of water. He led a simple life, eating what the villagers offered him. He claimed no superiority or divinity, but considered himself simply the messenger of God. He preached against idolatry and ordered the systematic destruction of fetishes and the exorcising of sorcerers. . . . He condemned adultery, theft and lying. He forbade intemperance and ordered the strict observance of the Sabbath and Christian ritual. . . . Although he was violent in his opposition to pagan practices; he otherwise preached total obedience to customary and colonial administrative authorities.”¹ Daniels wrote that Harris preached from 1913 to 1915 in the Ivory Coast and gained a great number of converts to his version of Christianity.²

Taking fright at the disruptive character of Harris, the French governor expelled him to Liberia in 1915.³ He left Cote d’Ivoire leaving behind him an unfinished popular missionary work. David Barrett concludes that “through his ministry, 120,000 adults were converted and baptized. About 20,000 later become Catholics and 35,000 Methodists, but [the] majority organized themselves as independent churches.”⁴

It was after World War I that the activities of Protestant missionaries began to take hold in Cote d’Ivoire. Around 1924, two English Methodist missionaries discovered

¹Roberts, 137.
²Daniels, XXII.
³Ibid.
⁴Barrett, 414.
the legacy of Harris and took up his work. He was found still living in Liberia in 1927, and it is claimed that he gave a Methodist missionary his testament which asked his proselytes to join the Methodist Church and it only. Barret notes that the other missions followed soon afterwards, the Mission Biblique (France) 1927, Christian Missionary Alliance (USA) 1930, Worldwide Evangelization for Christ 1934, the Conservative Baptists 1947, and the Freewill Baptist in 1957.¹

Paradoxically, one notes a proliferation of parallel churches that are more in the nature of sects than real traditional churches. These offshoots are mostly found in the south of Cote d’Ivoire and are currently attracting more and more adherents. Whatever religion is practiced by Ivorians, there are excellent relations between the different religious communities that live in general harmony and never hesitate whenever possible to attend each other’s important ceremonies. Cote d’Ivoire is the only nation in the whole of West Africa which has established a ministry of religion which takes pains to maintain harmonious relations among believers of all faiths.

**The United Methodist Church**

**Brief History**

Around 1923, there were already a number of Methodist believers from Gold Coast (Ghana) and Sierra Leone at Grand-Bassam (Cote d’Ivoire). Their religious services were held in English. The French Administration, which did not want to deal with anything that sounded British, closed the church. The believers wrote to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Gold Coast and the report got to the Wesleyan Methodist

¹Barrett, 414.
Missionary Society (WMMS) of London, England. The WMMS then sent William-James Platt, who was already a missionary in Dahomey (present Republic of Benin) and the president of the new district of French West Africa to Grand-Bassam, to investigate the situation. While there, Platt heard the direct echoes of the tremendous work of Harris. A report was sent to London and authorization was given to Platt for a longer sojourn in Cote d’Ivoire. When he returned in 1924, he was so impressed by what he saw that he sent a detailed report, and the territory of Cote d’Ivoire was added to his leadership. Bertin-Charles Legbedji-Aka wrote, “In the year 1924, Rev. W. J. Platt sent from Dahomey two French pastors, Paul Laine and Antoine Lethel with 15 Dahomeyan and Togolese catechists to take care of Harris’ legacy.”

On 16 August 1924, at Grand Bassam, Rev. W. J. Platt made a heart-felt call to all Protestants, ministers and theology students in France. With the help of twenty-five indigenous agents, they were able to organize a census in the Southeast portion of Cote d’Ivoire and found 35,000 Protestants. Pastor Mathieu Essoh says, “In 1925, Edmond de Billy responded to the call from Europe, and Theophilus Aquiah, Ezekiel E. Jiminiga, Samuel G. Lawson from Africa. In 1926, Pierre Benoit joined the team and from 1927 to 1930, the following missionaries came to contribute to the work: Ed Gaba, Willis A. Fletcher, Fernand Rodet, Benjamin Deschamps, Thomas Y. Grant, Robert Howett, and Jean-Baptiste Guillou.”

In 1930, missionary activities spread toward new territories like Adzope, Agboville, Divo, Bongouanou, Jacqueville, Lanzona, Toupa, and Tiassale. Legbedji agrees that “from


2Pastor Mathieu Essoh, interview by author, Dabou, Cote d’Ivoire, 7 February 2005.
1924 to 1930 there were 15 missionaries (8 French and 7 British), 8 pastors, and 7 laymen among whom 5 were women.\textsuperscript{1}

The function of the Church is to evangelize and a missionary church cannot limit its activities inside national borders but must seek souls wherever they are. The Wesleyan Methodist Church has used its specialized agency, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS), to reach its goals. In Cote d’Ivoire, the Methodists have spread their message and activities throughout the country. They have done it through members who are transferred as government officers. The work of Protestants in Cote d’Ivoire was characterized by a comity agreement which assigned territories to the principal churches. Methodists, who are active among the Alagya, Attie, Anyi, Avikam, and Dida in the southeastern part of Cote d’Ivoire, reached beyond the comity agreement to proselytize the whole country. They represent the strongest Protestant denomination.

In 1942, Martin Mel became the first Ivorian Methodist minister. He was ordained to the gospel ministry in January 1947 at Dabou, but unfortunately died in 1949. In 1958, the territory of Cote d’Ivoire became a district attached to the Methodist Conference of Great Britain. In 1963, Rev. Samson Nadjui, who was ordained in February 1950, was elected as the first Ivorian chairman of the Methodist Church in Cote d’Ivoire. On 9 February 1985, the Methodist Church in Cote d’Ivoire got its institutional autonomy from the British Methodist Conference and elected Rev. Emmanuel Yando who was ordained in January 1972 as the first president of the Ivorian Methodist Conference. In 1990, Rev. Lambert Ncho became the second Ivorian to lead the Church as autonomous entity. Rev. Benjamin Boni was elected president in 1998 and it was under his leadership, on 21

\textsuperscript{1}Legbedji-Aka, 281.
October 2002 that the Church integrated the Worldwide United Methodist Church in Connecticut (USA) and became the United Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire (EMU-CI). Rev. Benjamin Boni was then ordained the first bishop of the new entity on 13 March 2005.

The United Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire has 6 districts, 900 local churches, 91 pastors, 38 evangelists, and 1,350,000 members in 2000 with the following institutions:

The Methodist Hospital (Dabou)
The Headquarters of Methodist Schools (Abidjan)
The Methodist Center for Secular Universities (Cocody)
The Methodist Youth Center (Cocody)
The Methodist Center of Urban Ministry (Harbor, Abidjan)
John Wesley Center (Dabou)
The Methodist Orphanage (Dabou)
The Methodist Blue Cross Center (Williamsville)
The Methodist Theological Institute (Abidjan)
The Methodist Banks (FIMECO, BCD, Abidjan)

Causes of Success

The successes of the United Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire reflect three major elements in the philosophy of John Wesley: Evangelism, Organization and

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1*Eglise Méthodiste Unie de Cote d’Ivoire*, 4.
administration, and Education. The fact that the first Methodist missionaries came from a generation who understood that its mission was to go to every nation, language, tongue, and people has also helped the Church to reach its goals.

In my research and observations, four specific factors have contributed to Methodist success.

**Education System**

One of the main characteristics of the Methodist Church is the place of the laity. When the first missionaries opened Bible schools, the teaching of French was not widespread in a country whose effective colonization started in 1920. The enthusiastic students of that time could not understand French. Methodist missionaries created schools parallel to the French government schools in order to educate the laity and any person who wanted to go to school through the vernacular languages. According to Protestant tradition, education for basic literacy usually goes with evangelization.² Legbedji-Aka relates that "It was on August 20, 1926 that Rev. Palmer, a former missionary in Sierra Leone who was a theologian and linguistic, arrived in Cote d'Ivoire."³ He reorganized the Methodist schools and the curriculum, which included reading, writing, and Bible studies.

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³ Ibid.
The *Modjukru* language of Dabou was the very first local language used in the Methodist schools. These schools were also places where lay assistants to pastors were trained with an adult education manual, a liturgical book, and a hymnal produced by Rev. Palmer. Over the years, the Methodist schools have trained thousands of Ivorians, and many of them have been baptized and remained strong supporters of the Church.

According to A. J. Djoman, “Methodist schools are means of testimony by which the United Methodist Church wants to show the love of God for humanity.”¹ Based on that idea, the role of church and school has always been complementary. There is no mission without school and there is no school without mission. Legbedji-Aka asserts that “the first school started between 1924 and 1930.”² The pioneers were Rev. Edwin Kue Gaba, Rev. Samuel L. G. Lawson from Togo, and Rev. Albert Benjamin Dickson who was a missionary in Ghana. They gave to the Methodist education system something that had not been experienced before in the educational history of Côte d’Ivoire. Because they came from countries that valued education in local languages, these African missionaries devoted their ministries to developing a system through which the local population could learn to write and read in their own language. The French administration did not like that for two reasons: first, it was the great period of acculturation; they wanted Ivorians to learn only French; Second, as in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the French would not allow Protestants to open schools. The Methodist Church had to change the names of the schools and call them “schools of catechism” to maintain them. It was

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² Legbedji-Aka, 281.
through the help of Miss M. Stennett and Mr. E. Harrop who were the first French graduate missionaries that the French Administration gave an official authorization for the Methodist schools. Since then, the Methodist Church has spread its philosophy of education in Cote d’Ivoire. Following are some statistics for the last twenty years (1980–2000):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary schools and kindergartens</th>
<th>46</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students at the primary level</td>
<td>11,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students at the secondary level</td>
<td>5,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>814</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Health System**

The health ministry of the United Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire began with the building of the hospital of Dabou in October 1968. This hospital was managed by missionaries until 1983, when, according to the contract, nationals took over. In order that the Methodist philanthropic activities might be both scientific and Christian, the hospital has maintained the Christian standard and has looked to the Methodist constituency for support. The hospital has 100 beds and is served by 159 employees, including 8 doctors, 46 nurses, 19 assistant nurses, 8 medical assistants, and 9 medical technicians.

Since its establishment, the Methodist Hospital of Dabou has played an important missionary role, not only in Cote d’Ivoire but in the neighboring countries as well. In the Ivorian Health System, the Methodist hospital of Dabou is considered to be a regional hospital. In fact, Dabou is the capital of the Lagoons Region whose constituent counties
have only dispensaries, not hospitals. In this context, the Methodist Hospital of Dabou, with its nine permanent departments (general surgery, general medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, ophthalmology, laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, and cardiology), appears to be the best health facility in the entire Lagoons Region and attracts by its reputation patients not only from all over Cote d’Ivoire, but also from West Africa. Hundreds of them have met the Lord while visiting the hospital.

Cultural Considerations

At the beginning of the Methodist work in Cote d’Ivoire, missionaries took the local language seriously. Culture is defined as a set of norms, standards, notions and beliefs, an ideational code underlying behavior, a comprehensive plan of living a purposeful, harmonious and successful life. Rev. Palmer took his time to perceive the behavior and evaluate the cultures of the people in his new field of action. Based on the values, beliefs, and practices of these people, he composed the Modjukru alphabet, and wrote other books that promoted the values of the peoples of southern Cote d’Ivoire. Culture is learned from birth through learning one’s primary language, and through socialization which is the way culture is passed on and how an individual fits into a group’s organized way of life. Taking these factors into consideration, many have accepted the Methodist way of life and have joined the Church. Sermons were preached based on Ivorian proverbs and way of thinking. Old men were respected and dignified; they even had special seats in church. Baby dedications were thanksgiving festivals.

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Leadership

Years before Rev. Martin Mel, the first Ivorian to enter into the ministry, the Methodist missionaries had trained many Catechists to share leadership responsibilities and to advance the cause. Legbedji-Aka asserts, “The first graduating ceremony was held in 1929.” It means that just five years after its implantation, the Methodist Church was aware of the necessity of training local leadership. These Catechists were the first to serve as liaisons between missionaries and the local population. In 1963, when the Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire elected its first national president, the clergy was almost entirely Ivorian. This situation has created a strong confidence among members and other Ivorians.

As we shall see in the next chapter, the factors that have contributed to the success of the United Methodist Church in Cote d’Ivoire have not been adequately emphasized in the Ivorian Seventh-day Adventist church.

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1Legbedji-Aka, 306.
CHAPTER III

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN COTE D’IVOIRE

The distinctive Seventh-day Adventist message can be summarized as the everlasting gospel, the basic Christian message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, in the special setting of the threefold message of Rev 14:6-12, the call to worship the creator, for the hour of his judgment is come. This message is epitomized in the phrase, “the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” The Church Manual stipulates that “the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and people of every nation, race and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship.”¹ Gorden Doss suggested in an article about missionary ministry that “Adventists need mission work, more specially, foreign mission work.”² It was in that perspective that the Adventist message entered Cote d’Ivoire.

Brief History

The known Adventists in Cote d’Ivoire were two traders named Bley and Essien who came from Ghana in 1920. One was already an Adventist and the other was a Methodist who converted to Adventism later on. They settled at Tiemeleleko and started

¹Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (Washington DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000), 34.

to establish a company of believers. About the same time, two southern Ivorians, Joseph Kouame Djouman and Pierre Kouame Adingrah, who were members of the Dida ethnic group of the southern part of Cote d’Ivoire, and who went to Ghana to learn to grow cacao, met some Adventists there, accepted their teachings, and returned to their home village preaching their newly discovered faith. They moved through Agbahou, Iroporia, Gohou, Garo, Zehiri, and the neighboring villages with picture rolls brought from Ghana. The method of evangelism used at that time was: walking through villages with songs and preaching at dawn.

When the leaders of the Ghana Mission heard about the interested believers in Cote d’Ivoire, they sent a national worker, J. K. Garbrah, to visit them around 1936. J. K. Garbrah eventually went to Tiemelekro and Agbahou and as result of this visit, six persons were baptized at Agbahou, a village located in the region of Divo,¹ Cote d’Ivoire as first fruits. Later on, a teacher by the name of Arloo was also sent to help the believers to grow in faith.

From 1937 until the Second World War, except for very few visits made by Pastor Jesse Clifford, the president of the Ghana Mission, Adventists in Cote d’Ivoire had contact with the denomination only through the paper Les Signes de Temps published in France. When Pastor Jesse Clifford and E. R. Colson, treasurer of the Euro-African Division, visited the first company of believers at Tiemelekro, they agreed to send Felix Donkor to Bekwai, Ghana for pastoral training. After the training, Felix Donkor returned

¹See appendix C.
to work with his people as evangelist, but was persecuted terribly by Catholic priests wherever he preached.

Around 1943, the group of Tiemelekré heard about fellow believers at Beugretto, in the region of Jacquesville. They sent Felix Donkor who met the patriarch Zakka, head elder of the Harris Faith. He realized that this group of believers were not Adventists but belonged to the Harris Faith. It was a rumor that spread quickly about the fact that the well-known patriarch had a totem: not eating scaleless fish. After a serious Bible study from the English Bible that William Wade Harris left in the village during one of his missionary trips, the Spirit of the Lord touched the patriarch and he accepted the Adventist message with his large family. His nephew, Emmanuel Diaoue, who was a little bit educated, opposed the new faith of his uncle. One day, he discovered a brochure about the Sabbath and was convinced. He joined the family and even later became the first ordained Adventist minister in Côte d'Ivoire. During the first and last visit of Pastor Clifford at Beugretto, he met the son of the patriarch, Jean Zakka, and recommended him for pastoral training at Bekwai, Ghana.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially recognized by the French colonial government in 1946. In June of the same year, two missionary families: the Ellstrom and the Jespersen were sent from the United States. Mrs. Ellstrom said, “When they arrived, they were housed for several years until they were given permission to purchase land and construct permanent houses.”

Mrs. Ellstrom, wife of the first missionary recognized by the pioneers as the first official leaders, interviewed by author, Loma Linda, CA, 10 December 2003.
The church was organized in 1952\(^1\) but it was in 1953 that the first national colporteur, Jacob Gbessin, started the publishing work. J. R. Buzenet from France and Bah Amadou, a converted Senegalese Muslim, opened a primary school at Bouake. This school was to receive anyone who wanted to enter, but also students who were denied by the French system for passing the age required for school of that time.

The history of Ivorian Adventism can best be divided into three eras, which will now be briefly discussed.

**Pre-Organizational Era: 1920-1946**

The pre-organizational period (1920-1946) was a time of uncertainty and poor organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire. Believers did not follow basic church procedures outlined in the *Church Manual*, such thus instance, “the term of office for officers of the church and auxiliary organizations shall be one year, except where the local church in a business meeting votes to have elections every two years in order to facilitate continuity and development of spiritual gifts and eliminate the work involved in having yearly elections.”\(^2\) Customs from local tradition were followed, even when they did not harmonize with Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. There was a lack of sufficient supervision and the church developed a false interpretation of the Bible, a fanatical perception of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s teachings, and the misunderstanding of evangelism.

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\(^1\) *Seventh-day Adventist Church Yearbook* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998), 55.

\(^2\) *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (2000), 47.
Missionary Leadership Era: 1946-1986

In 1946, the Ivorian Seventh-day Adventist Church was established and the first two pioneer missionaries were sent from America: Gordon Ellstrom and Jespersen.¹ These missionaries organized the work and represented a great source of encouragement for the believers who had suffered persecutions for years. In 1948, under the leadership of Pastor Ellstrom, the Church obtained land at 11 Lycee Technique Street, Abidjan, where the headquarters was built. On 21 May 1952, the French colonial government granted the Seventh-day Church of Cote d’Ivoire recognition under the leadership of Pastor W. K. Denis.² Elder W. K. Denis stayed in Cote d’Ivoire for just a few months but upon his departure, Pastor Ellstrom took over.

When local community members encounter newcoming missionaries, they obviously view them as outsiders. The Ellstroms were so welcomed and loved for their strong pioneering work that many families in Cote d’Ivoire have taken their name. During these good years in Cote d’Ivoire where roads were scarcely passable, Esaie Grah said that Pastor Ellstrom often left his car in a place where the road could not continue and walked kilometers with us through forest to visit believers.³

The Ellstroms left Cote d’Ivoire in 1955 and were replaced by G. Gutekunst (1956-1959) from Belgium. He was the very first French speaking missionary to come to Cote d’Ivoire. Pastor Henri Kempf (1959-1962) from France was a developer. During

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¹None of the living pioneers remember the first name of Elder Jespersen.


³Esaie Grah, one of the pioneers, Iroporia, Divo, interview by Salomon Assiene, Divo, Cote d’ivoire, 15 July 1986.
three years, according to Pastor Joseph Bley, he developed five village schools to help poor parents who wanted to send their children to church schools.¹ These schools were closed a few years later because the government was offering free education.

Pastor Paul Heise, a former Catholic priest and his wife worked in Cote d'Ivoire from 1962-1970. Some people who have known them say that Mrs. Heise was a strong leader while Pastor Heise was a quiet person. Pastor Jean-Jacques Bouit from Tahiti (1972-1978) was appointed President of the mission while he was a teacher in the secondary school of Bouake. Pastor Sylvain Jerome from France (1978-1986) was the last missionary president. It was under his leadership that the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists established the African Indian Ocean Division at Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire which is now the West-Central Africa Division.

Post-Missionary Leadership Era: 1986-Present

Before giving the Great Commission to His disciples, Jesus Christ reminded them that all power in heaven and on earth belongs to Him. At the same time, He promised to be with them to the end of the age. Stephen Neil has described missionary work as “the most difficult thing in the world.”² Missionary work has always been difficult, dangerous, and discouraging. There is no reason to believe that the future will be any different from the past. If the missionary enterprise is to remain true to its own genius and realize its high destiny, it must continue to operate within the context of world history, however turbulent it might become. Because Jesus is not only the Head of the Church but also the

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¹Joseph Bley, fourth ordained minister in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, interview by author, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, 2 February 1997.

Lord of history, dictators come and go; kingdoms rise and fall; civilizations wax and wane; the worldwide mission of the Church will continue to the end of the age whether with foreigner or national missionaries.

In 1986, a very important historical event happened at the leadership level of Cote d'Ivoire Mission. When Pastor Sylvain Jerome was elected as departmental director at the Sahel Union Mission, Pastor Michel Konan Kra, a former Muslim, became the first national to be President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire. Under his leadership, the Church experienced a revival in public evangelism. In 1990, because of his Muslim background, he was transferred to the mission station of Mali. Pastor Elie Weick-Dido, a former Methodist, was then elected to replace Elder Kra. In 1993, Pastor Elie Weick-Dido was the first national to be elected as Executive Secretary of the Sahel Union Missions. He was replaced at the Mission by Julien Thiombiano, a native from Burkina Faso. The other historical event at the Mission of Cote d'Ivoire was the election in 1996 of Elder Samuel Ouadjo who was the first President to be born in the Church. In 2002, as result of a national effort, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire reached Conference status. In September 2005, Pastor Benjamin G. Gonkanou who is a product of the Ivorian Adventist education system, was elected President. With the election at the same time of Pastor Emmanuel K. Kra, son of the first national President, as Executive Secretary of the Conference, Adventism in Cote d'Ivoire at this level, has proved its capacity of producing competent local workers.

**Education System**

Evangelism and the spiritual activities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire are reinforced by its education system of few schools which follow the
philosophy of Adventist education: physical, mental and spiritual harmonious development. Pastor Salomon Assiene believes that Adventists started talking about education in Cote d’Ivoire around 1950. The construction process started as soon as the properties of Divo and Bouake were bought in 1952. Pastor Pascal Kouassi adds that “in 1954, an evangelism training center was created at Divo to spread the message.” The same kind of center was also established at Bouake in 1956. The school of Iroporia, Divo was created in 1962. Other schools were opened in Abidjan, Tiemelekro, Abengourou, Zergbe, Toulepleu, etc. but were closed a few years later for gratuitousness of government education.

In 1972, a Theological Seminary was established within the secondary school of Bouake but was closed in 1979 for lack of funding. In 1985 the only Adventist secondary school in Cote d’Ivoire which is the one of Bouake, became a full operating academy with 24 classrooms, 6 laboratories for natural sciences, biology and physics. Pastor Salomon reports that “the school year 1995-1996, the attendance was 1000 students with only 59 Adventist students, 4 advisers, 2 chaplains and 38 instructors.” He adds that “around 35 students give their life to Jesus Christ and get baptized.” The excellent result from national exams, has built a solid reputation for Adventist education in Cote d’Ivoire.

In 1992, Pastor Salomon Assiene who is the actual Director for both Stewardship and

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3 Assiene, 10.

4 Ibid.

Causes of the Slow Growth

In spite of the blessings received by the Ivorian Seventh-day Adventist Church, growth has been much slower than experienced elsewhere. Based on my research and my observations, the causes of slow growth are as follow.

Failure to Follow Holistic Missiology

John L. Dybdahl is right when he wrote, “Mission gives birth to the church and is its mother. The very essence or nature of the church is mission. If the church ceases to be missionary, it has not simply failed in its task, but has actually ceased being the church. It becomes only a religiously oriented social organization.”1 A holistic missiology has always included the mind, the body and the spirit. If a church misses one of them, that church will have an unbalanced ministry and will not reach the goal that God has designed for it.

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In my observation, Seventh-day Adventists in Cote d’Ivoire did not practice the holistic mission which characterized the work elsewhere. They concentrate their efforts on evangelism—with education and health work not sufficiently emphasized.

Instead of evangelizing Muslims and animists, Ivorian Seventh-day Adventists focused on other Christians.

At the beginning, it seems that leaders and members in Cote d’Ivoire did not really know in what direction to head for the accomplishment of the task. They were so concerned about the coming of the Lord that they emphasized more spirituality which led them to win Christians from other denominations. B. B. Beach confirms that “Adventists have been most successful in reaching religious or semi-religious people, especially those who are already Christians or influenced by Christianity. They have much greater difficulty in reaching secular people or those of other faith.”¹ This phenomenon gives the impression that the church’s task is to point out the error of, and win over, Christians from other denominations, but at the time leave the conversion of the non-religious and unchurched to those other denominations. As a result, the church has been struggling with the stigma of sheep stealers.

Few schools were established to address the main part of the mission, but quickly most of them were closed for lack of funding and for the fact that the government was offering free education. Only five primary schools and two secondary schools have remained open. Paraphrasing Ellen White about a proper education to help the planning of the new schools, the school should highlight the Bible and aim at developing in its students a balance of mental, physical, and spiritual powers. It is important to note that
the few educated members that the Church has and most of the teachers of the schools are
the fruit of the education ministry of the church in Cote d’Ivoire.

Ellen White observed that “during His ministry Jesus devoted more time to
healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of his words that He
came not to destroy but to save. . . . Where He had passed, the objects of His compassion
were rejoicing in health, and making trial of their new-found powers.”

2 Services and
programs that target the local community are to be evaluated in terms of the value they
offer to the people being served. Unfortunately, the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire
has not brought to its mission agenda, neither health care, nor community services etc.
Few no smoking five-day plans have been conducted with positive results. The services
of ADRA were directed toward the Liberian refugees, but nothing in reality for Cote
d’Ivoire.

Failure to Grasp Opportunity Left by William Wade Harris

When Harris left Cote d’Ivoire in 1915, David Barrett says that around “120,000
adults were converted and baptized. About 20,000 later became Catholics and 35,000
Methodists, but majority organized themselves as independent church.”

3 This special
harvest was a great opportunity for every organized church to grasp. The Seventh-day
Adventist Church entered Cote d’Ivoire five years after the departure of Harris and four
years before the Methodist Church. It means that the Adventist Church was the first


2 Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, 350.

3 Barrett, 414.
Protestant denomination to be in the country that could have taken advantage of this great opportunity. Esaie Grah shared one of the important reasons of neglecting these Christians. He confessed that “they were not interested to all these people because they did not trust Harris being an African.”¹ According to T. D. Roberts, “Harris wore a long white gown and a turban, went barefooted, and carried a bamboo staff with a cross, a small Bible and calabash of water.”² While Adventists and some other Ivorians questioned his ministry for being the first in West Africa with such power and appearance, many took him seriously. Those converted were only looking for leadership, direction, and orientation. The vacuum created by the Harris Church raised many other spiritual leaders who have organized independent churches. There was a wide open door to everything; unfortunately, the Adventists in Cote d’Ivoire not only ignored these people but did not understand that God did not endow only to Seventh-day Adventist Church with all ideas for effective ministry. If the challenge of opening-up was accepted, the channel of communication could have helped to learn from others.

Communication Problems

The planting and growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire was hindered with communication challenges in four dimensions:

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¹Grah, interview.
²Roberts, 137.
Rural to Urban

When the first pioneers came from Ghana, they lived in rural areas and remained in there to take care of their daily businesses. They had no contact with cities and at that time, very few places had roads. The reality was that no one could come from a rural area and preach to urban populations and be trusted, because villagers were considered as non-civilized. People from different places are represented in cities but the contrary is not possible. The pioneers did their best within their rural context. The technological advancement and the communication skills is one of the most challenging aspects of modern civilization.

Among Villages

Cultural matters in Cote d’Ivoire are very localized. Two villages might not be far from each other but have different cultures, even languages. Intercultural communication is as complex as the sum total of human differences. Clyde Kluckhohn says that “culture is a way of thinking, feeling and believing. It is the group’s knowledge stored up for future use.” Louis Luzbetak adds, “Culture is a design for living. It is a plan according to which a society adapts itself to its physical, social, and ideational environment, a plan for coping with the physical environment, political systems, kinships and family organization; a plan according to which one is to interact with his fellows... Culture is but different answers to essentially the same human problems.” The cultural matters have alienated many villages from the Adventist message. For years villages where the

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1 Clyde Kluckhohn, Mirror for Man (New York: Whittlesey, 1949), 23.
2 Luzbetak, 60-61.
message was known, were not able to spread it in other neighboring villages because of
cultural differences. Village life was woven so tight that no one was able to accept a new
faith such as the Adventist message. Seventh-day Adventists in rural area did not have
adequate communication skills to bridge the gap between localized cultural clusters. In
cities, there is greater freedom and the community of Christians can help new converts
make the necessary adjustments.

**Between Members and Denomination Headquarters**

Until 1980, the denomination headquarters in West Africa was located in Ghana
(formerly called Gold Coast). Because of the tension between colonized powers, two
countries with the same cultural identity had to be two different entities. French did not
want anything that sounded English within their colonized territories. John Thiessen
writes that even “Harris, the prophet was arrested and deported to his native Liberia.”¹ It
was not because the French had something against Harris and his ministry, but they only
wanted to protect their colonized territory against any English invasion.

Language had made inadequate communication between the believers and the
leaders in Accra, Ghana. This situation alienated the Church from supervision, from its
goal and from worldwide support. In a local form, the church is only partially able to
fulfill the Great Commission. This is the clear pattern of the New Testament and the
overwhelming verdict of history. Local churches need agencies, because agencies at the
same time have vision and focus narrow task. They have administrative personnel with

¹John Caldwell Thiessen, *A Survey of World Missions* (Chicago, IL: Inter-varsity Press, 1955),
189.
long-term career commitment and ability to respond rapidly to field opportunities. They also have the expertise and professionalism to accomplish their task. Organizations or agencies also need local churches because they have human resources, finances and material aid, and a broad base of intercessory prayer and stability. Jonathon Lewis concludes that “both local churches and leaders must cooperate on the basis of shared values and vision to advance the gospel.”¹ The fact that the church in Cote d’Ivoire was only receiving the Review *Signes des Temps* from France was a further hindrance.

**Between Language Groups**

A lot of what a disciple is commanded to do involve language. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ involves getting to know Him personally. That requires adequate comprehension of the Good News and of God’s Word. The apostle Paul said it was his responsibility to make the message clear (Col 4:4).

Although the colonial language was in wide use, Ivorians speak many local languages. This multiplicity of local languages added to an inadequate comprehension of French has greatly influence church work. Even when people speak French, their natural preference is to hear the Gospel in their mother tongue.

Christian faith is personal and intimate as well as corporate and public. If a second language is not learned and used extensively in interpersonal relationship, its effective use by a believer will be very limited.

French Secularism

French colonial secularism challenged Adventist mission in Cote d’Ivoire. About two-thirds of Ivorians are from Ghana by origin. They came from the same cultural roots, share the same worldviews, and almost belong to the same ethnic groups. However, Adventist missions in Ghana did not confront the particular challenges of French colonialism, being under the British Rule instead. The reality is that the French have experienced for a long period of time an idle dominating class which struggles against boredom in intellectual life and arts. Being part of the elite became synonymous with being interested in literature, philosophy, history, geography, music, paint, architecture, etc. The intellectual laymen called “The intelligentsia based their role on the Catholic-educated clergy and had given them the responsibility to think about daily problems of the society.”1 “The social relationship between Church and State in France has given birth to the important and valid concept: secularism.”2

It is important to note that the French entered Cote d’Ivoire with Catholic missionaries and the Catholic Church made a deep impact through an extensive educational system, and many Ivorians are nominally Catholics as a result. If the general growth of Christianity of Cote d’Ivoire is low, it is also because Catholicism has encouraged the separation between the elite and the rest of the population. France has transmitted its secularism and low interest in religious matter to her colonies.

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1 Being intellectual has appeared at the end of the nineteenth century in the time of the case Dreyfus. In reality, it existed a long time before that event in France. Montaigne in the sixteenth century, Pascal in the seventeenth century, and Voltaire in the eighteenth century were intellectuals and scholars.

An additional factor is that the French colonials in Cote d’Ivoire did not place the same significance as the British colonials in Ghana in training for literacy. Where literacy in Ghana is 70 percent, it is only 42 percent in Cote d’Ivoire.¹

Islam

The challenge of Islam was not confronted effectively in Cote d’Ivoire. Because of the large influx of foreign ethnic groups from Mali, Niger, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Senegal, Islam is growing. The Islamization of Cote d’Ivoire is greatly aided by the Africanization of Islam. The cultural dynamics explain not only the integration of Islam into Northern Cote d’Ivoire but how Ivorian Islam remains an integral part of the Muslim world.

Lamin Sanneh, in his thematic approach of translatability in Islam and in Christianity in Africa, mentions that “the strength of Islam in making excellent capital out of its Arab character in Africa was the weakness of Christianity when Christianity failed to shed its European forms.”² In evangelizing Muslims, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and sociological factors need to be taken into account. Winning them to Christ becomes a great challenge to Christian missions. Borge Schantz stipulates that “the lack of success in Muslim evangelism is that Christians in their outreach have dealt generally with Islamic theology and doctrinal points of disagreement, and have not really addressed the

¹Johnstone and Maudryk, 208, 274.
powerful Folk Islamic beliefs and the felt needs of the common Muslim."1 Because the transition for the converted Muslim from mosque to church can easily constitute a religious cultural shock, Adventism in Cote d’Ivoire has not tried to start such ministry.

Animism

Animism represents a challenge that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire has not addressed effectively. African traditional religions remain influential. David Barrett wrote, “The Kulango, Lobi, Guere and Gagu are still 90% traditionalist; the Agny, Dan, Bauli and Guro 70%; the Bete Brong and Senufo more than 60%; and the population as a whole 46% in 1975.”2 Animists cannot just drift into the Christian faith. Most animistic societies believe in the survival of the soul after death, whether as a ghost, an ancestor, or in some other form. They can call upon good spirits or protective magic to help them against evil spirits; or they are protected by good conduct and the good offices of ancestors.

Truly gloomy worldviews in this area are found, apparently, in societies which have been subjected to massive imposed changes, so that people feel helpless. The knowledge of religion as basically animistic is knowledge as power, but this power is destructive. A tradition that is understood reveals itself as a movement in which one generation can pass on its power over life and human orientation to the next, as something that gives life. The weakness of animism is the weakness visible in all

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2Barrett, 406.
“emaciation in learning and science” resulting from an unjustifiable objectification. A great number of Ivorians are rooted in such beliefs. Traditional practices continue to thrive in both towns and cities, even apart from their influence on the new religions, on Islam, and on Christianity. Witchcraft beliefs often flourish in the threatening world of urban change.

“Traditional modes of healing are maintained along with modern medicine.”

Doctors sometimes report that many of their less Westernized patients seek out traditional healers after leaving the hospital, combining the practical efficacy of Western medicine with the spiritual healing that only harmony with the past and with the ancestors can evoke for them. Even highly educated Ivorians may insist that there is a mysterious dimension to life that is missing within Western empiricism, and is more truly understood and dealt with by a traditional wisdom.

Family Religion

The force of family religion has not been successfully addressed. In Cote d’Ivoire, religion is a family matter. The Cartesian dictum “Cogito ergo sum,” I think, therefore I am, does not apply in Ivorian ethno-traditional communities. For them, the unchanging dictum is, I participate therefore I am. Conformity to and participation in traditional religious rites and customs give them their identity. If there is to be a radical change in religious allegiance, there must be a corporate or multi-individual decision.

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1Gerandus Van der Leeuw’s *Levenswormen* (Amsterdam: n.p., 1948) contains an essay on the process of “emaciation” of science and one on the nature of history; both are of immediate relevance to a critical evaluation of theories such as animism.

Family is vitally important to most African religious traditions in two closely interconnected ways: various ritual processes enacted by, to, and for the family help to create and sustain it as well as to give it meaning, and it functions as an important symbol of deity. Historically and cross-culturally, family in various forms has been so basic to human existence as to be a universal symbol of ultimacy.

It is difficult for individualistic Westerners to realize that in many face-to-face societies, religious decisions are made corporately. The individual is seen as a traitor. It is therefore necessary to evangelize whole families.

Lack of Commitment to Mission and Personal Evangelism

In all likelihood Jesus did not send his apostles out with a general mission merely to win as many individuals as they could, but rather to reach all the peoples of the world and thus to gather the sons of God which are scattered (John 11:52), and to call all the ransomed from every tongue and tribe and people and nation (Rev 5:9).

When Jesus says: go and make disciples of all nations, there is no good reason for construing this to mean anything other than that the missionary task of the church is to press on to all the unreached peoples until the Lord comes.

According to Jacques Assiene, second generation Adventist in Cote d'Ivoire, the first and his generation understood personal evangelism very well. Some of them used to invite villagers to harvest rice plantations. According to the rules of harvest of that time, any person that worked in a plantation was authorized to keep one-third of his work but
Adventists were allowed to keep whatever quantity of rice they harvested. It was a way to make friends and bring new members to the church.¹

Assiene says, “Members began to lose their missionary zeal when French missionaries started coming in Cote d’Ivoire.”² As a witness of the present situation, evangelists of great reputation have been sent to Cote d’Ivoire for mega crusades to reach the cities and this practice has decreased personal evangelism. But ultimately the real success occurs when believers, led by the Holy Spirit, put aside all inhibitions, apply their spiritual gifts, and engage persons who need Jesus Christ.

Recruiting Criteria of Members

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has different criteria for recruiting its members than the United Methodist Church. The *Church Manual* stipulates that “only those giving evidence of having experienced the new birth and who are enjoying a spiritual experience in the Lord Jesus, are prepared for acceptance into church membership.”³ Ellen White adds, “The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory.”⁴ Adventists believe that church membership is a serious matter. Solemn obligations are impressed on the one who applies for admittance to the church. That person receives a faithful teaching of what it means to become a member.

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¹Assiene, interview.
²Ibid.
The twelfth Fundamental Belief of Seventh-day Adventists says that “the universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”\(^1\) Even before the baptism, a final examination of the candidates is done before the entire church body. All these criteria are not making the situation easy to fill the church with new converts.

The Methodist Church, which is the largest Protestant church in Cote d’Ivoire, baptizes even children and in its doctrines and disciplines, it stipulates that “all children by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the Kingdom of God, and are therefore graciously entitled to baptism.”\(^2\) The other Protestant denominations baptize and give some responsibilities without complicating the process of membership.

**Leadership Instability**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was slow to develop and to appoint Ivorians as leaders. Christianity entered Cote d’Ivoire from the south with an undesirable association of colonial propaganda. Missionaries were first seen as bearers of colonialism propaganda. Adventism which also started in the south, made its history in the same context. From the arrival of the “first Adventist missionary in 1946, the organization of the territory of Cote d’Ivoire into mission in 1952”\(^3\) to 1986, Ivorians were not involved

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\(^2\) *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, 38.

\(^3\) *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1998), 55.
in leadership. The Church has been seen as a foreigner denomination and as such, could not attract Ivorians. For the Catholic Church, “The first indigenous priests were ordained in 1934 and the first local archbishop was consecrated in 1960.”\textsuperscript{1} The Methodists and the other Protestant denominations have trained and involved Ivorians early on. If the United Methodist Church has entered in Cote d’Ivoire in 1924, Legbedji-Aka agrees that in 1929,\textsuperscript{2} they have organized their first graduation after training their local leaders to face the challenges of their mission, and that after five years of their activity. Their involvement has removed all barriers of misconceptions and the growth is a reality compared to the Seventh-day Adventists.

Besides the late appointment of Ivorian Church leaders, once they were appointed they tended to be changed frequently. The system of appointment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church created a kind of instability in leadership. A leader did not have time to plan and put his plans in execution before another is appointed. No master plan was made to be evaluated and followed up. For communities which were used to kingship, continuity, stability, traditional discipline and order, the quick change of leadership or power vacuum was confusing.

Legalism, Fanaticism, and Exclusism

Mission in Cote d’Ivoire has been hindered by legalism, fanaticism and exclusion. The eighteenth Fundamental Belief of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is stipulated in these terms:

\begin{itemize}
\item[1] Barret, 414.
\item[2] Legbedji-Aka, 306.
\end{itemize}
The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is an evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow men. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness.¹

Because of an unbalanced or inadequate understanding of this belief and the lack of connection to any church organization, the first Adventists in Cote d'Ivoire developed a strong legalism and fanaticism. They did not understand that the first purpose of the Law is to reveal God to us. "The moral law which God gave to man in the beginning was no arbitrary or whimsical pronouncement, but an expression of His being. It showed man what the nature of God was."² The Law as a reflection of God's character points to the second purpose of the law. Thus Ellen White can write: "The condition of eternal life, under grace, is just what they were in Eden perfect righteousness harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law."³ The third function of the Law is that it points out and condemns sins in the human heart and life. "Through the law," Paul wrote, "comes knowledge of sin." (Rom 3:20, 7:7). One of the great realities of life is that people are often not aware of their most serious shortcomings and sins.

The fourth purpose of the Law is to point also beyond itself and human sinfulness. God uses the law to lead us beyond human hopelessness to Jesus Christ as the answer to

¹Church Manual, 28.
humanity’s lostness. Not only did the first Adventists in Cote d’Ivoire understand the purpose of the law but they were also influenced by Islam. “On March 7, 1955 the school development which started in Bouake, opened, offering the first primary class which was taught by Bah Amadou.” Bah Amadou, who was from Senegal, was born and raised Muslim. He did influence many pupils. “In 1964, the secondary school had an enrollment of 235 students with a staff of 9.3 percent of the students were Seventh-day Adventists, 30 percent Catholics, 10 percent Protestants, 57 percent Muslims and others, all citizens of Ivory Coast.” With this high percentage of Muslims in Adventist schools, the first ministers were from Muslim backgrounds. They did not have a strong theological education and they affected members with a legalistic understanding of the Bible. P. T. Forsyth says, “When religion becomes perverted to be a means of mere comfort and dense satisfaction, it becomes an integument [outer covering] so tough that even the grace of God cannot get through it.”

One of the great problems of a morally respectable people is that they cease to realize how lost they are in their natural state and how totally dependent they are upon God’s grace. There may be nothing more destructive than a critical spirit. Such a spirit continues to rip apart the Adventists in Cote d’Ivoire as its superior types multiply regulations and criticize everything from the way people worship God to what others may be eating or wearing. They are busy creating the God of heaven in their own religious image. Legalism like the Pharisees’ will always fail. Because of these tendencies,

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2 Ibid.

Ivorians looked at the Seventh-day Adventist Church as one of the Christian sects. The writings of Ellen G. White were more quoted than the Bible and that gave more opportunities to Ivorians to agree with Walter Martin when he wrote “Another confusing aspect of non-Christian cultist ‘approach to semantics is the manner in which they will surprise the Christian with voluminous quotations from less authority than the Bible, and give appearance of agreeing with nearly every statement the Christian makes in attempting to evangelize the cultist.”¹ Legalism and fanaticism have created a barrier of strict rules that made non-Christians, even Christians from other denominations, feel uncomfortable, have alienated the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire from evangelism, and have played an important role to slow the growth.

The other great factor that has affected the growth of the Adventist Church is exclusivism. Adventists have excluded themselves from the Ivorian community with their beliefs. Whenever a new member is incorporated into the fellowship, he is required to express the belief that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of the Bible prophecy. It is true that this doctrine is the basis of the mission offensive of the Adventist Church, but has played a major role in the creation of a mind-set and a social culture that is uniquely Adventist. This mind-set did not allow the Church in Cote d’Ivoire to respond to the opportunity left by the departure of William Wade Harris. Adventists were ready to fire the “Babylon gun” and were not allowed to attend other denominations funeral services, prayer meetings, and participation in other social activities of the community.

It is not difficult to find out that Seventh-day Adventism is a message-centered organization. This should not have preeminence on the commitment to the truth, staying faithful to Scripture, and the reproduction of a caring and loving Christian community. Russell Staples has written, “Perhaps we should be honest enough to admit that there has been a tendency towards a legalistic judgmentalism within the Adventist community. Precisely because the truth of the message is taken with utter seriousness and because of the apocalyptic view of the judgment, any deviation from the truth and moral rectitude may serve as a cause for discipline or correction. This may easily result toward a legalistic rather than grace orientation. And it may also undercut the joyous sense of victory that should fill the Christian’s soul.”¹ This denominational supremacy has decreased today but because of its strong roots, the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire has reached the state of low involvement in the community.

**Search for Identity and Direction**

The anthropological perspective describes missionaries as those who colonize their mission fields in the image of their culture. Christian or more specifically a Seventh-day Adventist culture is defined as the one who is ready to cross language and racial barriers, incorporating the good things of all cultures and happily discarding their negative aspects. Missionaries have an extremely important function in the tactful, thoughtful, serious presentation of alternate forms of cultural behavior to the Christians in a society. Their basic responsibility is to provide the material upon which the native

Christian and church can grow. As they grow in grace and knowledge they can make reliable and spirit-directed decisions with regard to their own conduct within the existing culture. This involves freedom of access to the Word of God.

The missionary’s role in culture change is that of a catalyst and of a source of new ideas and new information. It is the voice of experience, but an experience based on its own culture for the most part and therefore to be used only with care and understanding.

Though it is not so all the time, people must make decisions based on the new ideas which they have received. They must interpret old needs and expressions, examined in the light of their relationship to God and their fellow Christians. As missionaries do their daily work, the well-intended generosity of Western Christianity often backfires by creating dependency. Emile Kangabega shares his remarkable insight in these terms: “We were taught by missionaries to be faithful in tithing and offerings. In church building project, we were told that it was not our responsibility because they thought we were too poor.”

It took eighty-two years for the Church in Cote d’Ivoire to become a Conference because members expected missionaries to build churches, schools, etc. The structure of the church organization introduced to Cote d’Ivoire is not reproducible.

If the visiting foreign personnel during the colonial period could not run the programs without heavy foreign subsidy, how could they expect believers to do so when the subsidy was removed? Well-intentioned national church leaders are preoccupied with maintenance rather than dynamic missionary outreach. They are made to appear like poor

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1Emile Kangabega, interview by author, 5 March 1995, Katiola, Cote d’Ivoire.
managers, or even failures, for not being able to elaborate church program going. That is just one of the many regrettable results of creating irreproducible structures.

Enormous flow of outside funding keeps many churches poor. Believers through the years found that it was not necessary to put paper money into the church offering. They knew that if they sat back and waited long enough, funds would eventually come from unseen sources. Even mainline churches in Cote d’Ivoire which have experienced the blessing of being organizationally and financially independent find it necessary to continue teaching their people that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Soul winning is in the Adventist DNA. Even when missionaries left Cote d’Ivoire, the believers have continued to truly care within their own culture.

Summarizing the state of affairs of the Haitian Church, Dr. Fritz Fontus says, “Almost all the scholars who have written on the subject have recognized the weaknesses of the methods which were used in the past in spite of the spectacular results these methods have made possible. The gospel was brought to non-Christians wrapped in the Western cultural traditions. . . . In many Third World Countries Christianity is an intruder. It has not been sufficiently contextualized.”

Contrary to the incident reported in Acts 15 with the Gentile church of Antioch, in terms of cultural sensitivity or contextualization of the gospel message, the church of Cote d’Ivoire did not receive the same treatment. Therefore the Gospel appeared foreign to Ivorians. The “foreignness” of the gospel has created to some extent a domino effect that shaped the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire in at least four ways:

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(1) lack of numerical growth, (2) spiritual shallowness, (3) conversion, and (4) the impeding of its missionary vision. Philip Jenkins has argued “Over the past century, however, the center of gravity in the Christian World shifted inexorable southward, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This trend will continue apace in coming years.”¹ If intentional about contributing to the fulfillment of the Great Commission, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has to position itself to take up the global level of involvement as the spirit draws members to reach out to Cote d’Ivoire with the Gospel message. The emerging generation can be used as a catalyst to materialize that vision alongside the previous generation.

**Comparison and Contrast to the United Methodist Church**

Comparing the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the United Methodist Church in the context of the religious environment of Cote d’Ivoire may not be an easy task. But historically at first, both churches arose from Great Awakenings. The Methodist Church was born after what historians have called the First Great Awakening. It can be described as a revitalization of religious piety that swept through America and Europe between 1730s and 1770s. Christine Leigh Heyrman agrees that “The revival was part of much broader movement, an evangelical upsurge taking place simultaneously on the other side of the Atlantic, most notably in England, Scotland, and Germany. In all these Protestant cultures during the middle decades of the eighteenth century, a new Age of Faith rose to counter the currents of the Age of Enlightenment, to reaffirm the view the being truly

religious meant trusting the heart rather than the head, prizing feeling more than thinking, and relying on biblical revelation rather than human reason.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church started after the Second Great Awakening. This “Second Great Awakening was the second great religious revival in United States history and consisted of several kinds of activity, distinguished by local and locale and expression of religious commitment. . . . The revival strengthened the Methodists and Baptists, introduced into American a new form of religious expression.” Second, both churches were Bible Study movements that have arisen from those Great Awakenings. While in 1744 at the first annual conference, the Methodists draw up their articles of Religion, the Seventh-day Adventists at their part, take a denominational name in 1863. It is true that Seventh-day Adventism was formed of Christians from different denominational backgrounds, but most of their pioneers were former Methodists. Ellen White, who has influenced so profoundly the Seventh-day Adventist Church through her ministry, was also a devoted Methodist.

The Columbia Encyclopedia says “There are over 26 million Methodists worldwide.” On the 208 countries recognized by the United Nations, Seventh-day Adventists operate in 203 with a membership of baptized adults of “14,256,078.” If these baptized adults and their families are put all together, the Seventh-day Adventist

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Church will reach the same worldwide membership of the Methodist Church, a denomination that started its evangelistic activities a century before that of the Seventh-day Adventists.

With this background, and particularly with the same opportunities on the land of Cote d’Ivoire, the Seventh-day Adventist Church could at least show some signs of growth. The present exercise shows the gap between both churches. The United Methodists started officially their activities in the French Colony of Cote d’Ivoire in 1924 with 35,000 prospects resulting from the work of William Wade Harris. It is true that both denominations do not have the same membership criteria, but both suffered at the hand of the French colonial authority for being English-speaking originated churches. The Seventh-day Adventist Church effectively put itself into seclusion, first in rural areas and then with its beliefs, while the Methodist believers were in both rural areas and in the southern cities. As soon as the headquarters of the Methodist Church in Great Britain got the news about the believers in Cote d’Ivoire, they acted immediately, sending missionaries and leaders to face the challenge. For years, the only connection that the Adventist leaders at Accra, Ghana had with the small groups of Adventists in Cote d’Ivoire, was the French Review “Signes de Temps” which they could not even read.

Since 1926, the Methodist Church in Cote d’Ivoire has organized expertise in training leaders, establishing churches and schools, studying vernacular languages, and being involved in the community. This strong involvement has made the church the second Christian organization in the country after the Catholic Church. Its members, who

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have developed a giving-spirit, have not only supported the mission of the church, but are everywhere and represent their church in every aspect of the nation. Adventists started thinking about educational institutions around 1950 and it was only under the leadership of Henri Kempf (1959-1962), the first French leader and missionary, that Adventist schools have experienced an expansion. Many of them were closed a few years later for lack of funding.

The Methodist Church which has a great experience sharing the Gospel around the World since the eighteenth century, cannot be compared to the Seventh-day Adventist movement raised a century after. This maturity was implemented in Cote d’Ivoire. Though the Seventh-day Adventist Church remains fastest worldwide growing Christian movement, its strategies were not implemented in Cote d’Ivoire.

Another factor that has expanded the Methodist work is the reality of child baptisms. In Cote d’Ivoire, belonging to a denomination or a religion is a family matter. *The Methodist Manual of Discipline* teaches in its 119th article that “the minister shall earnestly exhort all parents to dedicate their children to the Lord in Baptism as early as convenient and, before Baptism is administrated, he shall diligently instruct the parents regarding the vows which they assume in this sacrament.”¹ This article of faith has motivated the Methodist action in Cote d’Ivoire. Because Adventists believe that “baptism is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus

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¹*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, 38.
and evidence of repentance of sin,”¹ they do not baptize children and that has affected their membership in Cote d’Ivoire.

The gap between these two churches is enormous. When the Ivorian United Methodist Church reached over a million members around 2000 without the type of aggressive public evangelism, but with its own methods, the Seventh-day Adventist Church around the same year continued its mission with 7,215 members. When the United Methodist Church developed a regional hospital hundreds of both unchurched and Christians from other denominations received not only adequate healthcare, but accepted the Methodist faith. By contrast, Adventists have not yet started planning such a project.

Most of the Adventist ministers in Cote d’Ivoire did not have a higher education. The few with degrees were trained in the neighboring English-speaking countries. The fact that their French is influenced by the English language disqualified them for any serious public speech. The Methodist Church makes sure that its preachers speak good French to maintain their public reputation. It is clear that these churches were not comparable, but the above considerations were made to at least allow the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire to evaluate its own history and take a new departure for Christ.

In this chapter, we have surveyed the mission and the historical growth struggle of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire. We have also compared it to the United Methodist Church that entered Cote d’Ivoire four years later. In the next chapter, we will move to an Adventist theology of mission for Cote d’Ivoire.

¹Church Manual (1986), 27.
CHAPTER IV

ADVENTIST THEOLOGY OF MISSION IN THE
IVORIAN CONTEXT

The First Christian Church and the early Adventist Church took some time before they dreamed of sending missionaries to foreign cultures and fields. The Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire needs not only to dream but to experience growth based on her understanding of the biblical and theological purposes of the Church. Rick Warren gives a five faceted definition of genuine church growth in these terms: “Every church needs to grow warmer through fellowship, deeper through discipleship, stronger through worship, broader through ministry and larger through evangelism.”¹

The apostle Paul said that God will judge whatever is built on the basis of whether it will last: “the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward” (1 Cor 3:13-14). Paul also said that the key to building something that lasts is to build it on the right foundation: “But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 3:10-11). Strong churches are built on purpose by focusing equally on fellowship, discipleship, worship, ministry and evangelism. It is in

implementing the New Testament purposes of the church that Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire will develop the healthy balance that makes lasting growth possible.

**Adventist Theology of Mission**

Christ’s mission is the model for the mission of the Church. According to John 17:18-20:21, Jesus did more than draw a vague parallel between His mission and the one of the Church. He made His mission the model of the mission of the Church saying “as the Father sent Me, so I send you.” Therefore the understanding of the mission of the Church is deduced from the understanding of the Son.

The principle of “love the world” was fundamental for the mission of Christ (John 3:16), and is basic for the mission of the Church. It is true that seems to be a theological tension between “God so love the world” and “love not the world” (1 John 2:15), but to conclude that “to hate the world and to be separated from it” is the right interpretation of the text, will be a misunderstanding of the principle involved.

The mission of Christ was oriented to the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the people, as well as the social needs of the community, all of that surrounded by His compassion (Matt 9:36-36). In performing His acts of mercy, Jesus was giving the right interpretation of the gospel. “Constantly He [Christ] went about doing good, sympathizing with the weary, the heavy laden, the oppressed, feeding the hungry and healing the sick. By His loving words and His kindly deeds, He interpreted the gospel. . . . The gospel is the power of God unto salvation when it is lived and practiced. The
union of Christlike work for the body and the Christlike work for the soul is the true interpretation of the gospel.”

With His presence and His deeds of compassion, Jesus brought the kingdom of God closer to the people. He was expecting His followers to do the same thing: in the healing of the sick, the feeding of the hungry, and the comforting of the weak, they were to bring the kingdom of God near to them (Matt 10:7-8; Luke 10:9).

It is true that Seventh-day Adventists emphasized the eschatological dimension of the kingdom, but have understood the theological tension between the “already” and the “not yet.” Without abandoning the preaching of the second coming, they add the present blessings to the people’s lives.

Jesus envisioned a church on the move from the center to the borders; farther and still farther. A church that will never be satisfied with what has been reached; a church always has news goals; new territories to enter, new population groups to reach. A renewal of global mission is in line with the view of Jesus and is in line with the centrifugal mission.

Seventh-day Adventists consider a privilege to also have the Prophetic Writings which are full of suggestions, ideas, strategies, and models for an Adventist theology of mission which is in tune with the biblical worldview of mission. These Prophetic Writings refer to the remnant that is represented as going not only to the nations, but also to every “kindred and tongue and people” (Rev 14:6). Therefore, “the mission of the

Church of Christ is to save perishing sinners. It is to make know the love of God to men and to win them to Christ by the efficacy of that love.\textsuperscript{1}

**Wholistic Mission**

The Church does not exist for its own sake. She is called for mission and theology is her daughter. The mission statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to

"proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel in the context of the three Angels’ messages of Rev 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and to unite with His church, and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return."\textsuperscript{2}

The method used to pursue this mission is described in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), teaching to develop mind and character, and healing under the affirmation of the biblical emphasis on the well-being of the whole person with the compassionate work of restoration.

**Social and Material**

The Bible deals not only with humanity’s primary relationship with God, but with all human relationships. The Biblical account begins with an emphasis upon God’s creation of all things and humanity’s relationship with them (Gen 1:1-2:20). Social deviance became a reality with sin, but God took the initiative to deal with social illness. It makes the whole Bible, the story of the drama of God’s redemptive actions among His creation. As people encounter God, they are struck by the knowledge that a relationship

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\textsuperscript{1}Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 3 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1945), 381.

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with God is distinctively personal. However, this relationship is not a purely private matter.

The One who has revealed Himself is concerned with the total well-being of every person, and an encounter with Him inevitably has an effect upon other relationships and the performance of the Christian’s role in society. “Thus the Christian will hold a prominent place for the needs of other persons in his world.”¹ A biblical basis for social ministry is not like hunting for some obscure proof-text. Joel Gregory suggested that often the approach taken in discussing a biblical social ministry would suggest that the Bible is about something other than ministry, with a few verses here and there about concern for persons in their physical, emotional, and financial deprivation. “On the contrary,” he has said, “anywhere you punch the Bible it reveals sensitivity to ministry with persons.”²

The four concepts of righteousness, justice, mercy, and love, appear constantly in the Bible as the basis for social ministry. First, the concept of righteousness carries with it the idea of conformity to a norm. Lawrence Richards mentions that the Old Testament pictures God as the Righteous One (Ps 4:1; 7:9; Isa 45:21). All of His actions are righteous (Judg 5:11; Ps 71:24; Jer 12:1). Since He is the source of righteousness, all that He does is in harmony with His character. Every one of God’s decrees and laws express


His righteous nature (Deut 4:8; Ps 119:7, 62, 75, 106, 138, 160, 164, 172). Christians are said to be righteous when their behavior approximates that of the moral and the ethical norm established in the revealed Word of God. Another norm for Christians is a lifestyle that radiates moral and ethical purity. Righteousness is not just an abstract set of moral principles but a behavioral outcome in harmony with one’s obligations to God. Social ministry which follows Christ will become the incarnation of His righteousness.

Second, justice is rooted in the very nature of God, and His nature is the true example. The Church must find comfort in what God calls justice in the domain of social ministry. Social ministry’s contribution to the body of Christ and to the nation has an impact upon the relationship with the Creator. God calls humanity to do justice and He chooses to use the church as His spokesperson to do His will by meeting the needs of the powerless and defending the oppressed.

Third, after the fall, humans needed protection from a hostile environment. Derek Kidner said, “Social action could not have had an earlier or more exalted inauguration” than to have the Creator Himself provide for the clothing and protection for sinful human beings. In the Pictorial Bible Dictionary, mercy is defined as: (1) forbearance from inflicting punishment upon an adversary or a lawbreaker, and (2) compassion which causes one to help the weak, the sick, or the poor. Baker’s Dictionary of Theology states that mercy is a communicable attribute of God. It expresses God’s goodness and love for

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the guilty and miserable. Pity, compassion, gentleness, and forbearance are also included.
It is free and absolute.\(^1\) As the light of the world, the Church must not only practice mercy but show it in the community.

Finally, God's mercy, justice, and righteousness all come together in the concept of love revealed in the Bible. However, when Jesus was born, lived, ministered, died, rose from the grave, and ascended to heaven, He revealed a dimension of love or mercy that surpasses anything the Old Testament writers could have known. While the Old Testament speaks more about justice and righteousness administrated with mercy, the New Testament speaks more about the love of God which includes all these qualities. All that God does grows out of His limitless love (John 3:16; 17:23-24; Rom 5:5, 8; Eph 1:4; 2:4; 3:18-19; 1 John 2:5; 3:1; 4:8-9, 16-17).

A synonym for "love" is "compassion." *The Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* says, "God shows compassion toward those who have broken His law (Dan 9:9; 1 Tim 1:13, 16), although such mercy is selective, demonstrating that it is not deserved (Rom 9:14-18)."\(^2\) Spiritual compassion is that which is born in a renewed heart and which finds hospitality there. This compassion goes beyond expending its force in simple gifts to those in needs. The Christlike compassion is deeper, broader in its nature. It is written about our Lord that "when He saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them" (Matt 9:36). He first saw the multitudes with their hunger, their woes, and their helpless condition; then He experienced compassion that moved Him for

\(^1\) *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (1960), s.v. "Mercy."

action. Compassion is moved at the sight of sin, sorrow, and suffering. It stands at the other extreme to indifference, to the wants and woes of others.

The fact that Ivorians have been always open to assist the populations of the neighboring countries, mark them as compassionate people. If the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire allows itself to be born in a renewed heart, it will accomplish the fullness of the social ministry, because compassion will cure more sins than condemnation. The Church cannot heal the wounds that it cannot feel. “Compassion is never indifferent, selfish, or forgetful of others. Compassion has not only to do with the body and its disabilities and needs, but it appeals to the soul’s distressing state, its needs and its danger.”¹ This divine quality in us, is what makes us so much like God. It belongs to grace and sees not only the bodies of men, but their spirits soiled by sins, unhappy condition without God, and in imminent peril of being forever lost. Compassion may not always move men but is always moved toward men. It may not turn men to God, but will, and does, turn God to men. When compassion beholds this sight of dying men, it breaks out for service.

Spiritual

Spirituality is not a formula; it is a relationship. Spirituality is not competency and perfection; it is about connection and intimacy. Christian life, by its nature and definition, represents something quite different from the previous life. In contrast to being dead in sin and trespasses, it is a new life, and it starts with the acceptation of the reality of

¹Elie Weick, “Prayer Born of Compassion,” Sermon given at the Bethlehem French SDA Church, Chicago, IL, 16 July 2005, 6, Typewritten.
broken life. As the believer is baptized into Christ, he dies to sin and the old man. He is made alive to God as a new creation (Rom 6:3-11; 2 Cor 5:17). It is not therefore a human self-help program or a means of justifying himself (Gal 2:15-21). It is a divine call through rebirth and conversion (John 3:3-8; Acts 2:38-39) wherein the sinner admits that he is helpless to help himself in his bondage to sin and enmity with God (Rom 5:6-11).

For Charles Horn, conversion is a simple entity which has two distinguishable but inseparable aspects: repentance and faith. Repentance is the believer’s turning away from sin, and faith is his or her turning toward Christ. They are respectively the negative and the positive aspect of the same occurrence.¹ In a sense, each is incomplete without the other. As the sinner becomes aware of sin, he turns away from it and sees the necessity of turning to Christ for the provision of his righteousness.

This requires divine grace and deliberate human cooperation. It is neither a passive quietism nor a triumphalist activism. It has to do with holiness, which is the restoration of the human person to what he was created to be. Holiness involves the recovery of the wholeness the integrity of life as it is being restored by the Holy Spirit. The process is depicted by several metaphors in Scripture. The Christian has to be a tree whose roots are firmly established in Christ Jesus planted by streams of nurturing waters (Eph 3:17). He is the way-sojourner on a journey (Acts 9:2; 1 Pet 2:11). He is born again and that means to grow from infancy to adulthood, sustained on a diet of rich spiritual food (John 3:3; Heb 5:12-14). The goal of this process is to be renewed in holiness, righteousness, and knowledge after the likeness of Christ (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).

¹Charles M. Horn, Salvation (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1975), 55.
A Christian needs a lifestyle that is formed by what one reads and listens to, the people with whom one associates (hence the importance of the church), the activities in which one engages, the way one eats, talks and so on, but above all it is formed by what one loves. If he mixes his lifestyle with other lifestyles (such as a materialistic conception of the world), there will be a kind of double vision that leads to conflicts, hypocrisy, and the like (Matt 6:19-24). A single focus, a total devotion to God is needed (Matt 6:33). It requires God’s grace and the human response of total sacrifice and the transformation of his mind (Rom 2:1-2).

Developing and keeping this single focus is accomplished by spiritual disciplines like Bible reading, meditation, prayer, and fasting, church attendance, giving things away, and serving others. This begins initially by repentance, turning the spiritual eyes away from former conceptions of the world to see life from Christ’s perspective, followed by concentrating on, focusing on, conceptualizing, and even imaging Christ’s character and God’s presence and activity primarily through Scripture reading and prayer in the context of the fellowship of believers. These disciplines mold and shape the embodied self. They are activities of mind and body intentionally undertaken to bring the entire person into effective cooperation with God’s work.

The Christian will learn Christlikeness by sharing Christ’s life (John 15:1-17; 17:20-24). Through this work of indwelling presence of the Spirit of Christ and the human’s response, he comes to have the mind of Christ which means Christ’s way of seeing the world that becomes second nature in him (Phil 2:1-5). He comes to know Christ, to become like Him in His death and to share in the power of His resurrection (Phil 3:3-11; 1 Pet 4:12, 5:11). Since obedience to God is from the heart; the Christian
becomes a slave to righteousness, and becomes free to serve God and others with self-sacrificial love.

On the way to this conformation to Christ’s image, the Christian experiences continuing struggles (Rom 7:15-25); but he also experiences God’s grace, for through Christ, he is more than conqueror (Rom 7:24-25; 8:37), something that will manifest itself in every aspect of the Christian existence as the One who calls him remains faithful to complete what He began in him (Phil 1:6).

This is the profound foundation of spirituality that the Adventists in Cote d’Ivoire should understand and experience. The growth of the church will depend in large measure on the level of its spirituality.

Worship

William Temple’s definition of worship is, “To quicken the conscience by the holiness to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.”¹ Worship is therefore a divine offering. Without a clear concept of the meaning of service, worship is difficult to understand. Although the term cult in English often has a negative meaning, its meaning in Latin and Romance languages, such as French and Italian, is much more positive. According to James F. White, “Its origin is the Latin Colere, an agriculture term meaning to cultivate. Both the French le culte, and the Italian il culto, preserve this Latin word as the usual term for worship. It is a rich term, far richer than the English word “worship,” for it catches the mutuality of responsibility between the farmer

and his land or animals. If I do not feed and water my chickens, I know there will be no eggs; unless I weed my garden, there will be no vegetables. It is a relationship of mutual dependence. . . . It is a measure of giving and receiving, certainly not in equal measure, but by being bound to each other. Unfortunately, the English language does not readily make obvious connection between cultivate and worship that we find in the Romance languages.”¹

The essence of worship is the self-portrayal of the congregation, whom God has called to be his people in the world. In fact, worship is the power from God that enables the church to be the church. W. T. Conner states, “The first business, then, of a church is not evangelism, nor missions, nor benevolence; it is worship. The worship of God in Christ should be at the center of all else that the church does. It is the mainspring of all the activity of the church.”²

Definitions and descriptions, however, cannot adequately delineate the experience of worship, for worship is an act of faith. “The worship of the people of God in the Old Testament was distinguished from Oriental cults as follows: (1) Israel’s God was the only God; (2) God was a personal God who intervened in history; (3) Israel had no image in its worship.”³ The atmosphere of worship pervades the whole Pentateuch. Its design and religious symbolism, hallowed by centuries of worship, produce a solemn sense of holiness and majesty of God. God created humanity to commune with him and took the

initiative in seeking them. Their worship responses included building altars and dedicating places and objects. Numerous prophets vigorously protested the empty ritualism and mixed motives of the people in their acts of worship.

According to the New Testament story, Christian worship is rooted in the Jewish practices of the Pentateuch. The earliest Christians were Jews who had been faithful in their worship at the temple and in their synagogues. Massey agrees, “Although Christian worship is distinctive, there is no radical discontinuity between Old Testament and New Testament worship.”¹ There is no prescribed order for worship in the New Testament, but there is evidence of order and planning. Paul warned against the excesses expressed in ecstatic utterances and speaking in tongues, he concluded with exhortation concerning worship: “let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40). Traces of ritual are found in the New Testament not only in the Lord’s Prayer and the doxologies but also in rhythmical passages in the apostolic writings.

No exact order is found in the worship of New Testament but the following elements of worship are present:

1. Music had a central place in the Christian expression of praise. They sang psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts unto the Lord (Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:16; 1 Cor 14:15).

2. The reading of the Scriptures was definitely an element in early Christian worship, for Jesus stood in the synagogue to read the Scriptures (Col 4:16; 1

Thess 5:27; 1 Tim 4:13), and Paul’s letter were written to be read in the churches.

3. There is abundant evidence of prayers in early Christian worship. Luke’s narrative tells us they devoted themselves to teaching, to fellowship, to breaking of bread, and to prayers (Acts 2:42). There were prayers of thanksgiving, petition, intercession, and benediction (Phil 4:6; Col 2:7; 2 Tim 2:1-2; 2 Cor 13:14).

4. The sermon or exposition of the Scriptures was a part of the public worship of the early Christians. Paul exhorted Timothy to be faithful in preaching the word (2 Tim 4:1-4).

5. Christians gave offerings in public worship (1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 9:6-7, 10-13).

6. Worship was also filled with doxologies (Eph 1:3).

7. Open confessions seem to have been a practice of Christians in the early church (1 Tim 6:12; Jas 5:16).


Neither Jesus nor Paul proposed a particular order for worship. However, both of them implied that there is a logical order of public worship. Worship must, by its nature, be an inclusive act. It must provide genuine worship opportunities for all of God’s gathered people.

For many Ivorians, Christianity is a religion of transition for the individual and an opportunity to experience something different from their own culture. A preferred style of worship will say more about the cultural background than about theology and making
a service comfortable for the people does not mean changing theologies. It means changing environment. Rick Warren concludes that “people want to go where lives are being changed, where hurts are being healed and where hope is being restored.” Worship can contribute to a tremendous growth if only leaders and members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire will be willing to create a safe environment for unbelievers at the expense of their own preferences, traditions and comfort. Enormous spiritual maturity is required to voluntarily move out of a comfort zone.

Fellowship

Biblical religion is not simply a personal, private matter. It concerns not only our vertical relationships with God but also our horizontal relationships with our neighbors. In Gen 2:12, God recognizes that Adam even before the fall was not fulfilled without a human partner. This text has primary reference to the propriety and sanctity of marriage within God’s good purpose for His creatures, but it is certainly not to be limited to that specific form of relationship. It asserts that a good life which God wills for man is one which involves human community.

This corporateness of God’s creative purpose finds immediate echo in His unfolding redemptive purpose. His covenant of grace with Noah (Gen 9:8) and Abraham (Gen 12:1) both carry the believer beyond a merely personal, individual relationship to God. For these men’s relationships to God reach out and embrace immediate descendants and even all the families of the earth. Eichrodt is surely correct when he states: “Old Testament faith knows nothing in any situation or any time of a religious individualism

1Warren, 247.
which gives a man a private relationship with God unconnected with the community either in its roots, its realization, or its goals.”¹ Old Testament religion reflects the corporate emphasis at another crucial point: in its messianic hope. There is a corporate dimension at the heart of the Old Testament doctrine of redemption as it moves forward to its fulfillment in the work of the coming Redeemer. The New Testament continues this Old Testament sense of corporateness. Jesus comes for the salvation of a people (Matt 21; Luke 2:10, 31). He gathers a group of disciples, shows them to be in His mind, the nucleus of the new Israel, the new people of God whom He will bind to God in the new covenant through His redemptive mission.

Scripture then knows nothing of solitary religion. The salvation it witnesses to is emphatically one which has corporate dimensions. No man can be reconciled to God without being reconciled to the people of God within whom his experience of God’s grace immediately sets him. Thus soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) is indissolubly bound up with ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church). The theme of fellowship, rising as it does issues concerning our relationship with our fellow Christians, is therefore a matter of supreme importance and takes us close to the very heart of biblical religion.

Bruce Milne agrees that “true fellowship only exists on the basis of repentance and faith in Christ. This has implications for human society at every level. There can finally be no true community except beneath the cross.”² This is true for a country like Cote d’Ivoire with a population of sixty different ethnic groups. It is even easy to assume

²Bruce Milne, We Belong Together (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), 25.
superficially that all who have come into a personal experience with Jesus Christ have found instant joy, peace, and rightness in their relationship to God and His people. People from diverse ethnic groups who have developed some degree of Christian maturity may forget that many of God’s people have not been yet delivered from self-centeredness and lovelessness. They are immature, not-yet-complete representatives of the Lord, but they are important to Him and should be included in the loving concerns of the more mature.

Everyone knows at times and to some degree what it means to feel alone. Burkhart says, “Anyone who is sensitive to other persons realizes that there is an emotional aloneness, a homesickness of the soul that is widespread.”¹ This malady is traced to a number of sources—the movement of people from place to place, a world in terrible travail, and the vastness of the universe. In contrast, when Christians in a local church understand and practice right attitudes in their relations with each other, the most solid foundation for unity is laid. Then believers can forget themselves and their aloneness and serve each other, bound together by the practical loving that undertakes to meet each individual’s need.

“Be humble, gentle, and patient always. Show love by being helpful to one another. Do your best to preserve the unity which the spirit gives, by the peace that binds you together” (Eph 4:23). Humility, patience, and loving helpfulness are closely related to peace in unity (not necessarily unanimity!) in the church. They are God’s antidote for snobbery, friction, conflict, harshness, and bitterness among His followers.

Unity should be a major goal for a church, but it can be realized in its truest sense only among men and women who are regenerate as well as thoroughly instructed as to His plan and power for Christian living. “When we are in union with Christ Jesus . . . what matters is faith that works through love” (Gal 5:6). To people who are not “in union with Christ,” other things may matter much more: social status, power of office, personal convenience, elite friends and exclusive, upper-crust doings. A church needs to give its members a strong sense of family relationship of belonging to each other as well as to the church, of being responsible for each other because they are brothers in Christ.

After Jesus had washed His disciples’ feet, he said: “I am your Lord and your teacher, and I have just washed your feet. You then should wash each others’ feet, do just what I have done for you. . . . Now you know this truth; happy you will be if you put it into practice” (John 13:13-17). When love and help to others is put in practical and humble ways, it produces happiness, and loneliness will go. Kenneth Strachan describes the close relation between this kind of self-giving and the escape from loneliness: “Loneliness arises not from isolation of spirit. . . . Loneliness in part results from the illusion sinful man indulges that he can live with other person without committing himself to share in their concerns, or entering a responsible interdependence.”

The walls between persons which are created by culture can only be scaled by the kind of concerned love that both cares and shares. The deepest needs in human life are met by love and acceptance. “Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord’s service is ever without value” (1 Cor 15:58).

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“When you help the poor you are lending to the Lord and he pays wonderful interest on your loan” (Prov 19:17). “God is not unfair. He will not forget the work you did, nor the love did you show for him in the help you gave and still give your fellow Christians” (Heb 6:10).

It is therefore difficult to conceive of anything higher or greater being attributed to the work of grace in our lives. Fellowship on the primary basis of Christ alone is also difficult but it is full of surprises and enrichments. The Christian who never really accepts the challenge is in the end, sadly, robbing himself of spiritual blessing and circumscribing his own growth and ministry for the Lord.

In reality, we are not made to live alone. It is in community, fellowship, and interacting with others that we find ourselves and come fully alive. For Christians, community has a special dimension, and if the church in Cote d’Ivoire understands that, it will generate growth.

Discipleship

The understanding of discipleship lies in the Great Commission. Jesus declares: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:18-20). The word disciple means a student, learner, or pupil. In the Bible the word is used most often to refer to a follower of Jesus. The word is rarely used in the Old Testament. Isaiah used the term “disciples” to refer to those who are taught or instructed (Isa 8:16). In general, apostles
refer to a small, inner group of Jesus’ followers; disciples refer to a larger group of Jesus’ followers.”

*Mathetes* always implies the existence of a personal attachment which shapes the whole life of the one described as “*mathetes* and which in its particularity leaves no doubt as to who is deploying the formative power.” The change to a churchcentric discipling model required a community relationship, a shared discipling among several people. The call of Christ is a call to discipleship and not a call to membership. It is a call to serve, not to sit. This call cannot and must not be replaced or superseded by the call of a church, a denomination, or any other organization. The call enunciated by such entities is only authenticated by heaven as it is given as an extension of the call of the Master.

The body can only call because the head directs it to call. While discipleship and church membership are not mutually exclusive, each connotes a distinct experience. Church membership connotes a sense of community and belonging, but discipleship communicates a sense of mission and purpose. It is a call to follow Christ, no one else, and to be His disciple. It is a lifelong commitment to, and process of making a disciple like the Chief Disciple—Jesus Christ—in precept and practice. This “involves both being like the Master in public ministry and in private disciplines in solitude, quietness, prayer, fasting, benevolence, and meditation.” Into this experience every believer has been called and through the same extends that call to others.

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Ellen White writes, “He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as though the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that uniting with Christ; we work the works of God.”¹ The existence of both spiritual gifts and discipling ministry is good news for evangelism. The church cannot truly disciple without both dimensions. Without the full exercise of gifts, the church cannot be the full mosaic God planned. The Great Commission is the engine that drives the church. Bill Hull adds that “to make discipleship effective, we must understand that it is a process, not an event. No system can make a disciple, because discipleship requires that a person’s will be activated by the Holy Spirit”.²

The First Church had the strategy of making disciples, as described in Acts 2:42-47. Guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), the twelve must have planned to send out many disciples. A reproduction congregation led to believers who reproduced the same practices wherever they went. They would start churches by preaching and would organize converts into small groups that would practice these priorities and reproduce in turn. Discipleship exists therefore to create qualified personnel through whom church ministry can reproduce and multiply. It is a process consisting of the following elements:

*Evangelism:* The first mark of a New Testament Church is leadership that is evangelizing. The believers in a church follow their leaders subconsciously.

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¹White, *Desire of Ages*, 297.

Baptism: “So then, those who had received his Word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). This symbol declares that the new believer belongs to Jesus Christ only and that by faith.

Teaching: “And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42). The new converts will become more mature and should be able to pass on to others what they have learned.

Fellowship: “And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer” (Acts 2:42). The uniqueness of Christianity brings together people from totally different backgrounds and with completely different interests. They hold Jesus Christ and His word in common.

Breaking of Bread: This remembrance feast is the central worship meeting of the local church. Singing, praying, and preaching are all necessary elements of the church, but nothing can replace Jesus as the center of worship.

Prayer: The Lord speaks to the believer through the Bible and the believer speaks to God through prayer.

When a new believer is integrated into the church, he will find another unbeliever and will tell him what the Lord has done for him.

Local Church Ministries

As my study of Christianity progresses, I have come to appreciate more fully the unique character of that love which Jesus refers to in His message of salvation, in that it not only comes to us etymologically from “agape,” but too, it finds its proper expression solely as being derived from the primordial commandment to “love the Lord your God”
(Matt 22: 37-39). In this respect, the Christian teaching is distinctive throughout the history of religion in the world, for it is the only one I know of which expresses human concern as being uniquely initiated from one’s relationship with God. In his attempt to relate this aspect of Christianity, Carl Michaelson stated: “Nothing is dear in all the Christian faith than this: the life of faith toward God is meant to bear fruit in works of love toward our fellow beings.”¹ As Michaelson then sought to remove any ambiguity from his remarks, he went on to reiterate this thought in asserting that: “The life of faith in God is meant to be expressed in works of love toward our fellow human beings. Ask anyone who a Christian is. Chances are the answer will be that a Christian is a person who loves one’s neighbor.”² What Michaelson has referred to as being the “life of faith in God” is identified as being the life of Christian discipleship. This life originates in an actively affirmative response of the will toward Jesus the Christ, in whom God has affected our salvation in that through His person we find ourselves being continually reconciled with the Deity. In its inclusive sense, this discipleship actively manifests itself in the world as the works of love toward our fellow human beings that it becomes Christian ministry. Christian ministry is that human manifestation of Christian discipleship which seeks to actively make agape available to all of humanity by works that affect reconciliation in the ongoing relationship between God and humanity and within humanity itself.

²Ibid., 96.
This ministry is decisively Christian in that its genesis and motivation for being is founded in the Christ event, and because it is dependent upon the Holy Spirit’s movement in human lives in order to realize concrete expression in fulfilling its intent in any given situation. John Knox states: “The Greek word for ‘ministry’ is ‘diakonia’; and it is significant that this term was in New Testament times, as it is still, the most favored way of referring inclusively to the Church’s workers and their work.” Furthermore, Knox goes on to assert: “The word ministry, whether in Greek or English, means simply service, and although it soon came to stand for a particular ecclesiastical office, the office of the deacon, its originally more inclusive sense was never completely lost.” The prototype for the Christian ministry is Jesus Christ Himself. For the New Testament paradigm for doing ministry is essentially based upon what our Lord taught His followers regarding His personal work in the world.

The function of Christian ministry in the world is twofold: a useful service of love based upon the commandments and the teaching of the One who embodied the divine will and character in His own person and the process of working at becoming the servant of all. His service to all continues by means of His spirit, which is actively engaged in ministry today throughout the earth, in the life of those who seek to follow His example and who therefore, both individually and collectively, constitute His body, the Church. Michael Green agrees that “there is no suggestion in the New Testament that one could possibly do anything without having a call to some form of ministry within the church.”


Interestingly, the New Testament does not make a false distinction between the sacred and the secular. The whole of life is seen as belonging to God. The Christian’s service to others must be done in the light of one’s relationship to God. The early church was very conscious of this fact and strongly believed that it was commissioned to carry on the work of the servant. No service was regarded as too menial or too exacting if only it would commend the Gospel of the grace of God. As Emil Brunner puts it: “One thing is supremely important that all Minster, and that nowhere is to be perceived a separation or even merely a distinction between those who do and those who do not minister, between the passive and the active members of the body, between those who give and those who receive. There is in the Ecclesia a universal duty and right of service, a universal readiness to serve, and at the same time the greatest possible differentiation of functions.”

If then ministry of this sort, comprising devotion to Christ, worship to God, and service to others, must be the hallmark of every Christian, it must in greater measure characterize their leaders. The fact that service is to be the mark of all Christians, not merely of ministerial elite, does not dispense with the need for specialization within the Christian community. The Apostle Paul sees the Church as the body of Christ. That is to say, she is the agent of His purposes, the bearer of His life in the world. Christians are like members within the human body; they have different functions, offer different types of service to the whole body, while they share the same life and belong together.

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Rom 12:4-8 urges Christians to discover and make the most of their particular gift for the good of the whole. Paul mentions the charismata (God-given qualities) of prophecy, helpful, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, and leadership as examples of what he means, and loves as the bond which unites these diverse gifts into the harmonious unity of the body. The function of leadership is just one among the other gifts of God to His Church. All Christians therefore are ministers of God.

1 Cor 12 uses the same metaphor and makes the added point that this differentiation of functions within the Christian body is the sovereign act of the Holy Trinity (vv. 4-6). God’s purpose is that by mutual caring (v. 26) each member should use his proper gift for the edification and benefit of the whole body. Paul concludes by showing that different types of specialized ministry are God’s gifts to His church (28). They can be divided into four rough groupings:

1. The ministry of the Word—Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers.
2. The ministry of—Workers of miracles and Healers.
3. The ministry of administration and leadership—Helpers, Administrators (literally means governors or directors).
4. The ministry of ecstasy (wrongly prized most by the Corinthians)—Speakers in various kinds of tongues.

James Fenhagen wrote, “Life in the church must always be an invitation to discipleship. But it must be an invitation to discipleship that takes ministry outside the institutional church as seriously as it takes ministry that assists the clergy in building a
stronger congregation."\(^1\) As a human institution which exists in the midst of society and which is influenced by cultural expectations, the Church has evolved as an organized and articulate organism whose order is essential to insure that the function or its service to members and to the world may be performed in a continuous and ongoing fashion. The emerging paradigm is a vision of the church that views the primary ministry of the laity in the milieu of home, community, and marketplace. For this reason, the Church has established and maintains certain ecclesiastical offices, and has been ordered according to a polity which seeks to assist the Body in its ongoing ministry as well as to prevent any deviation of its mission in the world from taking place. We learn from Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s assertion as to the manner in which such articulation exists in the Church: “When we speak of the Church as the Body of Christ, we include its articulation and order. These are essential to the Body and are of divine appointment. . . . An unarticulated body is doomed to perish.” Bonhoeffer goes on:

Church order is divine both in origin and character, though of course it is meant to serve and to rule. The offices of the Church are ministries. They are appointed in the Church of God by Christ and by the Holy Spirit. They are not appointed by the Church. Even where the Church makes itself responsible for distributing offices, it does so only under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Both ministry and church spring from the triune God. The offices exist to serve the Church, and their spiritual rights only originate from this service. That is why the Church has to adapt its offices to the varying needs of time and place.\(^2\)

Church organization is given the theological significance which it deserves, for its officers and members recognize that such articulation exists in order to enhance Christian ministry and discipleship and not merely to conform to those operative models which

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other human institutions employ in order to function. Officers and members alike come to appreciate the fact that regardless of the outward forms and internal polity maintained by the church, it has a theological grounding. It is therefore essential for each community of faith to possess the necessary freedom to design the forms and policies, which prove to be most conducive to the ministry of service to Christ and to each other in their particular situations. Paul underlines in his epistle of Ephesians, “His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (4:8-13).

Once again, scripture reiterates that a specialized ministry is Christ’s gift to His church; the divine institution of the ministry could hardly be more strongly stated. Furthermore, it can hardly be accidental that each of the ministries mentioned is a ministry of the Word. The apostles and prophets form Christ’s foundation gift to the Church. They were chosen by Christ as witnesses of His saving work, who should proclaim it to the world (Acts 1:8); men who could attest from personal experience the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:22); eye witnesses, in fact whose testimony would enable those who had not been present to believe (John 17:20). The prophets, too, belong to the foundation layer of the Church. They were men, associated closely with the apostles who spoke under the direct prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Evangelists and pastor-teachers have a continuing place in the church for the spread and the deepening of Christian commitment. The proof that God has given a man the gift of ministry is seen when he exercises it for the benefit of the Church. If all the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church are put together to reach the ultimate goal of the Lord, the Church and the community will experience a transformation. Inagrace Diettrich
wrote about a planned church transformation in these terms: “Church transformation is a process of intentional planned change which involves the entire church organization in retrieving its historical grounding, becoming clear about its current situation, exploring its theological heritage and commitment, envisioning a dynamic and creative future, building plans to enable the vision to become a reality, and developing new and more faithful and effective systems that will enable the church organization to manage itself more faithfully and effectively—being transformed and challenged by the Gospel at every point along the way.”

Transformation must not be confused with the popular understanding of church growth or success in materialistic terms. Transformation relates to effective ministry, not numerical increase, though enlarged attendance may be an expected and a natural outcome of significant transformation. It is more closely connected to re-creation than to managerial competence and strikes at the core of the church’s identity and methodology, not refurbishment of its extant structures. Emphasis must be placed upon the process of transformation. Change can never be a fait accompli: Ralph Kilmann says, “Corporate transformation is a process by which organizations examine what they were, what they are, what they will need to be, and how to make the necessary changes.” When the church becomes static, it soon becomes stagnant.

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1Inagrace Diettrich, An Evaluation of Approaches to Church Transformation: An Analytical and Comparative Study Funded By the Lilly Endowment (Chicago, IL: The Center for Parish Development, 1991), 3.

Spiritual transformation of a church is not simply the intensified effort of greater numbers of people. Mobilization and motivation of untapped laity resources may improve many aspects of church life, but industry alone will not impact our culture for Christ, nor will it bring spiritual renewal to our private and self-indulgent generation. Increased activity may even be antithetical to genuine transformation. When leaders stop thinking of change, they inevitably think of maintenance and churches degenerate into missional lethargy and inertia.

Transformative change is systematic and strategic, challenging the existing structures, programs, and methodologies of the congregation. David Hanna agrees that “the important point to remember about cultural change is that behaviors rarely change without a change in the underlying assumptions, values, and attitude.”1 In all cases, real change requires new ways of perceiving, intense theological reflection, fresh vision, and follow-through action. It is therefore in understanding the profound theological and biblical meaning of ministry that the Church in Cote d’Ivoire will experience growth.

Evangelism

Ellen White says that the “essence of the Gospel is restoration.”2 The purpose of God in creating man, the marring of the divine likeness by disobedience, the life of probation granted that the image of God in man might be restored, and the work of the

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1David P. Hanna, *Designing Organizations for High Performance* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1988), 159.

2White, *Desire of Ages*, 824.
Gospel that seeks to restore in man the image of God.”\textsuperscript{1} Evangelism, then, is an extension of Christ’s ministry, a ministry of reconciliation, redemption, and restoration.

New Testament evangelism presented to the people a unique and helping Person, One who could change their lives and meet their needs. Ellen White underscores these points beautifully: “Of all professing Christians,” she argues, “Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world.”\textsuperscript{2} The work of evangelism is to minister the very life of Christ to the people. This ministry of reconciliation and restoration can be carried forward in many ways: the ministry of visitation; the ministry of literature; the ministry of Bible studies; the ministry of health; the ministry of small groups; and the ministry of preaching (public evangelistic meetings). Walter Martin wrote:

More and more, Christians are beginning to think in terms of personal evangelism as opposed to mass evangelism, primarily because all successful evangelism of enduring worth has been of a personal nature. . . . The follow-up work of every major evangelical crusade must be a personal basis to be effective. A stamped envelope and a short memory course are no substitutes for the personal workers, whose on-the-spot faithfulness, patience and perseverance builds up and edifies young converts after the first warm glow of the conversion experience has begun to abate. . . . Is it perhaps possible that evangelism was intended, in its primary purpose, to be personal and individualistic to the degree that each Christian feels the responsibility to evangelize his neighbor, and that this is really the root of the whole matter for which the tree of church evangelism and mass evangelism, both in crusades and the mass media, are to draw their strength and spiritual stamina.\textsuperscript{3}


\textsuperscript{3}Martin, 386-87.
Soul winning is the basic solution of the other entire problem in the church. The first instructions of Jesus to His followers were, “Come . . . after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). His last instructions while on earth to His disciples were, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Jesus began and finished His earthly ministry with the command to be witnesses. Later, the apostle Paul was sensitive concerning his position before God. He said: “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20). It is sobering to realize that God is making His appeal to the lost world through the church. Each Christian is either a good ambassador of Christ or a poor one, but nobody can escape being ambassador. In the light of this staggering truth, all must accept their position with great care. Before evangelism can ever be a program, it must be first a passion. If the church is to witness for Christ successfully, it must honestly care for people. Frantz Lacombe agrees that “the Great Commission did not set forth all the responsibilities of the church in this world or the whole mission of the Church. Its purpose was to focus the Church on reaching out the lost and the unreached people of the world without distinction of their race, color, ethnic group, or religion.”

Evangelism is God’s business. It is comprised of these things: First, it involves the preaching of a person. Jesus the Man, Jesus the Crucified, Jesus risen from the dead, Jesus exalted to the place of power in the universe from which He will return in judgment at the end of the age. Second, it involves the proclamation of a gift, a gift which cannot

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be earned or bought. It proceeds from the love of God and comes only through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. This gift brings the believer the assurance of sins forgiven, the acceptance of God, and the gift of the Holy Spirit and the conversion experience. Third, the preaching of the Word always looks for responses. Norskov Olsen reminds us that “experiences of the apostles and those recorded in the New Testament become normative for all Christians.”

Evangelism demands more than preaching. Howard Snyder states this concept clearly: “The implication for the modern church seems obvious: the recovery of some functional equivalent of the class meeting with its intimate, mutual care and support, and discipline, is essential.” If a church provides for and promotes small group ministries, stimulating Sabbath school programs, a warm and dynamic worship service, and an aggressive evangelistic ministry, an explosion of growth will result. Christ’s goal was to create a Christian culture in which the teachings and values of Christianity would be supported and encouraged. Wesley understood this concept. That is why he “refused to preach in any place where he could not follow up his preaching by organized societies with adequate leadership.” Public evangelism is not therefore the only effective strategy for growth. It adds a certain dynamic to a local church that helps by sharpening the mission focus of the church. It also raises the level of awareness for witnessing and soul-winning, thereby motivating members to contact their relatives, neighbors, and friends.

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1Norskov Olsen, Man, the Image of God (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988), 93.

2Howard Snyder, The Radical Wesley (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 149.

Further, it galvanizes members into a concerted evangelistic effort. Finally, it is one of the most obvious principles to church growth and bet almost useless with personal work.

Church Growth Concepts in the Writings of Ellen G. White

After his election as General Conference President at the 1950 session, Elder W. H. Branson said in his first speech: “My chief burden shall be the winning of souls! We must never forget that the goal of all goals is soul saving.”¹ Most will agree that the Adventist Church is primarily an evangelistic movement and leaders are convicted that the church will achieve its mission only as it makes evangelism the focus of all its activities. Many kinds of methods and concepts have been established to maintain the growth of the Church and this principle has been emphasized throughout the ministry of Ellen G. White.

The biblically-based Gospel message taught by Ellen White will more than vindicate the messenger. The gospel is still abundantly good news and Ellen White’s understanding of it has wonderful power and balance. Not only does it have power to bring peace, joy, and hope in Jesus, but it can bring back a more scripturally based Gospel witness.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church began with a strong emphasis on small groups, partly because of its Methodist roots and partly because of the inspired counsel of Ellen White. For Ellen G. White, the Great Commission is given to each of us, and that no one should be inactive. First of all, every member is to be trained in these terms: “Every member of the church should be instructed in a regular system of labor. All are

required to do something for the Lord. They may interest persons to read; they may converse and pray with them. The minister who shall educate, discipline, and lead an army of efficient workers will have glorious conquests here, and a rich reward awaits him when, around the great white throne, he shall meet those saved through his influence.1 It has always been clear in her mind that every believer should play his part in the growth of the church with a personal testimony. According to Ellen G. White, personal testimony is the most effective method in church growth. She wrote “The first words of the church were seen when believers sought out friends, relatives, and acquaintances, and with hearts overflowing with love, told the story of what Jesus was to them, and what they were to Jesus.”2 She adds, “That which will be most effective is the testimony of our own experience.”3 She foresaw how the work would be finished then penned, “Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers.”4

The formation of small groups was a revelation from the Lord as one of the efficient methods to enhance the growth of the church. Mrs. White said, “The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by the One


who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church but for unbelievers. Let them labor in Christ-like love for those outside the fold, forgetting self in the endeavor to help others. As they work and pray in Christ’s name, their number will increase.\(^1\)

In conjunction with public and private efforts is the principle of possessing a vibrant faith and expecting great things from God. Those who will not move until they can see every step of the way clearly before them will not be of advantage at this time to forward the truth of God.\(^2\) This is in harmony with her overall of working as Christ himself worked. “Although Christ would have come in order to save just one, His plan was to save the world. His goal was to redeem the lost world.”\(^3\)

Prayer is another component of the great trial of church growth principles. It is almost connected with the personal work and necessity of having faith. Ellen White insists that “prayer should be solicited for the souls for whom we labor; we should present them before the church as subjects for their supplication. It will just be what the members of the church need, to have their minds called from their petty difficulties to feel a great burden, a personal interest, for a soul that is ready to perish.”\(^4\)


\(^3\)This worldwide scope of God’s redemption is found in the first part of John 3:16, “For God so loved the world” and in 2 Pet 3:96, “The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

The principle of public evangelism is as old as Christianity itself. It has always been one of the most obvious principles of church growth and yet almost useless without personal work. Throughout her life, Ellen White called for decided efforts to win people who were estranged from God. Public effort was the main thrust of the work in the late nineteenth century. "We should make effort to call together large congregations to hear the Word of the gospel minister."\(^1\) To reach this ultimate goal, she advises that "church leaders should preach less, and educate more by holding Bible reading, by praying with families and little companies."\(^2\) Small group's ministry was a new thing for most the believers and they were still learning in the school of Christ to overcome fear and trembling. She states that "the social meeting [small group meetings] will be the best meeting in which they may be trained and educated to be witnesses for Christ."\(^3\)

Though Ellen White believes that the universal Church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Rev 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. That's why every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness (Rev 12:7; 14:6-12; 2 Pet 3:10-14).

\(^1\)White, *Evangelism*, 119.


\(^3\)Ellen G. White, MS 32, 1894, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
With this Biblical Adventist theology on church growth, let us turn to some church growth strategies that could help the Seventh-day Adventist in Cote d’Ivoire to take a new departure.
CHAPTER V

PROPOSED CHURCH GROWTH STRATEGIES FOR COTE D’IVOIRE

The Great Commission embodies an overall outline of the missionary assignment given by Jesus to His church. Two imperatives are found in the missionary mandate, together with three participles (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8). The commands are: “make disciples” and “preach the gospel.” They are completed by “going,” “baptizing,” and “teaching” and then followed by the geographical notes. The imperatives are fundamental and articulate the heart of the commission, while the participles symbolize the ways in which the task can be accomplished.

The Great Commission, however, does not set forth all the responsibilities of the Church in the world or the whole mission of the Church. The purpose of these words is to focus the Church on reaching out to the lost and unchurched people of the world without distinction of race, color, ethnic group, or religion. It is part of a deliberate plan from the depths of history to bring the nations of the earth to God himself (Rev 7:9-12). That’s why growth in quality results in growth in quantity; growth in quantity makes growth in quality possible. A church expands when the members grow in grace (quality) and the process includes sharing Christ with people who then repent, believe in Christ, are baptized, are added to the church, and who then begin maturing in grace. The cycle is endless. Roland Griswold says, “Persons who have heard the Gospel, have become Christ’s disciples, and have become responsible members of his
Church, are in position to bear fruits." It makes evangelism the primary task of every Christian and every church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire can experience growth only if it considers emphasizing both social and spiritual. Evangelism demands more than preaching. Howard Snyder states this concept clearly: "The implication for the modern church seems obvious: the recovery of some functional equivalent of the class meeting with its intimate, mutual care and support, and discipline, is essential." If the Church provides for and promotes small group ministries, stimulating Sabbath School programs, a warm and dynamic worship service, an impact in the community, and an aggressive evangelistic ministry, an explosion of growth will result.

Social and Material

It is obvious that if the relationships in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire do not reflect love, then the witness to those outside will be ineffective. However, if love is demonstrated in the Church and to those outside with the same concrete actions, the Christian's witness will be effective. The love of God works through the Christian social ministry to perform the acts of Christ for all persons, even enemies of the church and of Christ.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire should look back to see how God has worked with humanity in the past in order to understand the redemptive purpose of God in working with peoples today. To reach this goal, the Church must consider the

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following fields in the context of Cote d’Ivoire: community health care, education, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and grief counseling for the survivors of AIDS.

Community Health Care

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to share God’s love by providing physical, mental, and spiritual healing. Motivated by its mission, and as a faith-based organization, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire, which has never owned a health institution, must study a possibility to be closer to Ivorians. The modern difficulties of Cote d’Ivoire are sadly endemic as it is in other countries of the African continent. Cote d’Ivoire suffers from serious health care problems and health provision is generally inadequate. In an effort to address the problem of health care in the country the government launched an ambitious public health development program in 1996. This program targets infrastructural development and mother and child initiatives.

Health care facilities in the main towns are not up to international standards; health insurance is essential, but “AIDS seems to be a growing threat with Cote d’Ivoire having high infection rates, one of the highest of West Africa, and consequent declining population growth rates.”1 The Ministry of Public Health and Population which bore a nationwide responsibility of health care planning, lacked adequately trained personnel and information management systems. It sought private sectors involvement in disease prevention and declared the improvement of health care standards a national priority. At the same time, the historical, the ethnic, socioeconomic, and political factors contributing

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to the nation’s health problems continued to complicate policy-making at the national level.

This is where the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Côte d’Ivoire must come out with a practical and compassionate contribution in establishing a central health facility with strategic branches equipped with mobile health care where needed. The Church must also seek to popularize five-day plans to stop smoking, sexually transmitted disease education, and nutrition, etc. to participate to the wellness of the Ivorian community.

Education

The Adventist interests in propagating education is founded upon the philosophy that students at all levels of schooling possess individuality and must be educated to use their God-given capacities to become individuals of principle, qualified for any position of life. Since its early days Adventism has embraced the philosophy that education must be redemptive in nature, for the purpose of restoring human beings to the image of God. Mental, physical, social, and spiritual health, intellectual growth, and service to humanity form a core of values that are essential aspects of the Adventist education.

As education matured in maturing social order, the people generally expect it to be more effective personally and socially. It is an easy exercise to demonstrate how the entire educational process has been improved in succeeding throughout history and it is possible to make a confident assertion that the means for education has never been superior to what it is today. The Ivorian education system is in reality an adaptation of the French system, which was introduced at the end of the nineteenth century. Today, education is a national priority; it receives one-third of the national budget. Most public schools are tuition free, although students pay registration fees and buy uniforms. Most
supplies are free, and some students receive government scholarships, usually in return for a period of government employment after graduation. The recent rate of enrollment in private schools where tuition is required is 11.3 percent in primary schools, and 36.2 percent for secondary schools.¹ This rate is going to decrease because of the plans of the government to make school tuition free.

Since education is recommended as a principal means for promoting social mobility, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Côte d’Ivoire must seriously study the educational needs of Ivorians and come out with something that is not being done by the other churches to meet these needs in perspective of its message. No church can carry out its mission without paying attention to its finance. Therefore, it will be necessary for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Côte d’Ivoire to encourage and to facilitate continuing education for its workers, to organize literacy classes supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) wherever it will be necessary and strategic, with the possibility to offer home economics, education on AIDS, stop smoking courses, and to establish language institutions.

**ADRA**

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is the humanitarian agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The reason for its existence is to follow the example of Christ by being the voice for, and serving those in need. ADRA reflects the character of Christ through humanitarian and developmental activity. The work of this agency is to represent the Seventh-day Adventist Church in improving the quality of life

of those in need. It also invests in the potential of these individuals through community
development initiatives targeting food security, economic development, primary health
and basic education, and providing aid to disaster survivors. But cultural and religious
boundaries distort and even blur people’s ability to perceive a loving Creator and receive
the good news of salvation. Political barriers control and forbid such belief. Economic
boundaries divide society, condemning many to poverty and hopelessness and others to
isolationism, preventing the love of Jesus from entering their hearts.

The belief that God desires all to come back into fellowship with Himself and
with each other drives Adventist mission. Mission accepts kingdom values about the
infinite value of human life. Holistic in nature, it always recognizes the human need for
personal dignity and hopelessness. It sees the hope for salvation in the acceptance of
Jesus Christ. Mission recognizes no boundaries because God who calls and sends is the
God of Spirit. He blows where He will. The Spirit will find ways to leap over walls and
into the hearts of individuals wherever there is human need. In personal terms, the
mission of the Church in Cote d’Ivoire must arise from a vision of the greatness and
power of God and His ability to lay claim to a person’s life and provide means to
implement the mission.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire through ADRA, could
therefore establish a strategic plan which will provide a framework for consistent and
effective decisions, define the mission of the Church in cote d’Ivoire and its related
objectives, analyze the external environment, make an assessment of its internal
environment, formulate a future strategy, and implement the strategic plan everywhere in
Cote d’Ivoire where the needs are. It is true that Cote d’Ivoire has experienced more
development than the other sub-Saharan countries, but the northern Cote d'Ivoire where Islam is the main religion remains poor. ADRA Cote d'Ivoire could be conscious of its role as part of the holistic mission of the Church and meet the short and long-term developmental needs. ADRA could also play a part in helping church members understand the importance and nature of this ministry of hope and compassion. The greatest need for this ministry is to look at people as God sees them. It is with this perspective that the Seventh-day Adventist Church will fulfill its mission in Cote d'Ivoire.

Grief Counseling

According to the U.S. Department of State, "Cote d'Ivoire has a generalized HIV epidemic and the highest HIV prevalence in West Africa with an estimated population prevalence of 7.0%."¹ This evaluation was done in 2003, but the HIV prevalence in 2001 was 9.5 percent.² The fact that the rate has decreased means that the government has provided a strong leadership in educating the population. Studies reveal that an estimated 54,000 infants in Cote d'Ivoire are born to HIV-infected women each year and approximately one-third of these infants will be HIV-infected in the absence of prevention of mother-to-child interventions.

The psychological aspects of AIDS or related diagnoses for families are in some ways unique. Many families deal with the same fears and anxieties about AIDS that the general public confronts. They respond to disclosures regarding the patient’s life style


and the resulting strain on relationships. They feel stigmatized and isolated because of their relationship to the person with AIDS. Fears of criticism, ostracism, and embarrassment prevent families from sharing their burden with others, and as a consequence, deny them support.

Because life has been shortened by this high HIV/AIDS prevalence among adults and death has become common in every level of the Ivorian society, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire must step in to prepare properly educated teams to facilitate a competent and effective AIDS ministry. This education and training can take various forms, but are indispensable. The care of sick and suffering people is a duty of God’s people. Institutions do not satisfy the obligation of individual Christians to address the needs of people coping with illness and the impact of death. Congregants routinely express concern and provide care for fellow congregants in crisis. The opportunities for ministry are greater outside the church.

Second, AIDS affects people in all religious traditions, and therefore all religious traditions have the responsibility to conduct AIDS ministries. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire must also cooperate with interfaith AIDS ministry to coordinate programs through which faith groups support and complement each other. Such a structure will enable a coordinating staff to match patients and families with a parish team of their own faith. Although sex and death are seen in scientific communities as legitimate subjects for analysis, in religious and nonscientific circles there is a tendency to regard both subjects and the phenomena related to them as off-limits. Thus, AIDS incorporates two taboos by being sexually transmitted and by being fatal. These taboos form an effective barrier to educating church people. Providing factual information about
the extent of suffering engendered by AIDS is one way to combat fear, indifference, and hostility. Yet, education about how to prevent the spread of the AIDS virus is presently the best hope of limiting its destructive effect.

The church can provide moral leadership to the Ivorian society by formulating a compassionate response to the disease. This prophetic ministry must provide legal assistance to patients whose rights are being denied by employers, landlords, insurers, medical institutions, or even government. Through its officials, the church can articulate, advance, and defend the claims of people touched by AIDS for social services and for personal respect. The Seventh-day Church in Cote d’Ivoire should participate in such an interfaith action to help Ivorians to change their sexual behavior, to protect health, to promote prevention and care, and to protect and support children.

Finally, though Ivorians benefit from the African solidarity in time of grief, many of them still suffer emotionally, particularly for not being Christians. Grief is a common experience, recognized by many as a frightening and painful encounter. An awareness of the fact that there are various types of grief experiences should result in a better understanding of grief reactions. Anticipation to these behaviors should help to reduce guilt, depression, and associated reactions when there has been a significant loss. Identifying the types of experiences that commonly result in grief should make all aware of the need for supportive care, particularly, when one is grieving the loss of a loved one through AIDS. Such universal concern could ultimately reduce the loneliness of having to face grief. It is so common that it has been ignored as a problem, because the majority of those affected cope with the stress it causes and return to usual activities without inordinate difficulties. However, many others are not able to handle the hurt,
helplessness, hopelessness, loneliness, and decision making alone. Obviously, help is needed so that a balance in the body functions can be reestablished. The process of resolving grief has been explored as the ultimate responsibility of the person having sustained a significant loss. This mobile society has placed an even greater burden on the grief-stricken, as well as on the counselor or friend. The success of grief counseling, like other types of helping relationships, is dependent upon methods that will help people to help themselves. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire could restructure itself first, on the local level, and then on the organizational level to be involved because a life, faith, and work shared is God-pleasing when it becomes utilized in living.

**Spiritual**

The Christian spiritual life is nothing less than a free participation as a self-agent in God’s creative and redemptive activity in all of creation. Spiritual discipline includes practices indispensable to actualize the freedom to participate. Christian spirituality is a complex but also costly living of the story that Jesus Christ lives in the midst of His Church (Phil 2:6 NEB). It is rooted in the call to anticipate and to participate in the coming of God’s realm.

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1:15). Repentance is the threshold for Christian transformation. It is more than feeling remorseful for something that has been done. It is a lifelong turning and returning to God. That’s why becoming a Christian requires a persistent struggle away from the old and toward the new man (Rom 12:2). The Christian depends on God’s grace and mercy. This requires humility and unqualified trust in God’s loyalty. Repentance brings hope, desire, plans and ambitions, fears and failures, and offers them
as a living and surrender. They are consecrated for service and partnership in God’s realm, made new and given back to the child of God. The Christian is freed to participate in joy, freedom, and hope.

Practical Soul Winning

A church in which lay people can be successful is the kind that will let them use their spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit orchestrates the giving and the using of spiritual gifts: “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines” (1 Cor 12:11). Because the Spirit determines who gets what, and who should do what, believers should listen to the Spirit. Listening is both a personal and a private matter. The apostle Paul says: “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant” (1 Cor 12:1). On one hand, Robert Slocum writes that “the important decision facing the church today is the decision to shift the focus of the church from the ministry of the clergy to the ministry of the laity.”¹ However, churches which function traditionally by either electing or appointing people to a ministry position find it difficult to start matching people’s task with their spiritual gifts. Not any willing person can take his or her turn at any task. Rom 12: 6-8 expresses the following ideas:

“If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him prophesy;

If it is serving, let him serve,

If it is teaching, let him teach,

If it is encouraging, let him encourage

If it is contributing, let him contribute

¹Robert Slocum, Maximize Your Ministry (Colorado Springs, NV: Navpress, 1990), 170.
If it is leadership, let him lead.

If it is showing mercy, let him show mercy.” 1

To believe that lay people are also authentic ministers in their own right and to affirm the parity of ministries requires a major paradigm shift for most leaders of traditional churches. The human body illustrates the truth that each part of the body needs every other part. “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you’ (1 Cor 12:21). All members therefore are to care for others. The Scriptures make a clear distinction between the fruit of the spirit which every Christian is to bear, and the gifts of the spirit which are unique to each Christian. The fruit is essential for quality of life; the gifts are essential for ministry. Functions unite rather than separate; the complement rather than compete, just like the many members of a healthy human body. The purpose of a ministry-balanced church is to build up the body of Christ, promote unity and further the maturity of the saints. Only a nurtured and cared for church will be strong enough to continue making disciples.

The church, in which the lay pastors’ ministry can happen, is the church that hears God by knowing, believing, and practicing biblical truths. It is a word-driven church. It also takes all the people of God to do all the work of God. In the following words, Pastor John Ed Matheson expresses how important the “every member in ministry” theme is to the church: “The emphasis on the ministry of the laity is something that must be kept constantly before the church. An occasional sermon is not sufficient. It needs to be taught

1The Greek word for man is anthropos, meaning a human being, whether male or female; referring to the genus or nature, not to gender. We at the beginning of verse 6 clarifies the inclusiveness of man. It does not distinguish between male and female, but between humans and animals, between human beings and God.
in Sunday School and preached from the pulpit. We say that each member is expected to find some place to serve in the life of the church. That expectation level is echoed from the pulpit. . . . People hear it often. It becomes a level of expectation. When people join your church, they should be given immediately an opportunity to indicate where they feel led to serve."

Churches which have adopted the philosophy of making disciples can be distinguished by the postnatal care they give to new Christians. They not only have spiritual obstetricians, but they also practice spiritual pediatrics. Paul and the other men in Acts 13:1 were acting in the discipling role, teaching the converts how to grow strong in their newly found faith. Following is a list of methods churches are using to make disciples as they help new Christians grow in the faith:

1. New Christian classes. Often, the pastor or elder serves as leader. Subjects covered are assurance of salvation, meaning of church membership, how to pray, how to study the Bible, how to witness, and the doctrines of the church, as well as the structure and goals of the church.

2. Support system. Each new Christian is assigned to a church family who become his or her sponsors for the first years. Sponsors will introduce them to other church families, have a monthly social time with the convert, and visit in the home when the person is sick or absent from worship.

3. Church organizations. Every new disciple is assigned to a Sabbath School class, and appropriate fellowship group such as men, women, or youth, and placed in some service or outreach committee.

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4. Christian service. Within six months of becoming a Christian, the person is given instruction in spiritual gifts and guided to discover his or her gifts. Opportunities are provided to use the gifts. Pastors find this helpful to get new Christians into a pattern of spiritual growth.

5. Monthly home Bible study or prayer/share groups. These combine new and more mature Christians. The new Christian gains wisdom from the older Christians and the older Christians catch some of the enthusiasm of the new ones.

An interview with Pastor Ewoo Andrews revealed that the following eight steps are a tremendous help in reaching out to unsaved neighbors:

1. Find the needs. During visitation, the teams should look for social, economic, and spiritual needs. The church might be able to establish a beachhead.

2. Establish specific goals. No church can be all things to all people. The board must decide on a specific portion of the city that they can claim for a harvest field.

3. Continuing prayer. At each step, the entire congregation must go to prayer for God's guidance. Before each Sabbath afternoon visit, prayer is offered.

4. Establish new programs. After evaluating the goals and praying for guidance, the church determines what specific program will help to accomplish the goals.

5. Appoint leaders.

6. Provide needed equipment.

7. Budget for the program. Members may give more in view of the effective ministries. New people attending will increase offerings. The church may cut back in some other areas in order to give financial support and priority to making disciples.
8. Evaluate the results. Every expenditure to the church budget will need to be examined in the light of its ability to help meet the priority goal of evangelism. The Great Commission flies over the church as a banner, and an all-consuming cause. When a core of people are willing to venture out in faith and pay the price for a thriving church, God joins them and blesses their plans and efforts.

A close comparison of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire with the Seventh-day Adventist Church of some other countries of Africa could help to understand the necessity of taking evangelism seriously in Cote d’Ivoire:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Beginning of Adventism</th>
<th>Membership 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>85,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>9,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroun</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>108,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>476,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>304,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>530,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>376,0602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1'Ewoo Andrews, Ministerial Secretary of West Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists, interview by author, Berrien Springs, MI, 13 July 2002.

Natural Church Development

Natural church development is defined by Schwarz as “releasing the growth automatism, by which God Himself grows his church.”¹ The word “automatism” is translated from the Greek as “all by itself” in Mark 4:28 (NIV). The concept is that, in nature, given the right conditions, plants grow with no apparent cause other than what God has built into that plant. Schwarz believes that in churches, as well as in plants, God has programmed into their genetic code the qualities that will make them healthy and allow them to grow. The key is that human leaders must learn how they can best cooperate with what God is already doing.

Schwarz claims to have discovered the principles of natural church development from three sources: “1) Empirical research, 2) observing nature, and 3) studying scripture, with the scripture being the final arbiter of truth.”² The concept is based on the belief that the Church is an organism and that God’s principles for growth should be similar to growth and health in other parts of creation. It is not based on natural theology but takes into account the processes of nature as it looks at how churches grow naturally.

Once Schwarz had identified the basic qualities of healthy and growing churches, reliability and validity studies were conducted to verify that the data gathered accurately reflected the concepts being studied. The result was validation through correlation of eight qualities of health that are present in growing churches worldwide. The eight qualities Schwarz uses to define healthy churches are:

²Ibid.
1. Empowering leadership. Leaders focus on equipping and training other Christians to do ministry; leaders are committed wholly to church growth.

2. Gift oriented ministry. Ministry tasks are distributed according to the spiritual gifts of the people; nearly every Christian is using his/her God given gifts to build up the church.

3. Passionate spirituality. The spiritual lives of the church members are characterized by prayer, enthusiasm, and boldness; most members live out their faith with power and contagious enthusiasm.

4. Functional structures. The forms, practices and structures of the church are designed to most effectively accomplish ministry in this time and place; church structures are evaluated as to whether or not they contribute to the growth of the church.

5. Inspiring worship service. Attending worship services is inspiring and uplifting to those who attend; worship is a high point of the week for the majority of the congregation.

6. Holistic small groups. There is a continuous multiplication of small groups that meet the real needs of people; the loving and healing power of fellowship is experienced in these groups.

7. Need-oriented evangelism. Evangelistic activities relate directly to the needs of the people the church is trying to reach; nearly all Christians use their spiritual gifts to help fulfill The Great Commission.
8. Loving relationships. Relationships among the members of the church are characterized by a high level of loving affections; Christ's love permeates nearly all church activities.¹

None of the eight characteristics can be missing if a church is to be both healthy and growing. Addressing and improving these qualitative characteristics will result in quantitative growth as a natural “by-product.” Schwarz recognizes that congregations have limited energy; therefore they should direct that energy strategically where it will have the most impact. Once a congregation has discovered its index on the eight quality characteristics, it should then focus its attention on its minimum factor, which is the quality that has the lowest score. A congregation can use its strengths to improve its weaker qualities. In so doing, both the weaknesses and the strengths are enhanced.

Schwarz has proposed six biotic concepts that are observable in nature and that are appropriate to the church as organism. Using these biotic principles will allow the “all by itself” concept to work effectively. The six biotic principles are:

1. Structure independence. How the parts are integrated into the whole is more important than the individual parts themselves.

2. Multiplications. Every form of organic growth eventually reaches its natural limits; further growth may best be achieved by creating other, similar units.


4. Multi-usage. The results of ministry are transformed into energy that, in turn, sustains the ongoing ministry of the Church.

¹Descriptions following each characteristic are adapted from Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk, The Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development (Carol Stream: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998), 47-122.

6. Functionality. The function of all created things is to bear fruit. When we bear fruit we live on, even when we die.¹

A brief sketch reminds that the New Testament writers view the Church not as an end in itself but as part of the larger project of God’s restoring of creation. The church is called to participate in that larger project of extending and deepening God’s gracious reign. Another significant aspect of natural church development is the theological paradigm undergirding this concept. Schwarz says that “natural church development is not just one church growth method among many. It is a different theological paradigm altogether. It introduces a different way of thinking for Christians.”¹ The concept is that there is a law of polarity in all creation demonstrated by two poles: a dynamic pole and a static pole. The dynamic pole (illustrated by the concept of organic growth through the “all by itself” principle) produces the static pole (illustrated by the organizational aspects). In turn, the static pole stimulates the dynamic pole. The dynamic pole emphasizes God’s role, and the static pole emphasizes the human role.

Spiritual Formation

This spiritual formation manual has been prepared and add to help leaders and members to understand their calling and to strengthen their growth in relation to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church (Eph 5:25-32). Spiritual formation is the process by which believers become more fully conformed and united to Christ, with regard to maturity of

¹Descriptions for each characteristic are adapted from The Implementation Guide. Ibid., 126-186.
maturity of life and calling. Instruction, personal relationships, spiritual discipling can facilitate spiritual formation. Its purpose is to cultivate growth toward Christ. It is an intentional pursuit of God and it is inspired, informed, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual formation is deeply rooted in the heart of God communicated through Scriptures. It is the activity of the Holy Spirit, which molds lives into the likeness of Christ. This likeness is a deep intimacy with God and genuine compassion for all creation.

The Spirit works not only in the lives of individuals but also in the Church, shaping into the body of Christ. Believers cooperate with this work of the Spirit through certain practices that make them open and responsive to the Spirit’s touch, disciplines such as Sabbath keeping, works of compassion and justice, discernment, worship, hospitality, spiritual friendship and soul-winning. Spiritual formation is the foundation upon which any other formations find their meaning. The complex crisis of our time is basically a crisis of faith. Man’s confidence in himself, his ideas and his accomplishments have crumbled. The scientific humanism of some decades ago, with its utopian optimism, has given place to skepticism and fear, even anguish, as violence increases and the arms race continues unchecked.

The time has come for the Church to return to God and rest faith on the eternal truths of His word. Ellen White stipulates that “the living Church of God will be waiting, watching and working. None are to stand in a neutral position. All are to represent Christ in active, earnest effort to save perishing souls.” For a church to be involved in a healthy

1Ibid., 83.

2Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1952), 163.
and growing process, its members need a spiritual formation that will open their vision for his call.

The Needs of Spiritual Formation

It is imperative for a believer to understand and to experience a genuine Christian life and to do so, his immediate needs will be: (1) life in Christ, (2) walk with Christ, (3) growth as a disciple.

Life in Christ

God has created man for a purpose and for His glory. He has conferred to him a dignity by creating him in His one image. God is personally interested in man. He loves him so much that he gave His only begotten son to die on his behalf on the cross. It is His deep desire to give to man an abundant life. We are all born in the family of God at the moment we receive the life in Christ. God is our father and we are his children.

Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God. As God-man, His experiences join ours. He suffered and has been tempted. He did not fall in temptation. He understands when we are tempted. Even when we fall, He is able to forgive us. He calls us “Brothers” and as we believe in Him, He gives us the certitude that we are one with Him. He has promised that he would prepare a place for the believers. Now in heaven, He reigns over the creation particularly on the Church. He lives in every believer by the Holy Spirit who gives the capacity of a Christ-centered obedient life.
Walk with Christ

*Walk towards maturity.* It is the desire of the Lord to see Christians become adults and resemble Christ. He saves us from the consequences of sins even while we are still in the battle. We can count in advance on a future freed of sin in the presence of Christ.

*Starting point.* Conversion is the beginning of the spiritual growth of a believer. The resources of God are at his disposal to help him.

*The process.* The spiritual growth looks like physical growth. God accomplishes a long-term work in the life of the believer. Christians should therefore advance with confidence, knowing that the Lord will complete what he has started in them.

*How to walk.* Growing in Christ is just like a walk. The believer should walk in communion with Christ by faith and love, following Christ’s example and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

*Adult life.* An adult Christian follows Jesus by persevering, working with zeal and experiencing His grace and His love.

*The Lord Jesus Christ.* Scriptures declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. He is worthy to be called so because of what He is and not only because of what He has done.

*Decision to make Christ the Lord of one’s life.* Though he is Lord, Jesus Christ does not occupy the first place in the heart of many believers. To make His reign possible in the heart, the believer needs to offer himself to Him and let Christ lead his life.

*Recognize His Lordship.* Many aspects of our Christian life escape the domination of Jesus Christ. The believer must submit himself to Christ and continue to walk with perseverance and make him the King of his life. He will find a genuine source of joy.
Walk by faith. Faith is based on the eternal and sure word of God. It is because the Christian believes in God and his word that his is able to benefit from hope, joy, and peace, answer of his prayers and accomplishments of other number of his promises.

Object of faith. Many people have faith in so many foolish things. God and His Word are the only worthy of faith.

Example of faith. A great number of things have been accomplished by faith (Hebrews 11).

God's promises. God is always faithful in the accomplishment of his promises. He does what he said he will do because his is faithful to his Word. The believer must appropriate the promises because it is with joy that the Lord answers those who seriously consider his Word.

Christ our example. Jesus Christ was not obligated to become a servant. He did that voluntarily. When He was on earth, He served others and he met their needs. The believer and even spiritual leaders must serve others. A Christian must know that he is under the authority of Christ. A periodical evaluation of service can encourage doing better.

Growth As a Disciple

A disciple is the one who learns from someone or the one who follows someone. Jesus invites Christians to join Him in the experience of learning. Four steps are necessary for a disciple to succeed: (1) desire, (2) decision, (3) resolution, and (4) disciple.

Evangelism is not an optional accessory in life; it is the essence of those who are called to be and to do. The gift of the “Good News” of Christ is one of the great
privileges that a Christian can have. Every believer has a responsibility to help the new Christian to persevere on the way that leads to spiritual maturity. Because of his or her uniqueness, each individual has a value and a dignity. It is necessary to help others to grow. These are some aspects in which the new believers need to be helped: (1) an assurance, help the new convert to find his assurance in the word of God; (2) devotion, help him to establish a personal relationship with Christ; (3) Bible studies, help him to start Bible studies with friends and other people; (4) testimony, help him to share Christian experience with others; and (5) fellowship, help him to feel himself not only in God’s local family but also in the worldwide church.

Having a worldwide vision is to take seriously what is precious to God: the world. The only way to share the love of God is to be engaged in discipleship. “In 2000, the world population was about 6.4 billion with the following breakdown of religious allegiances.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheism</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animism</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “Good News” can reach all these people everywhere if every Christian could only do something simple. Using the map of the world, each Christian could pray for every country, sharing missionary experiences, considering the daily contacts as part of the world, sustaining the world mission by offerings and tithes and sustaining financially the work of a missionary.

Methodology

To succeed in such a noble enterprise, it will be advisable to divide the church into cells or groups of seven to twelve. The coordinator of each cell must be active and establish a climate of confidence. Genuine success does not come from proclaiming values but constantly putting them into daily action. Real change does not happen until it happens inside. Being value-aligned does not occur without changes in habits, practices, and attitudes. When aligned around shared values and united in a common purpose, ordinary people accomplish extraordinary results and give their organization a competitive edge. This is the reason why the coordinator must also help the learners to admit their need of God and other close to them, express themselves, to make observations and to freely ask questions. The cells should meet once a week at which time every student should have a handout to write in during the lectures, and have his Bible to look up the texts.

Program for the opening week

10 min. Song service
5 min. Opening song and prayer
25 min. Welcome and introductions
5 min. Information
2 min. Song
45 min. Lecture and discussion
5 min. Closing song & prayer

Program for the following weeks
10 min. Song service
5 min. Opening song and prayer
15 min. Welcome and testimonies
7 min. Session of prayer
2 min. Song
45 min. Lecture and discussion
6 min. Closing song & prayer

The worksheets are moved to appendix A, but this strategy is based upon the four W's: Welcome, Worship, Word, and Works. It is for a people-centered and community based program, and it allows a small band of people to experience the manifest presence, power and purpose of God. The suggested length of every meeting will be an hour and thirty minutes, and during the works time of the cell meeting, a master plan must be designed with date, time, and the name of each member for a full participation. In addition to this, a fasting and praying schedule must be set up. Everyone must have this privilege on a rotation basis for the cell as a whole. Every member is an instrument of edification through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ is the DNA of the cell which has the responsibility to build up for the common goal.
These proposed strategies lead us to the conclusions, some final thoughts, and recommendations regarding this study and its implementation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Côte d’Ivoire.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This research project has tried to show the growth struggle of the Seventh-day Adventist Church during its eighty years in Cote d’Ivoire. These decades have been characterized by working in the midst of a significant diversity of cultures, languages, and religions. Compared to the United Methodist Church which started its activities in Cote d’Ivoire four years after the Seventh-day Adventist Church, growth has been low. The causes of this disappointing growth have been explored, but analysis has confirmed that despite difficulties in communication and differences in recruiting members, the United Methodist Church of Cote d’Ivoire which came to Cote d’Ivoire later, showed tremendous growth. In reality, these two denominations have significant differences which cannot be fully described here. Yet, they have enough in common that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire should have similar growth to that of the United Methodist Church. Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scripture. These beliefs constitute the Church’s understanding and are the expression of the teaching of Scripture. This comparison was done to challenge the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire as a wake up call about its responsibility toward the Great Commission. These studies have revealed the deep problem of the Church in Cote d’Ivoire: the fact
that it has spent a long period in the rural areas, it continues to be influenced by the village mentality which is defined as a narrow and small vision. Anyone who understands the importance of the Adventist message in God’s agenda and is acquainted with the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire would most likely raise the question: Why has the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire experienced such little growth while the neighboring Ghana which has the same culture, and almost the same kind of populations where the message came a few years earlier, has become a Union Conference? In other African countries, the Church has experienced a tremendous growth with very few years of existence.

The research provides compelling evidence of two things. First, the condition of the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire is serious. Second, church growth strategies are urgently needed in order to change the situation. The church has embraced a limited vision of the Great Commission that has been transferred to generations both in teaching and practices for decades. Members’ cognitive beliefs are incongruent with their sentiments and attitudes toward evangelism, but recent personal observation has shown some contemporary enthusiasm and encouraging reports. God has enabled the Church to take up the challenge, and the situation is changing.

God calls for the whole Church to be about the task of accomplishing its mission. In other words, the body must fulfill its purpose with the participation of each member. The Great Commission does not say “come,” but “go.” This paradigm shift is especially profound. The Gospel Commission was not given to the lost, telling them to come to church. Events like health programs, reaping series, and Bible study classes, are therefore created in the hopes that people will come to church. The definition of the word “go” in
the dictionary is to move or travel, to move away from a place; depart. The problem is that many believers will not go. If the church operates on the come paradigm, it will fail. The Church must take the initiative and move from being the inviting church to become the infiltrating church. If every member embraces that vision and the church organizes accordingly, the goal to reach Ivorians in great and significant numbers will be fulfilled and not only will that be awesome for the Church, but it will also thrill the heart of God.

**Recommendations**

The research undertaken for this study reveals that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d'Ivoire has a restricted view of the Great Commission. As a result of the causes which have been underlined, the church has experienced low growth throughout the years of its existence. The following recommendations are given to remedy the situation:

**Reformation**

Appealing to the leaders of the Church assembled at the 1973 Annual Council, the General Conference president, Robert Pierson, called for revival and reformation in leadership and administration. For him leaders and church members must let go all handfuls of earthly sand that are clawing for and clinging to for dear life and begin to cling to the Rock of Ages. He continued, “Unless we seek His Spirit, we can ever hope to succeed in the assignment God has given His remnant church. Only as we seek the Holy Spirit as the source of power for our leadership, the energy for all our assignments, will we ever rise above the miserable limitations of our own abilities and break out into that
glorious experience that God speaks of as the loud cry." Leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire must call the Church to revival and reformation. Members have great responsibilities in this matter. It is up to them to hear the call and respond willingly and eagerly by calling on the Lord to bring the promised revival.

Spiritual Formation

If the Gospel does not produce faith, hope, courage, cheerfulness, concern for the salvation of others, and provide a complete remedy for the disease of sin, it is evidence of either a misinterpretation of its meaning and purpose or a misapplication of its basic principles of daily life. Leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire should engage members in a process by which believers become more fully conformed and united to Christ, with regard to maturity of life and calling. The proposed spiritual formation manual, which is included in this research, should help facilitate growth toward Christ. This intentional pursuit of God is inspired, informed, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Because spiritual formation is the activity of the Holy Spirit, which molds believers into the likeness of Christ, it produces a deep intimacy with God and genuine compassion for all of creation. Cooperate with this work of the Holy Spirit through certain practices that make Christians open and responsive to the Spirit’s touch, disciplines such as Sabbath-keeping, the work of compassion and justice, discernment, worship, hospitality, spiritual friendships, and soul winning.

Small Groups Ministry

In order to succeed, the Cote d’Ivoire Conference could learn from the past mistakes in evangelism and church-planting and prioritize the small group ministry. Small group ministries provide an important catalyst for the advancement of the church mission. It is an effective and powerful agency of the Holy Spirit. This ministry will help members of the church to understand that evangelism is personal. Though important, mass evangelism cannot win the world to Christ. It is limited in its ability to get the Gospel across in the clearest possible way. The results cannot be sustained and individual Christians cannot participate. For these reasons the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire should give serious consideration to making small group ministry a vital part of its evangelistic and nurturing strategies.

Promotion of Education

The Cote d’Ivoire Conference could put forth a vision of the entire church as a learning community to help faith communities create and maintain learning environments that facilitate members being different together in a pluralistic world and to provide a comprehensive guide for pastors leading a congregation toward fully becoming a learning community. Pastors and church members are still used to government sponsorship of education. If church leaders promote education, it will enhance the growth on every level. It will generate an effective ministry, stimulate more participants in the Great Commission, and rediscover personal evangelism in the spirit of the New Testament Christianity. Since education has the tendency of becoming free in Cote d’Ivoire, and because the other church organizations have different ways of funding their schools, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire must try the system that the Seventh-day
Adventist Church in Korea is using to bring many people in the Church: create a language institute with branches in major cities of the country. Cote d'Ivoire has an active part of the globalization and English being the language of it, is greatly used in many places, occasions, and particularly in the business world.

Empowering Ministers

The Cote d'Ivoire Conference should listen to the Ivorian society and acquaint ministers with the factors that stimulate or hinder the growth of the Church. They need help in order to assess the effectiveness of various methods of the Seventh-day Adventist evangelism, church growth, and mission. They should discover new approaches and strategies for implementing the divine commission and accomplishing God’s work in this generation. Lay leaders should assist ministers in planning for church growth in biblical perspectives. They should equip ministers to give leadership to the growth of the Church in all its aspects, especially equip them to train and enable church membership to assume their role in the growth of the Church, because preaching is a small part of the work to be done for the salvation of souls.

Health Ministry and Community Services

The role of social concern and public service in the mission of the Adventist Church is well articulated by Ellen White: “Christ’s method alone will give success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their need, and won their confidence. Then
He bade them, “Follow me.” This method, that the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire could also try, has been reprinted in many places in the world and has demonstrated its effectiveness. Community involvement and visibility are key issues for the growth of the Church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire needs redynamized churches with nontraditional community services and active relationships with the neighborhood.

Some possibilities that can be explored are: health care, community services, phone ministry, internet ministry, DVD ministry, TV ministry, radio ministry, young mothers, youth ministry, cooking ministry, home economics, refugees ministry, homeless, adult education, alphabetization center, evangelism center for Muslims, family Life, birth control education, community choir, campus ministry, day care, tutoring, women ministry, abused women ministry, single mothers ministry, English program, vacation Bible School, craft, small business, sexual education, volunteer services, sexual transmitted diseases education, counseling services, and juvenal education.

Organizational Interrelationships

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire belongs to the Sahel Union Mission which is part of the 10/40 Window. This Window has in view most of the world’s areas of greatest physical and spiritual need, most of the world’s least-reached peoples. As such, the Church needs special attention from the Worldwide Church Organization, but also needs to twin with some conferences in the USA and in other places around the globe to benefit from their help, experience, and financial support. This

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partnership must involve the local people, supporting their workers, churches building their own buildings, and sending their own missionaries.

Leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire and foreign missionaries must emphasize the importance of self-support because when global resources replace local resources, people are deprived of the joy of giving. The Church should not be involved in irreproducible structures and projects that cannot be supported locally.

Evangelism for Muslims

The latest statistics on religions in Cote d’Ivoire reveal that 35 percent\(^1\) of Ivorians are Muslims. They live in the north in a great proportion, and this percentage has been enlarged by those coming from neighboring countries. Because immigration has always been a great tool in the hands of the Lord to reach those who cannot be touched by the Gospel while they are in their own context, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire could establish a ministry for Muslims learning from the Methodists’ experience who already have such a ministry and have planted many churches. As strategy, the Seventh-day Adventist Church could train and use members and pastors who were former Muslims to reach this goal. It will be a damaging mistake to neglect Muslims. It is true that the Muslim world is subjected to the secularizing influences of the West. Past Western domination of present independent Muslim nations has not helped the Christian mission, but it did transmit Western ideas and values to a whole generation of Muslim elite in many African countries. These secularizing influences which have eroded

the faith of many in the West in Christ, could well erode Islamic beliefs. In the midst of miscalculations, prejudices, and neglect, God has opened doors for the evangelization of Muslims.

The Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire could realize that a growing church is a church that is very active in public evangelism, small group outreach, and personal evangelism. This kind of church is also very involved constructively in community, providing significant services outside of its own self-interest, as well as providing a growing spiritual experience for its members and becoming intentional about a strategy for growth. Therefore to enhance its growth, the Adventist Church in Cote d’Ivoire must combine public and personal evangelism, community service, spirituality, intentionality, and even worship services designed for non-Adventists.
APPENDIX A

WORKSHEET SPIRITUAL FORMATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Worksheets prepared to be used in Small Cells of New Believers

I. Life in Christ

A – Man is important to God

You are special, unique in the universe. Your life is precious to God. That is why He takes care of you. This study is based on the following statements:

a) God has created you.

b) God knows you.

c) God loves you.

d) God made you a member of his family.

God Created You

1. In the book of the beginning called Genesis, the first chapter tells us how the universe was created. Read 1:1-5 and add to the list below at least three facts on creation:

   - God was in existence before the beginning.

   - God created heaven and earth

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
2. How did God create the world? (Hebrews 11:3)

3. Who initiated all of these things? (Revelation 4:11)


God Knows You

1. In the Psalm 139:1-6, David mentions several aspects of his life and what he has experienced. Enumerate four:

2. Does God know you in the same way? If yes, indicate that beside your response.

3. What was David’s reaction when he understood that God knew him entirely? (Psalm 139:24-25)

God Loves You

1. What is the great manifestation of the love of God? (John 4:9-10)
2. Study John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he have his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

3. What has God done through love?


4. What does that mean: God gave his Son?


5. How can you receive eternal life?


6. According to John 10:9-16, Jesus compares his love for us to a shepherd and his sheep. Enumerate some gifts he will be happy to concede to you.


7. What are the most important?


Let’s stop for a word of prayer. Let’s thank God for all these gifts. God gave grace to us freely; it is not dependent on our works.
Jesus Made You a Member of his Family

1. How can a child of God talk to him? (Matthew 6:9)

2. Is God really the Father of all? Yes or no? Why? (John 8:42-44)

3. How can we be born into the family of God? (John 1:12-13)

4. According to Romans 8:15-17, enumerate some advantages that God reserves to his children.

5. Tell briefly how you know that God is your father.

Abba: Aramaic word meaning “Daddy”

It is very important as Christians to have the assurance that God is your father and that you have eternal life. Because our feelings can change, this assurance must be based on the word of God.
"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God" 1 John 5:13.

The following texts have helped several Christians to get that assurance. Choose the one that is more meaningful to you and try to memorize it.

a. John 5:24
b. Revelation 3:20
c. 1 John 5:11-12

Summary

You have been created by God according to His will for His glory. He has conferred to you a great privilege by making you in His image. You have a high value in His eyes. He is interested in you and knows you deeply. He so loves you that He gave His begotten Son to die on the cross on your behalf. By this manifestation of His love, He wants to give you life and life abundantly. When you receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior, you are born in God’s family. God is your Father and you are His child.

B. The Person of Christ

According to Colossians 1:15, Jesus is the image of the invisible God. We are not capable of understanding God by ourselves. God is holy, man is sinner. To make the reconciliation possible, God took the form of man in the person of Jesus. Jesus Christ had to be God in order to reveal God in his plenitude. He also had to be man to communicate with men. He has therefore a double nature. He is Man-God and God-Man.
His Divinity

Christ is divine. Some people talk about Jesus as a great man. Others see him as a founder of a religion. Some see him as a prophet. Jesus Christ said that he is God. If it was not true, he could have been considered as a simple good man.

Hebrews 1 introduces the divinity of Jesus Christ to us. Read the chapter and answer the questions 1-4.

1. The superiority of Jesus over the angels
   Verse 4-5___________________________________________________________
   Verse 6____________________________________________________________
   Verse 13-14________________________________________________________

2. Read verses 8-12 and write the number of the verse of each statement.
   Jesus Christ is the Creator_____________________________________________
   Jesus does not change________________________________________________
   Jesus is eternal_______________________________________________________
   Jesus is just__________________________________________________________

3. What is the name given to Jesus?
   Verse 8______________________________________________________________
   Verse 10____________________________________________________________

4. What does Jesus say about Himself? (John 10:28-30)
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
5. What does He tell you about the uniqueness of His power? (John 11:39-44)

6. After being with Him, what was the conclusion of the disciples? (Matthew 16:13-16)

7. Give three reasons that help you to believe that Jesus Christ is God.

His Humanity

1. How does the humanity of Jesus appear in the following situations?
   
   John 4:6 ______________________________________________
   John 4:7 ______________________________________________
   John 11:35____________________________________________

2. In Matthew 4:1-11, we find the temptations of Jesus.
   
   a) Write down the statement of Jesus in each response to Satan.

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

   What is the meaning of that statement?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

   b) Put a corresponding line between the verses of Matthew 4 and the verses of Deuteronomy.
3. Can you follow the example of Christ in his way of overcoming temptations?

Let’s stop for a word of prayer.

Thank God for His understanding even when you are tempted. Ask Him to help you to overcome temptation. Remember his promise in John 1:9 and thank Him for forgiveness.

4. According to Hebrews 2:10, what part of the life of Jesus is common to every human being?

5. What is the name given by Jesus to those who believe in Him? (Hebrews 2:11)

6. What did Jesus accomplish when He took on our humanity? (Hebrews 2:14-15)

Summary

Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God. He possesses divine attributes and superiority over the angels. When He was on earth He demonstrated His divine power in healing and miracles. His disciples have believed His divinity and trusted His Messianic mission. As God He has authority on earth.
Jesus Christ was also a man. Several of His experiences join ours. He has suffered; He has been tempted but did not fall into it. That’s why He is able to understand us when we are tempted. Even when we fall and come to Him, He forgives. He calls “Brothers” those who believe in Him. He proves by that, that He is one with them.

C. The Work of Jesus Christ

Many know the great lines of the holy life of Jesus Christ: He was condemned as a common criminal, He has been crucified on the Cross, He died and three days later, He was resurrected. But only a few understand the importance of these events. By this study we are going to understand some reasons for His life, death and resurrection.

His Life

1. What was the reason of his coming in this world? (Matthew 1:21)

2. How did Jesus grow up as a teenager? (Luke 2:52)

3. Give some activities of his public life. (Matthew 4:23)

4. Why did he choose the Disciples? (Mark 3:14)
5. What was his way of leading them? (Luke 22:25-27)

Jesus has done so many things that are not written. John 21:25

His Death

1. What did Jesus prophesy? (Matthew 16:21)

2. How does Jesus die? (Matthew 27:35)

3. Did Jesus go to the cross voluntarily? (John 10:17-18)

4. What is the condition of man separated from Christ? (John 3:18)

5. Read 1 Peter 3:18. What is the action of Christ to bring sinners back to God?
His Resurrection

1. What is the assurance that the tomb was empty? (Matthew 27:62-66)

2. Read Matthew 28:1-7. What was the discovery in the sepulchre in the morning of the first day of the week?

What did the angel say about Jesus?

3. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples.
   a) What was their impression? (Luke 24:36-37)
   
   
   c) Was His body like ours? Comment on your response. (Luke 24:29-31)

4. What is the essential of the message of the Gospel? (1 Corinthians 15:1-5)

   D. The Holy Spirit in You

   Jesus Christ is resurrected! Jesus Christ is alive! When He went to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit who leads Christians.
Ascension of Christ

1. Read Acts 1:9-11
   a) Describe verses 9-10
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   b) Where is Jesus now? Verse 11
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   c) What did the two men in white say?
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

2. Give one of the reasons why Jesus went to heaven. (John 14:2-3)
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

3. Read Ephesians 1:20-23. What is the place of Jesus? Verse 20
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

His Intercession

1. What is Jesus doing now? (Romans 8:34)
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

2. What did Jesus ask in his prayer for the Disciples? (John 17)
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   Verse 13 ________________________________
   Verse 15 ________________________________
   Verse 17 ________________________________
3. Do you think that Jesus is praying for you? (Hebrews 7:24-25)

The Presence of the Holy Spirit

1. What were the promises of Jesus to His Disciples? (John 14:16-26)

2. What can we say about a person who sincerely recognizes Jesus Christ as Lord? (1 Corinthians 12:3)

3. What are the characteristics of Christians? (Romans 8:9)

   a. Because the believer has been baptized.
   b. Because the believer is his son.
   c. Because the believer has dedicated his life to him.
   d. Because the believer has done a special experience.

5. Enumerate some manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.
(2 Timothy 1:7)
6. See again the subject and tell how can someone know that the Holy Spirit lives in you?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Lead by the Holy Spirit

1. What are the two opposite natures in you?
   (Galatians)

Who should have led your life?

2. Who is praised by the Holy Spirit? (John 16:13-14)

3. What is the sword of the Spirit? (Ephesians 6:17)

4. What effects does the word of God produce on the believer? (Hebrews 4:12)

5. In what way does the Holy Spirit help you? And how? (Hebrews 8:26)

6. What did the Disciples do after being filled with the Holy Spirit? (Acts 2:42)


How does the Holy Spirit help to witness?

______________________________________________________________
A life filled with the Holy Spirit is:

- A life of obedience to the Holy Spirit
- A life centered on the person of Jesus Christ
- A life rooted in the word of God
- A life of prayer
- A life of fellowship
- A life of witnessing

This is the life in Christ Jesus.

II. Walk with Christ

A. Adult in Christ

Being a Christian is the beginning of an adventure that lasts throughout this life.

"Be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God?" Romans 12:2

Walk towards Maturity

1. You have done your first step towards spiritual maturity when you have accepted Christ. Write the essential points of the Gospel and give the biblical references.

2. Read Ephesians 4:11-16
   
   a. What does God expect from you? (Verses 13, 15) ________________________________

   b. What are the characteristics of those who are still spiritually children? (Verse 14) ___________________________________
c. What are the characteristics of the one who is spiritually adult?

3. Define human nature and the new Christian nature. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human nature</th>
<th>Christian nature</th>
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The Beginning


How must it continue? __________________________________________________________________

2. Read Romans 5:1-5. Now that you are justified by faith in Christ Jesus, what are the offered blessings? ________________________________________________

Growth Process

1. There is a parallelism between our physical life and the spiritual one. What do you understand by these verses?

   1 Thessalonians 2:11_______________________________________________________________
   Hebrews 5:13-14_______________________________________________________________
   1 Peter 2:2-3_______________________________________________________________

2. According to Romans 5:17, what double benefit can you receive? ________________________

3. Meditation on Romans 6:11-13. _____________________________________________________
4. God’s wish for you, is to reign upon your life but not sin reigns on you (Romans 6:13). How does this verse apply to you?


5. Ephesians 2:8-9 says that Christians are saved by faith; but your relationship with God is limited to that point.
   a) Who are you?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   b) Is God still working in you?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   c) What is he doing? (Philippians 1:6)
   __________________________________________________________________________

When you think about your life, you should be grateful for what He has done for you. Take time to express to Him your gratitude for what He has done, what He is doing and what He will do.

How to Walk

1. What do these verses teach you?
   Romans 8:4
   __________________________________________________________________________
   2 Corinthians 5:7
   __________________________________________________________________________
   Ephesians 5:2
   __________________________________________________________________________
   1 John 2:6
   __________________________________________________________________________
2. Describe, according to 1 John 1:6-10, those who are walking with God and who are not.

The Adult Life

1. What should be the behavior of a spiritually adult Christian? (Philippians 3:13-15)

2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:58. What should Christians do in perspective of living with Christ all long eternity?

3. In what should you grow spiritually?

Summary

It is the desire of the Lord that Christians should become adult and be like Him. He has saved them from the consequences of their sins. Even though they are in full battle against sin, they can still rely on Him. Conversion is for a Christian, the beginning of the spiritual growth. It looks like physical growth. God realizes in the life of the believer a work of long process. Christians should walk with confidence knowing that the Lord will complete what He has started in them.
Growing in Christ looks like a walk. Christians should walk in communion with Christ in faith and love, following His example and led by the Holy Spirit. A Christian adult is therefore someone who follows Christ with perseverance, working with zeal and doing the experience of his grace and his love. God does not forget the work of a believer. He rewards him.

B. Christ, Lord of my Life

Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord. Men and Women who want to become Disciples of Christ must take the aspect of the Christian experience very seriously.

The Lord Jesus Christ

1. Titles give useful information to the one who bears them. In the following verses what are the title of Jesus Christ?

   John 13:13 __________________________________________________________

   Acts 2:36 __________________________________________________________

   Revelation 19:16 _________________________________________________

   Summarize what these titles reveal about Christ________________________

2. Jesus Christ is Lord. Draw a line between the right text and the right response.

   Creation                      Colossians 1:18

   Dead and Living              Colossians 1:16-17

   Christians                   Romans 14:9

3. Think about Jesus Christ and give your own definition of the word LORD.__________
4. Read and meditate. (Philippians 2:9-11)

5. How does Revelation 5:12 proclaim the lordship of Christ?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. How did you become the property of God?

7. What place should Christ occupy in the life of a believer? (Colossians 1:18)

8. What should we do according to Romans 12:1?

9. Check those which apply to you.

In general I think that:

_____ Jesus does not really understand my problem.

_____ He would ask me something I would not be able to do.

_____ He would push me towards a profession that I would not like.

_____ He would not allow me to get married.

_____ He would take from me the pleasures I have with my wealth, my activities and my friends.

_____ He would like just to help in big things but he would not be involved in the small ones.

What other fears did not allow you to submit to Christ all the aspects of your life?
Read Jeremiah 29:11

10. In your prayer, consider the lordship of Christ. Have you decided to recognize that?
Yes ____  No ____

11. Take some time to evaluate the effectiveness of the lordship of Christ in your life.
   The best way to determine if Christ has the entire control over your life is to ask the following questions to yourself:
   
   Am I ready to do what Christ asks me to do; or am I able to thank God for what happen to me on this aspect?

12. What does 1 Peter 5:6-7 say when sometimes you choose a way on which you feel unhappy and anxious?

   __________________________________________________________

13. What happens when anxieties and worries are not given to Jesus Christ? (Mark 4:18-19)
   __________________________________________________________

14. Luke 6:46 indicates that Jesus Christ is really the Lord of your life.
   __________________________________________________________

15. What is the meaning of the Lordship of Jesus Christ to you?
   __________________________________________________________

   Summary

   God declares in scriptures that Jesus Christ is lord. Jesus Christ deserves that not for what He has done but what He is. Even though Jesus Christ is Lord He is not occupying the first place in the heart of many believers. For Him, to reign in the heart of
someone, the person must offer himself to Jesus and allow Him to lead his life. The Christian submits his life to Christ and continues with perseverance to make Christ the King of his life. He will find in Him the source of his joy.

C. Faith and Promises of God

Walk by Faith

Faith is absolutely necessary in our walk with Christ.

1. What is the function of faith in the beginning of our Christian life? (Ephesians 2:8-9)

________________________________________________________________________

You have accepted Christ by faith as your personal savior. How are you going to live now? (Colossians 2:6)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Define faith according to:

Acts 27:25

________________________________________________________________________

Romans 4:20-21

________________________________________________________________________

Hebrews 11:1

________________________________________________________________________

3. Write 2 Corinthians 5:17 according to your understanding and give an example of what that means to you.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. What can prevent you to see the works of God? (Matthew 13:58)

________________________________________________________________________
The Object of Faith

1. In what do people, by mistake, trust?

Psalm 33:16-17___________________________________________________________
Psalm 146:3___________________________________________________________
Proverbs 3:5___________________________________________________________
Proverbs 28:26________________________________________________________
Jeremiah 9:23__________________________________________________________

2. Who is the object of your faith? (Mark 11:22) ____________________________

Example of Faith

Hebrews 11 is the key chapter on faith. Read it and note what has been accomplished by faith.

The Promises of God

1. Remember a precise situation in which a promise had been made to you. Why would you think that the promise would be held or not?_______________________________

_______________________________________________________________
In what way has it influenced you in the perspective of future promises?________

_______________________________________________________________

2. God also has made some promises. What do scriptures say about the promises of God?

1 Kings 8:56___________________________________________________________
Psalm 89:35___________________________________________________________
Isaiah 55:11__________________________________________________________
3. Why do we need to trust God’s promises?

---

**Appropriate His Promises**

1. Write the promise and the condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Promise</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John 15:7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamentations 3:22-23</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Romans 8:28</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Galatians 6:7</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Why does God have conditions for some promises?

---

3. According to 2 Corinthians 1:20, what is the attitude of God towards the promises he has made?

---

4. What must be the attitude of the child of God when he appropriates God’s promises?

(Hebrews 6:16)

---

5a. Give one of the promises you have discovered by reading Scriptures.

---

5b. How has that promise helped you?

---
Summary

Faith is founded on the pure and sure word of God. It is because the Christian believes in God and in His word that he can benefit from joy, hope, peace, answer of prayers and other promises of God. God and his word are worthy to be trusted. He is faithful to His promises. God does what he has said that He would do because He is faithful to his word. He takes pleasure in answering those who take His promises seriously.

D. The Will of God

The Revealed Will of God

1) What should be one of the desires of a disciple of Christ? (Ephesians 5:17)

2) What are the promises of God about your life? (Psalms 32:8)

3) In the following verses, what is the will of God? (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

4) What was the attitude of David towards the will of God? (Psalms 40:9)
Who gives us strength to accomplish the will of God? (Philippians 2:13; John 15:5)

5) Describe some objectives of God for you:
   Matthew 6:33
   Matthew 22:34-39
   Matthew 28:18-20
   1 Peter 3:18

Obedience

1) How can you understand the will of God?
   Psalms 37:31
   Psalms 119:105, 130

2) What do you do in order to know the will of God?
   Psalms 143:8
   James 1:5

3) Psalms 25:4-5 is a prayer of David. Can you rewrite it and pray it in your heart?

4) Romans 12:1-2 gives some conditions to discovering the will of God. What are they?

5) What is the promised guide when looking for direction from God? (John 16:13)
(Remember that Satan deceives men but the Lord guides them.)

6) What will be your attitude when you know the demand of God? (Ephesians 6:6)

7) The objectives of life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do the desires of God come before mine?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Can a decision, once taken, help me to love God or my neighbour more?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can that decision help me to accomplish my part of the Great Commission?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can that decision help me to have a holy life?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can that decision help me to improve my spiritual formation?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

III. Growth as a Disciple

A. What is a Disciple?

The simple meaning of the word disciple is: the one who learns something from someone or one who follows someone. Socrates had disciples. John the Baptist had some. Even Charles de Gaulle had some, too. When Jesus Christ was talking about disciples, He was thinking of training for the entire world, disciples who could dedicate their lives more than simply adhere.

1) According to Luke 14:25-33, what characterizes a disciple according to the following verses?

   Verse 26

   Verse 27
Verse 33

2) What should be the characteristics of a disciple?

John 8:31

John 13:34-35

John 15:8

3) According to the verses of questions one and two, give a brief definition of discipleship.

4) Why, according to you, are there these requirements for those who Jesus saves?

The Learning Disciple

Jesus invites you to a learning adventure. In Hebrews 5:8, it is said that “though He was a Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” Jesus has learned during His earthly life.

1) What should be the attitude of the one who learns? (Proverbs 12:13)

2) From whom must you learn?

Proverbs 27:17

Proverbs 4:7

Hebrews 13:7

Matthew 11:29
3) What does Paul suggest to the Corinthians? (1 Corinthians 14:20)

4) Why is it important that you accept the instruction? (Proverbs 11:14)

The Price of Being a Disciple

1) What should those who want to be disciples of Jesus Christ consider? (Luke 14:28-32)

2) What does it cost to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? (Luke 9:57-62)

3) Let’s have a word of prayer.

B. The Faithful Steward

A steward is someone who manages the wealth of another person. The Christian is a manager of his own life and his wealth. Both entities belong to the Lord. It is because everything belongs to the Lord that Christians must be the best managers of their gifts, time, money and their bodies.

Managers of the Wealth of God

1) What do we learn from 1 Corinthians 14:2?

2) In what aspects does God want us to be good stewards?

Ephesians 5:15-16
1) Read Matthew 6:25-34.

   a) What are the things that a believer should look for? (Verse 33)

   b) Define the kingdom of God.

   c) Define the righteousness of God.

   d) Describe now Matthew 6:33. Use your own definitions.

2) What should precede the ministry in the church according to God? (1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12)

3) What importance does Paul give to works? (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9)

Gifts

1) What is given to us as Christians and why? (1 Peter 4:10)

2) Read Romans 12:3-8.
1) Why is it important to have a good attitude towards making money? (1 Timothy 6:10)

2) Read 1 Corinthians 9. What are the principles discovered in giving?
   Verse 6
   Verse 7
   Verse 8
   Verse 12
   Verse 13
   Verse 15

Money

3) Choose one of your gifts and tell how you can use it to serve others.

   174

a) Make a list of what is given to Christians.

b) What opinion should a Christian have about himself and the gifts that he has received?
   (Verse 3)
1) To whom do you belong? What is the meaning of being the “temple of the Holy Spirit”? (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2) Read Romans 12:1-2. What does Paul say about your body?
Why?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3) What does John say to Gaius about his spiritual health? (3 John 2)

________________________________________________________________________

4) In the spirit of prayer, check the aspects in which you need to change.

_____ Diet
_____ Regular exercise
_____ Sufficient rest
_____ Dangerous habits

C. Helping Others to Find Christ

Our goal as Christians is to share our faith with others. When the Lord reveals new truths to us, we should put them in practice on a personal and daily basis. If we are prepared, the Holy Spirit will use us to reach unbelievers to reveal Christ to them. We should remember that evangelism is not an optional accessory of our lives; it is the essence of what we are called to do and to be.
Preparation

1) What is the best preparation to talking about Jesus with others?

Explain Matthew 4:19

2) Read Philippians 2:14-16. If you recognize yourself somewhere, note in what you will need to improve.

3) Paul prayed for those who did not know Christ. Read Romans 10:1. What will you ask for those who live without Christ?

4) How can you get prepared to talk in the name of Jesus Christ?

Establishing the Contact

1) Read Matthew 9:10-12. With whom was Jesus in contact?
2) In what situations did Jesus enter in contact with them?

________________________________________________________________________________________

3) When did Paul meet the people to talk about Jesus? (Acts 20:20)

________________________________________________________________________________________

Knowing the Needs

Read Mark 10:17-22. What was the need of man?

________________________________________________________________________________________

Using the Word

1) What can the Word of God do? (Hebrews 4:12)

________________________________________________________________________________________

2) What is the promise of God about His Word? (Isaiah 55:11)

________________________________________________________________________________________

3) What should be your attitude towards an indifferent attitude? (2 Timothy 2:23-26)

________________________________________________________________________________________

Presentation of Christ

1) Why is it important to present Jesus Christ to the lost?

John 14:6

________________________________________________________________________________________

Acts 4:12

________________________________________________________________________________________

2) Read John 3:16-18.

a) Give four points that summarize the Gospel. (Verse 16)

________________________________________________________________________________________

b) Why did God send Jesus into the world?

________________________________________________________________________________________
c) What are the two kinds of people mentioned in verse 18?

__________________________________________________________________________

d) What is necessary to avoid judgment? _________________________________________

Be ready to talk about Jesus Christ in every circumstance.

Know the essential points of the Gospel.

Get prepared and be ready to present Jesus clearly.

Pray on every occasion.

D. Zeal and Discipline

1) The Christian life is compared in the New Testament to a race. Read 1 Corinthians
   9:24-27. How did Paul say that we should run? _________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

2) Enumerate some important factors for a running disciple. _______________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

3) What does Hebrews 12:12 add? ____________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

4) What is the relationship between zeal and the discipline of Christ? (Hebrews 6:11-12)

__________________________________________________________________________
These are the necessary four steps to succeed:

1—Desire
2—Decision
3—Resolution
4—Discipline

E. Following-up with New Christians

Every believer has the responsibility to help new Christians to grow and to persevere in their spiritual maturity.

Follow-up

Read Thessalonians 2:7-12.

a) How did Paul nurture the Thessalonians? (Verses 7-8)

b) What kind of relationship did Paul have with them? (Verse 11)

c) What are the three things Paul was doing to help them grow in faith? (Verse 12)

d) What was the desire of Paul for his spiritual children? (Verse 12)

Why the Follow-up

1) What did Jesus say about the Gospel in the world? (Matthew 28:18-20)
2) Why did Paul take time to follow-up?

3) Why did Paul feel himself personally responsible for the Corinthians?

(1 Corinthians 4:15)

Every Individual Is Valued

Because of our uniqueness, every individual is valued and has dignity. Man alone has the privilege of being made in the image of God.

1) How does Jesus value you? (Matthew 10:29-31)

2) What does Jesus teach us in Luke 15:3-7 about the importance of every human being?

3) How many people did Paul mention in Romans 16? What does that mean?

Helping Others to Grow

1) What were Paul and his companions doing to help those who had newly accepted Christ?

Acts 14:21-22
Acts 18:11

2) What was the prayer request of Paul and his co-workers for the newly converted?

Colossians 1:9-11

Colossians 4:12

3) What advice is given to the newly converted about the word of God? (Colossians 3:16)

4) In what other aspects can we instruct them?

Philippians 4:6

John 15:10

Mark 5:9

Hebrews 10:25

Luke 9:23

5) What were the four methods used by Paul to help the new converts?

2 Timothy 1:3

Acts 15:36

1 Corinthians 4:14

1 Corinthians 4:17

6) What did Paul want to say in Philippians 4:9?
7) Enumerate the aspects in which it is important for you to give examples? (I Timothy 4:12)

__________________________________________________________________________

8) Why is it important to live your life as an example? (Matthew 23:3)

__________________________________________________________________________

F. The World Vision

To have a worldwide vision is to take seriously what God considers serious: “The World.”

God Loves the World

1) Complete John 3:16: “For God so loved __________________that He gave His only begotten Son . . .”

2) What was the action field of Jesus? What is yours?

John 8:12____________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Matthew 5:14________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

3) What field is Jesus talking about?

__________________________________________________________________________
The World Today

1) What is the description of the world and the end of time?

1 Timothy 4:1-3

2 Timothy 3:1-5

2 Peter 3:3-5

2) What are the consequences of rejecting the Gospel of Jesus? (2 Thess. 1:18-19; Revelation 20:12, 15)

3) What is the desire of God for all men? (2 Peter 3:9)

4) When He saw the needs of the world, Jesus told His disciples to pray. What should they ask for? (Matthew 9:37-38)

Multiplication

Praying and giving are two important but indirect ways of contributing to the world’s evangelism. The only direct way is through our personal testimony. It is time to announce the “Good News” of Jesus Christ in the whole world. It is not necessary to be perfectly trained or to receive a personal call. You have been called already.

1) Read and write the promise of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)
2) Read the instructions given by Paul to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2.
   a) What is the order?

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   b) To whom should he transfer what he has received?

   ____________________________________________________________

3) Are you dedicating your life, time, and money to reach the world?

   ____________________________________________________________

   We cannot all go personally into a mission field, but we all can be there on our knees. A fruitful missionary work needs to be sustained by prayers.
SPIRITUAL FORMATION EVALUATION SHEET

Thank you for your participation in our spiritual formation session. In such circumstances, it is possible to make mistakes, but the goal is to improve methods that are used. To what extent were the various parts of our seminar helpful to your own spiritual formation? Use a scale of 1 to 5 with 1=very little and 5=very much.

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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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</table>
# Growing in Christ . . . Stages of Maturity in Christ

Based on 1John 2:12-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>BASIC NEED</th>
<th>DANGER</th>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Babe | Assurance | Doubts | Really? | Bible Memory | New Members' Class  
Sponsor (for 1 year)  
Study Course (New Believer SS)  
Essentials of sharing the good news  
Essentials of knowing Christ |
| | Need milk | After 3-6 mos | | | |
| Toddler | Dissemination | Deception | What? | Instruction  
Doctrine | Bible Survey (1 yr. - 5 min tape  
with accountability in share group)  
Course in power for spiritual living  
Journey guide  
Spiritual gifts/personality assessment |
| | Need milk | Programmed to their mother's milk | | | |
| Child | Character | Defensiveness | Why? | Discipline | Bible survey cont.  
Life principles projects |
| | | | | | |
| 2. Youth | Victory | Discouragement | Disinterest | When? | Schedule  
Prayer | Mentoring  
Etc. |
| | | because of hearing sin  
Don't want to be S.S. | | | |
| | | Inside is defeated. | | | |
| | | | | | |
| 3. Father | Reproduction | Teaching stage | Who? | Reckoning  
Experience  
Project  
Counseling | Experiencing God  
Conquering strongholds  
Etc. |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

References:
- 2 Tim 3:15
- James 1:18

APPENDIX B

LEADING DISCIPLESHIP
### Leadership Roles for Missionary Church Leaders

Based on 2 Tim 1:5,11 Adapted from Wofford 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Intercessor</th>
<th>Herald</th>
<th>Apostle</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theological base</td>
<td>Great Controversy</td>
<td>Mt. 24:14</td>
<td>Acts &amp; Great Commission</td>
<td>2 Tim 2:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>• Constant prayer</td>
<td>• Cross-cultural preaching</td>
<td>• Innovation</td>
<td>• Multiplication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related concepts</td>
<td>• Spiritual discipline</td>
<td>• The Gospel</td>
<td>• Person of peace</td>
<td>• Universal disciple pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prayer teams</td>
<td>• Jesus' life &amp; meaning</td>
<td>• Planting new churches</td>
<td>• Reproducing congregations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Spiritual warfare</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Oikos</td>
<td>• Expanding gospel (oikos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models</td>
<td>1 Tim</td>
<td>Rom. 1:16</td>
<td>Jesus instruction to the 12 &amp; 70</td>
<td>2 Tim 2:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>• To gain spiritual power</td>
<td>• To preach the gospel faithfully</td>
<td>• To find the person of peace</td>
<td>4 E's Payoff, Equip, Ed, Etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To be led by the Holy Spirit</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Plant new church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>• Proper response to revelation</td>
<td>• The gospel is unchangeable</td>
<td>• Reppeater already prepared by God</td>
<td>Reproducing disciples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;dear conscience&quot; (2Ti 1:3,4)</td>
<td>• The way it is communicated crossculturally is</td>
<td>• PoP is prototype of the culture</td>
<td>Reproducing congregations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>• Move from timidity to power, love and self-control (2Ti 1:7)</td>
<td>• Meaning of Christ's life and ministry</td>
<td>• Reaching new networks and people groups</td>
<td>• Oikos</td>
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<td>• Oikos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>• Spiritual Warfare</td>
<td>• Cross-cultural communication</td>
<td>Person of Peace</td>
<td>• Believe</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strategic Intercession</td>
<td>• What is gospel?</td>
<td>• receptive</td>
<td>• Break</td>
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<td>• Build</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Oikos</td>
<td>• Battle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possible methods</td>
<td>• Personal prayer</td>
<td>• Group Bible Studies</td>
<td>• Structures for growth</td>
<td>• Developmental curriculum for new believers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Prayer teams</td>
<td>• Oikos Evangelism</td>
<td>• Small groups</td>
<td>• Developmental curriculum for lay leaders</td>
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<td>• Prayer walks</td>
<td>• Discovery studies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Concerts of prayer</td>
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<td>• Prayer triplets</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Neighborhood prayer houses</td>
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Universal Discipleship Pattern

### WORSHIP IN CHRIST

Jesus is Lord

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WALK</th>
<th>WORD/SPIRIT</th>
<th>WARFARE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Put off</td>
<td>+ Put On</td>
<td>T WH E/E I/O C/A</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Stand &amp; Resist Alert &amp; Pray</td>
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<td>3 5</td>
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### The Universal Disciple

To believe - authority • To break - allegiance • To behave - attitudes • To build - arenas • To battle - adversary

#### Authorities

**Eph. 1:1-23; Col 1:1-29**
- Jesus is Lord
- Experience
- Intellect
- Tradition
- Scripture

**Put off (lay aside) - put on**
- Eph. 4:17-22; Col 3:1-14
  - cultural sins
  - family sins
  - personal sins

#### Arenas

**Eph. 5:22-6:9; Col. 3:18-4:1; Rom. 13**
- WH - wives/husbands
- C/P - children/parents
- E/E - employers/employees
- I/O - Insider/outsider
- C/A - Christian/Authorities

#### Allegiances

**Col. 1:1-29; 1Jn. 2:15-17**
- Christ broke the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom.

#### Attitudes

**Col. 3:16-4:8, Eph. 5:18-21**
- T - Teaching
- S - Singing
- T - Thanking
- S - Submitting

#### Adversary

**Eph. 6:10-20**
- Seven pieces of armor provide protection and strength.
Building a Team

Stage 4
Performing
Decision-making
Problem-solving

Stage 3
Norming
Communication
Networking

Stage 1
Forming
Values & vision discovery
Goal setting

Exhibit 4 (Adapted from class notes by Dr. Bill Green, "Improving Instruction," Andrews University)
A comparative study of the epistles of Paul, Peter, James, and to the Hebrews reveals a common pattern of teaching which is clearly observed in Colossians and Ephesians and which can also be followed in I Peter and James.

This "ethical education" pattern has 4 characteristics:
1. agreement of topics
2. distinctive vocabulary
3. individual development of the common topics
4. stylized order of presentation:
   (See G.B. Caird, The Apostolic Age, 1975: 106-115)

B.H. Streeter of Oxford University says:

"In the early church, candidates for baptism were normally adults converted from heathenism, and would include persons of very different classes--slaves, married women, fathers of families.

"Read as an address given on such an occasion, the exhortations are extraordinarily appropriate--an inspiring description of the new life into which they have been reborn, followed by encouragement to face alike the responsibilities involved and the hostility of the outside world." (The Primitive Church 1929: 122)
Elements of Pastoral/Theological Education

- Spiritual Formation
- Ministerial Formation
- Academic Formation
### VICES "put off"

- **Falsehood** (Ep 4:25) - a false statement made to deceive or mislead; in a broad sense, whatever is not what it seems to be; it includes exaggeration, misrepresentation, and intentionally breaking promises
- **Stealing** (Ep 4:28) - to take by theft (in secrecy) what belongs to another
- **Unwholesome words** (Ep 4:29) - corrupt; bad; rotten; unfit for use; words that do not bless or build-up
- **Bitterness** (Ep 4:31) - hatred or resentment
- **Anger** (Ep 4:26,31) - prolonged and heated displeasure, usually combined with a view to revenge
- **Wrath** (Ep 4:31) - an intense anger that typically flares up quickly and subsides soon
- **Liar** (Ep 4:31) - an outcry of controversy; an angry argument
- **Slander** (c; 4:31) - speech damaging to another's good name (often when that person is not present)
- **Malice** (Ep 4:31) - active ill-will; desire to injure; spite
- **Lustfulss** (Ep 5:4) - obscenity; suggestive, unclean, vulgar, shamefule talk or behavior; "dirty" words
- **Silly talk** (Ep 5:4) - talk that is imprudent and ungodly; without wisdom, or regard for God's revelation; the "talk of fools"; unfounded speculation
- **Coarse jesting** (Ep 5:4) - scurrility, ribaldry; crude or suggestive wit and humor; "dirty" jokes
- **Abusive speech** (Col 3:8) - disgraceful, shameful, foul speech; especially profanity and "hip", abusive language used to assault another person
- **Immorality** (Ep 5:3) - illicit sexual intercourse, i.e. premarital, extra-marital or homosexual
- **Impurity** (Ep 5:3) - uncleanness; morally, the impurity of lustful, wanton living and thinking
- **Passion** (Col 3:5) - depraved, immoral thoughts and cravings; eroticism
- **Evil desire** (Col 3:5) - desire for what is forbidden, lust; may also include behavior resulting from these desires
- **Greed** (Ep 5:3) - desire to have more; craving; avarice
- ** Covetousness** (Ep 5:5) - eager to have more, especially what belongs to others
- **Idolatry** (Ep 5:5) - worship of or service to false gods; participation in heathen religious ceremonies
- **Grieve Holy Spirit** (Ep 4:30) - to make sorrowful; to offend (through resistance or rebellion)

### VIRTUES "put on"

- **Truth** (Ep 4:25) - that integrity of mind and speech which is free from pretence, simulation, falsehood, or deceit
- **Labor** (Ep 4:28) - to labor with wearisome effort; to toil, work for an honest wage
- **Giving** (Ep 4:28) - to supply for the need of another; to make a contribution
- **Edification** (Ep 4:29) - the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, well being, holiness
- **Kindness** (Ep 4:32) - virtue, goodness; benevolence
- **Tender-hearted** (Ep 4:32) - empathetic; altruistic; "good hearted"; understanding
- **Forgiveness** (Ep 4:32) - to pardon; to set aside the penalty of an offense; to not keep a record of the wrong
- **Thankfulness** (Ep 5:4) - appreciation for benefits received; to acknowledge indebtedness to another
- **Compassion** (Col 3:12) - sorrow for the trouble of another accompanied by an urge to help; deep sympathy; mercy
- **Humility** (Col 3:12) - a deep sense of one's moral and spiritual inadequacy; modesty, lowliness of mind; absence of pride or self-assertion
- **Gentleness** (Col 3:12) - benignity, kindness; gracious disposition
- **Patience** (Col 3:12) - long suffering, slowness in being offended; not easily or quickly provoked
- **Forbearance** (Col 3:13) - to bear, endure, or put up with other's personality differences or weaknesses
- **Love** (Col 3:14) - good will toward others; an active commitment to promote the well-being of another

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**REAL POWER FOR REAL LIVING ©1992, THE CHURCH ON BRADY**
# Walking with Jesus Today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Bible Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
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<table>
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<th>Write the Bible passage word for word.</th>
<th>Write...</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Answer</td>
<td>Letter to Jesus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Surprises</td>
<td>Feel the emotions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>God’s messages</td>
<td>Analyze why He did or said this</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your responses</td>
<td>Stand in for each person in story</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Put own words</td>
<td>Write any other Scripture that comes to mind</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Flesh out story</td>
<td>Write <em>whatever</em> God puts in your mind!</td>
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APPENDIX C

THE MAP OF COTE D'IVOIRE
APPENDIX D

HARRIS, THE PROPHET

WILLIAM WADE HARRIS

Photo by an African photographer in 1914.

His simple walking staff, shaped to represent a rude cross, was a symbol of his message. In the other hand he carried a Bible, a horn of water, and a calabash.

Andrews, Ewoo. Interview by author, 13 July 2002, Berrien Springs, MI.


Bley, Joseph. Interview by author, 2 February 1997, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire.


Boua, Niangoran, historian of the University of Cocody. Interview by author, 2 February 2001, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire.


Djoman, A. J., superintendent of the Methodist Education System of Cote d’Ivoire. Interview by author, 23 March 2003, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire.


Ellstrom, Mrs. Interview by author, 10 December 2003, Loma Linda, CA.

Essoh, Mathieu. Interview by author, 7 February 2005, Dabou, Cote d’Ivoire.


Kangabega, Emile. Interview by author, 5 March 1995, Katiola, Cote d’Ivoire.


Kouassi, Pascal, retired minister. Interview by author, 5 February 1997, Divo, Cote d’Ivoire.


*Seventh-day Adventist Church Yearbook.* Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005.


Snyder, Howard. *Liberating the Church.* Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983


________. MS 32, 1894. Center for Adventist Research. Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

________. *Review and Herald*, March 4, 1902.

_______. *Testimonies to Ministers.* Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1952.


VITA

Name: Elie Weick-Dido

Date and Place of Birth: July 10, 1958, Divo, Cote d’Ivoire

Date of Marriage: December 17, 1980

Spouse: Rachel Amy Assiene, July 11, 1961

Children: Elie-Hannah, December 18, 1981
          Daniel, August 15, 1983
          Israel, August 19, 1986
          Elroi, January 23, 1998

Date of Ordination: Sahel Union Missions, December 27, 1986.

Education:

1982      Bachelor of Arts in Theology, Université Adventiste d’Haiti, Port-Au-Prince, Haiti
1992      Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, USA
1999      Master in Divinity, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, USA
2000      Bachelor of Arts in French, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, USA
2006      Doctor of Ministry, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, USA

Professional Experience:

1982–1984 Ministerial Intern, Divo, Cote d’Ivoire
1984–1986 District Pastor, San Pedro, Cote d’Ivoire
1986–1988 District Pastor, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire
1988–1990 Youth Director, District Pastor, Toulepleu, Man, Cote d’Ivoire
1990–1993 Cote d’Ivoire Conference President, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire
1993–1997 Sahel Union Executive Secretary, Togo Mission President, Lome, Togo
1997–2000 Assistant Pastor, African Adventist Church, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA
2000–     Senior Pastor, French District, Lake Region Conference, Chicago, Illinois, USA