

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH AND POLITICS IN GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis with the exception of references made from other scholarly works which have been duly acknowledged, is the original product of the researcher. This work was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego and Dr. Harry L. K. Agbanu of the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana. No part of this research has been presented in whole or in part to other institutions for any award. The researcher bears responsibility for all errors in this easy.

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ABSTRACTS

This thesis deals with the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church and politics in Ghana. Basically three schools of thought have been considered in this research namely sectarianism, “Christendom”, and the “Position of Balance”. The underlying issues that have been considered are: Adventist stances on voting, standing for elections, joining political parties, holding political office, political activism, social causes and political alignment of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

This research made use of multiple approaches including historical and missiological approaches to explore the conflict that ensues among Adventists on the subject of politics. Data collection was through primary and secondary sources. It was observed by this research that, the religiosity of individual Ghanaian Adventists influence their behaviour toward public issues. Though Adventists in Ghana have the same creed, they do not have the same point of view. People who turn to be liberal in politics turn to be liberal in religion. On the other hand, those who interpret the bible and the writings of Ellen G. White literally, hold conservatives views in religion and politics. The issue is that the political stand of Adventists in Ghana is not homogenous.

This thesis finds that pioneer Adventist had strong aversion for politics as shown in various statements they made against political involvement in the formative years of the church. However, there has been a shift in policies in line with the church’s relationship with the secular world and other churches. As such they accept secular notions that are not in conflict with their dogma. The thesis has established that politics has both perils and opportunities for Christians. There are dangers of compromise of principle and corruption of values when politics becomes all-absorbing. Conversely there are advantages for missionary endeavours for the Adventist church in Ghana.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife Christiana Amoakowaa for her forbearance while I wrote this essay. I also dedicate it to my children Kwasi Dankwa Awuah of Valley View University, Yaa Kani Awuah also of V.V.U. and Adwoa Amoakowaa Awuah of Benkum Senior High. Furthermore I dedicate this work also to my mother Yaa Bour, a retired kitchen staff of Bagabaga College of Education, Tamale, and my late grandmother Afua Bour for their investment in me.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

The symmetries of church and state, religion and politics, faith and society, Christ and culture, and church and world express different facets of the same general relationship, one that is vital to the church's missiological task and thus the subject of perennial debate. When the dichotomy is drawn between "church" and the "world," it usually implies that politics, economics, science, technology, and mass media are part of "the world." The Christian life is then confined to personal piety, to church activities, to family prayer and Bible study.¹ From this point of view, participation of the Christians in politics or business is seen as a step into the secular world, where Christian principles may apply to one's personal behaviour but not to the structures and functions of the political order or corporation.

Some informants expressed their deep abhorrence to Adventist in Ghana meddling in politics. For instance one retired clergy when asked whether it was appropriate for the Adventist in Ghana to engage in politics, retorted to the researcher: "it is an anathema for the Adventist Christian in Ghana to get involved in politics."² However, most African scholars agree that, in Africa specifically Ghana, there is a significant level of agreement between religion and politics. According to Pobee, politics and religion are striking and central features of the African society. He continues to say that, most of the communal activities including politics in Africa are inextricably bound with religion, but the contrast also highlights the fact that there are a number of unresolved questions and issues. For an example, Pobee in explaining what politics is, said that, politics is inherent with

¹ Brain Edgar, A Review Essay: Four Views on Church and Politics, *The Asbury Journal* 66/2, (2011), 101.

² Joseph Amoah, (retired clergy) interviewed in Cape Coast Central Region by researcher, on May 15, 2015. The researcher has no permission to use the real name of the interviewee thus the name use is pseudo name.

competition and conflicts because it is always concern with at least two groups in the society.³ It is this schism that worries sceptics who are against Adventist political involvement in Ghana.

There is diversity of religions in Ghana and each one of these religious organizations have a set of beliefs that give shape to a unique form of religious life. Every religious entity has a distinctive characteristic of creeds that makes it different from the other religions and even the secular world in which they operate. Naturally, people are confronted with competing truth by these religious organizations, each believing to possess the message of the saving truth that they proclaim. Each religion believing that her religious claims are authentic whiles the others are false. This is the exclusivists' view about religion. We make use of religious language for the reason that it is having an important effect on us because of the meaning and interpretation we give to it. It is this kind of schism that culminate in both inter and intra religio-political conflicts.

In the past, Christian denominations took entrenched positions when it came to religious absolutism. For example, the Roman Catholics have had a dogma thus: '*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*' (outside the church is no salvation).⁴ Absolutism is not peculiar to Catholics, there is also a Protestant equivalent that states that "outside the Christian church there is no salvation."⁵ Currently there seems to be a shift from absolutism to pluralism by many of the mainline churches. However, there are sectarians and fundamentalist amongst these groups who insist that the old traditions and forms must be followed strictly.⁶

On paper, equal opportunity, freedom from discrimination, religious pluralism, and religious liberty, are highly respected in Ghana. Also, the impression might be created by

³ John S. Pobee, *Religion and Politics in Ghana*, (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1991), 8, 10

⁴ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shift in the Theology of Mission*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 218.

⁵ Robert Cornwall, The Church and Salvation: An Early Eighteenth-Century High Church Perspective, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, Vol. 62, No. 2, (1993), 177.

⁶ John Hick, *Problem of Religious Pluralism* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1985), 31.

the concept of pluralism that, there is uniformity and unity of purpose in the diverse religions in Ghana. On the contrary, there are occasions when disagreements of higher magnitude (such as the debate on Christian involvement in politics) have arisen between Christian believers who incidentally profess the same faith. These incidents are banal in the Seventh-day Adventist church during political sessions in Ghana. We have today diversity and divergent theological expressions. We find also fundamentally different views of the world and different interpretation of the bible even within the same Christian denomination.

The Adventist church is exclusive in nature; they consider themselves as God's remnant church on earth given a special responsibility to evangelize people outside their fold. They lay claim to the following dogma: the holistic acceptance of the bible as the infallible word of God, the keeping of the Decalogue including the observance of the Sabbath, promotion of good health, the Parousia and the passion to share the Gospel. In principle they support the separation of the church from the state and promote religious liberty for all mankind; nonetheless, they do not subscribe to pure secularization of nations.

According to Bosch, the commencement of the Age of Enlightenment made anthropocentrism a dominant trait, proclaiming the independence and capacity of the mind to probe and understand matters, relegating in the process, the supremacy of faith in the life of humankind. The process eventually led to the acceptance of science and positivism in place of religion.⁷ Society has become more secular. The role of God in human life has been increasingly questioned. People were led to think that they have grown out of their condition of dependency on God and that they do not need Him anymore. In Bosch's view, the enlightenment impacted on mission thinking and practice. For him, the whole modern

⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 267-268

missionary enterprise was born by the Enlightenment.⁸ In a similar vein, Holyoake supporting noninterference of religion with law, education, politics and other ordinary worldly matters, invented the words 'secularism' and 'secularist' from a French word which means 'worldly' in 1846.⁹ Secularism can also mean “of this world”, and it is the opposite of anything religious. It is usually used to describe any philosophy which forms its principles without religious creed and which upholds the development of human art and science. These words are still in use today assuming radical meaning in baring religion from having anything to do with politics. An effective starting point in an examination of this issue would be a study of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s mission and how it is influenced by politics. To examine the subject responsibly, the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church will be considered in relationship to its mission.

The debate on Christian relationship to politics has ranged on since the beginning of Christianity. The relationship between Christianity and politics has been historically complex and a frequent source of disagreement since the inception of Christianity as well as in modern politics. There have been several questions from various sections of Christian community about how much involved a Christian should get into politics.

These challenges mentioned above look harmless, but the issue of Christian involvement in politics sparks spontaneous debate among Christians of every denomination. It has been said that Christianity and politics do not mix. This disagreement stems out from the entrenched position taken by some sectarians to have nothing to do with politics. Special attention will be given to the Seventh-day Adventist alignment to political issues; the issue will deal with whether the Adventists can identify themselves to a political party, hold a political office, vote or be voted for.

⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 274

⁹ Barbara Smoker, *Humanism*, (London: South Place Ethical Society, 1973), 22.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Christianity and politics have long been two uncomfortable companions. They have long been in constant contention; nonetheless they are always at each other's company. They seem to exert the same level of authority for determining human behavior. This is best explained in the life of Christian believers in Ghana. While they may take God and his word as dominant factors in their lives, the same persons when they turn out to be politicians, become aware that politics also has a claim in their lives. It is this dual allegiance to both God and politics that disgust the sectarians in the Adventist church in Ghana and they will do everything to combat it.

This controversy over politics has persisted since the inception of the church in the 19th century. The schism over political issues like voting, standing for elections, joining political parties and campaigning for them, holding of political office, social cause and political activism; do generate heightened tensions within the church, particularly among the laity as well as the clergy. This debate over politics escalates especially during political seasons in Ghana. Various measures have been taken to reduce or eliminate the tension over the years but the problems still persist; creating a lot of anxiety in the church when political activities get heightened in the country.

Indubitably the political stand among Seventh-day Adventists is not homogenous. There are various cluster schools of thought among the members of the church in Ghana when it comes to involvement in politics. The first segment holds that the church should abstain completely from political issues. Their line of argument is predicated on 1John 2:15-17, that admonishes Christians not to be in love with the world and on the concept that, Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. To them politics and Christianity do not have anything in common therefore must ever remain separate. The other segment argues that the church and her members have uncontested political responsibility to influence

society for Christ from a political power position. For them the main task of the Christian is to work towards creating a Christian political order that will culminate in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The last segment are those who believe and argue that the church as a body should not get involved in political matters; but individual members can fully participate in politics.

This ambivalence over the relationship of the Seventh-day Adventist and politics is alive and active. The study examines how Seventh-day Adventists who are committed to sectarian as well as fundamentalist beliefs influence the schism between politics and the mission of the church. The various biblical understanding and interpretations of the church members of the writing of Ellen G. White have informed their political minds and actions in creating serious tensions over politics in the churches in Ghana. Sectarians in the Seventh-day Adventist assert that humanity exists in a world in which nature, socio-economic and political systems have been tinted and severely compromised by evil.

Several Christians believe the human condition today is the result of Adam and Eve committing the first sin by eating the forbidden fruit. The universal effect of this act of our first parents has brought the condition of the world far from the ideal. The impact of sin has touched all aspects of human life and relationships as well as the earth itself. Not only has sin undermined the initial intimate communion between God and humanity, it has progressively ruptured humanity's moral soundness and social relationships in the world. Human existence and systems designed to maintain social order and progress operate with imperfection, disharmony and degeneration. Before God's restoration plan is fully realized at the Second Coming of Christ, however, imperfections continue in the creation and human systems; and any participation by Adventists in political arenas should be accompanied by full awareness of this fact. For this reason, Adventists maintain a clear line of demarcation between Church and State.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To help deal with the schism in the Seventh-day Adventist church about her mission and politics, the following questions emerged as critical to this research work:

- What is the inconsistency of the connection of politics and Christian Mission in the Seventh-day Adventist church?
- Does the Adventist involvement in politics agree with the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church?
- How does commitment to sectarian Adventist beliefs in the inerrancy of the Bible and the writings of E.G. White influence the links between politics and the mission of the church?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

This research is set out to look at the perennial conundrum of Adventist mission and politics which has persisted over the years since the beginning of the S.D.A. church. In view of this, the following aims and objectives have been set for this thesis:

- To identify the ambivalence of the nexus of politics and Christian Mission in the Seventh-day Adventist church and extent to which the seventh-day Adventist and her members can get involved in politics
- To examine how commitment to sectarian Adventist and fundamentalist beliefs in the inerrancy of the Bible and the writings of E.G. White influence the links between politics and the mission of the church
- To highlight how participation in politics influences the church's Mission

1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY

It is presumptuous to create the feeling that the Seventh-day Adventist church is the only Christian denomination that is entangled with political tension in its ranks. On the contrary, there has been an age long complex relationship between Christianity and politics that influenced Christian mission in almost all denominations across the globe. This topic therefore is too broad, requiring a book to contain the data; however, this work is confined to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church and how their mission is influenced by politics. The scope of the study is on the Seventh-day Adventist churches and members in the Greater Accra Region, Asante Region and Central Regions. The justification for concentration of the research on these three regions lies in the fact that Greater Accra Region hosts the National Capital of Ghana, thus houses various Adventist from different parts of the country. Asante Region has the largest population of Adventist in Ghana. Central Region is the originating point of the Adventist mission.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The model adopted for this work is strict church-state separation model. This model traces its roots to the Enlightenment Liberal view of society and politics. Under this model, Enlightenment Liberalism see religion and politics as two distinct institutions of human endeavours that should be kept separate from each other perpetually. This model regards religion as a personal and private matter, reserved for personal choice and action. When religion and politics are mixed, with the state dictating religious beliefs or practices, or on the other hand when religion uses state authority to advance its cause, in these cases both religion and politics are disadvantaged.¹⁰

¹⁰ Stephen V. Monsma and Christopher J. Soper, *the Challenge of Church and State in Five Democracies* 2nd Ed., (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 10.

Basically three schools of thought will be considered; the first is the sectarian view which argues that, Christians should abstain completely from politics and concentrate on the core mission of the church which is the propagation of the gospel. The second view is “Christendom” or corpus Christendom¹¹ which stipulates that Christians form a political power position to influence society for Christ. The main task of adherence of this view is to work towards creating a Christian political order that will culminate in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The third and the last of these segments is “position of power” which is more accommodating. This also teaches that the church as a body should refrain from political activities but individual members should be allowed to participate in political matters.

In formulating a Christian position on politics, it is vital to consider biblical principles. The Scripture presents various guiding principles regarding the relationship of the Christian and politics. The life of biblical characters provide orientation for the Christian’s engagement with politics. This is particularly so in terms of underlining principles demonstrated in their precedence and actions. The cases of the following biblical characters serve as ample testimony of individuals who were involved in politics of their day: Joseph, Moses, Deborah, David, Elisha, Daniel, Nehemiah, Mordecai, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, and Jesus Christ, who exemplified these principles in action. We will build on these principles and cases as we now turn to specific socio-political issues. The next section of this research deals with the methodology of the research.

¹¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 274-275

1.7 METHODOLOGY

Understanding the Seventh-day Adventist church and how it functions within a sociopolitical context is very important in dealing with the mission that the church has. This study looks closely at some aspects that make up the identity of the Seventh-day Adventist church and its mission. An overview and a descriptive function of the S.D.A. church and its members in politics and the meaning they attach to these phenomena, particularly, within the Ghanaian context is considered in this research. In doing so, this research uses interdisciplinary approaches in order to meet its targeted result. This is to help ascertain whether the Christian relationship with politics is in line with the church's Gospel mission bequeathed to them by the pioneers and as commanded by Jesus. Historical and missiological approaches are used because issues raised in this work need historical and missiological description. Particularly, attention will be given to the Seventh-day Adventist church's relationship with politics from its inception in the United States of America through to its introduction in Ghana all in the 19th century. The missiological approach adopted by this research is what George Knight has labelled missiological quadrennial. He asserts that there are four dimensions of the missiological approach namely: church organization, health reform, education and the publishing work. This researcher adds one dimension which is stewardship to that of Knight to rename it missiological quinary. This represents the Adventist version of the five marks of mission as propounded by Andrew Walls and Cathy Rose.

Then again, this thesis makes use of phenomenological epoché to look into how politics affects the missionary drive of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Phenomenologists are concerned with understanding human behaviour in the actors own perspective. Phenomenology considers human behavior as a result of how people see and interpret the world around them. It employs qualitative rather than quantitative methods in

data collection. According to James Cox, using epoché implies temporary suspension or bracketing of previous ideas, thoughts, opinions and beliefs. This means that suspending personal beliefs, and withholding judgements on academic theories about religion to look at a phenomena of religion as they appear rather than as they are understood through opinions formed prior to observation.¹² By bracketing and suspension of views about religious truth and practices therefore, the researcher was allowed the luxury of solely relying on the raw experience of the Seventh-day Adventist church. This also helped the researcher to ignore empirical data with personal intuition and judgement to describe the experience into details. Both primary and secondary sources of information were gleaned in order to validate the research work. It is based on the phenomena of politics and its influence on the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church as it appears to the members.

1.8 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

In order to assess the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church and politics in Ghana, the research made use of variety of sources. These are all mainly primary and secondary sources. The original documents relied on are questionnaires, formal and informal interviews, participant observation, and finally review of literature.

1.8.1 Primary Sources

In all, fifteen Adventist were formally interviewed and fifteen were interviewed informally. Five people were interviewed in each of the three regions under study. The interviews helped to receive primary information on the thoughts of stakeholders in the

¹² James Cox, *Expressing the Sacred: An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, (Harare, Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1992), 26-27.

Seventh-day Adventist church on politics and how it impacts their mission. One of the retired ministers interviewed was Samuel Adu Koranteng. His contribution to this work is very significant. This is because he has a long serving record and also a lot of experience as president of North Ghana Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church headquarters in Tamale. His jurisdiction covered the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West Regions and northern part of Volta Region. He later became the president of the Southern Ghana Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church with headquarters in Accra. This time round the area of his jurisdiction comprised Greater Accra Region, Central Region, and southern part of Volta Region.

Observer participation was also used personally to source for information. For an example, a number of Seventh-day Adventist churches in Greater Accra, Central, and Asanti Regions were visited. Additionally some of the demonstrations of the opposition parties and pressure groups were observed. This was to help look out for Adventists among the demonstrators to interview so as to find out their views on whether it was expedient for a Christian to participate in demonstrations.

The population was selected randomly from various churches. It represents the views of various Adventists from different background. This was in an attempt to ascertain the uncertainty of the link between politics and Christian mission particularly the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana.

Sampling has over the years been recognized as an essential tool that assists one to understand the comprehensive characteristics of a population. The rationale for sampling ranges from time and cost constraints with regards to studying the population as well as the general difficulties involved in population studies. Consequently, a representative sample is usually preferred so as to permit the drawing of inferences on the population under consideration. Scholars have given the following as some of the merits of sampling:

to reduce wastage to a minimum especially in studies where there are elements of destruction; reliability of sampling results as compared to the population; and cost and time considerations which are huge if the total counts (or population) is used. In this study, convenience and purposive sampling, based on accessibility, cost implications, time and representativeness, have been adopted. Accordingly, populations were selected (sampled) from the Christian community (specifically the Seventh-day Adventist church) for the study and this selection was informed by the very objective of the study, that is, “the Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist and Politics in Ghana.”

1.8.2 Secondary Source

This research made use of published and unpublished literatures in the area under research. Journal articles, newspaper reports and magazines were also used in this work. Information was also gathered extensively on the internet using Google, JSTOR and other search engines. Moreover, Church documents and policy papers were consulted extensively in order to get an in-depth understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s position on certain key issues relating to the topic under consideration. Interviews were conducted on both retired clergy and clergy in active service. Additionally, the lay people in the church and their leadership were interviewed. Some few Seventh-day Adventist who are currently engaged in politics were also interviewed.

1.8.3 Limitation

There were a number of challenges that militated against the writing of this research. The beginning of it all had to do with appropriate heading for this research. This culminated in the late start of the research work. Thereupon, there was financial challenge which also hampered the swift flow of the work. The research covered Adventists in

Greater Accra, Central, and Asante Regions. Moving from one location to another meant expending of money.

Another challenge was that it was difficult getting Adventist politicians to respond to the call to be interviewed or respond to a questionnaire. Many copies of the questionnaires sent to them were not returned. This made it difficult to gather the data needed for this work; howbeit, some did provide information for the work to go on.

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review in a study such as this is of the utmost importance, because it manifests the researcher's understanding of issues associated with the study area. However, the Mission of the Seventh - day Adventist and politics has limited literature. In view of this, broader scholarly works that have been written in relation to this topic were consulted.

Hall posits that Christians are becoming more interested in politics as never before. The desire for human wellbeing on its moral as well as its economic side is the new issue which is changing political life the world over. In the very nature of the case the church is deeply concerned in this changing order. Hall delves into the existing controversy by asking the following questions, what should be the Christian's relationship with politics? How far may church and state mutually influence each other? For him a clever answer to such questions must come from knowledge of the history of the church's association with political engagements in the past.¹³

¹³ Thomas C. Hall, Christianity and Politics: The Hope of the Early Church, *The Biblical World*, vol.41 (1), *Chicago Journals*, (2013): 20.

1.9.1 Literature Review (History of the S.D.A. Church)

Writing on the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church, R. W. Schwarz, M. Ellsworth Olsen, Arthur W. Spaldings, LeeRoy Edwin Froom and C. Mervyn Maxwell both give extended historical, detailed and accurate accounts of the origin and global development of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Kofi Owusu-Mensa presents the history and missionary activities of the Seventh-day Adventists over the years in Ghana. They all attribute the beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist church to William Miller. According to them, Miller was a deist who believed that God created the world but has not been active in running it. He later reconverted into Christianity and upon careful study of the Bible, he concluded that, the second coming of Jesus to this earth was supposed to have occurred between 1843 and 1844. Obviously the day came and passed and yet Christ did not come. This caused a very serious stir among the group of believers who came from various denominations to anticipate Christ coming. Some of these Adventist left to join their former denominations while others remained to search for reasons why Christ failed to come. It was part of this remnant who formed the nucleus of the Seventh-day Adventist church. To be able to understand the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church, vis-a-vis her relationship with politics, it is important to understand the origin and history of the church. The Adventist church was founded at a time Protestantism had already fragmented into several denominations.¹⁴

Kofi Owusu-Mensa, a retired history professor in Valley View University, offers a vivid narration of how the Adventist church started in Ghana. Mensah attributes the origin

¹⁴ For detailed history of the Seventh-day Adventist church, see R.W. Schwanz, *Light Bearers of the Remnant*, (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1979); M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Association, 1925); Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1961-1962); LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Association, 1971); C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell It to the World: The Story of Seventh-day Adventists* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Association, 1976); and Kofi Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism: History*, (Accra: The Advent Press, 2005).

of the Seventh-day Adventist church to two indigenous Africans all from Fanteland who in collaboration with missionaries worked tirelessly to establish the church in what was then known as Gold Coast. All these publications mentioned above, answer several questions about the origin, identity and developmental phase of the Seventh-day Adventist church during the founding era in the nineteenth century. The authors, some of whom are deceased and some still living Seventh-day Adventists turn to be apologetic in their narration of the history of the church. They wrote their historical accounts from the perspective of faith. This does not mean that their point of view involved any distortion of factual evidence or leads to misinterpretation of source. Rolf J. Pöhler describes this approach as confessional history which mirrors a particular theological stance of the writer and his denomination. It will always try to reinforce loyalty to the church and its teaching specifically with the help of historical findings¹⁵. The weakness of this approach is that it can lead to the temptation of presenting one-sided picture of the past which always invariably favors ones faith and theology; completely ignoring darker sides of history which attacks or criticizes the writers denomination. Pöhler continues to argue that historical method which is diametrically opposed to defensive approach of confessional history is what he called polemical approach which attacks a particular denomination and system of beliefs and attempts to demonstrate with the help of historical investigation its alleged erroneous, contradictory, or unbiblical nature. However, this type of negative criticism does not always stem from historical research, which strictly speaking is not interested in theological judgment. This approach may face the danger of misrepresentation. One of the authors who uses the polemical approach in his writing

¹⁵ Rolf J. Pöhler, *The Adventist Historian between Criticism and Faith* via <http://www.thh-friedensau.de/downloads/13157/>, retrieved June 13, 2015

about the Seventh-day Adventist is Lamasa Adams.¹⁶ He takes a critical view of the Seventh-day Adventist church. He attacks the beliefs system; the churches allege errors, its contradictions and her unbiblical nature. For Adams it is very difficult for the Adventist to be classified as Protestants because of doctrinal differences.

1.9.2 Literature Review (Ellen G. White Comments of S.D.A. and Politics)

Ellen G. White is a prolific writer and a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Her contemporaries and even present day S.D.A. faith community believe that she was a prophetess whom the Lord used to provide directions and guidance to the church. They claim she offered so many counsels to the church in many spheres of life including politics. Her counsels are held in high esteem in the Adventist cycle and even beyond. This research believes the interpretation and meanings some Adventist give to statements she made on politics could be the source of unending political debate in the church from the beginning of the church up to the present time.

For the following are collections and analysis of Ellen G. White's statements concerning Adventist approach to public, political, and civic affairs. Most of Ellen G. White's statements about Seventh-day Adventist involvement in politics are negative. In her first comment in 1897 she argued strongly that: God's people are to stay off politics.¹⁷ She foresaw a potential threat to their identity as Adventists, hence she gave specific counsel to the workers of the church against political participation. Talking directly to questions related to monetary reforms raised during the presidential campaign of William Jennings Bryan, and a number of workers taking sides on the issues, she indicated that

¹⁶ Lamasa Adams, *Who are these Believers in Ghana: Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists*, (Accra: Advocate Publishing, 2008).

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Release V. 3*, (Silver Spring, MD.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981), 41.

they were not to engage in political speeches, either in or out of the pulpit¹⁸. This according to her was not about the question of seeking political office but about abusing the ministerial call by supporting political agendas. She explained that when Adventists come to worship, they should always be Christ centric rather than political. In her view, Adventist workers paid from the church's coffers should not be involved in politics. White's most direct statements against political participation were addressed primarily to teachers in Adventist institutions. Here again the involvement of teachers had to do with expressing support to political candidates and giving opinions about their agendas. She urged workers to bury political questions and to leave political questions alone. They were not to spend their time talking politics or acting as politicians or take part in political strife.¹⁹

Ellen admonished that those who teach the Bible in Adventist churches and schools are not at liberty to unite in making apparent their prejudices for or against political men or measures."²⁰ This statement is in direct reference to specific group who are on the pay roll of the church to desist from engaging themselves in politics; howbeit some sectarians have extended the meaning to include all members of the church.

Because most of the statement of early Adventists are ambiguous and subject to individual interpretations, they are by themselves being used to create tensions in the church both by proponents of the churches participation in politics and those against. For an example, Ellen G. White argues that The Lord requires His people to bury political issues. She admonished, 'on these topic silence is eloquence'. For her what is essential is that, Christ calls upon His followers to come into unity on pure gospel principles which

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1923), 31.

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1915), 391-393.

²⁰ Ellen G. White, *Counsel for the Church*, (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1991), 316.

are plainly revealed in the word of God, she admonished her fellow Adventists that they cannot with safety vote for political parties; for they do not know whom they are voting for. For her the Adventist church cannot with safety take part in any political scheme.²¹

In the view of this paper, this is a subtle way of saying no to politics in the Seventh-day Adventist church. This paper sees the above statement to mean a warning given to church members to stay away from politics or it is interpreted by some church members to mean that. For example she made a statement to the effect that God's people are to separate themselves from politics, from any alliance with unbelievers. According to her they should not take part in political strife, and in addition they should separate themselves from the world, and refrain from bringing into the church or school ideas that will lead to contention and disorder. For her, dissension is the moral poison taken into the system by human beings who are selfish.²²

1.9.3 Literature Review (S.D.A. and Missions)

Andrew Walls and Cathy Rose, co-edited a book in which different authors shared their views on various topics on the five marks of mission namely, “to proclaim Good News of the Kingdom”, “to teach, baptize and nurture new believers,” “to respond to human need by loving service”, “to seek to transform unjust structures of society” and “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. These collections of essays from people engaged in mission in a variety of contexts around the world shows that there is not just one, but several and diverse, narratives of mission. It is especially in the context of cultural pluralism that the editors invited the contributors to write. The goal of missions is still the glory of God.

²¹ White, *Gospel Workers*, 391

²² White, *Counsel for the Church*, 316

The Church still exists by mission. Mission is paramount to the church, and constitutes the very essence of its existence. Mission is indeed ‘the mother of the church’ and the mission-first agenda is the chief marker of discipleship in today’s world. The Five Marks of Missions interact with this research, in that they bring into focus a good working basis for a holistic approach to mission. The last three of the five marks is of particular importance to this paper because, not only is a social responsibility a part of mission but also a political obligation by political authorities. Mission in its entirety, is ‘proclamation of the good news of the kingdom of God and discipleship,’ and ‘social justice’ with the former taking a back seat or being ignored altogether. Biblically, mission is inherently holistic; the Church exists in history for the sake of God’s global mission. Holistic mission is mission that is concerned about the whole scope of human need. God’s “global mission” for the Church incorporates the whole Church to the whole world.²³

1.10 CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

This paper is organized into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the research; is made up of the background to the study, statement of problem, research questions, aims and objectives of research, scope of study, theoretical frame work, methodology and method of data collection, literature review, chapter organization and significance of study. Chapter two gives the background information to the Mission History of the Seventh-day Adventist church. It discusses the roots of the Seventh-day Adventist Church globally and the history of Adventism in Ghana. Finally, it touches on some major Adventists beliefs. Chapter three of the thesis focuses on politics and the Adventists mission, under this topic, political arguments during the formative years of the S.D.A.

²³ Andrew Walls and Cathy Rose, eds., *Mission in the Twenty-First Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*, (London: Darton, Longman and Tod Ltd., 2008), xiv.

church was considered. The participation and roles of Adventist in Ghanaian politics. It discusses partisan alignment, holding of political office, voting, and involvement in social cause, the Adventist and political activism. Other topics also discussed in chapter three are, contemporary Adventist in politics, Adventist women and politics, Seventh-day Adventist missiology, public issues, politics and society and military conscription. The chapter four of the research dwells on sectarianism and other views in Adventism; it includes the sectarians in the Seventh-day Adventist church, Christendom and the Seventh-day Adventist church, “position of balance.” The chapter five is the conclusion and recommendation of the research. It gives the bibliography and an appendix.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The first significance of this research is its interdisciplinary character. Its contribution to academia is in the field of religion, political science, sociology, and conflict resolution. It will help shape the socio-political decisions making of stakeholders and the larger Christian population as a whole.

Religious bodies and leaders can make good use of it in future guidance of church members on the issues of politics. It will particularly be significant to the Seventh-day Adventist Christian in assisting to curb or eliminate tension that is linked to politics. With the research suggesting panacea to the conundrum over participation of the Adventist in politics in Ghana, a peaceful atmosphere will be created for the church to concentrate on her core mandate of the gospel commission. It will also help in the redirection of executing evangelism in a different form taking into consideration the churches obligation to provide for the needs of human beings which form part of the Christian mandate of the Gospel Commission.

CHAPTER TWO

MISSION HISTORY OF S.D.A. CHURCH IN GHANA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The history of Seventh-day Adventist church is to a large degree a story of its missionary penetration in Ghana and other parts of the world. Therefore a historical and missionary overview as well as a description of the function of the church in both the global and particularly within the Ghanaian context have been dealt with in chapter two. The Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana is part of a global church family. There is Adventist presence in almost every country around the world. With the headquarters in Washington D.C., the church is administered through its 13 regional divisions across the globe. The Church in Ghana is part of this world-wide structure under the West-Central Africa Division. The Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana does not operate with policies and polity crafted and developed in a local context exclusively. Therefore the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana operates within a world-wide church organization. The structure, however, does recognize that each church operates within the scope of the laws of a particular country or countries in a region of its operation.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church compared with other mainline churches like Baptist, Anglican and Roman Catholic is an emerging church with a current population of eighteen million baptized members worldwide. In its Sabbatarian form, it began to develop in 1844, adopting its name in 1860 and its initial structure by 1863. Although its origin is Western, (primarily North America, secondarily Europe), currently it is rapidly growing in parts of Africa, Asia, Oceania and Latin America.²⁴ The detailed investigation of Seventh-day Adventist church (herein abbreviated as Adventist or Adventism or

²⁴ *Yearbook: Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Hagerstown, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Publication of Yearbook commenced in 1883).

S.D.A.) include the following characteristics that invite attention from persons undertaking serious research such as this: the origins, nature, development and identity of Adventism as a religious body; as well as its interaction with fundamentalism, evangelicalism, and secularism.

This part of the research provides some of the major characteristics of the religious situation in the U.S.A. during the first half of the 19th century which led to the rise of the Millerite movement out of which the SDA church emerged. The period has been described in the light of two successive historical phases characterized by their dominant features as an "era of good feeling" and an "era of controversy," indicating a change in the mood of the nation which provided an ideal climate for the development of Adventism. It further describes the major historical and missiological factors that brought about this movement and which are basic to an understanding of the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist theology of mission. According to Andrew G. Mustard, the opening half of the nineteenth century was a time of social disorder and religious confusion in the United States where the Seventh-day Adventist church began. He opines that, scientific progress and the increase in knowledge facilitated travel, communication, and the industrialization of society during this period. The impact of the industrial revolution in the early nineteenth century brought about great drift in population from rural to urban America. This created enormous social problems as these largely unskilled people were exploited by their employers in the cities or struggled to establish a new life for themselves in the opening territories of the West. A good proportion of these immigrants were Roman Catholics. Their presence brought about religious tensions among the Protestant populace who regarded the United States as a Protestant country²⁵

²⁵ Andrew G. Mustard, *Seventh-day Adventist Polity: Its Historical Development*, 2

Mustard, further explains that, parallel to the sociopolitical advances, there was also a great rise in religious life in what has become known as the Second Great Awakening. The revival which started in the 18th century, reached its climax through the preaching of men like Charles G. Finney. The influence of Finney and other revivalists on American religion was felt enormously, culminating in the increase of church membership in the nineteenth century from approximately one in fifteen of the total population to one in eight.²⁶ It is of no surprise that LeeRoy Edwin Froom asserts that the 19th century was regarded by many as a missionary century.²⁷

Mustard intones the revival of the first half of the nineteenth century laid major emphasis on the individual's conversion experience. People gathered to meetings and other services of the revivalist from all denominational backgrounds to find vitality to their faith from their meetings. This he claims stood in contrast with the formalism of the established churches. Consequently, the Second Great Awakening for him sought to halt the barriers between denominations, to place emphasis on lay leadership and preaching, and to boost the growth of pietistic groups such as the Methodists and Baptists, which proved more adaptable to the volatile situation that often prevailed. Thus the Methodists, who prior to 1784 had not even been a church but only a religious society, had become the largest denomination in North America by 1820. The Baptists, too, "multiplied with astonishing rapidity."²⁸

Pieter Gerard Damsteegt argues that, the democratization of American culture, the Second Great Awakening and the revivalism gave rise to what he called religious

²⁶ Ray A. Billington, *the Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860*, (New York: 1938). 203-276 in Andrew Mustard, *Seventh day Adventist and Polity*, 2

²⁷ LeeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, (Washington D.C: Review and Herald Association, 1971), 50, 56.

²⁸ Andrew G. Mustard, *Seventh-day Adventist Polity*,

individualism²⁹. Thus it was not surprising that William Miller appeared proclaiming the imminent Second Advent as the only possible solution to this world's predicament. Because he and his followers proclaimed Christ's imminent advent, they were known as "Adventists."

2.2 THE HISTORY OF ADVENTISM

William Miller was a former sea captain who converted from Deism in 1816 to become a Christian. After detailed examination of the bible, especially Daniel 8:14: "Unto 2,300 days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." He became convinced that, the cleansing of the sanctuary could only mean the purging of the earth by fire—in short, the end of the world.

William Miller stirred America with his Second Advent message. He unsettled the existing churches, drawing followers from all denominations. The largest number came from three churches: the Methodists, Baptists, and the Christian Connection. They brought with them the perspectives and practices of their respective groups. Initially they maintained membership in their previous churches. But as opposition from the churches grew during 1843-1844, Adventists found it increasingly difficult to retain membership in them.

In spite of interdenominational participation in revival struggles, the religious awakening resulted in an array of religious sects. This was partly as a result of the stress placed on individual conversion and also due to the unstructured nature of church life on the frontier. Thus, a Christian leader, if disillusioned with the spiritual state of his church or believing that he had discovered some new teaching, could always opt to start a new

²⁹ Damsteegt, *Foundation of Seventh-day Adventist and Message and Mission*, 16(Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 20.

movement if the religious establishment failed to respond positively to his calls for reform.

Many comments have been passed about the eccentric behaviour the Millerites engaged in while waiting for the Parousia. Laura Lee Vance opines that the press reported at the time that the Millerites in anticipation of the second advent, dressed in white ascension apparel, they sat on tree tops and house tops with eyes fixed heavenward, gazing in the clouds to catch the first glimpse of Christ second coming. These descriptions according to Vance are exaggeration of what actually took place. Howbeit, the Millerites did involve themselves in bizarre behavior such as falling prostrate, crying out and swooning. Furthermore the farmers among them left their crops unharvested, businessmen left their businesses unattended to, those with possessions disposed of them and debtors paid off their debts. No doubt some scoffers mocked and accused them of being extremist and lunatics.

Vance postulates further that, when October 22, 1844 came, the Millerites waited all day into the night for Christ's Second Advent. They waited until midnight came and passed and yet Jesus did not come as predicted by Miller and his cohorts. Subsequently, the Millerites suffered a great humiliation and bitter disappointment. As a result of Christ's failure to come as predicted by Miller and his adherents, they were mocked and twitted as extremist and lunatics. R.W. Schwarz describes the frustration of Hiram Edson, one of the believers who experienced the disappointment; he is said to have remembered the event this way: "Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as never before. We wept and wept till the day dawned."³⁰ Thereupon, many of the Millerites went back to their former churches, others abandoned the Christian faith altogether, while others held on to their faith.

³⁰ Schwarz, *Light Bearers*, 51

The remnant (that is to say those who held on to their faith after the disappointment) maintained their confidence in the Parousia. Inadvertently they sprang into four denominations namely: Adventist Christian church, Church of God (Seventh-day), Church of God of Abrahamic Faith and the Seventh-day Adventist church. Many of these denominations continued to hold Millerite Adventist beliefs with only some few differences keeping them separate. The largest of these is the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

After the disappointments of 1844, several of Miller's followers proposed an alternative theory. One of such people is Hiram Edson. While walking in a cornfield on the morning of October 23, 1844, the day after Christ failed to return, he claims he received a "spiritual" revelation that indicated that Miller had misidentified the sanctuary. For the revelation revealed that it was not the earthly sanctuary that needed to be cleansed, but the Holy of Holies in God's heavenly temple. Instead of coming out of the heavenly temple to cleanse the sanctuary of the earth, in 1844, Christ, for the first time, went into the heavenly Holy of Holies to cleanse it.

Damsteegt posit that many critics disagree with Adventist 'belief' that, Christ started his heavenly ministry in October 22, 1844. They contend, Christ began His ministry in the most holy place at His ascension about two thousand years ago. Hence, they regard the Adventist interpretation of October 22, 1844, as a "face-saving device" and as representing a misunderstanding of the gospel and a misinterpretation of the bible. For these cynics, the only significance October 22, 1844 provides, is that it is a demonstration of how erroneous Adventists are in calculating the time prophecies. Instead of calling October 22, 1844 the day of the great disappointment, they prefer to call it the great disillusion. They subsequently conclude that the Millerite emphasis on time setting did

great harm to Christian mission and created suspicion about anything connected with the Second Advent.³¹

By 1846 the group had adopted the Seventh-day Baptists' view that the Saturday Sabbath must be observed by Christians. Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain was the first to introduce the Sabbath to the sabbatarian Adventist in 1846 and 1849. He issued pamphlets insisting that Christians observe the Sabbath—Saturday—instead of worshipping on Sunday. A highly elevated form of this doctrine, together with the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment, became the hallmarks of Seventh-day Adventism. In 1850 James and Ellen White began publishing a magazine, The "Review & Herald", to disseminate Adventist and Sabbatarian doctrines. This helped many of the remaining "Millerites" to coalesce into a distinctive body which adopted the name "Seventh-day Adventist Church" in 1860, and formally incorporated in 1863, with approximately 3,500 members in 125 congregations. Miller's followers broke up into a number of competing factions. Miller would have nothing to do with the new theories his followers produced, including ones which attempted to save part of his 1844 doctrine. He rejected this and other teachings being generated by his former followers, including those of Ellen Gould White. Miller William never joined the SDA movement, but there can be little doubt that SDA's history is intertwined with Miller's prophecies.

Ellen White is recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist church as having received the gift of prophecy. The writings of Ellen White "are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction." There have been some controversies about the writings of Ellen G. White when a research in the 1980's suggested that she had plagiarized heavily from

³¹ P.Gerard Damsteegt, Blessing of the Disappointment, *Adventist Affirm*, vol. 8, no.2, (1994).

contemporary writers. However, an Analysis of the Literary Dependency of Ellen White" demonstrates that there is no proof of Ellen White's plagiarism.

2.3 HISTORY OF ADVENTISM IN GHANA

Owusu-Mensah claims that the Seventh-day Adventist church made her debut in West Africa through literature evangelism in 1863 through the efforts of Hannah More. Hannah was a citizen of the United States of America, domiciled in Liberia, West Africa. She worked for the British Missionary Society in Liberia. On a furlough to the U.S.A., she came into contact with Adventist pioneer Stephen Haskell. Upon reading some literature introduced to her by Haskell, she is believed to have accepted the Adventist faith. Back in Liberia she started disseminating literature across the cost of Africa. Her new found faith conflicted with the mission of the British Missionary Society who had employed her in Liberia. She was subsequently fired. Hannah More's literature ministry in Liberia and other parts in West Africa was very significant. Owusu-Mensah believes some of her literature which found their way to Ghana might have precipitated the beginning of the Adventist mission in the country³². The following section narrates how the S.D.A. church started in the three regions under study; namely Central, Asante and Greater Accra Regions.

2.3.1 Beginning of the work in Central Region

The conventional thinking of attributing the establishment of the church in West Africa to foreign missionaries is not entirely factual. Lamin Sanneh thinks that the indigenous African missionary as an agent of religious adaptation, have done much more as far as Christian mission is concerned than his foreign missionary counterpart. In

³² Kofi Owusu-Mensah, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*. 8-11

Sanneh's view, the role played by these zealot indigenes are often pushed under the carpet; while that of the foreign missionary is given historical hype. Sanneh contends that the African factor should be fairly represented.³³ It is worthy to note that Sanneh himself overstates the preponderance of the indigenous African over the foreign missionary. The proposition of this paper is that Sanneh is guilty of the same errors he is accusing others of; that is, overstating the role of the indigenous African over his foreign counterpart. He seem to be exaggerating the efforts of African missionaries above that of their foreign counterparts. What is important therefore is a balance presentation of the whole mission story in Africa.

Gold Coast (now Ghana) was recipient of the Seventh-day Adventist message in 1888 through Francis I.U. Dolphijn a Ghanaian who lived in Apam in the Central Region. Dolphijn is said to have received the Sabbath message from International Tract Society. A tract believed to have disseminated by Hannah More. Howbeit, there is another oral narrative that ascribes the introduction of Adventism in Ghana to one William Kweku Atta Dawson of Fetteh and Mayenda, also in the Central Region. The story continues that Dawson was the first to have received the Adventist message and possibly the one who introduced Francis Dolphijn to Adventism.³⁴ Owusu-Mensah, confirms the attribution of the beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist church to these two indigenous Ghanaians; Francis I. U. Dolphijn and William Kweku Atta Dawson. Owusu-Mensah maintains that both of them were Methodist and also merchants who dealt in rubber, palm products, gold, cotton, and hardware in Gold Coast; these common backgrounds brought them together as friends.³⁵ Official records at the General Conference of the Seventh day Adventist

³³ Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983), xii.

³⁴ Cgcsda.org/our-history retrieved May 13, 2014

³⁵ Owusu-Mensah, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 19

indicates that the Adventist message got to Gold Coast now Ghana in 1888 and Francis Dolphijn is the originator of Adventism in Ghana.

According to the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, the first Euro-American missionaries to come to Ghana in the name of the S.D.A. church were Edward Leroy Sandford and Karl G. Rudolph. The pair arrived in Ghana in 1894 and were stationed at Apam in the Central Region. They came without their spouses or any family relation; Sandford was the leader. The arrival of these foreign missionaries really marked the beginning of Adventist mission in “Black Africa” and more so in Ghana.³⁶ Owusu-Mensah claims that the arrival of Sandford and Rudolf boosted the moral of the few Adventist believers in Ghana. He further elaborates how, the presence of the missionaries blunted and taunted the skepticism of their detractors who made every effort to nip the infant missionary work of the Adventist in the bud; according to him they wanted to kill the church in its embryonic state.³⁷ The mission of SDA was established in the Gold Coast in 1894 with the headquarters at Cape Coast which at the same time served as the headquarters of SDA mission for West Africa. By this time Adventism had gained roots in Gold Coast.

In partnership with their African counterparts, Sandford and Rudolph walked miles on end in the coastal belt particularly the Central Region to disseminate the S.D.A. message through preaching, and distribution and sales of Adventist literature. Unfortunately for Sandford after only five months stay in Ghana, he had to leave probably in 1894 because his health was failing due to consistent malaria attacks. Rudolph stayed on for a year and worked very diligently for Adventist mission to thrive in Ghana.³⁸ The General

³⁶ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia, Commentary Series* vol. 10 (Washington D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), 460.

³⁷ Owusu-Mensah, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 34

³⁸ Karl G. Rudolph, *From West African Gold Coast Mission*, as cited in Kofi Owusu-Mensah, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 34

Conference (the headquarters of S.D.A. church in America) was impressed with the literature ministry of Rudolph. However, in spite of the successful story of Adventist mission in Ghana, there erupted a serious crisis in 1896; Rudolph suddenly suffered from what seemed like schizophrenia (a mental disorder).³⁹ This sadly brought to an abrupt end of Rudolph involvement in Adventist missionary work in Ghana. After sacrificing so much to Adventist mission in Ghana, there is no further reference to him by the church in their historical records.

To augment the Adventist missionary work in Ghana, the leadership of the S.D.A. church in America send a second batch of missionaries in the persons of Dudley Upton Hale (who was the leader), G.P. Riggs a literature evangelist (a literature evangelist is the one who either by sales or distribution propagates the gospel through printed materials), and George Thomas Kerr and his wife Eva Elmore Kerr both trained nurses.⁴⁰ A critical look at this delegation indicates that, the leadership of the church were strategic in their mission focus, in that while Hale took care of the propagation of the gospel message, through preaching and house to house evangelism, Riggs also focused on the dissemination of Seventh-day Adventist literature. The Kerr family also took care of the health needs of the people. Later on provision of Education was added to their ministry.⁴¹ Thus bringing to fore what George Knight called missiological quadrennial of the Adventist missionary work in Ghana. The missiological quadrennial he identified as church organization, publication, health reform and Education. Somehow the missiological quadrennial looks similar to Andrew Walls Five Marks of Mission but obviously not the same.

To provide for the health needs of the people of Cape Coast, Karl and his wife Eva

³⁹Owusu-Mensah, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 34

⁴⁰ Owusu-Mensah, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism* 37

⁴¹ Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventim*, 48

set up a clinic which was open to everybody. It was highly patronized by many people in Cape Coast and surrounding villages and towns. To borrow from Cephas N. Omenyo (however this time round) the Adventist missionaries scratched the people of Cape Coast and its environs where they itched most.⁴² It is however gloomy to note that, the healthcare facility (clinic) established by Kerr and his wife, was stalled by the powers that be at the time. The nursing school which was in the process, also came to an abrupt end due to the same reason.⁴³

Several of the foreign missionaries who came to Ghana in the name of the Seventh-day Adventist church faced serious health challenges. Many died in the line of duty for the love of God and salvation of humanity. For example, George and Eva Kerr lost their two children in 1896 shortly after they arrived in Ghana. The couple themselves had to be relocated to South Africa because of ill health. G. P. Giggs was plagued with a life threatening illness and had to be transferred from Ghana to Liverpool for medical care. Unfortunately, he did not survive. Dudley Hale was the only person who went back to America safe and sound, though records show that there was occasional reports of illness.⁴⁴ This phenomenon is not peculiar to only Adventist missionaries at that time several of the missionaries who came to serve other denominations in the Gold Coast also suffered similar fate. From the Central Region, Adventists made an entrance into the Western Region. However, the Western Region is not part of the focus of this study. Suffice it to say though, that from the records available to the researcher, Western Region took over from the Central Region as the hub of Adventist mission. From the Western Region the Adventist message spread to the interior part of Ghana, precisely, Asante.

⁴² Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Publishing House, 2006), 46.

⁴³ Owusu-Mensah, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 40-41

⁴⁴ *The Home Missionary*, vol. 9, (1897). 168

2.3.2 The Spread of Adventist Mission to Asante

Owusu-Mensah credits the pioneering work of Adventist Mission in Asante to William Kweku Atta Dawson, Francis I.U. Dolphijn, and George Grant. They are believed to be the early conveyers of Adventist mission to Asante. Their initial contact later helped the smooth take off of Adventism in Asante. Owusu-Mensah claims that the reason for the successful take off of Adventism in Asante can be attributed to the fact that, the Sabbath truth resonated the Asante world view of considering God as Saturday God. (Onyame Kwame).⁴⁵

William H. Lewis, was initially sent to Sierra Leone to be in charge of an Adventist school in Freetown by the Adventist Mission Board in Washington, DC in 1910. Lewis was a carpenter by profession. After spending four and a half years in mission in Sierra Leone, Lewis was reposted to be in charge of Adventist Mission in Gold Coast in 1913. However due to an issue of who was to replace him in Sierra Leone, his transfer delayed for about seven months. He finally came to Gold Coast in October, 1914.⁴⁶

Owusu-Mensah postulates that, W. H. Lewis, was appointed the first President of Gold Coast Adventist Mission. One of the significant things he did was to relocate the mission headquarters in Gold Coast from Central Region to Asante. The reason for the relocation was that, Adventist mission in the Central Region where the church started and Western Region where it later spread to, was dwindling; he tried to resuscitate the spirit of members but his effort was met with little success. This situation was the last straw that broke the camel's back for Lewis to relocate Adventist Mission to the interior of Gold Coast; specifically Asante.

⁴⁵ Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 14

⁴⁶ Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 131-132

Before he made any incursion into Asante, Lewis introduced himself and his mission to the then colonial authorities. He sought advice and assistance in getting a new base in the interior for operational base for Adventist Mission outside Kumasi. Lewis and his team, after much search in the North Eastern side of Asante, finally settled on Agona Asante as the missionary headquarters, after he had been heartily accepted by Nana Kwame Boakye 1, chief of Agona. All these prospecting was done on foot eventually covering approximately 1280 kilometres (800 miles). Tradition holds that Lewis met a Sabbath keeping family in Asante, specifically, Wiemoase.⁴⁷

Christiana Gyimah, posits that, before the advent of the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries in Agona (Asante), the Presbyterians had already established their presence there in 1911. Gyimah posit that Nana Yaa Ntonso (the queen mother of Agona) was the one who received the Presbyterians. Meanwhile, Nana Yaa Ntonso was at loggerheads with Nana Boakye. Thus in order for the king to exert his political power on the queen mother, he gave the green light to the Seventh-day Adventist Church to operate in his kingdom. Although he himself never became a Seventh-day Adventist, he took personal interest in the establishment and activities of the church in his area. Gyima further explains that the chief's warm acceptance of the S.D.A. missionaries was also to spite Nana Yaa Ntonso (the queen mother) who had formed a clique to oppose the his reign. Furthermore she contends that the reasons could be political, social, or economical.⁴⁸

Nana Boakye's dream of getting education for his people was achieved when Lewis, the Adventist missionary, with the permission of the then Chief Commissioner, Francis Fuller started a school in Agona in November, 1914. Lewis extended his missionary work beyond the preaching of the gospel; he is said to have provided

⁴⁷ Owusu-Mensa, *Seventh-day Adventism*, 139

⁴⁸ Christiana Gyimah, *The History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Agona Pastoral District*, (MPhil. Thesis, University of Ghana, 2006). 57

architectural advice in the planning and building of the township of Agona. According to Gyimah, he opened and operated a local posting system in the chief's palace. The wife of Lewis also provided health care for the people which took care of minor ailments.

Agona became the citadel of Seventh-day Adventist mission and education. The achievement of the Seventh-day Adventist in the field of education attracted the attention of the British colonial governor Gordon Guggisberg.⁴⁹ From this vantage point the Adventist succeeded in expanding their mission to various parts in Asante and even beyond. Some of the students of Lewis from the Agona School and other missionaries who came made this mission possible. Lewis got involved in a motor accident in 1917, this hindered his continued stay in Gold Coast; consequently he left Gold Coast for further medical treatment in the USA.⁵⁰ In all the years William H. Lewis spent in Ghana, he stayed clear of political matters and entanglement. He always adhered to the colonial government directives and advice. This attitude is typical of most Seventh-day Adventist missionaries, clergy and members. They want to be seen as law abiding members of society but isolate themselves on matters of politics.

Thomas Baker succeeded William H. Lewis from 1917 to 1918 as a caretaker superintendent. All this while, Lewis was considered as a furloughing overseer in Ghana. Baker together with some indigenous missionaries did some good work from where Lewis left off. L.F. Langford who was in charge of the Seventh-day Adventist work in West Africa was made the supervisor of the work in Ghana. He was then stationed at Waterloo, Sierra Leone and thus operated and supervised the Adventist work from there. It was Langford who moved the West African headquarters from Waterloo, Sierra Leone to Agona in 1923,⁵¹ therefore Asante became the center of Seventh-day Adventist mission in

⁴⁹ Christiana Gyimah, *the History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 58-59

⁵⁰ Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 161

⁵¹ *Seventh-day Adventist Year Book*, (1919). 129-130; (1920). 83; (1922). 84 and (1923). 118

West Africa. After Langford came J.J. Hyde. After Hyde came another European who joined the Adventist work force in the person of Jesse Clifford in 1919.

After Adventist presence and operation in Agona and its environs, it took seven years for the Adventist to make an incursion into Kumasi the capital city of Asante. John Kwabena Kaipro Garbra an indigene of Nzimahland, was the first Ghanaian Adventist Clergy to be ordained into S.D.A. gospel ministry 1921. Five month after his ordination Garbrah was posted from Agona to Kumasi to start Adventist mission.⁵² Garbar worked hard in Kumasi to give the Seventh-day Adventist church an exposure and wide publicity. This progress earned the Adventist much recognition from the colonial authorities in Ghana much more than they have previously enjoyed. The Chief Commissioner of Asante at the time Mr. Harper, impressed with the work of Adventist and its representative, made a recommendation for the headquarters of the church to be move from Agona to Kumasi. The Adventist leadership accepted the challenge and relocated the headquarters to Kumasi in 1924 under the leadership of Langford. However after three years operation in Kumasi, and under the leading of J.J. Hyde, the headquarters was reverted to Agona.

According to Owusu-Mensa, Jesse Clifford worked in Ghana from 1919 to 1923 for Adventist mission. He left Ghana to pioneer the work in Eastern Nigeria where he was ordained into the S.D.A. gospel ministry. In 1931 he was asked to return to Ghana to direct the Adventist work in the country. Clifford moved the Ghana Adventist headquarters to Bekwai. Owusu-Mensa testifies of the hard work done by Clifford in Asante for it to become the hub of Adventist mission in Ghana. It was from Asante that the Adventist message travelled to the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions, then to Brong Ahafo and the three Northern Regions in Ghana.

⁵² Owusu-Mensa, *Seventh-day Adventism*, 174

In 1946, Jesse O. Gibson an American missionary who was stationed at Ibadan in Nigeria, the then headquarters of West African Union Mission of the S.D.A. was relocated to Ghana to help construct a permanent headquarters that will house the West African Union Mission in Accra. He was officially ordained into S.D.A. gospel ministry in 1947.

Gibson was appointed in 1948 as the president of the S.D.A. Ghana mission in Bekwai. Gibson believed in progressive leadership structure. He brought so many reforms into the Adventist missionary work in Ghana. He first brought on board indigenous Africans to positions of responsibility and administration. He again decentralized leadership structure of mission. He partitioned the Ghana field into seven administrative districts; he put five ordained indigenous pastors in charge of five stations; leaving only two for foreign missionaries. Gibson is credited with the beginning of the Africanization of the Adventist missionary work in Ghana. Gibson for the second time, he moved the headquarters of Ghana mission to Kumasi in 1949 when he became the supervisor. With the permission of the West African Union Mission in Accra, Gibson appointed C.B. Mensah as an associate (vice) president of the Ghana Mission in order to groom him for future leadership role⁵³. Indeed his dreams came to pass as C.B. Mensah became the first indigene to head the Ghana Mission of the S.D.A. church in 1959.⁵⁴ In all these years records available to the researcher does not show any Ghanaian politician who was an Adventist or any of the converts ever becoming a politician in Asante.

2.3.3 Adventism in Greater Accra

Eunice Miranda Brocke, an elder in the Seventh-day Adventist church indicates that the work in Accra was began by an indigenous Ghanaian missionary named David

⁵³ Owusu-Mensa, Ghana seventh-day Adventism, 238

⁵⁴ Owusu-Mensah, Ghana Seventh-day Adventism, 262

Narteh Agboka, who hailed from Ada in the Greater Accra Region. He came into contact with Adventism while domicile in Agona Asante to complete his standard seven education⁵⁵. Upon successful completion of standard seven education, he was recruited by the Seventh-day Adventist church as a teacher, office clerk and a secretary in 1931. Owusu-Mensah avers that, at the time Agboka was recruited by the S.D.A. Church, he was a Presbyterian.⁵⁶ He was baptized into the Adventist church the same year he was employed. After working in Agona and Bekwai for some time, he was assigned the responsibility of formally opening the Adventist work in Accra in 1941. Through hard work, dedication and humility, he was able to (amidst rough terrain) start seventh –day Adventist church at Osu, Adabraka, and many other areas in Accra. Many converts were won in Accra; among them was a prominent Ghanaian politician K. A. Gbedemah. Gbedemah was a personal friend to Pastor David N. Agboka, he was very supportive of the Adventist work in Accra and was among the first people to be baptized in the Adventist church in Accra in 1946.⁵⁷ Gbedemah was endowed with organizational skills; he served the church in many capacities such as Sabbath school superintendent, a deacon, an usher, youth program organizer and the promoter of the Adventist church in political circle in Ghana.⁵⁸

Meanwhile a decision which was taken to relocate the West African Union Mission from Ibadan, Nigeria to Accra, Ghana also brought Jesse Gibson and his family to Accra. The church needing the constructional and administrative skills, sent him over to Ghana to build offices and residential edifices to accommodate staff of the West African Union Mission. He blended evangelism with his constructional work. It was through his

⁵⁵ Eunice Miranda Brocke, *Adventism in Accra: History of the Hansen Road Seventh-day Adventist Church*, (Ghana: EMB Publication, 2011), 1

⁵⁶ Owusu-Mensah, *Adventism in Ghana*, 193-194

⁵⁷ Brocke, *Adventism in Accra*, 3,6,15

⁵⁸ Brocke *Adventism in Accra*, 20

joint effort with D.N. Agboka that the Adventist message took off in Accra. Eunice Brocks intones that his acquaintance with Gbedema and Clerk resulted in the two converting into Adventism.⁵⁹

In all of this religious enterprise, only one political figure emerged, in the person of Komla Agbla Gbedemah. He was a prominent figure in the convention peoples Party of Kwame Nkrumah, the first black head of state of Ghana. History has it that he used his organizational skills to campaign for Kwame Nkrumah who was at the time incarcerated by the colonial authorities to win an election. Unfortunately, Gbademah did not die a Seventh-day Adventist. Could it be that conventionally Seventh-day Adventist did not encourage their members to be involved in politics? The subsequent page will discuss some Adventist beliefs to ascertain an allowance for any political involvement. It looks as if Seventh-day Adventist cosmic view is influenced by the Parousia and the eschatological events leaving no room for other considerations like political, social and economic issues.

2.4 SOME MAJOR ADVENTIST BELIEF

According to Kwabena Donkor of Adventist Research Institute, the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church officially defines its system of beliefs in the context of their mission. Thus these doctrines become important data of faith that lead souls to Christ. For him, the fundamental beliefs are only useful in the context of the mission of the church.⁶⁰

Careful observation of the fundamental beliefs of the S.D.A. church indicates that they are a set of doctrines that gives the church a unique identification from other denominations. It is evident that the use of a set of doctrines did not start with the Seventh-

⁵⁹ Brocke, *Adventism in Accra*, 15

⁶⁰ Kwabena Donkor, The Role of the Statement of Beliefs and Creeds, *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 16/1–2 (2005): 93–113.

day Adventist church. According to E. Glenn Hinson, there is unanimous agreement among Christian scholars that early Christian confession of faith were adopted for instruction and baptism of new converts. In this vein, the Adventist fundamental beliefs take on the similitude of a creed.⁶¹

The label “Seventh-day Adventist” mirrors the beliefs of the church in three words. “Seventh-day” refers to the biblical Sabbath of rest, which according to them was given by God to humankind at creation. It is believed by the church that Jesus observed the Sabbath during His incarnation. “Adventist” indicates the assurance of the soon return (advent) of Jesus to this earth.

The Adventist Church also observes various dietary laws rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures, including the abstinence from eating pork, shellfish, and other “unclean” foods as defined in Leviticus chapter eleven. They also abstain from use and sale of tobacco, alcoholic beverages and all illicit drugs. Another defining characteristic of the Church is their adherence to the spiritual teachings of Ellen G. White, whom they consider to be a prophet of God. Besides some of these unique doctrines, the Adventist Church maintains most standard Protestant Christian theologies including the authority of the Bible, the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Pöhler intones that, Christian faith is rational in its constitution. It admits certain panoramas which deal with God and humankind to be true. These truths can be expressed in an orderly fashion, argued for in a logical way, and presented in a convincing manner. The Christian faith is relational, involving a divine-human encounter; it is also rational, capable of being expressed in a manner appealing to human reason. It is open to sound reasoning, argumentation, logical conclusions, and so on. In short, Christian faith is a

⁶¹ E. Glenn Hinson “confession or Creeds in the Early Christian Tradition, Review and Expositor 76 in Kwabena Donkor, the Role of the Statement Creeds, (2005), 6.

reasonable faith. Because it is rational rather than irrational, Christian faith lends itself to scholarly inquiry, rigorous questioning, and serious reflection; here, faith is subjected to critical examination, challenged in scholarly debates, and presented in academic fashion. Early Adventists intentionally sought to present doctrine in a logical, coherent, and systematic fashion. They were convinced of presenting a perfect system of truth, where everything had its proper bearing and place, and nothing was meaningless or superfluous. Adventist theological thinking is rational, reflecting a reasonable faith.⁶²

Pöhler, posits again that, Christian faith in a systematic and orderly fashion, demonstrates the inner relationship of the truths of faith; putting the pieces together to form a coherent whole. Adventist theology consciously works on this basis, too. Taking Scripture as the Word of God conveying the message of salvation to humankind, it attempts to provide a sound understanding of the Bible, its meaning and message, content and concern. Theological statements are believed to be coherent ideas, revealing an inner relationship to each other and forming a meaningful whole. The doctrinal loci do relate to each other even though they treat different aspects of the one truth of God. This interrelationship forms a network of ideas, insights, disciplines and departments.⁶³

To comprehend the distinctive doctrines of Seventh Day Adventist church, it is important to understand the degree to which they lean upon Ellen G. White and her writings for guidance. The S.D.A. church conversely explains that, they in no wise regard her writings to be on equal pedestal with the Bible. They have even said that they test the writings of Ellen G. White by the Bible, but they do not test the Bible with Ellen G. White's writings.

⁶² Pöhler, *The Adventist Historian between Criticism and Faith*

⁶³ Pöhler, *The Adventist Historian between Criticism and Faith*

According to them, this set of Beliefs presents a “Christ-centered exposition of what they believe. For them, Jesus Christ is the hub from which doctrines issue like spokes from a wheel, going out to the rim where “the rubber meets the road.” Without doctrine, there is no clear connection between the confession of Christ and one’s personal life.

The Seventh-day Adventist church has 28 fundamental beliefs, which may be similar to the Catholic catechism. The official teachings of the SDA church are stated in this 28 Fundamental Beliefs. They were originally adopted by the General Conference in 1980. The belief (number 11) was added in 2005. According to the S.D.A. church, it has organized the 28 fundamental beliefs into six categories of doctrines—these are the doctrines of God, the doctrine of man, the doctrines of salvation, the doctrine of the church, the doctrines of the Christian life and the doctrines of the last day events. They claim that in each teaching, God is the architect, who in wisdom, grace and infinite love, is restoring a relationship with humanity that will last for eternity. These beliefs seem to be typical of Trinitarian Protestant theology, with Premillennialism and Arminianism (an emphasis on the dominance of the human will). They embrace the infallibility of Scripture, the substitutionary atonement, the resurrection of the dead, and justification by faith. However, there are certain distinctive SDA doctrines that make them unique from the rest of the Christian world.

Most of the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists follow the trend of conventional conservative Christianity: these are creation in six literal days, the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden, original sin; the virgin birth; the divinity of Christ; the nature of the Trinity; belief in Satan as a rebellious created being; God's inspiration of the authors of the Bible, the inerrancy of Scriptures as they were originally written down; the resurrection of Jesus, salvation by the atonement of Christ, considering all same-sex sexual behavior as sinful, regardless of the nature of the relationship; rejection of same-sex marriage and civil

unions, and many other several beliefs. However, they differ from other conservative Protestants on a number of other beliefs: for example, Seventh-day Adventists differ, particularly on which day to worship. These unique doctrines formulates part of their mission focus. The Sabbath is their most obvious distinct practice which differentiates them from most other Christian churches.

By early 1847 the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church held the basic pillar doctrines of the Second Advent, the sanctuary, the Sabbath, and the state of the dead. According to Knight, each of these doctrines originated from Bible study, ironically these doctrines were developed by Millerites who never became part of the Seventh-day Adventist church. What the founders of the S.D.A. church actually did was to integrate these four doctrines into an understanding of the end times as portrayed from Revelation 11:19 through the end of chapter 14. In relation to that process, Ellen White's visions filled the role of confirmation rather than initiation.⁶⁴

Knight further postulates that, the Seventh-day Adventist found the unifying focal point of their theology in the apocalyptic core of the book of Revelation. The different facets of that theology did not exist as isolated units. Revelation 11:19 through 14:20 intertwined the Second Advent with an understanding of the opening of the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary and the eschatological importance of the Ten Commandments, especially the Sabbath. To the contrary, it was a united whole with each aspect related to the others. The placement of their theology in the framework of the last great conflict between good and evil set forth in the heart of the book of Revelation gave it an urgency that eventually set the Seventh-day Adventist on an expanding mission of warning the world.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ George R. Knight, , What is Adventist in Adventism, , *Adventist Review* Online Edition, (2000).

⁶⁵ Knight, *Adventist Review*, Online Edition

Seventh-day Adventism is recognized with the corporate identity because they have enough of a shared worldview, or way of looking at the world as a whole. A shared identity always implies the existence of a correspondingly shared corporate worldview. Adventists traditionally claim they base their corporate identity and worldview on a biblically grounded doctrines and lifestyle distinctiveness from other denominations; developed during a specific historical situation. Beyond this specific context, however, philosophically and sociologically, one of the primary purposes of most religious groups, churches, or ecclesiastical bodies is to foster a public witness through their corporate identity that testifies to their internal spiritual moorings. When religious groups become large enough, the logical consequence is that the varying religious worldviews begin to compete with one another as well as with any secular worldviews. Put simply, and this remains very much true for Christians, “a worldview ultimately determines a person’s ideology in politics, religion, and economics. There is a unique relationship between religion and politics in Ghana with significant implications for the corporate identity of Seventh-day Adventism that continually places the church at risk of becoming “entangled” in the web of socio-political ideologies or otherwise. The members of any healthy and dynamic group need to know who they are, for their identity and worldview to thrive and be persuasive to others, and this is especially true of Adventists.

Christianity has a social implications and can be identified as a social religion. Religious beliefs inevitably shape socioeconomic views and political actions. Beach postulates that, Adventist view mission as service in word and action. In this service concept, a synthesis between evangelism and social activity exists. Beach asserts that the social responsibility is inherent in the doctrine of anthropology. The limits of the church’s social service lie within the nature of humans. With human beings created in the image of God and marred by sin, the dignity of the child of God becomes restored through the

process of salvation. Such an appreciation entails concrete social responsibility. The Christian concept that humans are not flotsam on the sea of time but people with a potential for a radiant future gives purpose and energy to the Christian mission.

While Christian social responsibility rests on the doctrines of Creation and man, the soteriological principle provides its teleology. When the church and its members relate to society, salvation as the ultimate purpose must dominate. Christian social responsibility does not simply result from humanitarian impulses, but it springs from a much deeper level, the desire that “they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). This fullness of life involves conversion, reconciliation, and faith, or in one word, salvation, but also a healthier and happier life. Christian virtues have social implications, and thus Christianity can be identified as a social religion. Religious beliefs inevitably shape socioeconomic views and political actions. Religious values have a societal fallout.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The quadrilateral model of mission was exported to Ghana and replicated in ways in which the four aspects of the work developed in the United States, the birth place of the Adventist church. The work began with publishing ministry; thus distribution and sales of literature was critical in establishing and sustaining the work. It was the first and most important factor in laying the foundation for Adventist missionary work in Ghana. Perhaps the single most important factor in establishing the work in Ghana was the role of the printed page. From the very inception and throughout the history of the work, the role of Adventist literature and the work of both canvasser and colporteur were pivotal. Owusu-Mensa suggests Hannah More who distributed Adventist literature along the coast line of West Africa should have been credited with the honor of being the first Adventist

missionary overseas. According to Owusu-Mensa, Seventh-day Adventists in Ghana and their forbearers believe that it was the literature ministry of Hannah More which opened Adventist missions in Ghana.⁶⁶ It is believed by most Adventists that Seventh-day Adventism reached Ghana through literature and not in person. Owusu-Mensa posit that the literature ministry of Hannah More and later George Drew opened the gates of penetration of Seventh-day Adventism in the nineteenth century.⁶⁷

The other facet of the missiological quadrilateral focused on conference organization. As the work developed and more churches were established, there was a need for a more central organization. Karl G. Rudolf and Edward Leroy Sanford were the first resident missionaries sent to Ghana. The sending of these two residential missionaries by the general conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church marked the opening of S.D.A. organized center in West Africa. During the first decade of Adventism in Ghana, church growth was outstanding. From the initial baptism of four members in 1897, the church in Ghana grew to reach 104,280 members when the church celebrated its centenary in 1988.⁶⁸

Another major development of Ghana Adventism was education, the fourth leg of Knight's Quadrilateral of mission. From the very beginning of the work in Ghana, it became clear that schools were needed. As converts were added to the young church, many children came with their families, so the need to educate these youngsters was very important. The establishment of schools became one of the most important factors in the consolidation of Adventism in Ghana. Owusu-Mensa postulates that Christian Abraham Ackah, is the real Adventist pioneer Adventist educationist in the annals of the church history in Ghana. He established the first official school in Kikam in 1908. From that

⁶⁶ Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 10

⁶⁷ Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 12

⁶⁸ Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 352

small beginning S.D.A. church has been able to establish a number of second circle schools and one tertiary institution.⁶⁹ The third leg of the Quadrilateral, the health message, was also replicated in the missionary endeavors of Adventism in Ghana. But as its turnout to be, this aspect of the quadrilateral had poor start in Ghana. The health message, which has been described by Ellen White as the “Right Arm” of the message, never reached the same level of achievement as the other three legs and even as we speak it is still at its growing stage. Although the health needs of Ghanaians were great, it appears the church never invested the same level of resources and personnel to advance this aspect of the work due to colonial master restrictions and ban. For example the early medical missionary services of George T. Kerr and his wife Eva Elmore Kerr at Cape Coast in the 1890s and that of those of British missionaries at Agona in the 1930s. A clinic the Kerrs established to take care of the medical needs of the people of Cape Coast and its environs was highly patronized. However, the medical ministry suffered a setback as the then surgeon-general ruled against its continuation.

Just before political independence in Ghana in 1957, the church did, establish a hospital at Atibie in 1955. However the facility was taken over by the government of Ghana in 1973 after eighteen years of operation.⁷⁰ It is very likely that if this aspect of the work had been more developed, the appeal to the Ghanaian elite class would have been greater. However, much of the literature sold by the colporteurs dealt with the subject of health, and many of the converts to Adventism eagerly embraced the healthy lifestyle of Adventism, so in that respect the “Right Arm” of the message was successful.

⁶⁹ Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 345

⁷⁰ Owusu-Mensa, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism*, 348

CHAPTER THREE

POLITICS AND THE ADVENTIST MISSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this part of the paper is to highlight potential and actual tension spots between the church and its socio political world. Christianity and politics have often been in conflict; a struggle commonly epitomized in the contrasting ideas of church and state, religion and politics, faith and society, Christ and culture, and church and world which express varied dimensions of the same common association. This matter is important to the Adventist missiological task, wherefore the issue of constant argument. There are major levels of agreement much as there are a number of unresolved questions and issues. Understanding the Seventh-day Adventist church and how it functions within a socio-political context is very important in dealing with the challenges that the church faces. This section of the thesis outlines the interaction between Seventh-day Adventist mission and politics. Christians stance on politics and their relationship to voting, social cause (provision of social needs), and political activism (demonstration and protest). Attention is also be given to the issue of a Christian joining a political party or campaigning for a person or a party. The chapter will also look at the Christian standing to be elected for or appointed to a political office or seek a legislative office.

The nexus between Christianity and politics are complex, ambivalent and paradoxical. Both try to secure and maintain power. However they are different by contrasts in the aims and values they set upon power. Furthermore there is a radical departure in their conceptions of the nature and source of power. The basic power envisaged in politics is secular, which is of this world; while Christianity on the other hand envisaged in Supernatural from another world. Politics is concern for order in society and religion is concern for congregational bonds. Then again Christianity deals with the

sacred, while politics deals with the profane. Christianity and politics both use calculation and appeal to emotion, but religion is grounded in revelation while politics tries to keep within the bounds of reason. Raymond Firth posits that while Christianity operates in the name of a principle of truth, politics deals with canons of expediency. Such everyday contrasts are commonplace, and long-standing. In this view, politics and the pulpit are terms that have little agreement.

3.2 POLITICAL ARGUMENTS IN THE FORMATIVE ERA OF THE S.D.A CHURCH

As already indicated above, the Adventist church was started in the United States of America in 19th century amidst contentious political struggles, the entire nation was entangled in heated partisan media reports boosting one side or another. In this political turmoil did the Adventist church develop, giving rise to the need for the infant church getting political guidance from its leaders. Members were asking questions such as: should the Adventist vote? Would doing so harm the mission of the church? The answers that were provided were so conflicting then just as it is today.

According to Paul A. Gordon, pioneer Adventists isolated themselves from other churches because they were considered as “Babylon.” (Froom explains that Babylon is an ecclesiastical apostasy aided and abetted by the nations of the world.)⁷¹ In much the same manner they isolated themselves from involvement with political government because it was also considered to be “Babylon.” These two institutions were considered with suspicion and distrust.⁷² Adventist pioneers in the formative years thus disengaged themselves from politics and civil government. At the time the Adventist church was

⁷¹ Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 553

⁷² Paul A. Gordon, The right to vote—shall I exercise it? Part 1, *Adventist Review*, (1980). 2

beginning, the political situation in America where the church started was bedevilled with corruption; perhaps unmatched by any preceding period in United States history. Adventists expressed intense opposition to politics and the disposition that usually accompanies an election campaign.

[W]ith our people refusing "to take part in a contest so exciting as the one which is now agitating this nation...To the question, why we do not with our votes and influence labor against the evil tendency of the times, we reply, that our views of prophecy lead us to the conclusion that things will not be bettered. . . . And we feel it our duty to confine our efforts to preparing ourselves, and others as far as in us lies, for the great and final issue already pressing upon us--the revelation of the Son [of] man from heaven, the destruction of all earthly governments, the establishment of the glorious, universal and eternal kingdom of the King of kings, and the redemption and deliverance of all His subjects."⁷³

Adventists pioneers considered their chief mission for national and international betterment to be the Everlasting Gospel, which links mankind to Christ and liberates him/her from the dependence upon social and civic measures. Furthermore, they believed the true Adventists are not of this world; they are swiftly on their way out to heaven. Likewise they considered politics as worldly and thought that any involvement in it, is a step into the secular world.

As time went on, there was a change in the Seventh-day Adventist Church relationship with politics, there was a shift from their rigid position against politics to a more tolerant or flexible position. After two years of the official organization of the Church, it met for its third General Conference session in 1865. At the session, the church made one of its initial official statements on politics that have stood the test of time.

Resolved, [t]hat in our judgment, the act of voting when exercised in behalf of justice, humanity and right, is in itself blameless, and may be at sometimes highly proper; but that the casting of any vote that shall

⁷³*Review and Herald*, Sept. 11, 1856.

strengthen the cause of such crimes as intemperance, insurrection, and slavery, we regard as highly criminal in the sight of Heaven. But we would deprecate any participation in the spirit of party strife.⁷⁴

From the beginning, the Adventist church disallowed and denounced politics. This persistence against political involvement for any reason did not die completely and still exists even up till date. However, the majority of Adventists, and especially the church leadership, supported political involvement concerning vital areas such as prohibition. Paradoxically about 17 years after the first Adventist statement on politics, in 1882, the president of the General Conference, George Butler, wrote a very balanced article for the *Review*, the church's official paper. In it, he pointed out that some had gotten so involved in politics that they had forgotten the Lord, and warned against such involvement. This supported the stand of those who objected to the church's involvement in politics.

This early resolution by the Adventist pioneers, including counsels from Ellen White, has continued to be a guide for the church for more than 150 years. However Gordon calls attention to the distinction that is made between the exercise of the voting right and "participation in the spirit of party strife. Again he pointed to the several social issues which he mentioned should be a point of concern. This resolution was reaffirmed as the position of the church in the subsequent years and has not been changed to this day. Those who have written since to clarify the church's belief on this issue have used this resolution as a statement of principle that continues to apply.⁷⁵

According to Mark A. Keller, from the beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1863 (official date of the beginning of the church) through to the 1880s, the general advice to Adventist was to stay away from voting. After issues surfaced that challenged Adventist positions, "there seemed to be more of an interest or support for

⁷⁴ General Conference Report in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, (1865). 197

⁷⁵ Gordon, The right to vote—shall I exercise it? Part 2, *Adventist Review*, (1980), 3.

Adventists to vote, it was more like if you feel compelled to, if you feel you should, go ahead and vote. The greatest of these challenges, it appears, was that of temperance. The promotion and sale of alcoholic beverages was seen not only as a moral and physical danger during this period, but also as an issue of economic survival.⁷⁶

3.3 ADVENTIST INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS AND PARTISAN ALIGNMENT

Several people interviewed in the Asante Region were of the opinion that when the church takes a stand that stresses political involvement, it always turn away energy and resources away from the church's core mandate of the gospel commission. According to Patrick Mensah, such an antagonistic posture toward the established secular culture leads believers to feel hostile and antagonistic toward governmental leaders, neighbours and fellow citizens they ought to love, pray for, and share the gospel with. To such Christian believers, it is unthinkable that they become enemies of the very people they seek to win to Christ.⁷⁷ It is in this direction that some Adventist argue against the politicization of the Christian faith: according to them, engaging in politics not only blur believers' priorities, but also weakens their loyalties. For them, the primary citizenship of the Christian is not on earth but in heaven. Unless Christians reject the false reliance on the illusion of Christian involvement in politics, Christians will continue to distort the gospel and thwart a genuine biblical identity.

It in the same spirit that Tobiasen argues that, it is inappropriate for the Seventh day Adventist to engage in political agitation or discussion, either privately or in public. He warns Adventist not to become partisan, not to dabble in politics, not to seek to unduly

⁷⁶ Mark A. Keller, *How will Ellen White Vote*,

⁷⁷ Patrick Mensah, Clergy of S.D.A. church, interviewed by the researcher in Kumasi on March 2, 2015.

influence votes, and not to link themselves with any political party, in order to work for its measures and its candidates regardless of the rules involved. Furthermore he postulates that, Adventist cannot pose as abettors or supporters of any particular political party. According to him, if they vote at all, they do not link their interests with such parties. They cast their votes for the candidates who in their judgment are best qualified for particular offices, without reference to party affiliation. For him, One can vote for certain men and measures, one can give his support by ballot to ways and means which make for the good of the state and society, and at the same time keep free from the control or domination or spirit of some political party which advocates the measures which he approves.⁷⁸

Through preaching and godly living, believers are to be the conscience of whatever nation they reside in. They can challenge the culture not with the political and social activism of man's wisdom, but with God's Word. Using temporal methods to promote legislative and judicial change, and resorting to external efforts of lobbying and intimidation to achieve some sort of "Christian morality" in society is not the Christian mission on earth. Only the gospel rescues sinners from sin, death, and hell. Therefore whenever the church has focused on evangelism and preaching the gospel, her influence has increased. When she has sought power by political, cultural, or military activism, she has damaged or spoiled her testimony.

According to Ellen White there is danger for all Adventist who align themselves with political parties of the world. She considers the church's engagement in politics as an act of iniquity from which believers must separate themselves. In her opinion, those who see nothing inconsistent in their taking part in politics, are doing a work that God has not set them to do. They therefore dishonor God by their party spirit and contention, and will

⁷⁸Leif Kr. Tobiasen, *Adventists and Politics*, 34

be condemned. Any connection with infidels and unbelievers which would identify Christians with politicians is forbidden by the word. They are not to spend their time talking politics or acting as politicians, for by so doing, they give the enemy opportunity to come in and cause variance and discord. White posit that Christians are to separate themselves from politics, from any alliance with unbelievers. They are not to link their interests with the interests of the world. She even went further to recommend that those in the ministry who desire to stand as politicians should have their credentials taken from them.⁷⁹ Furthermore she issued stronger warnings to those who stand as educators, as ministers, as laborers together with God in any line, to have no battles to fight in the political world. Their citizenship is in heaven, therefore the Lord calls upon them to stand as a separate and peculiar people. He would have no schisms in the body of believers. His people are to possess the elements of reconciliation. She contends, it is not their work to make enemies in the political world. The condition of being received into the Lord's family is coming out from the world, separating from all its contaminating influences. The people of God are to have no connection with idolatry in any of its forms. They are to reach a higher standard.

Ellen White postulates further that Christians are to be distinguished from the world, as believers in the truth they are to be distinct in practice from sin and sinners because their citizenship is in heaven. She continues to argue that, God is displeased with Christians who become absorbed in politics. She cannot see how the Seventh-day Adventist can bear the sign of God as His commandment-keeping people, and at the same time, mingle with the strife of the world. Adventist are not to give their minds to political issues. According to Ellen White, any Adventist who mixes up with politics, walks

⁷⁹ Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), 475-484.

contrary to God's will and those who engage in politics, are not taught and led by God, but by that spirit which creates contention and strife and every evil work. For her, Seventh-day Adventist are subjects of the Lord's kingdom, and are expected to work to establish that kingdom in righteousness.⁸⁰

Several of Ellen G. White's comments on Seventh-day Adventist involvement in politics are negative. She argues strongly that Christians must stay off politics. Her reasons for most of these statements are that, she foresaw a potential threat to the identity of Adventists, hence she gave specific counsel to the church against political participation. Again Adventist should focus on the mission of the church and teach the word. Additionally they should avoid political contention with those with whom they needed to share their message. According to her, Adventist church workers involved in politics should be relieved from their teaching positions, and tithe money should not be used to pay any one for speechifying on political questions. Every teacher, minister, or leader in their ranks who is stirred with a desire to ventilate his opinions on political questions, should be converted by a belief in the truth, or give up his work. She alerted church leaders on the importance of not becoming absorbed in politics. According to Ellen White, Adventists are not to give their minds to political issues. God's people walk contrary to His will when they mix up with politics, and those who commence this work reveal that they are not taught and led by God, but by that spirit which creates contention and strife and every evil work.⁸¹ Ellen White stated distinctly that it was not safe for Adventists to take sides in politics. She asserted that Adventists have no work to do in arguing or writing or taking any part whatsoever in politics. In her view, God will be dishonored by those who play any part in politics

⁸⁰ Ellen White, Letters 92, (1899)

⁸¹ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases Vol. 3*, (162-209), (Silver Spring: Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 1990), 41.

Encounter between different opinions have shaped the political history of the Seventh-day Adventist church right from its inception. The church being international in nature operates under different categories of political system. In the U.S.A. where the church was started, the system of governance is democracy; it is the same in some countries in Europe. In most countries in the Orient as well as some in Africa there is some semblance of democracy. The church has presence also in countries where authoritarianism is used as a system of governance. The baffling question lingering in the minds of some concerned Adventists is that, can the Adventist get involved in an autocratic governance? How safe will it be for Seventh-day Adventist to join a repressive government? For an example a government that uses violence and repression to achieve absolute power. Basically Adventists believe that all governments are ordained by God and every citizen of the country is expected to obey the laws of the land except when it contravenes or comes in direct collision with the law of God. Adventist cautiously opposed governance when their vital interests are at stake

According to Leif Kr. Tobiassen, to be able to comprehend fully the import of Ellen Whites' statements on politics, one needs to appreciate the meaning and the difference between these two words 'political' and 'politics'. Tobiassen defines politics and political in the following two ways: first he defines Politics as "The science and art of government." And secondly he defines Political as: pertaining to polity, or politics, or the conduct of government; again it also pertains to those who make a business of politics, or politicians in their partisan activities; as, he is actuated by merely political motives." Again he explains that, "Politics frequently has unpleasant connotations. The use of the term in the bad sense implies a milieu to scheming and manipulations. In which of the two senses did Ellen G. White use the terms politics and political? Did she intend to condemn

only partisan strife and scheming, dishonest manipulations? Did she intend to discourage orderly exercise of the vote and serious study of political science?⁸²

After coming into existence for over 150 years, the relationship of the church with politics is more disputed today more than ever before. Some Seventh-day Adventists have the perception that the church has no political role to play. This view is predicated on the notion that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. This notwithstanding, other Adventists insist that both individuals and the church have uncontested socio-political tasks to improve the living conditions of human beings. Some Christians go steps further to claim that Christianity's foremost task is to work toward creating a Christian political order that will result in establishing the kingdom of God on earth. In between, these two schools of thought, there runs a whole gamut of views.

Many Christians have, for long, considered politics as no go area. For them the distinction is drawn between "church" and the "world," this implies that politics, economics, science, technology, and mass media are part of "the world." The Christian faith is thus restricted to individual piety, to church events, to family prayer and Bible study. From this perspective, a Christian's engagement in politics is perceived as a step into the secular world where Christian principles may apply to one's personal behavior but not to the structures and functions of the political order or the corporation. W. Binzer, an Adventist minister during the time of the Nazi war in Germany did posit that the Lord wishes that Adventists bypass political question. He claims Adventists cannot give their voice to a political party. In such circumstance, silence is golden.⁸³ In short, the church must be the church, not another sociological agency. Her most promising approach to changing society is to change individuals. In so doing, Seventh-day Adventists fulfill on a

⁸² Leif Kr. Tobiassen, Adventists and Politics (Part II), *Ministry*, (1968), 32.

⁸³ W. Binzer, Politische Erziehung der Jugend, *Aller Diener*, Vol. 5, nr.2 (1930). 42

binary tract, God's mission in the world: evangelism and service.

Bert B. Beach also warns Adventist against the danger of politicization of both individuals and the church. He intones Adventists, just like all other Christians, can be deceived by politics. Success in politics often involves compromise, conceit, hypocrisy, and playing partisan roles. Sometimes political responsibilities compel politicians to perform a role that may not square with their own Christian conviction. For example Adventists are not to engage in any secular work on the Sabbath (Saturday) but many Adventist politicians have been seen on television openly defiling what they claim is biblical injunction. This act under normal circumstances would have attracted sanctions from the church authorities. Beach postulates that, Politics is a hard task master and can become all-absorbing, and Christian politicians walk a difficult tightrope. They must circumvent becoming polluted by political activism that can downgrade their efforts to a level where it seems there is no God involved in human affairs. Beach continues to alert Christians about the increasing danger of politicization of churches. This has led not only to church involvement in political activity, but also to the interpretation of the Christian faith and gospel in terms of political values. The result has been that in certain segments of church society, secular ideas have been permitted to mould Christian worldview so much that, there is little difference between the secular and the sacred. It is sad to see that often Christian attitudes are the same as those of society in general. The church must never (and never is a strong word!) identify herself with a particular political party or political system. Such identification may bring about a temporary privilege, but it will inevitably sweep the church down the slippery political slope toward the evangelistic and prophetic paralysis.⁸⁴

Some Adventists clergy interviewed argued in alongside the views of Beach that; they also reiterated the danger of politicizing both the church and individual members.

⁸⁴ Bert B. Beach, Christian and Politics, *Dialogue*, vol. 9, no. 1, (1997). 5,6

Their point of view is that Adventists, can be deceived by politics like any other person. For them, achievement in politics often entails compromise, exalting oneself, hiding weaknesses, and playing partisan roles. At times, it becomes necessary to accept an expedient course that may not square with one's best moral convictions. This has led not only to church involvement in political activity, but also to the interpretation of the Christian faith and gospel in terms of political values.⁸⁵

Regardless of the above statement, Seventh-day Adventist church is aware of biblical characters in civil affairs. Joseph exercised political power in Egypt. Similarly, Daniel was elevated to occupy a higher civil power in Babylon. Adventists with other religious and secular organizations have joined to exert influence over civil authorities to stop slavery and to fight the cause of religious freedom. Religious influence has not always resulted in the betterment of society, however. Religious persecution, religious wars, and the numerous examples of social and political suppression perpetrated at the behest of religious people, confirms the dangers that exist when the church flirts with the state on politics.

The development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has resulted in a corresponding growth in their ability to exert political impact in some parts of the world. This political influence is not in itself problematic. Indeed, Adventists may properly aspire to serve in positions of civil leadership. Nevertheless, Adventist are cautioned to be mindful of the dangers that are associated with religious influence on civil affairs and avoid such dangers. These perceived dangers have informed the entrenched position taken by some section of the Adventists to resist any attempt for members to get involved in politics.

⁸⁵ Emmanuel Osei Mensah, Interview: a clergy of the Seventh-day Adventist church on the 15th of May 2015, not real name of interviewee.

According to Seventh-day Adventists church's guidelines to politics, politicians who are members of the church, who feel called to be politicians and civic leaders, must endeavor to adhere to the highest standards of Christian behaviour. As modern-day Daniels, God will lead them and their fidelity to Him will inspire their community. Throughout the history of the People of God, the Lord has seen fit to delegate individuals to represent His message to the rulers of the time. Abraham, Joseph, and Moses all dealt directly with the Pharaoh of their time. Esther's presence in the court of King Ahasuerus resulted in saving God's people from destruction. Daniel was first a representative to the Babylonian Empire, and later to Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede. Paul carried the gospel to the ruling class of the Roman Empire. Similarly, many of the great reformers stood before the rulers of their day to advocate their position. We would therefore be remiss if we were not to endeavor to represent Christ to the leaders of this world in our current time. Adventists claim they are called to be a voice for liberty of conscience to this world. Integral to this mission is the development of relationships with temporary rulers. In order to do this, the Church appoints representatives to governments and international bodies that have influence over the protection of religious liberty. Adventists view this work as essential to their gospel mission and as a result they ensure that it is accorded the resources necessary and representative of the highest order are appointed to represent the church.

Churches in Ghana have been active in some aspects of Ghanaian politics, particularly the mainline churches, Pentecostals as well as Charismatic churches. Their involvements usually take the form of organizing prayer and fasting programmes to support the electioneering process. They also help in organizing peace rallies to help maintain peace and order before, during and after the elections in Ghana. The churches also provide advice when necessary to all stakeholders in the elections. They offer

advocacy roles, give training and education, and again monitor the elections in various locations in the country. Whenever there is the need, the churches give their opinions on a government policy in the form of commendations or critique.⁸⁶ The Seventh-day Adventist church from observation, engages in all the activities described above except in monitoring of elections.

The role of the Charismatic churches in Ghanaian politics differs from the mainline churches. The charismatic leaders turn to spiritualized politics in Ghana. To them politics involves the metaphysical realm and goes beyond secular forms. Paul Gifford emphasizes that this tendency of spiritualization characterizes the new churches.⁸⁷

Adventism thrives because of the urgency of its message, argues church historian George Knight. Countless missionaries have crossed the earth to warn of Jesus' imminent arrival. "When that vision is gone," Knight writes, "Adventism will become just another toothless denomination that happens to be a little more peculiar in some of its beliefs than others." Consequently, the SDA Church is careful to avoid the dangerous examples of other groups, who have become official and unofficial adjuncts to certain political parties.⁸⁸ As is the case with many denominations in Ghana.

3.3.1 Holding of Political Office

The Adventist point of view on politics is founded on the teachings of the Bible and the instruction from the Spirit of Prophecy (the writing of Ellen G. White); their worldview with regards to public affairs is shaped by their understanding of Bible prophecy and their philosophy of history. Tobiassen thinks that when it comes to political

⁸⁶ Fredrick Acheampong, *Religion and Politics in Ghana's 4th Republican Election: 1992-2008*. (Mphil. Thesis Submitted to the University of Ghana, Accra, 2010), 3.

⁸⁷ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing economy* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004), 165.

⁸⁸ George Knight, *Knight's Law applied to Leadership, Ministry*, (July/August, 2005), 27.

question, each Adventist must make up his own mind after individual consideration of the problem in the light of his own study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy instruction.⁸⁹ He counsels Adventists that in their attitude to and possible participation in public affairs, they must ever remain intelligently independent, always fully an Adventist. For him, the Adventist needs also to be well educated in the Adventist way of life. Ellen White explains that becoming an Adventist may mean change of opinions: Adventists are not to compromise principle by yielding to the opinions and prejudices which they may have encouraged before becoming Adventists. For her, the word of the Lord is to be their guide. Any connection with infidels and unbelievers that would identify believers with them, is forbidden by the Word of God.⁹⁰

Holding public office not always necessarily corrupting: One legitimate purpose in life may be participation in certain public affairs: for Adventists with such aspiration this is the Counsel of Ellen White:

Dear youth, what is the aim and purpose of your life? Are you ambitious for education that you may have a name and position in the world? Have you thoughts that you dare not express, that you may one day stand upon the summit of intellectual greatness; that you may sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation? There is nothing wrong in these aspirations.⁹¹

Obviously this statement is given authenticity with several biblical characters who at one stage in their lives were part of the governance systems of their times. One such example is the case of Daniel which is tinted with political enounces. It reveals the fact that a businessman is not necessarily a sharp, policy man. He can be instructed by God at every step. Daniel, while prime minister of the kingdom of Babylon, was a prophet of God, receiving the light of heavenly inspiration.

⁸⁹ Leif Kr. Tobiassen, *Adventist and Politics, Ministry*, (1968), 30.

⁹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, (Washington D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1915), 392, 394.

⁹¹ Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Education*, (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1928), 82.

According to Tobiassen, the Adventist approach to civic and public affairs is that the genuine Adventist is a citizen of the heavenly kingdom, established upon principles outlined in the Bible. Therefore the Christian is a converted man, an ambassador from God to men. The Christian's chief program is the spiritual gospel, which links man to Christ and liberates man from his dependence upon social and civic measures. The true Adventist is not of this world; he is swiftly on his way out. Yet, while passing through, he seeks to attract other men to the heavenly kingdom by translating its divine principles into human action. As a part of this, the true Christian will aid in the proper promotion of sensible plans for the extension of health, for the realization of religious and other proper freedoms, for the relief of want and fear, and for the pacific stability of the social and political order. Peace among men and peace among nations are among his personal concerns. Justice is one of his aims.⁹² The conclusion would not be warranted that it is God's design to promote His kingdom today by His servants seeking public office; the statements indicate, however, that God's people cannot fully ignore the public aspects of life. Adventist education must pay some attention to public affairs.

Is it proper for a Christian to hold public office, either elective or appointive? How can Christians run for office without fracturing the church of which they are a part? Can a Christian politician really do much in politics that is truly Christian? Do Christian politicians have any right to allow their conscience to override the majority view of their constituents? Unfortunately, there are no easy answers to these questions. Christian believers, however, are admonished to be careful in seeking a Christian response. Cases in Scripture, such as Joseph, Daniel, and Nehemiah, indicate that a believer can effectively occupy a position in secular government without sacrificing or compromising moral and

⁹² Leif Kr. Tobiassen, *Ministry, Adventist and Politics*, (Washington D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1968), 32.

religious principle. One must, however, candidly examine the motive for seeking political office. Is one's motivation in politics jeered towards the improvement of the livelihood of people or a motive of fame, power, economic benefit, or self-aggrandizement? Perhaps the most complex aspect, however, involves the matter of identification with a particular political party, given that the vast majority of elected positions and many civil appointments involve partisan affiliation. Although one may always choose to run as independent, the chance of breaking into government without partisan recognition in many cases is but marginal. Many Seventh-day Adventists believe, that the desire to address injustices or a believer's decision to affiliate with a political party, should be qualified by members. For them a Seventh-day Adventist politician simply cannot make an irrevocable commitment to anything that is not authentically Christian. Furthermore, he must be sensitive to the mission of the church and refrain from partisan words or actions that might damage its mission or fracture its community.

3.3.2 Voting

This section of the research takes a look at the appropriateness of the Seventh-day Adventist to voting for individuals and on specific issues. The Christian scripture does not address this problem directly as the system of governance in those days was not democracy. Christians will do well to seek knowledge as to how to handle this complex issue of voting which is the key of selecting leaders to occupy positions of governance in democratic nations. The Christian community has been sharply divided upon the role Christians should play in the political process. Many Christian believers see their involvement in politics as a civil and patriotic responsibility; others believe that they have an individual responsibility to vote for the best candidate, and upon issues of significance, while yet hesitating to join in an orchestrated political thrust. On the other hand, others

avoid political involvement of any kind, declining to register and vote, perceiving the political process as of the world, not productive to the hastening of the spread of the gospel. A section of the Christian community argue that when God said Christians should pray for governments, God did not mean Christians should vote. Consequently, voting for candidates will amount to Christians placing their confidence in men. The Christian supporting governments with prayer does not include the exercising of franchise.

Over the years, some members of the Seventh-day Adventist fraternity have taken the counsel of Ellen White to mean that Adventists should not vote altogether. They claim, to do so, would make them responsible for the sins of those they voted into office. This may explain why the issue of voting continues to ignite considerable controversy among Adventists today. The matter of voting actually stems back to the early days of the church. It is not a new question. At that time, most Adventists believed that Jesus was coming soon. God's kingdom was an everlasting kingdom, not an earthly one. This led some to believe, however, that voting was not worthwhile, and the efforts to advance and preserve religious freedom-both in America and abroad, was equally unnecessary. Surprisingly, this sentiment was expressed by some of the prominent Adventist pioneers. The Christian will abstain from supporting political groups by voting or by membership. A Christian's vote has already been given to the Lord Jesus Christ as King. In an interview with Kwame Ofosu Adu in one of the churches in Accra this is what he had to say:

From the context, I do not believe Ellen White meant voting was always right but, voting for a cause, not an individual, should be done. I don't see it as a broad indication that she approved of politics, considering what she wrote in other places about the subject for an example she admonishes Christians to avoid contention.⁹³

Roger Coon confirms the above statement by asserting in 2003 to the effect that, there's nothing in the Bible or Ellen White's writings that compels believers to vote for one party or another, or to hold conservative or liberal political views. The issue here has to do with the need to avoid partisanship. Study the issues, vote for the person and not the party. Ellen White discourages an involvement in highly partisan politics that would tend to divide members from each other. That is a potential problem. It can also disrupt relationships in private conversation. Ellen white continues to issue warning to Adventist not to become mixed up with political questions. She admonishes them to keep their voting to themselves.

Bert B. Beach collaborate these facts by arguing that, many Christians perceiving the danger in party politics, and the vicious loyalty to party platform, subsequently avoid either joining a political party, or voting along political lines. According to him for the reasons enumerated above, the Seventh-day Adventist would never join or promote a political party. They believe that no political party fully promotes godly interests, so the gospel commission would be weakened by aligning themselves to worldly minded political parties. However, Christians do have a responsibility to vote on moral issues. How far they intrude into the political process is a matter of judgment. Yet, it is within the Christian responsibility to do all that is possible to help in these troublous times.⁹⁴ Most Adventists would vote but find it an anathema for its clergy to instruct politicians or the electorate on how to vote.

⁹³ Kwame Oforu Adu, Interview: on January 23, 2014, the name of the respondent is pseudonym as the researcher has no permission to use his real name.

⁹⁴ Bert B. Beach, The Christian and politics, *Dialogue*, 9:1, (1997), 5.

Robert L. Odom contends that as a church, the Seventh-day Adventist does not support one political party. It does not tell her members for whom they should vote. The denomination respects the right of each member to vote as his conscience and duty shall dictate to him. The Adventist church endeavours to keep politics out of their parishes, schools, preaching, and teaching, according to Odom. The reason for this is that, the church membership is opened to people of various nationalities and political persuasion; living under many forms of civil government throughout the world. Therefore it is incumbent on the church to safeguard the unity of the denomination by separating from politics. He admonished Seventh-day Adventists that whatever opinions they may entertain with regards to casting their vote in political questions, they are not to proclaim it by pen or voice. Adventists need to be silent upon questions which have no relation to the church's mission, which is the proclamation of the gospel. No Adventist has any obligation to publish their political preferences in papers, or to speak of them in the congregation, when the people assemble to hear the Word of the Lord. It is obvious that he sees politics as a no go area except on specific areas and specific occasions; thus he continues to warn that, Adventist are not to mix up with political questions. He called on Adventists to separate from politics by being not unequally yoked together with unbelievers in political strife, or bind with them in their attachments. There is no safe ground in which they can stand and work together. The loyal and the disloyal have no equal ground on which to meet. "He who breaks one precept of the commandments of God is a transgressor of the whole law. Keep your voting to yourself. Do not feel it your duty to urge everyone to do as you do."⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Robert L. Odom, Shall We Vote, Review and Herald, vol., 141, no. 36, (1964). 6

3.4 CONTEMPORARY ADVENTIST IN POLITICS

It can be problematic for Seventh-day Adventists to attain equilibrium when it comes to politics. The Adventists Church maintains a longstanding neutral position on candidates running for elected office, and that can prove challenging for church members who also happen to be politicians. Despite the difficulties, some Adventist have ventured into political career and it has not always been easy to straddle that line-particularly when members of the church often look cynically at politics.

Benjamin Carson, a retired Seventh-day Adventist neurosurgeon-turned-presidential-candidate, for the Republican Party in the U.S.A., has become a polarizing figure among Adventists. While some in the denomination laud his candidacy and his remarkable personal biography that propelled him to fame, others feel his deeply partisan rhetoric since turning to politics negates his legacy as a physician. On May 4, Carson officially announced his candidacy as a Republican hopeful, and ever since that time Adventists are divided over his candidature. What is more worrying is that, shortly after he announced his candidature, the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists issued a statement asking Church members not to engage in politicking under the auspices of the denomination on behalf of the first ever Adventist presidential candidate; Ben Carson.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a longstanding position of not supporting or opposing any candidate for elected office. According to them this position is based both on their historical position of separation of church and state and the applicable federal law relating to the church's tax-exempt status. While individual church members are free to support or oppose any candidate for office as they see fit, it is crucial that the church as an institution remain neutral on all candidates for office. The statement sought to remind members and leaders at all levels that the Adventist Church has long advocated for a clear

separation of church and state, and seeks to defend the religious liberties of people of all faiths. In Uganda, two Adventist women were appointed by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni to head two ministries in his government. This follows a cabinet reshuffle that was announced in the morning of Friday May 24, 2013. The two included Information and National Guidance Minister Rosemary Namayanja Nsereko and Lands Minister Idah Erios Nantaba. The report continued that the two, gave Seventh-day Adventists a share of 2.59% out of 77 ministers of the total cabinet ministers Uganda. After the appointment Namayanja made the following statement to Adventist about the involvement in politics:

I request Seventh-day Adventist believers to join politics so that they can take up positions of leadership in this country... Yes people say that politics is a dirty game, but it becomes dirty because those who know God have not entered politics to bring to right what has gone wrong,” she adds... At times people call me to preside over functions on Saturdays, but when they realize that I can’t make it on Sabbath, they alter the programs; I think this good and brings to a limelight the God we believe,⁹⁶

This is not the first time an Adventist has been elevated to a higher political position in Ugandan politics. Apart from these two women who are now icons of the Adventist church in Ugandan politics, the late Dr. Samson Babi Mululu Kisekka became a vice President and Steven Kabuye former Entebbe Mayor.

The data on Adventist politicians in Ghana is hard to come by; however, from information gleaned from respondents there are a few Adventists involved in Ghanaian politics. Adventist politicians in Ghana are across the various political divide. In chapter two of this studies, reference was made to Komla Agbla Gbedemah as the first known Seventh-day Adventist to have engaged in Ghanaian politics. Gbedemah was a strong ally of Kwame Nkrumah the first president of Ghana after independence. Gbedemah is said to

⁹⁶ Godfrey Babi Kimera, Central Uganda Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, (2010-2012) via cucadmin@cucsda.org, retrieved December 3, 2016

have played a pivotal role in the formation of the C.P.P. He became finance minister in the Kwame Nkrumah regime. The irony is that when he died in July 11, 1998 he was not a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church. It is believed that after Gbedemah, there have been several Adventist politicians whose records the church does not have.

However, a new networking group has been formed by Adventist politicians to make things a little less isolating for political figures worldwide. This new networking group was launched to help Adventist politicians to build a stronger support system. The World Adventist Public Officials Association, organized its maiden general meeting in San Antonio. It brought together international Adventist politicians from countries like Jamaica, Brazil, and the Philippines. Many of these leaders occupy various positions in their respective countries.

Alfred Oko Vanderpuije was born on November 4, 1955. He is a Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist politician from Jamestown Accra. He was appointed Mayor of Accra by President John Atta Mills in 2009. He is a member of the ruling party: the National Democratic Congress.

3.5 ADVENTIST WOMEN AND POLITICS IN GHANA

The role of women in the Seventh-day Adventist church dates back to the origin of the church. Vance intones that the history of the S.D.A. church is replete with women who made major contribution towards the development of the church. Some of them did their work underground; while others were on the frontline occupying official position of leadership.⁹⁷ One such women is Ellen G. White who is one of the co-founders of the church.

⁹⁷ Laura L. Vance, *Adventism in Crisis*, 188

From the beginning of the church however, women's role were defined as being reserved to that of a homemaker, a wife and a mother among other things. Vance asserts further that, in the 19th Century, the existing norm about an ideal woman was the one who took care of her children, nurtured her husband and maintained her home. They were not encouraged by the church to engage in activities outside the domestic sphere. This notwithstanding, Ellen White admonishes Adventist women to take an intelligent interest in public affairs: she argues that, it is inapt for women (and men) to exercise their political duties unless they have intelligently understood the rudiments of politics; and that such understanding and intelligence should be acquired:

There are speculations as to woman's rights and duties in regard to voting. Many are in no way disciplined to understand the bearing of important questions. . . . Such women are not prepared to intelligently take a prominent position in political matters. They are mere creatures of fashion and circumstance. Let this order of things be changed.⁹⁸

The women manifesto for Ghana, 2003 expresses confidence in the law as a tool for ensuring gender equality. The convention demands that, all forms of discriminations against women should be stopped by application of the law. The article 3 of this convention stipulates that parties are to ensure the full development and advancement of women to equal participation with men in the field of politics, social studies, economics, and cultural studies. The convention states that appropriate measures be taken to ensure women's participation and this decision must be backed by law.

Even though the right to participate in politics is incontestable right of every citizen of Ghana, women (Seventh-day Adventist women) involvement in politics can only be described as abysmal. For about half a century since Ghana gained independence

⁹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1875), 565.

from colonial rule, the political scene has been dominated by men to the detriment of women. Majority of government decision makers and policy makers are males notwithstanding the fact that politics is cultural universal. The number of women in policy making position in governance and statutory bodies is very negligible. And even as at present, there is no known Adventist woman involved in politics either as a legislature or executive arm of government. George P. Hagan thinks that gender role perception is born out of cultural beliefs; and that these beliefs influence the “role choices” that men and women consider appropriate to them as individuals. Hagan alludes to the fact that, women in Ghana are breaking barriers in many fields of human endeavour according to their individual abilities. In contemporary era, Ghana can boast of women in all the major professions: there are women lawyers, doctors, engineers, pilots, university lecturers, bankers, accountants, administrators and what have you.⁹⁹ Some respondents think that the Seventh-day Adventist women is still not measuring up to standard when it comes to the issue of political involvement. For example, one woman who expressed high interest in politics lamented on the lack of interest of the Adventist women in politics. She thinks that it is the culture of the church that has made Adventist women timid to venture into politics.¹⁰⁰ B. R. Hergenhahn, argues that a person’s culture to a large extent determines what is considered proper in his social life. The issue of marriage, raising of family, political and religious institutions, education, justice and the way people of other cultures are viewed are all influenced by culture.¹⁰¹ It is easy for women who have achieved higher education, professional qualifications and women who earn higher income to make choices in respect of roles. Usually such women are independent in their decision making.

⁹⁹ George P. Hagan, *Gender: Evolving Roles and Perceptions*, in *Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, Proceeding 2004*, (Accra: Black Mask Ltd., 2006). 47

¹⁰⁰ Esther Thomson interview July 5, 2015, this is not the real name of the respondent, the writer had no permission to use her real name hence the pseudo name.

¹⁰¹ B.R. Hergenhahn, *An Introduction to Theories of Personality*, 3 ed., (New Jersey: Prince-Hall, Inc., 1980), 4.

There are many suggestion given by scholars on what motivates people to engage in politics. For an example, Sigmund Freud, B.F. Skinner, John Dollard, and Neal Miller all do agree that it is hedonism (that is the tendency to seek pleasure and avoid pain) that motivate people to behave in a certain manner. On the other hand Carl Jung, Karen Horney, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers postulate that self-actualization or the impulse edge to realize ones full potential motivates people to behave in a certain way. Furthermore, Alfred Adler suggests that strife for superiority is responsible for people behaving in a certain manner. Additionally, Rollo May and George Kelly think that a search for meaning or reduction of uncertainty is what motivates people for political involvement. Finally Edward Wilson and David Barash postulate that the desire to create and maintain a compatibility between biological nature and culture motivate people to behave in certain manner in politics.¹⁰²

Jean Jacques Rousseau, argues that women as precious half of the republic should only limit themselves to domestic government and not mix themselves with politics. He assigned women important role as mothers who educate their sons in the virtues of citizenship; but they themselves are excluded from the status of citizens. Also in the civic-republic thought of Aristotle, women were considered as political beings whose reserve was the private sphere of the family household. Political virtues were connected with maleness; consequently, within Christian theories it was anathema to place women in the same pedestrian as men. This is because for Aristotle, women were incapable of natural thought, thus disqualified from being political citizens. W. Brown collaborates the views of Rousseau and Aristotle in the following statement:

“More than any other kind of human activity, politics has borne an explicitly masculine identity. It has been more exclusively limited to men than any other realm of

¹⁰² Hergenhahn, *An Introduction to Theories of Personality*, 3

endeavour and has been more intensely, self-conscious masculine than most other social practice.”¹⁰³ Olympic de Gouges disagrees with Rousseau and Aristotle by fighting for the natural rights of women. She advocated for equal rights and equal protection for all sexes. In addition she also demanded equal obligations, equal participation and equal share in wealth for all gender. According to Richard T. Schaefer, sexism is considered the most serious of all barriers that militate against women participation in politics.

The stereotyped images of women formed in most cultures in Ghana have images that suggest negativism, weakness and even inborn stupidity. Statements such as, "don't cry like a woman! Only women are cowards! Speak like a man! A woman sells tobacco and not the gun powder! When a woman buys a gun she keeps it in a man's room and so on, are so deep-seated in people's psychological make-up so much that they hardly notice their derogatory connotations. Society is synthesised to believe that while men are the thinkers, scientists, politicians and bread winners, women on the other hand are the home makers, workers and the artists.

As at 1960, it was still believed that women were unqualified to contribute to the development of a world dominated by men. Women were still considered to be under the protection of men, their role was to be fulfilled only through raising children, and to function best within the confines of the home. As a result, women were precluded from economic, and political matters substantially less than those of men. The social ideology legitimized these disadvantages in a manner consistent with earlier interpretations of women's nature and role. In the second half of the twentieth century, a woman's world was

¹⁰³ W. Brown, *Manhood and Politics*, (Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, NJ, 1988) in Ghana Academy for Art and Sciences, *Proceeding 2004*, 63

confined to her own body and beauty, the charming of a man, the bearing of babies, and the physical care and serving of husband, children, and home.¹⁰⁴

Women's political importance was as wives and mothers to the boys and men who were leading or would be leading the nation. Some informants think that, although women have contributed tremendously to the political history of Ghana, their contributions have not been adequately acknowledged. One Adventist woman politician retorted in an interview that the lack of acknowledgement of women has resulted in the lack of role models that characterizes women's participation in all spheres of public life. Women must therefore, seize the opportunity of the challenge and strive to improve their overall position in society by vying for positions of prominence in society.

Scholars give several reasons women are under-represented in politics aside the frequent international and national commitments to equality. Even a casual glance at the current composition of political decision-makers in any region provide evidence that women including Seventh-day Adventists in Ghana still face numerous obstacles in articulating and shaping their own destiny. Among the political obstacles that militate against women in political involvement, according to A. Thanikodi and M. Sugirtha is first of all what they termed as the prevalence of the "masculine model" of political life and of elected governmental bodies. Men dominate the political arena; men formulate the rules of the political game; and men define the standards for evaluation. Furthermore, political life is organized according to male norms and values, and in some cases, even male lifestyles. For example, the political model is based on the idea of "winners and losers", competition and confrontation, rather than on mutual respect, collaboration and consensus building. This environment is alien to women, both to their nature and to their experiences. The

104 Jane Gruenebaum, *Women in Politics*, Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science, Vol. 34, No. 2, *The Power to Govern: Assessing Reform in the United States* (1981), pp. 104-120 via <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1173794>, retrieved 10-11-2015

existence of this male-dominated model results in either women rejecting politics altogether or rejecting male-style politics. Thus, when women do participate in politics, they tend to do so in small numbers.

The other political hindrance they make mention of is the lack of party support, such as limited financial support for women candidates; limited access to political networks; and the prevalence of double standards. Women play important roles in campaigning and mobilizing support for their parties, yet they rarely occupy decision-making positions in these structures. Less than eleven percent of party leaders world-wide are women. Although political parties possess resources for conducting election campaigns, women do not benefit from these resources. The selection and nomination process within political parties is also biased against women. The absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership in general, and for orienting young women toward political life in particular is one of the obstacles faced by women. Thus other Socio-economic obstacles like poverty and unemployment, Illiteracy and limited access to education and choice of professions, the dual burden of domestic tasks and professional obligations also impede women's participation in politics.

Often it is supposed to be unacceptable, or even shameful for women to be open about their feminine nature. In fact, the more authoritative and "manly" a woman is, the more she corresponds to the undeclared male rules of the game. That is why women politicians in general, have to overcome this difficulty of feeling uncomfortable in the political field as though they are somewhere they do not belong, behaving in ways that are not natural to them. It's not being emotional, it's being intelligent. But women don't have the right to be weak, to show their emotions- because they live in a time when to be in politics, they have to behave more like a man. Lack of confidence in themselves is one of

the main reasons for women's under representation in formal political institutions including parliaments, governments and political parties. With confidence and determination, women can reach the highest levels in the political process. That is why women should believe in themselves and should do away with the widespread perception that men have to be their leaders. Women are equal to and have the same potential as men, but only they can fight for their rights. Women are very good campaigners, organizers and support-mobilizers, but they rarely contest parliamentary posts. A certain culture of fear prevents women from contesting elections and from participating in political life.

This is the true state in which women in Ghana find themselves. The Seventh-day Adventist woman who braves the storm to engage in politics will have traditional and cultural hurdles to cross. In view of these disturbing situations facing women all over the world, the Adventist woman in Ghana inclusive, the United Nations Organisation made the following suggestions to strategically increase women's participation in decision-making. These include actions to be taken by Governments, national bodies, the private sector, political parties, trade unions, employers, organizations, sub regional and regional bodies, non-governmental and international organizations and educational institutions.

3.6 ADVENTIST INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL CAUSE

Many Seventh-day Adventists believe that, the teachings of Jesus have a significant socio-political fallout when lived by the Christian community. In their view Christ offered good news for the poor, liberty for the oppressed, and "life in all its fullness. Therefore, contemporary Adventists, following the example of Christians throughout the centuries, must acknowledge a social responsibility resting on their shoulders. John Wesley Taylor V argues that, Adventist cannot remain followers of Christ and still ignore

the pressing needs of society.¹⁰⁵ Adventist pioneers preached not only the gospel of personal salvation, but were also concerned about alcoholics, the slaves, oppressed women, and the educational needs of children and youth. It has been argued by Carl Marx and other likeminded people that, religion is an element that dulls human will to work for socio-economic and political as well as transformational changes they so need in their lives. Marx further posit that 'religion is an opium of the masses, the heart of the heartless soul.'¹⁰⁶ Betrand Russel was more specific with his critique, narrowing it down to Christianity he postulates that, the Christian religion in its organized form is opposed to every progress of human life. For Russel, Christian religion has been and still is the principal enemy to moral progress in the world.¹⁰⁷

Several Christians who have society at heart think that it makes sense for Carl Max and persons who agree with him to critique traditional Christianity because it has failed in contributing to social and physical needs of the people they minister to. For these critics, Christianity is irrational, inhuman, and oppose to every progress in human life. Marx was consumed with passion to bring an end to exploitations and oppression of the poor, and this can hardly be faulted by Christians.

The activities of some contemporary Christian churches lend credence to the views of the critics in accusing the churches of being insensitive to the plight of the needy in society. They rather concentrate on how to extract the hard earned moneys from the already impoverished members they preside over. There is barely no Sunday or Saturday where the congregation is not called upon to make one contribution or another. Some of these contributions are funeral donations, welfare contributions, collection alongside the

¹⁰⁵ John Wesley Taylor V, *The Christian and Politics Peril or Opportunity*, *College and University Dialogue*, vol. 22, # 1, (AMiCUS, Silver Spring, 2010). 12

¹⁰⁶ Karl Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology 1947, and the Communist Manifesto* (Peking Press, 1963). 18

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Ignatus Buabeng, *The Church-State relationship in Ghana Under Rawlings Democratic Era 1992-2000*, (MPhil. Thesis, University of Ghana, 2010). 91

day one was born (Kofi ne Ama), project giving, camp meeting contributions in addition to one giving of tithe and offerings. These contributions are just but a few that are scaring many deprived from attending church services regularly.

Some Adventists interviewed assert that, as Adventists, they have both the right and duty to use earthly citizenship to keep the church free to fulfill her divine mandate and help individuals to meet crying social needs. This is in the view of Knight and Walls presentation of a holistic mission (missiological quadrennial and five marks of mission particularly the last three of it).

According to Taylor V, Christians are expected to address pressing social needs such as providing assistance to the economically deprived, bringing freedom to the oppressed, protecting the weak and the powerless, providing a voice for the marginalized and neglected. Again as stewards of the earth, Christians are expected to protect creation and improve the lives of the inhabitants of the earth. Feeding the hungry and meeting the needs of the sick are important missionary activities. Furthermore, Taylor avers that, it is important for the Adventists to use their influence to raise the awareness of society about their rights and again become catalyst for action. In his view, Adventists have it as a duty to redress wrongs in communities so that the disadvantaged may regain their self-sufficiency and self-worth¹⁰⁸.

However, paying attention to individuals alone to the neglect of the larger society is in itself problematic. It is in this vein that Beach argues that Christianity is not a religion of individualism or insulated introversion, but a religion of community. Thus he maintains that, Christian gifts and virtues have social implications and responsibility. Commitment to Adventist mission therefore involves commitment to all the people of the earth.¹⁰⁹ Some

¹⁰⁸ Taylor V, *The Christian and Politics Peril or Opportunity*, (2010). 12

¹⁰⁹ Beach, *Christianity and Politics*, 5,6

people even think that it is not enough to operate ambulances that will convey casualties of destructive societal structure, but also to try to change these bad structures themselves by putting up alternatives to existing evil. It is through this engagement that the church will be fulfilling their mission to the hurting world. Christian socio-political obligation is built on two biblical grounds. First, the Christian philosophy of Creation. Christians believe God created “ex nihilo” a universe and entrusted human beings with the dominion and stewardship of the world. Stewardship entails both responsibility and accountability for the domain over which one has jurisdiction. Human beings are created in the image of God. The parameters of human responsibility for service depend on the biblical concept of human nature. The Christian understanding is that men and women have a responsible role to play in radiating the future. This human potential gives purpose, direction, and optimism to Christians serving others in a communal setting.

3.7 THE ADVENTIST AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Ellen G. white, one of the cofounders of the Seventh-day Adventist church, made a profound statement about the attitude of Christians, particularly Seventh-day Adventist, in addressing the ills of society she said:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men- men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall. But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature--the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ White, *Education*, 57

This is obviously an admonition to Adventists to eschew passivity. Furthermore, Adventist believers are encouraged to speak out against wrongs in higher levels of society or end up to certain extent sharing the guilt of those who commit the wrongs. Additionally, Adventists are urged not to withdraw from socio-political activities. It is clear from the above statement of Ellen White that, Christians have a responsibility where moral issues are involved. The believer must decide, whether a particular form of activism constitutes acceptable Christian service or lies outside the gospel mandate. Regardless of the particular issue, we also need to examine the form of activism. While Christians should avoid unethical or violent forms of political activism, there may be modes of activism that harmonize with the gospel.

A number of respondents interviewed, including veteran Pastor Samuel Adu Koranteng, are of the view that protecting or expanding the cause of Christ by human political and social activism, no matter how great or sincere the efforts, is not a Christian responsibility. For them, the Christian warfare is a spiritual battle waged against worldly ideologies and dogmas arrayed against God. Subsequently the only weapon needed to achieve victory over them is the weapon of Scripture. The question then is how do Christians then address the issues of indecency, vulgarity, lack of courtesy and respect for others, deceitfulness, self-indulgent materialism, and violence that is corroding society? To answer these questions Koranteng posit that, in the Christian's efforts to support what is good and wholesome, reject what is evil and corrupt, and make a profoundly positive impact on culture, the believer must use God's methods and maintain scriptural priorities.¹¹¹ Several Christians are engaging in social and political activism to coerce political authorities to succumb to social changes. The purpose of political activism is to create social upheaval that will put pressure on governments into changing the obnoxious

¹¹¹ Samuel Adu Koranteng, interviewed by the researcher in Accra, May 13, 2014

policies. Pressure groups produce the social tension necessary for political change. Political change may come after pressure groups bring enough tension to the nation and pressure on government to change her policies. When people are changed by the gospel, and they are renewed in Christ, they begin to see with fresh eyes what is wrong in society, because the gospel has taught them what is right. They cannot ignore what is happening around them, the gospel constrains them to stand up and protest against the evil in governmental places. George Kwame Darko, an elder in the Seventh-day Adventist church in one of the areas in Accra, expressed this sentiments in an interview with the researcher.¹¹²

Nonetheless, according to Dave Hunt, no matter how commendable the objectives of political activism, it has no one precedence in the entire Bible. He intones that nowhere in the Bible was political activism ever advocated for or used by God's people. There are numerous cases of civil disobedience in the Scripture, but it was never engaged in for the purpose of forcing political authorities to bow in to pressure. The Hebrew midwives, (Shiphrah and Puah) for example, disobeyed Pharaoh's edict and spared the lives of the male babies, even lying to cover up their "rescue operation." God was so pleased with their obedience to Him that their names, have been preserved in the Bible (Ex 1:15-22). This was, however, a matter of individual conscience before God, not an organized attempt to pressure the pagan Egyptians by mass demonstrations into adopting Israel's God-given morals.¹¹³

Dave Hunt argues that, contemporary Christian activism is far too narrow and selective. It addresses certain issues but ignores many equal or greater important ones. For Hunt, it is hypocritical for the church to protest what they perceive as the world's sins

¹¹² George Kwame Darko, Interviewed by researcher in Cape Coast, October 7, 2015

¹¹³ Dave Hunt, *Christian Activism* Christian Activism: Is It Biblical? (1989). via <http://www.thebereanall.org/content/christian-activism-it-biblical>, retrieved October 18, 2015.

while tolerating and even honouring within its ranks those who preach a false gospel and are the enemies of the cross of Christ. He therefore concludes that Christian activism" is not Christian. It represents a deviation from the straight path the church is to walk before the world. It can obscure the real issues, lead to compromise and unholy alliances, and divert time and effort that would better be channelled into the proclamation of the gospel. Hunt admonished Christians to weigh the demands upon their time and set priorities that will lead them to be fully engaged in rescuing souls for eternity.¹¹⁴

Conversely, John Wesley Taylor V argues that, the Christian values and beliefs, provide avenue to "do justly, to love mercy." This involves holding civil leaders accountable to the promises they have made and to their expected roles of establishing justice and maintaining civil order. This he avers includes the critique of government, as well as proposing strategies to enhance the well-being of society. It is a call to speak out against government policies that promote domination, oppression, or enslavement. It may require a stand against militant nationalism that ignores the brotherhood of all mankind. Perhaps, most significantly, it may entail advocacy, mediation, and conciliation.¹¹⁵ The Seventh-day Adventist Church, for example has issued statements on climate change, human cloning, racism, birth control, and same sex unions, as well as statements which have focused on specific political issues.¹¹⁶

The history of early Christian church is replete of many stories that lent credence to the use of political activism to fight social ills. Tom Minnery narrates a dramatic case to illustrate how early Christians in the Roman Empire took action by the use of protest to change the culture and the laws of their society. He recounts the role Christians played in ending the vicious and popular blood sport, the gladiatorial games of the Roman Empire.

¹¹⁴ Dave Hunt, Christian Activism

¹¹⁵ John Wesley Taylor V, The Christian and Politics: Peril or Opportunity, *Dialogue*, 22:1, (2010)

¹¹⁶ <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/index.html>, retrieved October 15, 2015

An eastern monk named Telemachus journeyed to the mighty city of Rome. He was determined to put a stop to the madness, armed only with faith in God and the belief that human beings made in His image should not tear each other to pieces like wild animals. One day he entered the Coliseum as a spectator, he bided his time in the stands until the fighting had raised the crowd to a frenzy. Then he leaped into the arena and separated the combatants. He was cut to pieces, but he won the day. The spectacles ceased when the emperor Honorius abolished them, moved by what had happened in the arena that day. The end of the gladiatorial contests was a significant victory for the emerging church against an entrenched barbaric custom.¹¹⁷

Gladiators (named after the Roman sword called the gladius) were mostly unfree individuals (condemned criminals, prisoners of war, slaves). Some gladiators were volunteers (mostly freedmen or very low classes of freeborn men) who chose to take on the status of a slave for the monetary rewards or the fame and excitement. Anyone who became a gladiator was automatically infamies, beneath the law and by definition not a respectable citizen. A small number of upper-class men and women did compete in the arena (though this was explicitly prohibited by law), but they did not live with the other gladiators and constituted a special, esoteric form of entertainment. In effect, gladiators are men who fight to death for the enjoyment of others. Gladiators probably originated as funeral games as the first recorded gladiatorial combat in Rome occurred when three pairs of gladiators fought to death during the funeral of Junius Brutus in 264 BCE. Gladiatorial games (called munera since they were originally “duties” paid to dead ancestors) gradually lost their exclusive connection with the funerals of individuals and became an important part of the public spectacles staged by politicians and emperors. Gladiatorial shows turned

¹¹⁷ Tom Minnery, *Why You Can't Stay Silent: A Biblical Mandate to Shape Our Culture* (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2001), 22.

war into a game, preserved an atmosphere of violence in time of peace, and functioned as a political theatre which allowed confrontation between rulers and ruled. Public killings of men and animals were a Roman rite, with overtones of religious sacrifice, legitimated by the myth that gladiatorial shows inspired the populace with 'a glory in wounds and a contempt of death. Mass execution of criminals was staged as an entertainment in the interval between the wild-beast show in the morning and the gladiatorial show of the afternoon.¹¹⁸ Why did all these believers take on these challenges throughout the ages? They did it because they were compelled by conscience. And while they badly wanted to win every soul to Christ, they also knew that they couldn't stand back and ignore evils in society around them in the meantime. They stepped out and took action to change their cultures and their laws for the sake of righteousness. For people of modern age, it is difficult to understand what could have motivated the Romans to watch the cruel spectacle of men fighting each other to the death.

3.8 SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MISSIOLOGY

The general history of the Seventh-day Adventist church can be understood as the history of emerging mission. Therefore to think of Seventh-day Adventist missiology means to consider her historical patterns of the expansion of the church and their theological background as well as present-day issues. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, which recently passed the 18 million membership mark,¹¹⁹ is a movement that owes much of its identity to a unique missiology. This part of the thesis attempts to provide an understanding of the most important aspects and issues of this missiology as reflected in

¹¹⁸Keith Hopkins, Murderous Games: Gladiatorial Contest in Ancient Rome, *History Today*, Vol.33, no. 6 (1985), via <http://www.historytoday.com/keith-hopkins/murderous-games-gladiatorial-contests-ancient-rome#sthash.MjNcTido.dpuf>, retrieve July 14, 2014.

¹¹⁹ General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2015 Session, Secretary's report

Seventh-day Adventists history as well as the present situation of the denomination.¹²⁰

Numerical and geographical expansion have brought differences in missiological thinking and evangelistic approaches. However, one can find, at least in history, ideas and practices agreed upon by many leading scholars, missionaries, and administrators of the church.

The General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church, adopted a mission statement which included different aspects of mission: namely, preaching, teaching, and healing. These statements only mentions three of the missiological quadrennial espoused by George Knight. Both the central Christian message, the gospel as shared with other Christians, and the particular Seventh-day Adventists emphasis on Revelation 14:6-12 are¹²¹ included in the statement.

Seventh-day Adventist missiology is evangelical in nature, and the Church can be understood as part of the evangelical movement. Its historical formation which is influenced by elements of Methodist and Baptist churches gives ample testimony to their evangelical similarity. Furthermore, there have been friendly contacts with other evangelical churches especially since the Seventh-day Adventist Church entered its World Mission period. Seventh-day Adventists can mingle with evangelical with little reservation. For instance, they participate actively in the 1910 Edinburgh World Mission Conference.¹²² Adventism's evangelical character can also be seen when one reviews important evangelical missiological declarations such as the *Lausanne Covenant*¹²³ and compares them with the 28 *Fundamental Beliefs* of Seventh-day Adventists and other

¹²⁰ Stefan Höschele, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth: The Development of Seventh-day-Adventist Missiology*, (Nürnberg, Germany: Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, 2004), 7.

¹²¹ The SDA Mission Statement is found in the *General Conference Working Policy* (1998-1999 edition), 27,

¹²² Höschele, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth*, 22

¹²³ John Stott (ed.), *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement, 1974-1989*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996,) 1-55. As cited Stefan Höschele, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth: The Development of Seventh-Day Adventist Missiology*, (Nürnberg, Germany: Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft Gogolstr, 2004), via <http://www.vtr-online.de> retrieved February 20, 2015

Adventist statements and publications that deal with the mission of the church as well as Ellen G. White's writings. Seventh-day Adventists agree with almost all of the articles of the *Lausanne Covenant*. With it, they believe that God is a missionary. Additionally they accept that, God wants His people to be builders of His kingdom, they uphold the authority of the Bible, calling it infallible, and they believe that Christ is the only and universal Saviour of mankind. They also agree with the statements made about the nature of evangelism and Christian social responsibility that carefully balance these two aspects of Christian mission while putting more weight on evangelistic witness. There is a difference, however. Whereas SDA Church policy and tradition discourage active political participation, the *Lausanne Covenant* makes socio-political involvement part of their Christian duty but shows that this responsibility is not to be equated with evangelism.¹²⁴

Adventism subscribes to some of the ideas of the sections on the Church and evangelism and cooperation in evangelism, especially the centrality of the evangelistic task and its being the *raison d'être* (the reason for the existence) of the church as well as the need for strategic planning. In spite of her harmony with evangelicals, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has always been very cautious mingling with other Christian churches. In spite of recognizing other Christians as a part of the divine plan for evangelization of the world, most Seventh-day Adventists have always felt that they cannot directly co-operate with non-sabbatarian churches, not even with those evangelical groups that are very close to theologically and in Christian lifestyle. Because of its focus on specific doctrines, some of which have been mentioned in chapter two, the Adventist Church makes agreement in outreach dependent on acceptance of its theology. Thus, at Adventism is a "loner" in its missionary outreach, not being a member in any of the significant evangelical or

¹²⁴ Stefan Hörschele, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth*, 23

interdenominational organizations except in certain obvious areas of Christian co-operation such as the Bible Societies or relief and development.¹²⁵

3.9 PUBLIC ISSUES, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY

Adventists agree that the mission of the church, while focusing on evangelism as central task, does not exclude other lines of service to humankind. Adventist missiology also has to tackle manifold issues of society that concern the church. Although SDA missiologists contend that “areas of mission obligation that are almost completely neglected by Seventh-day Adventists are the complex matter of social responsibility, Hörschele, says, it is not true that Adventists are hesitant to develop activities pertaining to public life and social service. He contends, it has been part of its mission philosophy from the beginning to serve holistically, aiming at restoring the dignity of man in its social, physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. Thus, in spite of putting much weight on their spiritual mission, Adventists have not failed to serve people in aspects of life that are not primarily religious. This issue is much dealt with in chapter three.¹²⁶

An even more intrinsic part of Adventist mission to society is its particular emphasis on healthful living or a “health reform” that has frequently been called “the right arm of the Three Angels’ Messages” according to a statement by Ellen White. This also is one of the missiological quadrennial formatted by Knight. Apart from building famous medical institutions such as Loma Linda University and the early 20th century magnet of natural medicine, Battle Creek Sanitarium, as well as many Adventist hospitals in the Two-Thirds World being leading in quality in their respective country, Adventists have distinguished themselves from other denominations by integrating the health aspect into

¹²⁵ Hörschele, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth*, 23

¹²⁶ Hörschele, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth*, 42

their doctrine and lifestyle. An Adventist is supposed to abstain from alcohol and smoking as well as from unhealthy foods of all kinds, including meat that is unclean according to Leviticus 11. The promotion of restoring human beings not only spiritually but also physically is a central idea of the church's mission to the world.

The most renowned Seventh-day Adventist involvement in society comes in its various types of institutions; medical, educational, and publishing. Some of these institutions can be found in most countries of the world today. Adventist, originally an apocalyptic movement waiting for the imminent end of the world, has succeeded to develop, the most comprehensive Protestant educational system. Seldom while expecting a Kingdom of God from heaven has a group worked so diligently for one on earth. All these achievements were reached because of the fact that Adventists were American pragmatists; and also for the very reason that their eschatological vision was translated into missionary activity; when they became clear about the fact that they could not know the day Jesus will return to this earth again, they continue to enhance the living conditions of people they served while they continued to wait.

3.10 MILITARY CONSCRIPTION

This section of the paper deals with the dynamics of the responses of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to military conscription from the time of its formal organization in the early 1860s. Since Adventism became centralized international denomination, in many countries they have been forced to cope with the issue, where both the political context and the level of Adventist tension with society as measured by other indicators have varied considerably.

Ronald Lawson contends that, the best measure of where a religious group falls on the church-sect range is its state of tension with society. A highly sectarian group has

high tension with society, a mainline denomination low tension. According to him, tension has three components: difference, antagonism, and separation.¹²⁷ Wherefore when Seventh-day Adventist concluded that military service contravened its principles and rejected the call to arms, that decision invited scorn from the public and punishment by the state. That is, it indicated that the church's tension with society was high and drifted towards the sect end of the church-sect scale. Over time the Adventists reduced their tension with society and moved towards the church end of the scale. This initiative by the church no doubt modified its deviant stand on conscription in order to reduce tension.¹²⁸

When the American Civil War ensued, Adventists were forced to grapple with the issue of military service. This was the time the church was creating its organizational structure between 1860 and 1863. As war dragged on, more and more soldiers were needed. The hesitancy of Seventh-day Adventists to volunteer for military service caused suspicion among their neighbors. Lawson posit that within the Adventist ranks three groups developed: a few war hawks who favored vigorous participation in the war in order to end slavery; some pacifists who maintained their willingness to accept martyrdom or imprisonment rather than to participate in any war effort; and a third group who would serve, but only if spared the necessity of bearing arms and killing.¹²⁹

Their political pessimism, stemmed from their concern to keep all of the Ten Commandments, including both the 4th (Sabbath) and 6th ("Thou shalt not kill"). Again, the priority they gave to the spreading of their Gospel made them reluctant to participate in war. For them, to take part in an armed combat would make a mockery of their mission as a church. Their prophetic message would be compromised, along with their witness to the

¹²⁷ Ronald Lawson, *Onward Christian Soldiers: The Issue of Military Service within International Adventism*, *Review of Religious Research*, 37:3, (March 1996), 97-122.

¹²⁸ Ronald Lawson, *Onward Christian Soldiers*, 97-122

¹²⁹ Ronald Lawson *Sect-State Relations: Accounting for the Differing Trajectories of Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses*, *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (CUNY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 351-377. via <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3712195> retrieve November 10, 2015

fourth and sixth commandments. If they resisted military service in order to be faithful to Scripture, they risked being accused of disloyalty, which could lead to a severe government crackdown on their fledgling movement. Though this decision earned them scorn, Adventists were able to circumvent legal punishments once conscription was instituted through using the loopholes created for Quakers. They gained recognition as non-combatants from state and federal authorities. Thereafter, having adopted a position of non-combatants, they enforced it, dis-fellowshipping members who heeded the call to arms. The 1865 general church session, held shortly after the war's end, affirmed the new position: It declared that while Adventists "recognize civil government as ordained by God, "they were" compelled to decline all participation in acts of war and blood shed" because this was inconsistent with the teaching of Christianity.¹³⁰

After the American Civil War, the issue of military service, which had faded from view, only to resurface in the new century as international tensions deepened. This became the focal point in the evolution of Adventist relations with governments during the next several decades. When the U.S. joined World War 1, the Adventist church there reaffirmed its earlier non-combatant position, and filed this with the War Department. However, it transformed its interpretation of "noncombatancy" from non-participation in war to unarmed military service. Adventists could now express their patriotism: Its members became un-armed soldiers doing good while refraining from killing. Before World War 1 in 1916, anticipating a draft, the church established Red Cross training schools at its schools and hospitals, where potential draftees undertook training that helped make them attractive to non-combatant medical units within the armed forces. Such postings were considered particularly desirable because helping people medically was defined as suitable

¹³⁰ Schwarz, Light Bearer of the Remnant, 98

activity for the Sabbath. They thus provided Adventist draftees a non-combatant role within the military and at the same time removed the difficult problem of service on the Sabbath.

However, many still faced punishment because of problems with Sabbath observance during basic training. Although Adventist leaders were eventually able to arrange for their members to be excused from all unnecessary military activities on that day, at the end of the war there were still 35 in prison, with sentences ranging from 5 to 20 years, for disobeying officers on this account. They were then released by proclamation. Adventists were also successful in gaining non-combatant status in other English speaking countries during World War I. The new Adventist policy of non-combatant participation in war subsequently became a vehicle for creating close ties with the U.S. government. In 1939, as war broke out in Europe, church leaders in the U.S. again established a medical training program for potential draftees. This time, however, it was much more sophisticated, for they had secured the cooperation of the armed forces: Called the Medical Cadet Training Program, it was directed and supervised by regular army officers.

3.11 CONCLUSION

Because of its apolitical stance the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a corporate body has not had much influence in politics. This position is based on the principle held by the church which separates state from religious affairs. However, members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as individuals have held political positions within the various political structures while they maintained their membership within the church. Many Seventh-day Adventists still make a contribution as individuals in the South African political scene.

CHAPTER FOUR

SECTARIANISM AND OTHER VIEWS IN ADVENTISM

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Having described the link between politics and the Adventist mission in chapter three, this chapter proceeds to analyze basically, three schools of thought held by some Adventist. These are Sectarian view, Christendom view and Position of Power view. They are the source of the ambivalence of the nexus of politics and Adventist mission.

Politics and religion have been two of the most powerful and long lasting human institutions since the era of Plato, Pope Gregory VII and King Henry IV in the Middle Ages. To this contemporary era, the debate on how religion and politics are to relate to each other is still on going. Religion is a perverse, entrenched human phenomenon on the life of every human existence. Politics in a similar manner is an omnipresent feature in human societies such that there is virtually no human society without politics. Consequently because of the enduring presence and power of the church and the state, there is a perpetual struggle between religion and politics human societies will have to endure.¹³¹

In Ghana, religious and political debate have remained on the front burner for a long time. There are interested groups who have assumed entrenched position on the diverse sides of the schism. The ambivalence of the nexus between religion and politics is not only limited to Christian fanatics, extremist or sectarians, there are political ideologist who vehemently oppose to any kind of religious interference in politics-ideologies such as secularism, and Enlightenment liberalism to mention but a few. According to Monsma and Soper, Enlightenment Liberalism is a philosophical theory that reacted with deep abhorrence to the religious wars of the 17th century. They aver that, Liberals place deep

¹³¹ Monsma and Soper, *The Challenges of Church and State*, 1

faith in human reasoning-believing that when society is liberated from existing economic, political and religious restrictions, they could exercise their human reasoning to reach a consensus for virtues and institution needed for a free and prosperous society.¹³² There is no doubt that, “Enlightenment” and its modern day counterpart, “secularism” contribute immensely to the schism between the church and politics.

For the conviction that the state will be spared the divisive tendencies that religion poses, Enlightenment always favoured the separation of the church and state. Proponents of enlightenment argue that the state should only support and identify consensual religious themes such as: duty, honesty, responsibility, and respect. On these, all religions and even non-religious people converge. Enlightenment just as secularism has always been at loggerheads with the organised church authorities. Subsequently, the church also resisted their theoretical assumptions and the political influence of those assumptions. In as much as the French revolution was against monarchy, and social class and authority, it was also against the organized church.¹³³ Surprisingly though, the Seventh-day Adventist church is a strong advocate for the separation of the church and state.

4.2 SECTARIANISM IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Those who hold the sectarian view in Adventism posit that, Christians should abstain completely from politics and concentrate on the core mission of the church. According to Stark and Bainbridge, the surrounding sociocultural environments of sectarians are marked by a high state of tension. This tension is characterized by

¹³² Monsma and Soper, *The Challenges of Church and State*, 8

¹³³ Monsma and Soper, *the Challenges*, 10

difference, separation, and antagonism, the reason being that a sect and its surrounding society disagree over proper beliefs, norms, and behavior.¹³⁴

It is not surprising that differences, tensions, and antagonisms have often resulted in skirmishes that have erupted in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana during political sessions in Ghana. For an example the general election in Ghana which fell on December 7th quadrennially in 1996 was on a Saturday. This situation brought the church at loggerheads with the state; all efforts to give the church the right to special voting was rejected, thus sectarians in the church insisted that the church members refrain from voting that year. Meanwhile the official position of the church was neutral.

The religiosity of individuals, influence their attitude toward public issues, these attitude also vary within denominational groupings. The basic assumption is that, though all Adventist have the same creed, they all do not have the same religion. They vary as to what they want to believe as individuals, how they want to behave, how they want to experience faith, and their various religious motivation. All of the above inform members in various countries of their socio-political position.

The sectarian view holds that, Lordship of Christ is the sole authority over the Christian. It thus presents Christ and politics as diametrically opposed to each other: the choice of Christ means the rejection of any loyalty to politics. Ostensibly, the view has its scriptural support. For example, John says: “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). In a similar vein, some would argue that the prince of this world is the devil, and therefore that loyalty to worldly authority is ultimately loyalty to the devil.

¹³⁴ Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), 23, 49. As cited in Ronald Lawson, Seventh-day Adventists and the U.S. Courts: Road Signs Along the Route of a Denominationalizing Sect, *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 40, No. 3, (Oxford University Press, 1998), 553-588 via <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23920412>

Several Christian fundamentalist and sectarians consider culture as evil, and under the control of the devil. Tertullian is attributed with this kind of exclusive one kingdom approach; under which he explains that, Christians are citizens only of the heavenly kingdom. Therefore the gospel is limited to personal life while the world is left to the devil. He encourages faith communities to reject politics and seek to separate and insulate themselves from its corruption. Carl Knott, postulates that, politics is a web of worldly entanglement, as a result, it should be a prohibited arena for Christians. Some Christians who hold the sectarian view are of the assumption that, governments are flawed and incapable of resolving even the basic needs of their citizens. Knott avers that what Christians will achieve by engaging in politics is wasted hours, wasted funds, and wasted lives. Consequently, seeing politics as hopelessly useless, Knott poses the following questions:

Who will go into a condemned building and start painting the walls and replacing broken windows? Who would stay on a sinking ship?... the ship of this world is sinking like the Titanic, and our job is get people in the lifeboat to safety in Christ not to paint the Titanic or elect a new captain or lookout because the old ones failed.¹³⁵

With the view that the world like the Great Titanic is sinking with all its inhabitants, sectarians like Knott conclude that the only safety left for the people of this cosmos is for Christians to call them to Jesus Christ. All other engagements such as Science, business and politics considered a waste of time and resources and a chase after mirages, could only be expressed by a person who is a conservative and serious about religion. Such a person is likely to stir up tension within the group he belongs and can eventually become a sectarian.

¹³⁵ C. Knott, *The Christian and Politics*, (2001), via <http://www.nlbchapel.org/politics.htm>, retrieved May 15th 2014

David C. Pack argues that Christ announced the establishment of his kingdom in his first advent; and the coming Kingdom would be a world ruling kingdom which will smash and replace all kingdoms and governments of men. Pack thinks that the assumption that modern governments are sanctioned by God is false. According to him, God cannot be a part of government bedeviled with confusing, competition, inefficiency and ineffectiveness.¹³⁶ For these reasons Pack is not convinced that Christians should waste their time in voting. Packs desiring to explain the kingdoms of this world better clustered them into three categories, namely: monarchy, dictatorship and democracy.

It is therefore not surprising that Robert Soucy, postulates that, the Christian is a stranger and a pilgrim travelling through the world to the Heavenly Kingdom and as such need not meddle in politics. For him, Christians should not concern themselves with who runs their countries but seeking freedom to worship God and going on his mission. The rationale is that the Christian at present is but a pilgrim traveling to the heavenly Kingdom. As a foreigner, the believer should not engage in politics, but should desire freedom to serve God, and should have no concern about who runs the territory wherein he temporarily resides. “Neither does the Christian participate in the processes of democracy to select a new government, nor in political protest against the existing arrangements.

Opanin Kwasi Poku, an informant in Asante Region thinks that, Politics is a thorny issue which Christians cannot push under the carpet. According to him, the danger of politics is such that it tends to make the world the focus of the Christian. Political domains therefore can never be made truly Christian. Again, to imagine that Christian standards, which are higher than those accepted by society, can be successfully applied to

¹³⁶ David C. Pack, *Should a Christian Vote*, (Restored Church of God, United State of America, 2010). 5; also available Via rcg.org/books/scv.html, retrieved September 16 2015

government and society in general is quite unrealistic. It is not possible to apply the principles of the Sermon on the Mount in the general political arena. Love cannot be legislated or institutionalized, nor can that undermine the very foundation of the country's legal system.¹³⁷

Pluralism, Marxism and secular humanism are also posing challenges to the contemporary believer in the face of competing beliefs. The philosophical question that is lingering in the minds of many people is whether it is reasonable for a believer to make absolute claims of his belief and limit himself to that conviction because that could be the only true perspective. Many religious thinkers answering this question think that it is intolerant and arrogant for one faith to claim that it has monopoly over the truth. They even propose further that missionary activities and proselytizing should be suspended and replaced with dialogue and mutual respect.¹³⁸ These kinds of sentiments infuriates the sectarian who always insists that traditions must be adhered to.

There have been several sectarian spirit in all ages. The disposition of exclusivism has always existed in many world religions. Exclusivism according to John Hick relates to a situation where one particular tradition lay claims to salvation or liberation. It becomes an article of faith that salvation is restricted to that group alone; while the rest of mankind is excluded from the sphere of salvation. This exclusive view finds it emphatic and influential expression in catholic dogma *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the church, no salvation). The Protestants Missionary Movement has a nineteenth century corresponding assumption thus, outside Christianity, no salvation.¹³⁹ Where a person has taken an entrenched position in his conviction, it is almost impossible for the person to appreciate those who differ from him in their beliefs; thus there is a natural display of

¹³⁷ Opanin Kwasi Poku, Interview on July 03, 2014

¹³⁸ C. Stephen Evans, *Philosophy of Religion, Thinking About Faith* (InterVarsity Press, Illinois 1982). 180

¹³⁹ John Hick, *Problems*, 31

strong feelings. These differences in opinion often degenerate into group antagonism. It is such a position that sectarians in the Adventist church have taken against politics.

James Dankwa-Darkwa a retired Pastor of the S.D.A. church, in an interview, asserted that the schism between religion and politics in Ghana has a significant implications on the corporate identity of Seventh-day Adventist church. For him, the church is at risk of becoming entangled in the evil of politics.¹⁴⁰ This is not a new phenomenon in the history of the Christian church. The New Testament reports of deeply divisive issues in the early Christian Church. One such incident that almost split the church apart was circumcision (Acts 15). This issue created deep suspicions (21:20, 21) and even confrontation (Gal. 2:1–16) among those with opposing views.

Beach identifies three problems existing in politics. The problems are: (1) compromise, (2) expediency, and (3) Christian standards seen as unrealistic.¹⁴¹ One veteran Pastor avers that the Christian must walk sensibly and circumspectly when confronted with politics. Politics cannot be identified as gospel, or the gospel as politics. Politics is often tainted, even corrupt; at best, it is ambivalent. Christians can easily be contaminated, and churches risk losing the respect and aura of virtue when they get too politically involved. The church can be seen as, or become in reality, a faction or handmaiden of secular interests. At the same time Christians can play a positive, though difficult, role in public affairs.¹⁴²

The members of any healthy and dynamic group need to know who they are for their identity and worldview to thrive and be persuasive to others, and this is especially true of Adventists. Seventh-day Adventism is recognized with the corporate identity because they have enough of a shared worldview, or way of looking at the world as a

¹⁴⁰ James Dankwa-Darkwa, Interview in his Residence, February 16, 2015, the researcher had no permission to use the real name of the interviewee, and hence the name indicated in the reference is pseudonym.

¹⁴¹ Beach,

¹⁴² Felix Ankomah, interviewed October 2, 2015

whole. A shared identity always implies the existence of a correspondingly shared corporate worldview. Adventists traditionally have based their corporate identity and worldview on a biblically grounded doctrine and lifestyle distinctive from other denominations; developed during a specific historical situation. It is this tradition sectarians within the church aver to protect and guard jealously. When religious group grows large, the logical consequence is that the different religious worldviews begin to contest with one another as well as with any secular worldviews. Put simply, a worldview ultimately determines a person's ideology in politics and religion. Some Seventh-day Adventists think that the church as well as members of the church have no political role to play. This view is predicated on the concept that Christ's kingdom is not of this world.

Invariably there are some Christian denominations, which collectively have an aversion for politics; they include the Amish, historic Mennonites, and Christadelphians. Christadelphians, for example, insist that the Bible teaches that believers should disengage from all involvement in politics. They claim that God, not man, is the ruler of humanity. Consequently, non-involvement in politics indicate the Christian allegiance and submission to God. They ask, how sure could one be to know which leader is the one God wants to be in power? Christadelphians consequently believe that God has His own perfect political agenda and that all the entire believers must do is rest in full confidence that God's purpose will "be done on earth as it is in heaven". According to Joshua Mensah, Christians are fallen creatures, nonetheless they are made in God's image, endowed with greater purpose. They yearn for that untainted existence where Christ is the model. However, he admonished Christians never to construe man's innate moral sense and ultimate restoration as evidence of utopia on earth. Kings, constitutions, institutions and other secular devices cannot perfect what only God can perfect. In putting faith in them, we deny human nature, nullify the cross and take salvation in our own hands. Even as we

are witnesses to the arrival of the Kingdom of Christ, we must also recognize that it is not yet in its fullness. The consequences are dire for those who fail to make this distinction and attempt to create Heaven on earth.¹⁴³

The Crusades during the Middle Ages waged wars purposely to regain Christian control over the Holy Lands. Few believers today would argue that those efforts were fruitful. Even when the crusaders enjoyed military success, the church grew spiritually weaker and worldlier. Several Christians view with curiosity and disapproval religious wars and campaigns tinged with political motivation. The military and political ambitions of some of the Reformers turned out to be a weakness, and ultimately an impediment to the Reformation. On the other hand, the strength of the Reformation, and its enduring legacy, was derived from the fact that Reformation theology shone a bright spotlight on the way of salvation and brought clarity to the gospel. Contemporary Christians have become attracted with temporal issues at the expense of eternal values. Christian activists are turned to simply preaching a politically conservative version of the old social gospel, stressing on social and cultural concerns above spiritual ones.¹⁴⁴ Robert L. Ottley gives a biblical and Christian perspective on political involvement:

The Old Testament may be studied . . . as an instructor in social righteousness. It exhibits the moral government of God as attested in his dealings with nations rather than with individuals; and it was their consciousness of the action and presence of God in history that made the prophets preachers, not merely to their countrymen, but to the world at large. . . . There is indeed significance in the fact that in spite of their ardent zeal for social reform they did not as a rule take part in political life or demand political reforms. They desired ... not better institutions but better men.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Joshua Mensah, interviewed at Cape Coast 22-03-16

¹⁴⁴ MacArthur, Christian and politics,

¹⁴⁵ MacArthur, Christian and Politics

Ottley thinks that the Bible, particularly Old Testament characters, avoided engagement with politics. This is to elaborate the fact that Christians ought not to participate in politics. The argument that Bible characters did not engage in politics is highly subjective; as we have figures like Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah and the rest engaging in politics of their time.

Concern is expressed that if Christians are not involved in politics, the right to evangelize cannot be taken for granted. That is a fair concern; of course it cannot be assumed that by having Christians in politics, right will be preserved. What Christians can assume and what the Bible clearly teaches is that if they wish to have that right preserved they should pray for those in government (1 Tim. 2:1-2). And if that right is taken away, preach the gospel anyway, in season and out.

4.3 “CHRISTENDOM” AND THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

From the “Christendom” point of view in Adventism, the distinction between church and world, between the sacred and the secular, is mistaken. Christ is seen as the Lord of the whole world, over every dimension of creation. In spite of the fact that non-Christian aims and purposes dominate in politics, business, and the public media, the fact still remains that, these areas of life do not exist outside God's domain of Christ's kingdom. The Christian should be seen as having been called to bring every thought, every activity, and every responsibility, captive to Christ. All of life is God's creation and is claimed by Christ. Everything in all creation, including everything secular, belongs to God and comes under Christ's sacred authority and claim of ownership.

According to James W. Skillen, Christian politics, must extent to more than the attempt to maintain upright personal behaviour in a non-Christian environment. It means more than campaigning for a few moral causes by political means. Christian politics must be about politics in its entirety. It must be about defining the very nature of government -

about the structure, limits, and policy responsibilities of government. The personal piety of the Christian and heart-deep dedication to Jesus Christ should be linked up with the way they seek to obey God with all the political responsibilities they bear as public officials and as citizens.¹⁴⁶ Christian's political challenge is to learn how to exercise their earthly political responsibilities in obedience to Christ. They are to seek to exercise as much leadership as possible. This implies seeking leadership in the national parliaments, in governments, and in international organizations - to propose principled policies and changes in political structures that advance justice domestically and internationally.

Some Christians, particularly liberation theology and the Christian Right, maintain that Christianity must reshape culture. Through the political process, evil must be opposed and divine standards established as the law of the land. In this kingdom standpoint, the world is seen as fallen, yet redeemable. Christians are God's agents for restoration and calibrating government according to God's political agenda. In this perspective, political involvement must go beyond speaking out on social issues. A Christian worldview implies a Christian world order. Christians, in fact, have a right and responsibility to help determine who runs the country and to install a Christian platform. Votes and political activism can make a difference. To sit back and do nothing but pray would, in this perspective, be failing God, duty, and country. Politics can turn around the world only through the dedicated, unswerving, relentless involvement of true Christians.¹⁴⁷

According to Denver Cheddie, at the centre of the Christendom paradigm is a postmillennial theology. Christendom believes that the church will affect society in a Christian way and bring about large scale religious reform. When the earth has been Christianized, then Jesus will return to establish his kingdom. Postmillennialism entails a

¹⁴⁶ James W. Skillen, *Christian Politics in the 21st Century*, (Washington, DC: Centre for Public Justice, no date)

¹⁴⁷ T. Anderson, The Christian in Politics, *Straight Talk* 53/4 (January 28, 1988).

“spiritual” interpretation of the OT while neglecting the explicit teachings of the NT which herald societal decadence in the last days (e.g. 2 Tim. 3). Only Jesus’ future physical presence combined with the binding of Satan could bring about an Elysian society. It is not totally correct to assume that society is in its current shape primarily because Christians have become complacent.¹⁴⁸

It is wrong for Christians to presume that if political leaders are "righteous" then that righteousness would be transferred to all facets of society. King Josiah was a righteous man, nevertheless his righteousness could not be transferred to the children of Israel. Josiah's righteousness hardly influenced the people (including his own children) in a positive way. Jeremiah reproved the people of his time for their wicked ways. Society is in a downward spiral, because of the mystery of iniquity at work, which no political leader can reverse.

Another premise of Christendom is that nations can be Christianized. Denver Cheddie argues that, there is no such thing as a Christian nation. Christianity is an individual issue not a national one. There are Islamic states where everyone is obliged to be a Moslem. However, there cannot be Christian states since individuals must freely choose Christ. The real purpose of the church is to evangelize individuals not Christianize nations. The truth is that if Christians cannot do this outside of politics, it is naïve to think they will do it if they get into office. The real problem is not lack of political power, but the absence of pure religion.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Denver Cheddie, Should Christians Enter Politics? (2001). Via www.BibleIssues.org, retrieved November 2, 2015

¹⁴⁹ Denver Cheddie, Should Christians Enter Politics via www.BibleIssues.org, retrieved November 19, 2015

Historically, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has taken a stand in support of separation of Church and State.¹⁵⁰ The Church therefore does not engage in matters of politics. As Ghanaian citizens however, members have social and civic responsibilities, which maybe expressed in political or non-political activities. Given the complexity of political activities in Africa and the potential for compromising Christian standards, the church does not encourage active participation in politics. Nevertheless, the Church recognizes that there may be members who feel that the Lord has called them to serve in political offices, in such cases the church leaves that to individual discretion.

4.4 “POSITION OF BALANCE” VIEW IN ADVENTISM

The “Position of Balance” view has it that the church as a collective entity should abstain from politics; however, individual church members may participate if they so desire. Adherence of this view think that if the church should pursue political power, it will lose impetus and focus on her mission. Adventist who take this stand, think that history militates against the church’s political engagement. According to Cheddie, what history has thought is that the church as a political body does not exert a Christian influence on society. On the other hand, society rather leavens the church. According to him if society is to accept the church as a political body then the church would have to dilute her message. For him true Christianity is politically incorrect and sharply contrasted with the spirit of the world.

Cheddie believes that individual Christian may rally against social injustices, but the church must not lose its focus. There are social aspects of Christianity that are concomitant with missions e.g. the building of schools, orphanages, clinics etc. thus it is

¹⁵⁰ see Declaration of the Seventy-day Adventist Church on Church and State Relations, 2002.

quite possible for the church to make a social impact outside of politics.¹⁵¹ Brandon Bayne postulates that, the Christian Church slowly gained cultural dominance and political control when in 311 A.D. Emperor Constantine converted from paganism into Christianity. Although the church's numbers have grown, its mission as salt and light to the world has been forgotten. It has, however, compromised the message of the cross as the scandalous representation of sin and natural separation from God. If Christians want the Good News of the cross, they cannot expect to be part of the culture; Jesus is counterculture. If Christians cannot control the law and politics, how can they lead the nation to Christ? To begin with, they can take up their lifelong pursuit of holiness in imitating Jesus. They can go out into all nations spreading the good news of Christ's death and resurrection. In short, they can do what the church was called to do.

Many informants particularly in the Asante Region think that Christians as individuals can and should be involved in every aspect of politics, its discourse, and its application. However, the 'church qua church', (i.e. when gathered as a community) should never endorse candidates or specific issues. Its members should fight for social justice and stand against immorality, but its funds and focus must not be diverted from the true cure of souls, the spiritual cure. For the first time since Constantine, western Christianity has been radically separated from the state, making the call to a spiritual community more urgent than ever. We should not give up on the public sphere, but we should not expect to impose the principles of the Bible on a society that rejects its authority.¹⁵²

The position of the Seventh - day Adventist is that, as individuals, Adventists are free to enter politics. There are numerous references in Proverbs to righteous and wicked

¹⁵¹ Denver Cheddie, Should Christians Enter Politics? (2001), 5. via www.BibleIssues.org, retrieved July 5, 2015

¹⁵² Response from several informants in Asante Region

rulers. Of course Proverbs defines righteousness in terms of social justice and equity, not personal right standing with God through Jesus Christ. So it is very possible for non-Christians to rule righteously according to the definition of Proverbs. However there are certain countries, like Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana, where the electorate is racially divided. Christians are strongly advised against Christians going into politics, unless they wish to see the church racially divided as well.

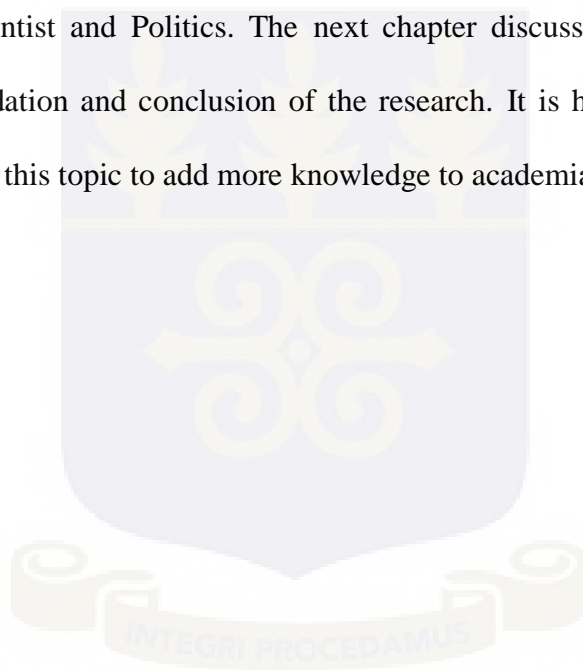
4.5 CONCLUSION

Adventists live in an increasingly polarized political world. The current happenings amongst Adventists in Ghana evident that strong polarizing tendencies are in their midst. There are Adventists deeply suspicious of fellow church members. Others are less vocal regarding their views but will simply tune out the other side and restrict their attention and conversation to those who think as they do. This is a problem of gospel hemi-neglect. If you cannot get rid of the other side, simply tune it out. The Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana is not immune from this kind of skirmishes. Recently the researcher heard Adomako Berfi the deputy communication director of N.P.P. attacking his fellow Adventist politician Dr. Oko Vandapuye ,the Mayor of Accra who himself is a member of the ruling party N.D.C., of being inhumane for driving out people who sell on the street.

This chapter brings to the fore the significance of the link between politics and the mission of the Seventh - day Adventist church and how the various school of thoughts impact the faith of church members and missiological trajectory of the church. It has been noted that the political stand among Seventh-day Adventists is not homogenous. There are several cluster schools of thought among the affiliates of the church in Ghana when it comes to participation in politics.

The first segment holds that the church should abstain completely from political issues. Their line of argument is predicated on 1John 2:15-17, that admonishes Christians not to be in love with the world and on the concept that, Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. To them politics and Christianity do not have anything in common therefore must ever remain separate. The other segment argues that the church and her members have uncontested political responsibility to influence society for Christ from a political power position.

This is the conclusion of the whole matter of research on the mission of the Seventh - day Adventist and Politics. The next chapter discusses the summary, major findings, recommendation and conclusion of the research. It is hope that further studies will be conducted on this topic to add more knowledge to academia.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

As stated in chapter two, the Seventh-day Adventist church emerged from the Millerite. The new denomination was marked by considerable tension with its surrounding culture in the nineteenth century. The church adopted a distinctly restricted lifestyle, which included the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath in a society where a six-day work week was almost universal, diet and entertainment prohibitions, and a commitment to "dress reform" and abstinence from jewelry and makeup. This set Adventists apart and made it difficult for them to associate with others. These barriers were reinforced by the close ties that developed among members.

It grew up with its own culture; it created a subculture and mission where church members centered their lives on their church. They usually attended church schools; and many of them were employed in church institutions. Not only were they different and separate from their surrounding society, their beliefs also fostered antagonisms between them and others. They perceived themselves as "God's Remnant People," the true church charged with bearing God's final warning message in the last days. Other Protestant groups were considered to be "apostate." Seventh-day Adventist beliefs have also promoted norms and behavior that have resulted in tension and clashes within the church and with society. The most frequent source of dispute has been the Adventist belief that Saturday is the Sabbath: Adventists' insistence on refraining from work from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Other norms that have resulted in conflicts have been their refusal to bear arms in wartime or to join and contribute to labor unions and their practices of door-to-door solicitation and selling of religious publications. Adventist eschatology promoted tension with the state. This tension increased during the American Civil War,

when Adventists, in the face of conscription, took a position against involvement in military service.

The Seventh-day Adventist church has become large, with a population of 18,000,000 membership worldwide and the logical consequence is that the varying worldviews and differences in the interpretation of their dogma has begun to compete with one another. In its formative years, political participation was rejected because politics was viewed as contaminating and distracting from their God-given purpose. The Adventist considered themselves as objects of state persecution because some of their dogmas were not in sync with some of the demands of the states. To a large degree, the Seventh-day Adventist church was strongly sectarian. They were convinced Jesus was coming to overthrow nations and therefore government and politics were not worthy of their attention. However overtime, this position on politics shifted from that of intransigence to a compromise.

It does not come as a surprise to see some traces of sectarianism still persisting in the S.D.A. church today. Some Adventists in Ghana continue to see politics as unsavory and as a distractive from their primary purpose of spreading the gospel. In their view political pessimism, concern for adhering to their creed, particularly the Decalogue which also contains the Sabbath commandment and their priority to spread the gospel, made it impossible to participate in politics.

The Seventh-day Adventist affirms that, their understanding of mission is that, every disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. In their view, Christ has entrusted a personal work to every believer which cannot be done by proxy.¹⁵³ That is individual responsibility, individual effort, personal sacrifice is the requirement of the

¹⁵³ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1925), 9-10

God's mission. To everyone work has been assigned and no one can be a substitute for another. Consequently, the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as stated in their mission statement is "to make disciples of all people, proclaiming the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading non-believers to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and unite with the Church, nurturing them to serve Him as Lord and preparing them for His soon return"¹⁵⁴.

In conformity with their creed, the Adventists insist on the continued spiritual growth and development of newly converted members, who are nurtured spiritually to live righteous lives, and become effective witnesses themselves. The newly converted members are also encouraged to be responsively obedient to the will of God. The Adventists stress that, their goal is to experience utopia on earth at the second coming of Jesus Christ (this belief is predicated on the promise Jesus made to his followers in John 14:1-3); which according to them is part of God's prophecy in the Bible.¹⁵⁵

Ronald Lawson points to one of the ambivalence in the practice of the Adventist Church: according to him, while the church continues to espouse the separation of church and state, it has in recent times pursued exchange relationships with other governments, especially with authoritarian regimes of both Left and Right. Undeniably, it has also established a close cooperative relationship with the U.S. government in the area of military service. Lawson expresses surprise at this position of the Adventist given its original pacifist position and expectations of persecution from the American government. This divergence between principle and practice cannot be explained simply. Lawson however concedes that, the pattern of relationships between the Adventist Church and

¹⁵⁴ Mission statement of S.D.A. Church.

¹⁵⁵ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist: West-Central African Division, *Working Policy*, (Accra: Advent Press, 2014-2015), 27.

governments has been transformed with increasing speed, since the year the church was formally organized in 1863.¹⁵⁶

The Seventh-day Adventists initially rejected political participation and regarded it as contaminating and distracting from their God-given mission and thus viewed society pessimistically. They expected to be the object of persecution from the state; and held theological positions that placed them at constant loggerheads with the state. For example, the refusal to bear arms in wartime. Adventist believe William Miller is the originator of Adventism. He focused his preaching on the apocalyptic visions of the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation. This led him to see governments portrayed as wild beasts which hurt God's people. His message encouraged his followers to be apolitical, with many of them withdrawing from reform associations, and becoming totally absorbed in preparing for, and warning people about the Parousia and eschatology.

The church exists to proclaim the gospel to all the entire world. She exists to bring all men everywhere under the scope of Christ's redemption, and to claim for the Spirit of Christ the effectual lordship over all human thought and life and activity. Therefore, the Church is missionary in nature. The Christian Church is in principle and of necessity missionary, and apart from the vitalizing breath of the missionary spirit, the life of the Church languishes and dies. Christian missions is not a narrow proselytism, The redemption of society, the evangelization of the world, the elimination of war from the earth, the dividing barriers of colour and race and caste are essential elements in the Christian vision.

There is nothing in the bible or Ellen White's writings that compels believers to vote for one party or another, or to hold conservative or liberal political views. One can

¹⁵⁶ Ronald Lawson, *Church and State at Home and Abroad: The Evolution of Seventh-Day Adventist Relations with Governments*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Oxford University Press, 1996). 279-311 via <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1466103>, retrieved 10-11-2015

vote for certain men and measures, he/she can give his support by ballot to ways and means which make for the good of the state and society, and at the same time keep free from the control or domination or spirit of political party which advocates the measures which he/she approves. Several respondents say they know many people who do not engage in political agitation or discussion, privately or in public; they do not pose as the abettors or supporters of any particular political party. They seek always to recognize principles apart from and above men. If they vote, they do not link their interests with such parties. They cast their votes for the candidates who in their judgment are best qualified for particular offices, without reference to party affiliation. When one becomes partisan, when he dabbles in politics, seeks to unduly influence votes, links himself with some political party, to work for its measures and its candidates regardless of the principles involved, it is this spirit against which they are warned.

There is a thin line between religion and politics when we consider that both disciplines deal with the exercise of power. While religion has been an effective desire to be in right relation to the Power manifesting itself in the universe, political power on the other hand is conceived as the exercise and use of power by some classes, individuals or groups. Both religion and politics deal with the concept of power, even from a material or transcendental perspective and analyzing the relationship between them is not an easy task. Regardless of what angle is used to define the most common terminology, reciprocity, influence and interdependence, the religion and politics equation has intrigued the minds of scholars from different research backgrounds. The major problem for a researcher in attempting to draw a common line between religion and politics is finding a definition for these concepts. Religion and politics have been major subjects of research from antiquity to today and different definitions have emerged in history expressing different perceptions and academic analyses

J. John, posit that because everyone is affected either directly or indirectly on a daily basis by politics, all Christians need to be involved in politics. More so, it is essential that the Christian stay informed on the running of governmental systems. He argued that ‘For evil to triumph it is merely necessary that good men do nothing.’ To say it another way— all that is necessary for the weak and powerless to be crushed is for no one to stand up for them. Politics is about how nations are run; for John if governments will run more effectively and more ethically, Christians must play their part by getting involved. Through the power of the vote and advocacy, Christians can influence governments to be just and fair to all citizens.¹⁵⁷

The Christian's chief programme for national and international betterment is the spiritual gospel, which links man to Christ and liberates man from his dependence upon social and civic measures. The true Adventist is not of this world; he is swiftly on his way out. Yet, while passing through he seeks to attract other men to the heavenly kingdom by translating its divine principles into human action. As part of the responsibility of the Christian, he/she is to aid in the proper promotion of sensible plans for the extension of health, for the realization of religious and other proper freedoms, for the relief of want and fear, and for the pacific stability of the social and political order. Peace among men and peace among nations are among his personal concerns. Justice is one of his aims.

Under appropriate conditions the Adventist may cast his vote, or refrain from voting, as his deliberate judgment suggests. He will condemn no one who, under full consciousness of the spirit and doctrines of Christ, may decide to devote parts of his talents and time to the giving of sensible leadership to his local or national or world community. On the other hand, the true Christian will weigh matters calmly, conduct

¹⁵⁷ J. John, Politics And Faith: Why Should Christians Be Involved In Politics?

himself with the strictest rectitude and dignity, ever seeking to be fully and impartially informed, and in all aspects of his functions always seek to discharge first, and at all costs, his ambassadorial obligations as a personal representative of Christ among his fellow men.

It can be problematic for Seventh-day Adventists to attain equilibrium on political issues. The Adventist Church maintains a longstanding neutral position on candidates running for elected office, and that can prove challenging for church members who also happen to be politicians. Despite the difficulties, some Adventist have ventured into political career and it has not always been easy to straddle that line, particularly when members of the church often look cynically at politics, an area some Adventists see as “off limits.” Sectarians in the Adventist church see culture as evil and the sphere of Satan. As stated in chapter four (4), Tertullian is the architect of this exclusive one kingdom approach, this concept has it that, Christians are citizens only of the heavenly kingdom. The gospel is limited to the personal life, and the world is left to the devil. Politics is rejected, and the faith community seeks to separate and insulate itself from its corrupting influence. Furthermore in the same chapter, politics is seen as a prohibited arena for the Christian, a web of worldly entanglement. There is an underlying assumption that government is fatally flawed and incapable of solving even the most basic problems of mankind. The greater concern, however, is that involvement in politics will result in “wasted hours, wasted funds, and wasted lives, with politics seen as hopelessly inept and the end of all things at hand. The idea of the interfacing or mixing of religion and politics being problematic and potentially dangerous can be attributed in part to secularism, which is often regarded as one of the hallmarks of modern society.

In conclusion, politics on its own is neutral, however it has both perils as well as opportunities for Christians. The research concludes that, there are dangers of compromise of principle and corruption of values, in as much as involvement with politics becomes all-

absorbing. At the same time, there are also significant opportunities for fulfilling the divine mandate to be effective witnesses for God. This perspective may lead to a radical reorientation of thinking—from seeing Christian engagement primarily in terms of socio-political action, to viewing political involvement as the faithful response of witness. Taylor V, admonishes Seventh-day Adventists, to view politics in the light of end-time events, where political systems will attempt to legislate conscience and expediency will seek to trump truth. For him, Adventist are to speak out in support of religious freedom and human rights, and against discrimination and decadence. Furthermore, they are to remain true to duty of worshiping the Creator of heaven and earth, of which the Sabbath is a sign of allegiance. Again they must take hold of the Word of God as the supreme authority in their lives, shaping all of their interactions, including relationship to politics. While degree and form of political participation may vary for the Church, its leaders, and individual members, the mission of the gospel must always include both the proclamation, as well as the tangible revelation of who God is. This commission involves standing with voice and vote against immorality and in favour of all that is just and compassionate. It includes caring for God's creation in all of its diversity. It is a commitment to live a life like Christ, of Christ, and for Christ in every way.¹⁵⁸ In essence, Christians are expected to relate to politics in a framework of biblical principles. Nonetheless, the Seventh-day Adventists, like all other Christians, are not to revile rulers; neither are they to despise authority or show contempt to the judge. They are to eschew arrogance and disrespect toward the state; while acknowledging that, the Christians' responsibility and duty is to adhere to civil laws and regulations of their various nations. Additionally they are expected to pay their taxes faithfully and regularly. However, when the state issues

¹⁵⁸ Taylor V., *The Christian and Politics*, 15.

directives which are in opposition to God's commandments, the Christian option is to obey God rather than man.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

The research discovered that, the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana does not work with policies and a polity that is crafted and developed in a local context exclusively. As a worldwide denomination, the church operates across many legal contexts. The Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana operates within a world-wide church organization. The structure however does recognize that each level operates within the scope of the laws of a particular country or countries in a region. Wherefore many of the things that occurred in the global level also have a trickledown effect on the local church in Ghana.

This thesis finds that pioneer Adventist had strong aversion for politics as is clearly demonstrated by various statements they made against political involvement. According to Vance, during the 1950s and 1960s, however, there was a shift in the policies of the Adventist church in line with their relationship with the secular world. From these period onward, Adventist have adopted accommodative response to the secular world. They now accept secular notions that are not in conflict with their dogma. Some informants believe it is this position that has precipitated the opposition of sectarian groups in the church who claim that the church need to stick to their old traditions.¹⁵⁹

It is observed that Adventist in Ghana who tend to be liberal in politics turn to be liberal in religion. On the other hand, Sectarrians in the church consider themselves arbiters of who is a true Adventist. Like other sectarians they also reject other approaches to Adventism. Sectarrians within the Adventist church in Ghana regard their mission as one of

¹⁵⁹ Vance, *Adventism in Crisis*,

apologetic and call on all Adventists to adhere strictly to Adventist traditions and stick to the creeds of the church. Their idea of the interfacing or mixing of religion and politics being problematic and potentially dangerous can be attributed in part to secularism, which is often regarded as one of the hallmarks of modern society. It was found out that a minute section of the Seventh-day Adventist membership in Ghana do adhere to this kind of belief. Comparatively the research found out that sectarians in the Adventist church in the Asante Region turnout to be higher than Greater Accra and Central Regions.

This thesis found out that Adventists developed political and public relation skills overtime to reduce tension between the church, government and society. Conflict avoidance became the priority of the church. As a result, the church succeeded in reducing tension with governments, other churches and society as a whole.

It has been said that “all politics is local;” and politics in Ghana certainly has its own local complications. Ghana is marked by a broad diversity of ethnic groups, languages and intertwining cultures and worldviews. According to D.E.K. Amenumey, the Ghanaian socio-political systems were traditionally rooted in monarchies and ancestral perspectives. The size and shape of present day Ghana is as a result of coming together of independent ethnic and tribal groups over the years. The current trend is towards democratization of social and political life. The people of Ghana can be divided into five main groups. They are the Guan, Mole-Dagbani/Gonja, Akan, Ga-Dangme and Ewe.

The consequence of these realities is that, influences such as language, ethnic identity, geographic origin and location are determinant features in the Ghanaian political dispensation. These factors carry encoded norms and expectations of socio-cultural and political beliefs, prejudicial notions that influence individual and group behavior. As a result, political life is stained with deep-rooted ethnocentrism and antagonisms in many parts of Ghana. A typical example of schism lies between the two major political parties:

New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the ruling party National Democratic Congress (NDC). The NPP seems to be enjoying support from Akan dominated areas; particularly Asante and Eastern; while the support of other ethnic groups is tilted toward the NDC particularly the people of Volta and the three Northern Regions.

The direct effect of these factors is shaky church unity. Tribalism does tend to impact significant decision-making processes and the determination of power relations and benefits to specific individuals and groups. In such situations, gospel principles are easily compromised, leading to injustices of various sorts; and behavior characterized by the pursuit of self-interest adds complexity to already vexed conditions. A problematic consequence of the injudicious alliance of language, ethnicity, and regionalism is the selective privileging of people that creates socio-economic disparities between communities. The distribution and/or delivery of social development programs may be influenced by preferences based on tribal affiliations and regional origins.

Based on the firm position taken by the Seventh-day Adventists church on the absolute separation of the state and the church, there has been a long standing debate on whether the Church or its institutions should accept government funding or not. On one hand, the Church has taught that the Lord moves upon the hearts of those in civil power and that the Church should not build barriers that would cut off assistance for the advancement of His cause. On the other hand, the Church has warned against the union of church and state. This is obviously one of the ambivalence of the nexus between politics and Adventist mission which is still unresolved.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended by this thesis that the Adventist church in Ghana as an institution should ever remain apolitical. Christians as individuals can and should be involved in every aspect of politics, its discourse, and its application. However, the ‘church qua church’, (i.e. when gathered as a community) should never endorse candidates or specific issues. Its members should fight for social justice and stand against immorality, but its funds and focus must not be diverted from the true cure of souls, the spiritual cure.

As stated in the Declaration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the church and state relations, the church has taken a position in favour of separation of Church and State. The Church does not get actively involved in matters of politics. As citizens of Ghana, however, members have social and civic responsibilities, which may be expressed in political or non-political activities. Given the complexity of political activities in Africa and the potential for compromising Christian standards, the church does not encourage active participation in politics. Nevertheless, the church recognizes that there may be members who feel that the Lord has called them to serve in political offices. When it comes to such situations, where a member has to take a decision whether to engage or not to engage in politics, the church should be neutral.

The church though always separate from the state must not alienate itself from or be indifferent to society. Religious leaders must, walk carefully and circumspectly when in the public arena. Politics cannot be identified as gospel; or the gospel as politics. Politics is often tainted, even corrupt; at best, it is ambivalent. Christians can easily be contaminated, and churches risk losing the respect and aura of virtue when they get too politically involved.

It is further recommended that when Adventists become leaders or exert influence in their wider society, they are expected to do so in a manner consistent with the golden

rule. They are to establish robust religious liberty for all and should not use their influence with political and civil leadership to either advance their faith or inhibit the faith of others. Adventists should take civic responsibilities seriously. They are to participate in voting process when it is possible to do so in good conscience and should share the responsibility of building their communities. Adventists should not, however, become preoccupied with politics, or utilize the pulpit or their publications to advance political theories. Adventists who are civic leaders must endeavour to adhere to the highest standards of Christian behaviour. As modern-day Daniels, God will lead them and their fidelity to Him will inspire their community.

Again recommendation is given by this paper that, Christian mission must deal with both salvation and society. There is a misconception that development of public policies, such as (political matters, economic and technological issues) do not need to seriously concern Christians because they are purely secular Matters. It is irresponsible for Christians to consider themselves free from societal responsibility. Every individual exerts an influence in society. Poverty and hunger are daily problems killing several people every day. Global warming and global pollution are problems along with the destruction of the earth through human activities.

Additionally the research recommends that Adventist politicians need to stay away from any political scheme that perpetuate the domination of one group by another. Adventists should keep their citizenship clean of schemes that precipitate injustice and the denigration of Christian mission. They should always seek for ways in which they can reconcile conflicting communities or parties.

The Seventh-day Adventist church has received little scholar attention in Ghana. The church's identity seems ambiguous to academia such that rarely is the church mentioned in scholarly works. It is therefore the recommendation of this research that, the

church being a stakeholder in the religious sphere in Ghana, be given attention by the academia as is done to mainline churches and other Christian denominations.

It is also recommended that investigations relating to the mission of the S.D.A. church and politics in Ghana be carried further by the academia. The reason being that the context of analysis offered in these paper is still rudimentary and needs a great deal of expansion and improvement. Nevertheless, such an approach, by its emphasis on the investigation of indigenous, African, paradigms of religiopolitical development, presents many possibilities for the study of patterns of Ghanaian religiopolitical organization and behavior. The incorporation of additional case studies, and the construction of tools for their verification, may, perhaps, contribute somewhat to the clarification of the evolution of political change in the seventh-day Adventist church and the Christian community as well as Ghana and Africa as a whole.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This concluding section of the paper looks at how objectives we set for ourselves have been achieved for this study. As stated in chapter two, the Seventh-day Adventist church emerged from the Millerite Movement, which had preached throughout the American Northeast that Christ was returning to earth in 1844. When Jesus did not come as predicted, the failure became known as the "Great Disappointment." The new denomination was marked by considerable tension with its surrounding culture in the nineteenth century. It rejected the American Dream, for it continued to predict the imminent return of Christ and the end of the world. The church adopted a distinctly restricted lifestyle, which included the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath in a society where a six-day work week was almost universal, diet and entertainment prohibitions, and a commitment to "dress reform" and abstinence from jewelry and makeup. This set

Adventists apart and made it difficult for them to associate with others. These barriers were reinforced by the close ties that developed among members.

They created a subculture and mission where church members centered their lives on their church. They usually attended church schools; and many of them were employed in church institutions. Not only were Adventists different and separate from the surrounding society, their beliefs also fostered antagonisms between them and others. Adventists viewed themselves as "God's Remnant People," the true church charged with bearing God's final warning message in the last days. Other Protestant groups were "apostate" and had become "the whore of Babylon"; the Roman Catholic Church was identified with the persecuting "beast" of the book of Revelation. Adventist preaching focused closely on the apocalyptic visions of the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation, where governments were portrayed as wild beasts which hurt God's people.

Seventh-day Adventist beliefs have also promoted norms and behavior that have resulted in tension and clashes with society. The most frequent source of dispute has been the Adventist belief that Saturday is the Sabbath: Adventists' insistence on refraining from work from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Other norms that have resulted in conflicts have been their refusal to bear arms in wartime or to join and contribute to labor unions and their practices of door-to-door solicitation and selling of religious publications. Adventist eschatology promoted tension with the state. This tension increased during the American Civil War, when Adventists, in the face of conscription, took a position against involvement in military service.

According to Stark and Bainbridge, the surrounding sociocultural environments of sectarians are marked by a high state of tension. This tension is characterized by difference, separation, and antagonism, for a sect and its surrounding society disagreeing over proper beliefs, norms, and behavior. It is not surprising that differences, tensions,

and antagonisms have often resulted in skirmishes that have erupted in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana during political sessions in Ghana. For an example, the general election in Ghana which falls on December 7th every quadrennial since 1992. In 1996, the date for the general election fell on Saturday. This situation brought the church at loggerheads with the state; all efforts to give the church the right to special voting was rejected, thus sectarians in the church insisted that the church members refrain from voting that year.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church provides an excellent example of a religious group moving from sect towards denomination over time or, as Stark and Bainbridge have defined this process, from a state of high tension with its surrounding environment to one of much lower tension. Over the past 150 years, Adventism has become far less separated from the broader society, much less different from it, and antagonism between the two has decreased markedly.

The religiosity of individuals, influence their attitude toward public issues, these attitude also vary within denominational groupings. The basic assumption is that though all Adventist have the same creed, they all do not have the same religion. They vary as to what they want to believe as individuals, how they want to behave, how they want to experience faith, and their various religious motivation. All of the above inform members in various countries of their socio-political position.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaires

My name is Emmanuel Kojo Manu Awuah, I am a graduate student in the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana. As part of my requirement for the award of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) Degree in the Study of Religions, I am conducting a research on the Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist and Politics in Ghana. The research is a fact finding one which is to find out why there is seeming tension in the church on political issues. This tension almost always gets heightened during political seasons in Ghana.

The study is purely an academic exercise to unearth the reason why there is division in the Seventh-day Adventist when it comes to politics. I would be grateful if you could spare a little of your time to complete the questionnaire below.

1. How should the Seventh-day Adventist relate to politics?

Please explain

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2. In your opinion, should the Seventh-day Adventist participating in politics?

Please elaborate

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3. Can the Seventh-day Adventist vote on a particular issue or for a specific
Can you please explain?

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4. Should the Seventh-day Adventist be aligned to any particular political party or
political system?

Please explain

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5. Can the Seventh - day Adventist take part in social cause?
Can you please explain?

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6. Should the Adventist be involved in political activism?
Can you please elaborate?

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7. Can the Seventh - day Adventist hold a political office?
Please elaborate

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8. Can the Seventh - day Adventist be a legislator?
Please explain

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9. In your opinion how does politics impact the Seventh - day Adventist church's
core mandate of the Gospel Commission?
Can you please explain?

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10. In your opinion, should Adventist women be involved in partisan politics?
Can you please elaborate?

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11. Does the Seventh - day Adventist Church have any statement on politics?
Please explain

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12. Are you aware of any political challenge during the formative years of the
Seventh-day Adventist?
Can you please explain?

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13. What is the position of the Bible on politics?
Please explain

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14. Do you know any Adventist past or present who is a politician
Can you please explain?

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15. Is the Adventist politician you know very active in church?
Can you please elaborate?

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16. In your opinion does politics divide the Seventh-day Adventist church?
Please explain

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17. Do you think politics impede the propagation of the Gospel?
Can you please elaborate?

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