

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN TO ORGANIC GROWTH
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN GHANA**

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INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis with the exception of materials quoted from the other scholarly works that have been acknowledged fully, is the original production of research work by the researcher under the supervision of Prof. Elizabeth Amoah and Dr. Lawrence Boakye towards the award of M.Phil Religions in the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana.

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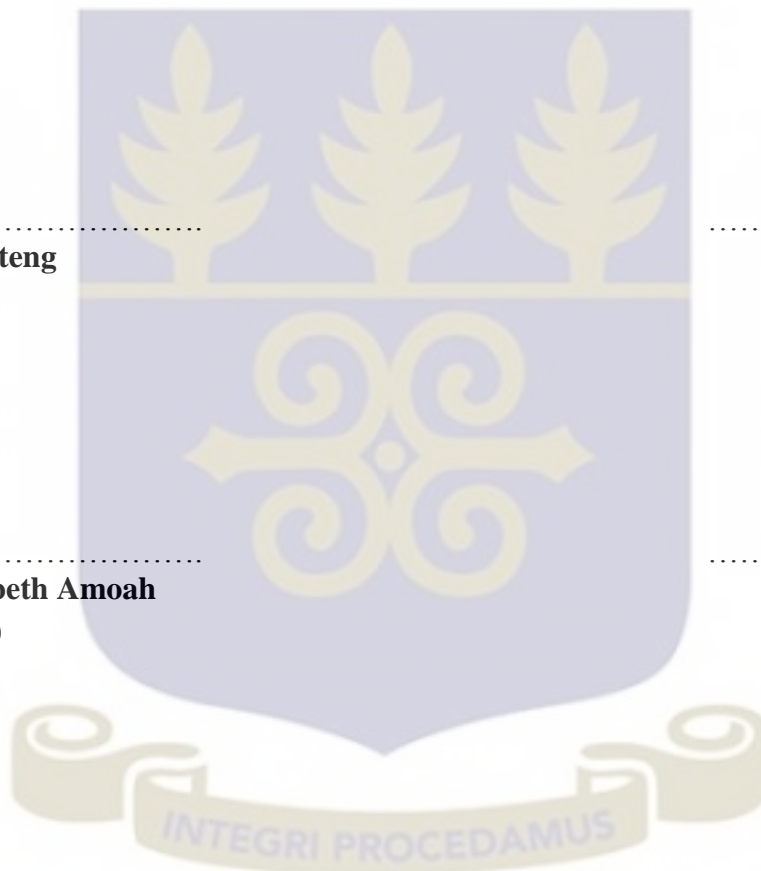
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ABSTRACT

In 1888, the Seventh-day Adventist literature was distributed at the coast of Apam in the Central Region of Ghana. An indigenous Ghanaian named Francis Dolphijn got hold of some of the literature, read it and got converted. Through his effort, the Seventh-day Adventist church was officially established in Ghana in 1888. Since then, Ghanaian women have been contributing in diverse ways, to the organic growth of the church. So far there is a systematic analysis of the contribution of indigenous women in that direction. The study employed a qualitative and a historical approach. The researcher also used both primary, secondary and observational tools as a method of data collection. This research focused on analyzing systematically how the women in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana have helped in developing the members of the church with regards to educational and economic empowerment.

The research question is; in what ways have the Ghanaian Seventh - day Adventist's women contributed to the quality of membership? The main objective is to find out the contribution of indigenous women to the organic growth of the Seventh-day Adventist in Ghana and also to find out what motivates them in performing such roles in the church. Upon completion, the study brought to light the contribution of indigenous women to the organic growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana thus, contributing to the data on women's activities in the church in general.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late husband, Mr. Seth Kwarteng, who worked tiredly and supported me to make my dream come through but did not live to see the completion of this work. May his soul rest in peace.



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First and foremost, I am grateful to the Almighty God for sustenance and how far He has led me. May his name be praised!

The success of the thesis depends on the contributions of many people, especially those who took their time to share their thoughtful corrections and suggestions to improve the work. I would especially like to thank the following reviewers who gave me valuable insights into this thesis;

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Finally, to Mr Francis Benyah, a colleague, who supported me in my difficult times.

May God richly bless you all.

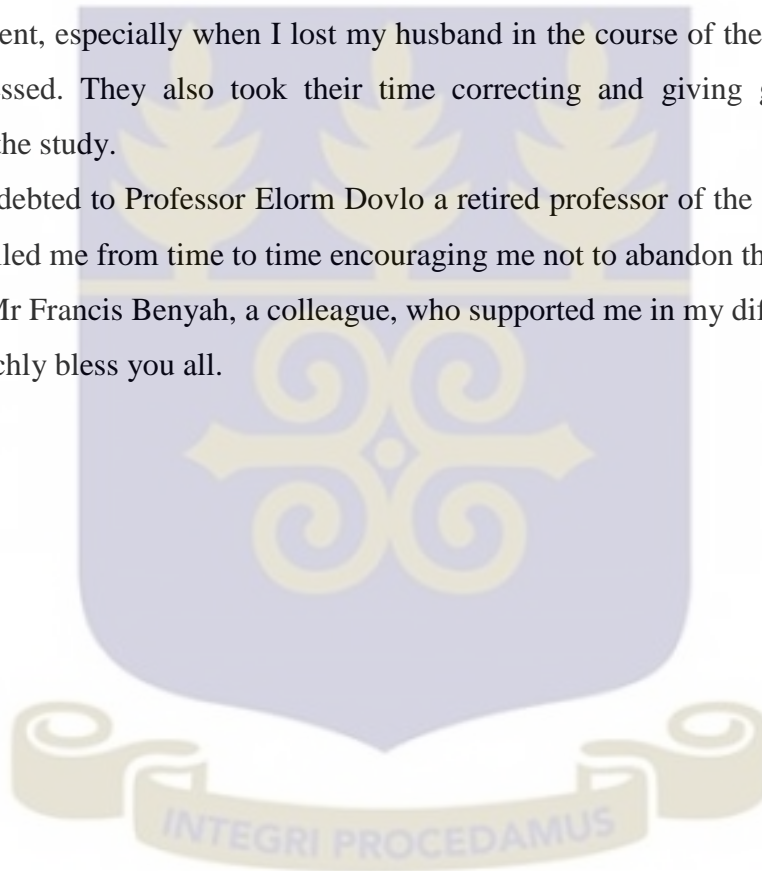


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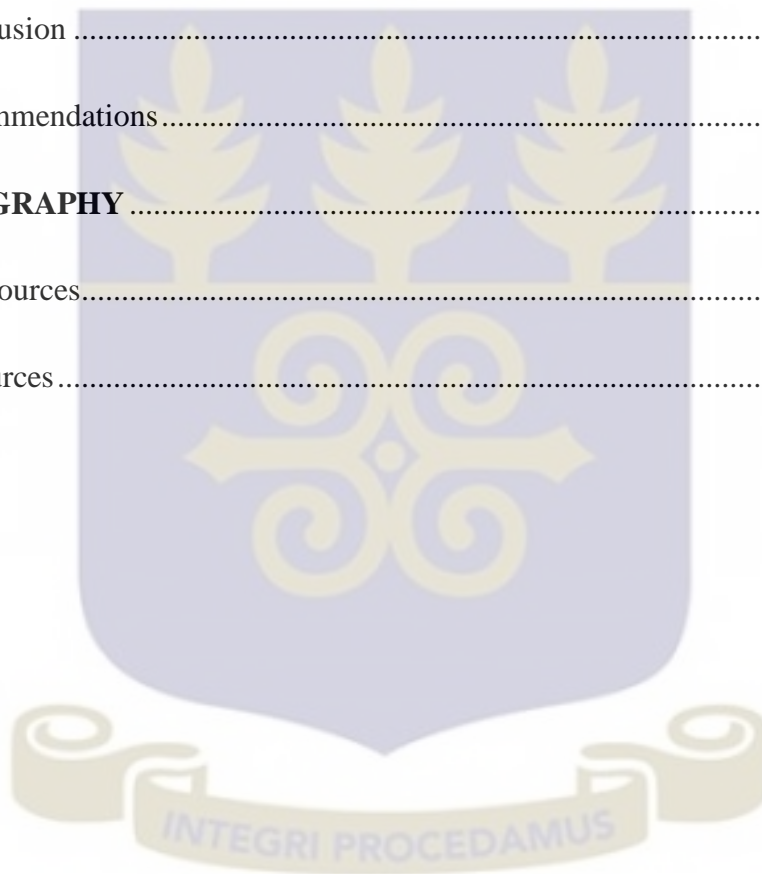
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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a worldwide “conservative Christian movement, evangelical in doctrine, and professing no creed but the Bible”¹. The church has its foundation and formation from the 1844 great disappointment in the United States as well as the Millerite movement during the mid-19th century. It was a period; when some portion of Christendom considered the second coming of Christ as imminent based on a calculation of the 2300 day prophecy in Daniel chapter 8. The Seventh-day Adventist church then became a remnant of this disappointment and was formally established in 1863. Leaders such as Joseph Bates, James White, Ellen White, and J.N Andrews took on the mission of spreading the message of the church concerning the end times to the rest of the world. As a mission, the church sponsored evangelists all over the world as a way of fulfilling its mission of reaching every person with the gospel of Jesus Christ.²

In Ghana, formerly called Gold Coast, indigenous people were introduced and converted to Adventism through literature that was distributed in the coastal areas by ship captains. As a result of this literature distribution along the coast of Apam in the Central Region of Ghana, a Ghanaian named Francis Dolphijn got hold of some of the literature, read it and got converted. Through his effort, the church was officially established in the then Gold Coast in the year 1888.

¹ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (SDAE)*, rev. ed., 1976, s.v. “Seventh-day Adventist Church;” Nancy J. Vyhmeister, “Who Are Seventh-day Adventist?” in *HSDAT*, 1; Aecio E. Cairus, *Advent Daybreak: The Rise of a Movement That Captivated the Christian World* (Silang Cavite, Philippines: Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2007), 1

² *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (SDAE)*, rev. ed., 1976, s.v.

Since then, women have been contributing to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church to its current population of about 500,000.³ Recently, the researcher attended an Adventist Church's official gathering and three lay women: Mary Totor, Evelyn Boateng and Mary Afriyie, were honoured and acknowledged for their contributions to the church. In the citations read to acknowledge their contribution to the work of the church, they were said to have put up schools, church buildings, support evangelism and needy persons as well as other humanitarian aspects in the society. I was impressed about the above event, and this is one of the motivated factors that prompted me to do a systematic research into women's contribution to the church in Ghana.

Indigenous women, in general, have not only contributed to the growth of the church regarding numbers but also regarding the quality of membership. Roy Pointer affirms that while becoming and being a Christian are entirely dependent upon an intimate and personal relationship with Christ; the Christian faith can only be lived in a relationship with and in service to others. Their commitment to Christ includes the commitment to the SDA church. This has resulted in the organic growth of the church. Pointer describes the formation and functioning of this communal life of the local church. Again, Pointer refers to Costa's, definition of organic growth as:

The internal development of a local community of faith (that is, the system of relationships among its members), its form of government, financial structures, leadership and types of activities in which its time and resources are invested. Organic growth is concerned with such issues as depth of fellowship; quality of worship; training of new members; discovery of gifts and the exercise of ministry; appointment and role of leaders; practice of corporate prayer; celebration of the ordinance or sacraments-all that relate to the corporate organization and activity of the local church.⁴

³ General Conference of Seventh-day- Adventist Church, Ghana Union Conference: Membership Statistics (www.adventiststatistics.org/view retrieved, April 2013).

⁴ Roy Pointer, *How Do Churches Grow?* (Great Britain: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1984), 28.

Notwithstanding, much is not heard about the contributions of women in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana. Also, there is inadequate information on women's contributions to the church in the existing literature on the SDA church in Ghana.

Scholars such as Kofi Owusu-Mensah and Francis Opoku for example, in their works on the SDA church, did not mention any indigenous woman's contributions among the indigenous workers, who have contributed to the growth of the church, apart from welfare services they attributed to women's group in the church - the Dorcas Society. Moreover, Pastor Emmanuel Dickson Poakwa's unpublished thesis on "The Indigenous Factor in the Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana 1888-2003"⁵, listed many indigenous workers, but the list, here too, did not include any woman. He only mentioned the services of the Dorcas Society, which donated clothes and food to the needy. In this regard, one agrees with Elizabeth Isichei and Bengt Sundklar who emphasised that women were often the first converts and the most enthusiastic local evangelists. They even sacrifice their resources in propagating the gospel.⁶ Sundklar Steed also notes that though women may appear invisible, they have been the pillars of the parish and have taken care of the local church and its worship.⁷ This study, therefore, is to examine and document the contributions of indigenous women to the growth of the Adventist church in Ghana, which has effectively helped to contribute to the growth and success of the Adventist history in Ghana.

⁵ Poakwa, E. D., *The Indigenous Factor in the Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana 1888-2003*, Unpublished Thesis, Department of Studies of Religions, University of Ghana, 2006

⁶ Isichel, E., *The History of Christianity in Africa: from Antiquity to the Present*, London, SPCK, 1995, 190

⁷ Sundklar, B. and Steed, C., *A History of the Church in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 681

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana started with only one family at Apam in the year 1888.⁸ Currently the church's population, as at the year 2013, is about five hundred thousand (500,000).⁹ The contribution of indigenous women does account for the organic growth of the church. However, a closer look at the literature on the SDA concerning the church's history and expansion of the church seem not highlight and recognize the pivotal role women have played in the development and expansion of the SDA Church in Ghana. The contribution of indigenous women to SDA Church in Ghana has received little research attention. The researcher, therefore, seeks to investigate as well as document the contributions of women to the growth of the Adventist church in Ghana.

1.3 The Research Questions

The main questions that guided the research are;

1. What are the contributions of the indigenous women to the organic growth of Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana?
2. What motivates women to contribute to the growth of the SDA church?
3. What are the challenges faced by the indigenous women in contributing to the growth of the church?

1.4 The Research Objectives

From the following research questions, the researcher aims at the following;

1. To find and contribute to existing knowledge on the contribution of women to the organic growth of SDA church in Ghana.

⁸ Owusu-Mensa, K, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventist: A History*. Accra, Advent Press, 2005.

⁹ Adventist Statistics Office, General Conference, 2011 *Statistics of Ghana Union Conference*, (Retrieved, May 2013, http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=2105099)

2. To investigate about the factors that motivate women to contribute to the growth of the church.
3. To find out the challenges faced by women in their quest to contribute to the growth of the church.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study focuses on the contributions of women to organic growth to the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana. The study is narrowed to the study of indigenous women in two SDA churches in Accra namely, Adenta and Oyarefa and two SDA churches in Kumasi namely, Amakom and Bantama. The study attempts to find out the extent to which indigenous women have contributed to the growth of the church regarding the quality of membership.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is based on the empowerment of indigenous women to the growth of Christianity in Africa. Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions that both build individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context that govern the use of these assets and abilities. Empowered people have freedom of choice and action. This in turn enables them to influence better the course of their lives and the decisions that affect them. In the context of this study, the researcher argues that, the empowerment of women, especially indigenous women within the SDA church in Ghana, will invariably affect the organic growth of the church. This theory of empowerment takes the position that the capacity

building of women through education and the given of roles in the church to perform will go a long way to influence their skills and leadership abilities to help contribute their quota to the growth of the SDA church in Ghana.

The theory of empowerment espouses the provision of resources to people in disadvantaged situations so that they can strengthen their capacities to participate fully in the community and to articulate their interests.¹⁰ Kabeer also defines empowerment as the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. She further indicated that empowerment could be explored closely through the following interrelated pathways: agency, resources and achievements.¹¹ In other words, empowerment entails a process of change.

Thus, the theory of empowerment is used to establish the significant role of women in the church. Following this observation, it is conceptualized that women, encouraged in the church will contribute significantly regarding quality to the church through various responsibilities such as facilitating and planning of women's retreats and conferences, facilitating the development of culture-specific Women's Ministries activities for the church. Women, when empowered, will be available as speakers for various presentations relating to women's needs and concerns in different locations. They will also assist in planning, organizing, and implementing the direction of Women, and assist in providing information and advice to the officials of the Church on issues related to, and of particular interest to Adventist women.¹²

¹⁰ Poakwa, E. D., *The Indigenous Factor in the Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana 1888-2003*, Unpublished Thesis, Department of Studies of Religions, University of Ghana, 2006

¹¹ Isichel, E., *The History of Christianity in Africa: from Antiquity to the Present*, London, SPCK, 1995, 190.

¹² Opoku, F., *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana: Some Aspects of its History and Development from 1864-2000*, Unpublished Thesis, Department of Studies of Religions, University of Ghana, 2003.

In the 21st century, women enjoy more freedom and power than ever before. However, they are still disadvantaged in virtually all aspects of life. Women have been deprived for a long time of equal access to education, health care, capital, and decision-making powers in the political, social, religious and business sectors.¹³ According to Mwaura, women still dominate the pews in mainline churches,¹⁴ but some of these churches still limit or do not encourage women to play active roles. Notwithstanding, Charismatic and Pentecostal groups have provided a larger space for women. Explanations for the change include the fact that women are educated on a larger scale and operate in universities with their male counterparts.¹⁵ That is an implication of economic and social independence for the female.

In the Seventh-day Adventist church, some of the indigenous women who have contributed to the growth of the church in Ghana, may have some form of education, or are economically sound. Some may also have both; education and are financially sound. There is, therefore, the need to adopt the influence of economic strength, education or both on the empowerment of indigenous women, as influencing indigenous women to contribute to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana, as the theoretical framework for this study.

1.7 Methodology

Generally, this research work is a qualitative study and employs a historical approach. The researcher understands a qualitative approach as one that does not use statistical

¹³ Kabeer, N., *Development*

¹⁴ Mwaura, P. N., *Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches in African Christianity: An African Story: Perspectives on Christianity Series, Pretoria, University of Pretoria, 2005, 411*

¹⁵ Mwaura, P. N., *Gender and Power in African Christianity*, 431.

procedures or methods of quantification as primary tools to understand the object of research. Qualitative methods in this study refer to “a nonmathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme.” The main focus of qualitative research is to consider meaning production as a process that is “contextualized and inextricably integrated with wider social and cultural practices.” It also seeks to collect data on the “perceptions of local actors from inside, through a process of deep attentiveness.”

The purpose of qualitative research is to seek the understanding from the respondent’s perspective. According to Denzin and Lincoln qualitative research focuses on the interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings to make sense regarding the meanings people bring to these settings. Qualitative research involves collecting information about personal experiences, introspection, life story, interviews, observations, historical, interactions and visual text that are significant moments and meaningful in peoples' lives. In this study, the researcher used interview and observation of fact.

Historical studies concern the identification, location, evaluation, and synthesis of data from the past. Historical research seeks not only to discover the events of the past but to relate these past happenings to the present and the future.

Historical research “attempts to recapture systematically the complex nuances, the people, meanings, events, and even ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present.” Denzin and Lincoln explain that historical approach involves the systematic collection and objective evaluation of data related to past occurrences to test hypotheses

concerning causes, effects, or trends of these events that may help to explain present events and anticipate future events.

The historical approach will be used to trace the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana and will also help bring to light the contribution of indigenous women to the growth of the Church.

1.7.1 Methods of Data Collection

1.7.1.1 Primary Sources

Primary Sources include personal observation of events, and can be oral or written testimony, etc.

For the purpose of the study, the researcher developed an interview guide, to aid the interview process. Thus, an in-depth interview was conducted using both structured and unstructured questions, to solicit the views of the selected indigenous women and other selected male members of the church in Ghana. Though, personal interviews are labour intensive they can be the best way of collecting high-quality data, especially when the subject matter is very sensitive, if the questions are very complex and if the interview is likely to be lengthy.¹⁶

However, it is very useful in this study since it will provide data for the research. Also, compared to other methods of data collection, face-to-face interviewing offers a greater degree of flexibility. The interviewer can also clarify questions, correct misunderstandings, offer prompts, probe responses and follow up on new ideas in a way that is just not possible with other methods¹⁷.

¹⁶ Negash, A., *Economic Empowerment of Women*,

¹⁷ Mwaura, P. N., *Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches in African Christianity: An African Story: Perspectives on Christianity Series*, Pretoria, University of Pretoria, 2005, 411

1.7.1.2 Secondary Sources

Because of the focus and scope of the study, the researcher had to consult different secondary sources especially books and theses that focused on indigenous women's contribution to the growth of the Adventist Church in Ghana. The researcher also consulted articles, journals, brochures, biographies, newspapers and church official documents.

1.7.1.3 Observation of Facts

Another method of data collection employed in the study is observation. Observation is the technique of obtaining data through direct contact with a persons or group of persons or fact. Since, the main focus of qualitative research is naturalism; the researcher has to observe fact in their natural state as undisturbed as possible.¹⁸ The researcher, therefore, observed schools, church buildings, etc. that were put up by some of the selected indigenous women in Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana.

1.7.2 Sample/Sampling procedure or Technique

The researcher used purposive sampling, called criterion sampling technique for the study¹⁹ to select ten women; four of which have served as church elders, two serving as ministry leaders and four lay women of the SDA church for investigation. Respondents were selected based on certain criteria that helped bring out the objective of the study.

The sample population of the study is mainly from the two administrative fields of the church. The Seventh Day Adventist Church in Ghana currently has twelve administrative fields spreading all over the country. Two of these Conferences (administrative fields of

¹⁸ Mwaura, P. N., *Gender and Power in African Christianity*, 431

¹⁹ Kabeer, N., *Development vol.30, Institute of social Studies*, Oxford Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 1999

the church) are in the Ashanti and the Greater Accra regions of Ghana, where the church is firmly established and also has the highest population and are economically sound, as compared to the other administrative fields of the church.²⁰ The Ghana Union Conference, the administrative head of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana is also located in the study area.

1.7.3 Data Analysis

In evaluating the data that was gathered during fieldwork, a qualitative analysis was employed. This method relies on the quality of the information based on its relevance to the subjects being studied rather than on the quantity of responses to a particular issue.²¹ That is, instead of drawing from a large representative sample, the researcher sought to acquire in-depth and intimate information from a relatively smaller group of people. This method of data analysis was employed since the researcher dwell largely on interviews that are intended to elicit detailed information from individual respondents.

1.8 Literature Review

In this study, the researcher sought to review literature that has a direct bearing on the issues that remains very central to this study. As part of this, the researcher reviewed all the relevant literature under two thematic heading – that is, Women and the SDA church and Contribution of Women to the Growth of the SDA church.

²⁰ Negash, A., *Economic Empowerment of Women*, www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/global_ethics/economic-empowerment.html (Retrieved, 4 Oct, 2013)

²¹ Barbara M. Wildemuth, 'Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63 (1995), 881.

1.8.1 Women and the SDA Church

Mary Getui's article entitled, "The Role of Women in Seventh-day Adventist church in Kenya", is directly related to the study. The author, in her article, discusses in detail, some policies of the church concerning women's role in the Seventh-day Adventist church worldwide, especially concerning un-ordained pastoral ministers and eldership of women. She enumerates the role some indigenous women in Seventh-day Adventist church in Kenya has played. In the said article, Getui mentions among many others, how some few women in the midst of a patriarchal society in Kenya, have been able to break through and are serving as unordained ministers in Kenya.²²

Getui further discusses the challenges Adventist Women in Kenya face. She mentions that women in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Kenya are of different social, economic and educational backgrounds and that these differences are reflected in the women's attitudes such that they can hardly talk with one voice. She adds, "for some, the hierarchy of human needs limits their concerns to safety and survival; others whose basic issues are not so pressing, wrestle with the issues of worth, justice and opportunity to be all they can be for God."²³ Even though Getui's work is in a different context, it offers the researcher the opportunity to look some of the situation in the book that seem to be similar with regards to the role of women in the Ghanaian context. The researcher attempted to establish whether Ghanaian Adventist women play similar roles as its Kenyan counterpart and also whether they encounter similar challenges in carrying out the work of the church.

²² Getui, M. N., *Women in Mission in the Seventh-day Adventist in Kenya*, Journal of Adventist Thought in Africa, Vol1, No1, 1995, 76-81

²³ Getui, M. N., *Women in Mission in the Seventh-day Adventist*

Philomena Njeri Mwaura's book *Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches*, though not directly linked with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, dealt with the contribution of indigenous women to the growth of the Church in Africa and therefore, was very useful to the study. Mwaura asserts that the attraction of African women to Christianity was not confined to the pioneer period, but today, women still dominate the pews in mainline Churches, African Instituted Churches, Charismatic Movements and Pentecostal Churches. She also remarked that the contribution of the indigenous women to the growth of the Church in Africa cannot be gainsaid. More so, Mwaura noted that women are animators of the Church and society and not only during times of crises, even in times of stability. Whether women are educated or not, they continue to be devoted to the Church.²⁴ This article served as a useful material for the study because, the researcher was to establish whether both educated and non-educated women in the Adventist church are also really devoted to the work of the church.

Another useful literature is a report presented at the African Theological Institute by Mwaura. It states that women all over the world are the pillars, they witness to the image of God within them, and the hope and renewal for the church rest on this witness.²⁵ In the same argument, Crabtree also concurs in her article "Women Liberation and the Church" that women do comprise the large majority of active church members and are the sustaining force in the almost every congregation.²⁶ Crabtree assertion and that of

²⁴ Mwaura, P. N., *Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches in African Christianity: An African Story: Perspectives on Christianity Series*, Pretoria, University of Pretoria, 2005, 411

²⁵ Mwaura, P. N., *Empowerment of Women, The Role of the Church: A Paper Presented at The African Theological Fellowship Consultation at Akrofi Christaller Memorial Centre. Akropong, Akwapim, Ghana, 14:19*

²⁶ Crabtree, D. F., *Women Liberation and The Church*, In Sarah Betley Doely (ed) *Women Liberation and The Church. The New Demand for Freedom in the Life of Christian Church*, New York Association Press, 1970, 15

Mwaura arguments go a long way affirming that women are indeed contributing to the growth of the church in Africa. These two literatures also serve as a useful resource since it helps the researcher to establish whether indigenous women are the sustaining force in the Adventist church in Ghana. Especially, Mwaura's report was useful to the study because it helped the researcher to find out whether indigenous Adventist women can also be considered as pillars of the Christian church.

In Mary McKenna's book *Women in the Church: Role and Renewal*, it states that in the early church, the role of women was highly recognised and appreciated. Women participated as deacons, companions of Paul and other Apostles and as Apostles themselves (Roman 16:7). Church leaders (Rom 16:3-5) church rulers (Rom 16:1). McKenna notes that women's pastoral functions included teaching, catechising to other women and caring for the sick.²⁷ This is useful for the study because, it helped the researcher to bring to light and document some women in the Adventist Church in Ghana who have carried out some of these Pastoral functions, but their contributions are not known or documented.

Another related work to the study is the report by the Director of Women Ministries Department at the 2012 Session of the South Ghana Conference. In her address, to delegates at the Session, she talked about the achievements women, within their jurisdiction, have achieved to the growth of the Church.²⁸ However, the report was silent about the detailed achievements of the women. Hence, there is the need to find out what these indigenous women achieved through this study.

²⁷ McKenna, M. L., *Women in the Church Role and Renewal*, New York, PJ Kennedy & Sons, 1967, 153

²⁸ *South Ghana Conference, 1st Quadrennial Sessional Report of the South Ghana Conference, 2012*

1.8.2 Contribution of Women to the Growth of the SDA church

Another work that has a bearing on the study was unpublished MPhil Thesis by E.D. Poakwa entitled, “The Indigenous Factor in the Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana (1888 - 2003).” In the thesis, he deals with the contribution of indigenous workers to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Poakwa devoted nineteen (19) pages mentioning names of indigenous workers who have contributed to the Church. Interestingly, he did not mention any woman’s name as also having contributed their quota to the growth of the Church in Ghana. All he emphasized was that the women of the Church have also embarked upon welfare services through the Dorcas Society by donating items such as salt, second-hand clothing and soap to project the love and unity in the Church.²⁹

Since Poakwa’s interest was not adding to the contribution of women to the growth of the church, he was, therefore, silent on some of the other achievements of indigenous women in the church. More so, most of the indigenous workers he mentioned were having wives whom they worked with, as co-partners. But Poakwa, not even on one occasion, acknowledged the fact that some of the indigenous workers laboured with their wives. Some of these women might have accompanied their husbands to evangelical programmes. They also preached, mobilised children and assisted those who are in need. The researcher, therefore, fills this gap by looking at the contribution of some of these indigenous women, apart from the welfare services that was mentioned by the author.

Branch Sabbath School: A Church planting method employed by Seventh-day Adventists to start a new bible study group that leads to a Company, which when organised becomes one of the sisterhood of Churches.

²⁹ Poakwa, E. D., *The Indigenous Factor in the Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana 1888-2003*, Unpublished Thesis, Department of Studies of Religions, University of Ghana, 2006

To add up, Francis Opoku's MPhil thesis entitled, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church, Some Aspects of its History and Development" also throws some light on the subject under study. In his work, he also devotes time discussing the activities of the women's ministry in the church, that is, the Dorcas Society. What Opoku highlight is that the Dorcas Society, comprising women of the church, devote time and talents to the gathering and preparing clothing, food, etc., for the poor.³⁰ However, Opoku refused to acknowledge is the fact that the Women Ministry Department of the Church has evangelism as its main mission. In this regard, some of the women have excelled and need to be acknowledged and documented. This is what this thesis seeks to do.

An additional work that will also be useful in this study is Kofi Owusu-Mensa's book titled, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism: A History*. He traced the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church right from 1863 to 2000. Mensa does a very good work by writing extensively on some key indigenous pioneers and other indigenous workers who have contributed to the growth of the Adventist Church in Ghana up to the year 2000. Among the people he mentions include; Francis Dolphijn, a native of Apam in the Central Region of Ghana. In his narrative, Mensa admits that Dolphijn's wife, Ekua Guraba of Mankoadze does not feature in his records in highlighting her husband's activities because she died early, probably, even before her husband accepted the new faith.

However, his three children, that included a girl called Joyce Dolphijn, according to Mensa, worked closely with her father until his death. The researcher is, therefore, interested in finding out whether some of the early indigenous women, including Joyce

³⁰ Opoku, F., *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana: Some Aspects of its History and Development from 1864-2000*, Unpublished Thesis, Department of Studies of Religions, University of Ghana, 2003

Dolphijn, did contribute anything that is worth documenting or acknowledging, to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana.

In the same book, Owusu-Mensa mentions seventeen (17) key laypersons in the Central Ghana Conference, who actively participated in drawing members to the church and one of these was a woman, called, Madam Mary Afriyie. According to Owusu-Mensa, Afriyie was one of the active women leaders in the Kumasi Seventh-day Adventist Church.³¹ However, the actual contribution of this woman was not explicitly outlined. There is, therefore, the need to find out what this woman has contributed to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana, and document them, thus, contributing to the data on women's activities in the church.

Moreover, Owusu-Mensa's article that appeared in the *Dictionary of Africa Christian Biography* also mentions the contribution of one lay indigenous woman in the Ghana Seventh-day Adventist Church. According to Owusu Mensah, Evelyn Boateng over the years got more involved in gospel ministry by helping with funds for the advancement of the Lord's work and the training of young Adventists, particularly as ministers and evangelists. She concentrated the early stages of her fund on the financing of evangelism equipment such as electric generators, public address systems, and projectors for church leaders and evangelists. She also provided funds for the construction of many Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Ghana and sponsored students in Adventist institutions.³² Owusu-Mensah notes that Boateng has funded several conferences and missions of the

³¹ Owusu-Mensa, K, *Dictionary of Africa Christian Biography*, (<http://www.dacb.org/index.html>, Retrieved, May, 2013)

³² Owusu-Mensa, K, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventist: A History*, 2013.

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana to aid the church's evangelistic programs.³³ She has also funded several orphanages.³⁴

Despite the effort that was made by Owusu-Mensa in highlighting the contribution of Boateng, his study was silent on how Boateng was able to contribute, how she funded the programmes, what inspired her to contribute to the work of the church, etc. The researcher as part of this study inquired about the challenges she encountered, in the course of carrying out these tasks, which answers some of the research questions of this study.

Furthermore, in *Adventism in Accra: History of the Hanson Road Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana*, Eunice Miranda Brocke's offers a very good source of information which serves as a point of departure for analysis on some of the issues that are very pertinent to this study. In this book, she wrote that she was officially performing duties as an elder from 1976-1981, even though women had not been accepted or gained much grounds in the SDA Church.³⁵ In the same book, it is written that Brocke who was a women's leader founded Dorcas Welfare Society evangelism in Accra Seventh-day Adventist Church, now Hanson Road Seventh-day Adventist Church. These women undertook "Share your faith", House-to-house, Community Evangelism and established Branch Sabbath School, which led to the expansion of the Church in Accra.³⁶ However, Brocke did not state into details her achievements as an elder, how she was able to do it, and whether there were any challenges she encountered, carrying out her work in the

³³ Owusu-Mensa, K, *Dictionary of Africa Christian Biography*

³⁴ Owusu-Mensa, K, *Dictionary of Africa Christian Biography*

³⁵ Brocke, E. M., *Adventism in Ghana: History of the Hansen Road Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Accra, EMB Goodwill Foundation, 2011, 96

³⁶ Brocke, E. M., *Adventism in Ghana*, 46.

Hanson Road Seventh-day Adventist Church, which were addressed in this work. These were some of the answers the study wanted to find out and document.

Brocke also in the same book acknowledges Udo E. Akpan, who was working with her husband to assist Nsawam Seventh-day Adventist Church and through their efforts, were able to acquire a piece of land to build a permanent Church and school to serve the community.³⁷ Furthermore, Brocke also mentioned Madam Victoria Torto, who started a Branch Sabbath School with fifty (50) children at Kaneshie First Light, Accra, in her bedroom. This Branch Sabbath School became a formal school in 1961 and later handed to the Hanson Road Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1963, which is now called Hansen Road Seventh-day Adventist Preparatory School.³⁸ This also served a useful resource because; the researcher found out into details how Madam Torto was able to do it, what motivated her and some of her challenges. These were systematically analysed and documented.

Another relevant literature is the burial brochure of the late Victoria Ama Osaebia Daaku. According to the brochure, Daaku contributed immensely to the church in many capacities. At the American Town Seventh-day Adventist Church, in which she held her membership, she was the pillar of the church.³⁹ Daaku was instrumental in the establishment of Gbawe Top Base, Ablekuma Fan Milk, Sakaman and the American Town Seventh-day Adventist churches. This material, therefore, became necessary for this study, since the researcher was interested in finding out the contribution of

³⁷ Brocke, E. M., *Adventism in Ghana*, 125.

³⁸ Brocke, E. M., *Adventism in Ghana*, 56.

³⁹ Daaku, V., *Funeral and Burial Brochure*, 21st February, 2013

indigenous women to the growth of Adventist church in Ghana and analysed them and, also adding to academic data.⁴⁰

1.9 Significance of the Study

The study has brought to light the contributions made by some indigenous women to the growth of Christianity in Ghana, thus contributing to the data on women's activities in the church. The study has unearthed what inspires and motivates these women to engage in the work of the church. The study again has added to the data on the challenges women face in the various roles they play in the church

1.10 Organization of Chapters

This work has been organized into four chapters. Chapter one is the general introduction. It gives the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aims and objectives of the study, research methodology employed, literature review, and significance of the study.

Chapter two deals with the history and mission of the Seventh – day Adventist church in Ghana. The chapter mainly touches on the events that led to the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana, and various epochs that the church has passed through to this stage. The aim here is to situate the church within its proper historical context and locate the period in which women's contributions were very substantial to its growth.

⁴⁰ Daaku, V., *Funeral and Burial Brochure*, 57.

Chapter three focuses on a discussion and analysis of women contribution to the growth of SDA church in Ghana. The chapter presents literature on the operation of women in areas of the church. It shows biblical perceptions of the roles women play in the church. The chapter dwells on women as leaders in the church. It also deals with the analysis and examination of the issues that immerges out of the study. Views of respondents have also been presented.

Chapter four which concludes the study gives the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

1.11 Definition of terms

Situating keywords or terms within the framework of a given study is an integral part of scholarship.⁴¹ This helps to delineate contextually such terms by clarifying their usage for understanding.⁴² In this work, such terms are indigenous women, organic growth and lay women.

Indigenous Women

In this study, indigenous women refer to all Ghanaian women in Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana

⁴¹ Gerrier ter Haar, "World Religions and Community Religions: Where does Africa fit in?" occasional Paper (Centre for African Studies, university of Copenhagen, August 2001), 1.

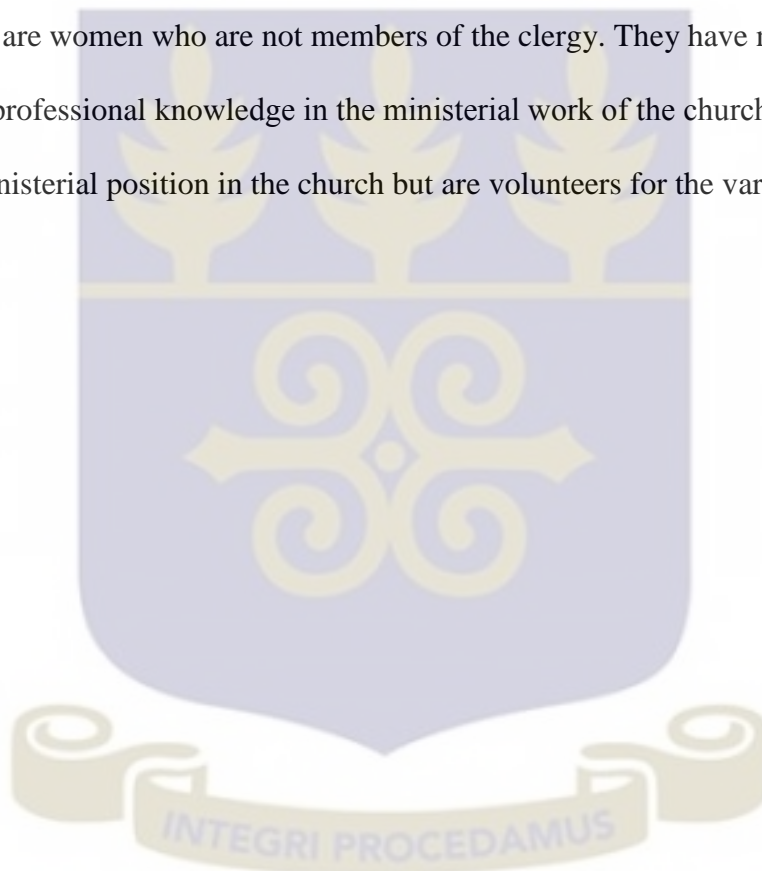
⁴² Graham, Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (London: Hurst and Company, 2005), xvii.

Organic Growth

Organic growth involves Growing together in Community. It concerns the depth of fellowship. It is promoted by The quality of worship; Teaching new members; Discovery of gifts and exercise of ministry; Appointment and role of leaders; Practice of corporate prayer and Celebration of the sacraments.

Lay Women

Lay women are women who are not members of the clergy. They have not specialized or gained any professional knowledge in the ministerial work of the church. They don't also hold any ministerial position in the church but are volunteers for the various activities in the church.



CHAPTER TWO
THE HISTORY AND MISSION OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH IN GHANA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the history and mission of Seventh-day Adventist Church. The chapter presents the historical background of the church in Ghana, the mission of Seventh-day Adventist church, the women in mission and the role of women in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

A lot of work has been dedicated to the writing of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA). Some of such works include *Ghana Seventh-day Adventist: A History* by Kofi Owusu Mensah, “The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana: Some Aspects of its History and Development from 1864-2000”⁴³, by Francis Opoku. The aim of the researcher here is not to reproduce what other scholars have done on such area of the study. However, as the focus of the study is, the researcher gives a brief historical background of the church to situate the work within its proper historical context.

2.2 Brief Historical Background of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Modern Seventh Day Adventism traces its origins back to the early 1800's to Mr. William Miller (1782-1849) of Low Hampton, New York. Mr. Miller had converted from Deism to Christianity in 1816 and became a Baptist. He was an avid reader, dedicated to God's word, and sought to reconcile apparent biblical difficulties raised by

⁴³ Opoku, F., *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana: Some Aspects of its History and Development from 1864-2000*, Unpublished Thesis, Department of Studies of Religions, University of Ghana, 2003

deists. He relied heavily on the Cruden's Concordance in his studies and developed a focus on the imminent return of Jesus. He began preaching at the age of fifty (50).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the largest of several Adventist groups that arose from the Millerite movement of the 1840s in upstate New York, a phase of the Second Great Awakening. After William Miller's prediction had failed (an event known as the "Great Disappointment"), most of his followers disbanded and returned to their original churches. Nonetheless, some Millerites came to believe that Miller's calculations were correct but that his interpretation of Daniel 8:14 was flawed as he assumed it was the "earth that was to be cleansed" or Christ would come to cleanse the world. These Adventists arrived at the conviction that Daniel 8:14 foretold Christ's entrance into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary rather than his second coming. This new awareness of a sanctuary in heaven became an important part of their thinking. Over the next few decades, this understanding developed into the doctrine of the investigative judgment: an eschatological process commencing in 1844 in which Christians will be judged to verify their eligibility for salvation and God's justice will be confirmed before the universe. This group of Adventists continued to believe that Christ's second coming would be imminent. They resisted setting further dates for the event, citing Revelation 10:6, "that there should be time no longer".⁴⁴

The church owns its beginning to the Advent movement of the nineteenth century, especially the Millerite movement of the 1840s. The church sees itself as "heirs also of an earlier widespread awakening, in many countries, of interest in the Second Advent, of

⁴⁴ Owusu-Mensa, K, *Dictionary of Africa Christian Biography*, (<http://www.dacb.org/index.html>, Retrieved, May, 2013)

which the Millerite movement was a part.⁴⁵ The period between 1831 and 1863 served as the organisational years of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist church. This period saw the unfolding of the Millerite Movement and the advent message, the Disappointment of 1844, the renewed Advent Movement, the emergence of James and Ellen White, the birth of periodicals and other types of literature for the dissemination of Christian evangelistic and missionary messages, the adoption of the name “Seventh-day Adventist,” and the organisation of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist as the official name of the world church in 1863.⁴⁶

Seventh-day Adventist Church corresponds to Protestant Christian teachings such as the Trinity and the infallibility of Scripture. Distinctive teachings include the unconscious state of the dead and the doctrine of an investigative judgment. The church is also known for its emphasis on diet and health, its "holistic" understanding of the person⁴⁷, its promotion of religious liberty, and its conservative principles and lifestyle.⁴⁸ Prominent founders of the church include James and Ellen White, Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, Stephen Haskell, Uriah Smith and John Loughborough.

White's whose extensive writings are still held in high regard by the church today.⁴⁹ Apart from White, many other women also contributed to the establishment of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Some of such women include Mary E. Britton and Anna Knight.

⁴⁵ Owusu-Mensa, K, *Dictionary of Africa Christian Biography*

⁴⁶ Owusu-Mensa, K, *Dictionary of Africa Christian Biography*

⁴⁷ Getui, M. N., *Women in Mission in the Seventh-day Adventist in Kenya*, Journal of Adventist Thought in Africa, Vol1, No1, 1995, 76-81

⁴⁸ Getui, M. N., *Women in Mission in the Seventh-day Adventist*, 74.

⁴⁹ Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P.. *Ethnography Principles in Practice* , London, Routledge, 2007, 3

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana is part of a bigger movement of Adventist worldwide which has a population of more than 500,000. Seventh-day Adventist message reached Gold Coast now Ghana in 1888 when Francis I. U. Dolphijn a Ghanaian, who lived at Apam received the Sabbath message through a pamphlet from the International Tract Society. One William Kweku Attah Dawson of Fetteh and Mayenda, also in Fantiland, is said to have either preceded Dolphijn as first Adventist, or even the one who introduced Adventism to Dolphijn. In 1893, the General Conference of SDA Church officially dispatched the first missionary from America to Gold Coast. The missionaries Karl G. Rudolph and E. L Sanford arrived at Apam. In 1894, the Gold Coast mission of SDA was established with the headquarters at Cape Coast, which happened to be the headquarters of the SDA mission for West Africa. By this time Adventism had gained root in Gold Coast.⁵⁰

In 1914, W. H. Lewis, the first president of Gold Coast mission travelled to Kumasi, Asante in search of permanent headquarters. On November 1914, he chose Agona Asante as the missionary headquarters after he had been heartily accepted by Nana Kwame Boakye 1, Chief of Agona. The year 1915 marked the beginning of pioneering work in Asante. Much work was done by Lewis and his team which included J.K Gabra in Asante area especially Ntonso, Wiamoase, Asamang, etc. Tradition holds that Lewis even met a Sabbath-keeping family at Wiamoase when he officially sent the Adventist message to the place. In 1931, Pastor Clifford arrived at Agona and in 1932 helped to established the Bekwai Training School (Evangelistic Training School/Seminary), In 1933, the West African field was re-organized as a Gold Coast Union Mission with the

⁵⁰ Baker, B. J. *Black SDA Obits*. (Retrieved May 29, 2014, from www.blackdahistory.org)

mission based at Asante Bekwai. After Ghana's independence on March 6, 1957, the Gold Coast Mission was renamed Ghana Mission with the headquarters now in Kumasi.

Pastor C. B. Mensah became the first black president of the Ghana Mission in 1959. In 1968, the North Ghana Mission was carved out from Ghana Mission making Ghana mission re-organized with Pastor J.K Amoah as the president of the Ghana Mission. In 1970, the Mission was re-organized as Ghana conference. Ghana conference was reorganized in 1977 as Central Ghana Conference with the creation of South Ghana Mission. In 1986, the Central Ghana Conference with Pastor W.G Mensah as its president was again reorganized with the creation of Mid-West Ghana Mission. Then in 1998 also, the South Central Ghana Conference was carved out from Central Ghana Conference and Central Ghana Conference was re-organized.

Throughout these periods of metamorphosis, a lot of church activities; example evangelism, Constituency meetings, camp meetings, Youth Camps, anniversaries, the building of churches, the creation of church districts and the establishment of institutions have successfully been undertaken.⁵¹

In January 2000, after several reorganisations in the Church's set up, the then West African Union Mission of the SDA was also re-organised and Ghana became the GUC with Accra as its headquarters and Pastor P.O. Mensah as its first President, and on November 15, 2005, Pastor Larmie assumed office as the second President of the GUC.

Presently, the SDA Church in Ghana has a total of 3,012 local churches throughout the country and a total membership of 700,000, comprising both the baptized and

⁵¹ Morgan D, *Give Us More Noble Souls Like Hers* (Retrieved May 29, 2014, from Blog: www.adventistpeace.org)

unbaptized, with a total baptized membership of more than 400,000.⁵² The next section takes a closer look at how some of the churches that were used in this study were established. Regarding global historical perspective about the church, women have contributed to the establishment of the church. It is, however, not surprising that also in Ghana some women like Mary Totor, Evelyn Boateng and Mary Afriyie have also contributed to the establishment and expansion of the church till its current state. Though their contributions are not mostly highlighted in the current literature, the researcher during fieldwork found out their contribution that will be highlighted in chapter three.

2.2.1 The Establishment of Bantama SDA church

Bantama is very significant in this study since one of the women under study who has distinguished herself regarding been a financier, Madam Evelyn Boateng, is found in this church. Bantama Seventh-Day Adventist Church was established in April 1973 by the Central Ghana Conference of SDA after a six (6) week Evangelism campaign that was held at the Ghana National Cultural Centre in Kumasi, the Garden City of West Africa. The 1973 Evangelism campaign that was led by Pastor M.A. Bediako was funded by a devoted American Evangelist and Philanthropist, one Pastor Ford Harrison, who donated Two Thousand U.S Dollars (\$ 2,000.00) through the late Elder R.A. Kissi of Nkawkaw. The following ministers actively participated in the 1973 evangelism campaign: Pastor David Colheart; a young Australian student missionary who was on his way to Australia after his religious assignment in the then Upper Volta now Burkina Faso, Pastor Antobam from Oda District, Pastor Charles Amoah; a former Amakom Church Pastor and Pastor M.E Ampate, the former Kumasi District Pastor⁵³ Also, Pastor S.Y.

⁵² Seventh Day Adventist. (n.d.). *Our History*. Retrieved May 29, 2014, from Central Ghana Conference: www.cgcsda.org

⁵³ *Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Ghana Launches 125th Anniversary*, <http://www.ghana.gov.gh>. (Retrieved May 29, 2014).

Ampomah of Ntonso Church and Pastor V.C.B. Debrah, the former Lay Activity Director of Central Ghana Conference were also part of this campaign.

All the existing churches in and outside Kumasi actively participated in establishing the Bantama SDA Church. At the end of the six-week campaign, one hundred and eighty-four (184) souls converted and baptized. By April 1976, the church membership had increased to two hundred (200) adults with eighty-one (81) children. Today, the church membership is more than eight hundred (800) adult members and about six hundred (600) children⁵⁴. Pioneers that have contributed to the establishment of SDA church in Ghana include Mrs. Agyei Kodie, Evelyn Boateng, Mr. Abraham Mintah, Mr. Samuel Abankwa, Joseph Boateng, Kofi Boa-Amponsem, Mr. Agyei Anthony, Mr. S.O. Mensah, Mr. S.O. Tawiah, Mr. James Boateng, Mad. Mary Henewaa, Mr. E.Y. Boakye, Mr. Hayford Marfo, etc. By dint of hard work, dedication and good spiritual leadership that built the Bantama SDA church on a sound and firm foundation and, therefore, became a model church in Kumasi. The three-year stay of the young church at the Cultural Centre was not peaceful. There was no specific place of worship. The church worshipped at different places. These places included Quashie Idun Hall, Apatakesem, Dwaberem and sometimes at the long room behind the beer bar at the Culture Centre.⁵⁵

2.2.2 History of Adenta District SDA Church

Some of the women, who have been able to distinguish themselves so much, regarding leadership roles as well as financing the church, are found in this district. They include Victoria Tortor, Victoria Acheampong and Lydia Anthony. The Adenta District was part

⁵⁴ Seventh Day Adventist. *Women Ministries*. gucsga.org (Retrieved May 29, 2014).

⁵⁵ Finucane C., *In Search Of Pastoral Care In The Seventh-Day Adventist Church: A Narrative Approach* University Of South Africa, 2009.

of Madina District of the South Ghana Conference of SDA which was also born out of the Accra East District in 1993. The two churches that have been selected as part of the study that is, the Adenta and Oyarifa branches of the SDA church as part of the Adenta district.

The idea to create a new district in the Madina District was the brainchild of Pastor Kephias Gyamfi, who was then the Madina District Pastor and his abled executive committee. As the church grew with the opening of more churches (about 19 churches and companies), Pastor Kephias Gyamfi and his executive committee voted to divide the district into Zone 1, 2, 3 and 4 for easy administration. The other vision was to nurture each zone into districting the future. Fortunately, Zone 1 in the Madina District was the Adenta Zone. From that point, they began to appoint Zonal Officers and do joint program in zones under the Madina District.

At a zonal corporate worship on July 4, 2009, at Adenta Church, the president of the South Ghana Conference who was the Preacher for the day was overwhelmed with the growth of the Adenta zone. He encouraged them to keep the zonal concept alive to be upgraded into districts shortly. In 2010, Pastor Kephias Gyamfi was transferred to Accra Central District and Madina District was taken over by Pastor Isaiah G. Morrison. He also continued from where Pastor Gyamfi had begun and also encouraged at the zones. Fortunately in 2012, the South Ghana Conference headed by Pastor Anthony Kesse voted to upgrade Zone 1 which is the Adenta Zone into Adenta District. On May 12, 2012, the whole Adenta zone congregated at Adenta Church to mark the beginning of the Adenta District. In the service, Pastor Isaac Kwame Donkor was introduced as the new District Pastor and on that same day the zonal officers by Pastor Emmanuel Dickson.

The new District was working hand in hand with the Madina District until July 1, 2012 when upon an agreement with the Madina District they began to operate independently. As a result, the Adenta District was able to plan within one month their District camp meeting. It was held at Oyoko near Koforidua with great success. From that time, the new Adenta District has been on her feet and poised for action.

After their first camp meeting, they were looking forward to a date for their inauguration. After a lot of consideration 29th June 2013 which is exactly one year of the takeoff as a district was selected and that is why they are here today. The district has seen a significant growth in their membership. This has increased from 622 at the end of the third quarter in 2012 to 644 as at the end of the first quarter which indicates an increase of 42 newly baptized and members in six months. The new District took off with two organized churches and three companies. Today, which marks exactly one year of the takeoff, two new companies have been added. The new companies are New Legon and Akpormang. Today, the district is pregnant with another new company to be opened at the Old Adenta Site, which is proposed to be the English Church in the district.

Three new church pastors have been seconded to pastors in the District. These are Pastor Flacus Kofi Amponsah for All Nations SDA Church, Pastor Gabriel Nsiah for Amazing Grace Church at Pantang and Pastor Francis Agyekum for Oyarifa Church. A new District office has also been shaped behind the Adenta Church Building, which has been well furnished to benefit the status of a new District office. The major challenge of the district has to do with infrastructure. The Adenta church that is the headquarters and on whose premises they are today has an uncompleted building. The Adenta All Nations Church is also under construction. The Amazing Grace in Pantang Hospital worships in a

temporal structure. Oyarifa, New Legon, and Akpormang all worship in classrooms. For Dromo, Sesemi they have but a small old Church Building, which still needs some finishing touches.⁵⁶ As part of the establishment of the Adenta District, women who also contributed include Mary Totor, Victoria Acheampong and Margaret Peasa.

2.3 The Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana

The word Mission may be described as sending individuals and groups, or missionaries to foreign countries, towns and cities in the homeland for the purpose of preaching the gospel to the unsaved community in particular and the world at large. The mission involves evangelism and humanitarian work, especially among the poor and disadvantaged; improve economic development, literacy, education, Healthcare services and provision of orphanages. For instance, the Encarta World English Dictionary defines mission as

A group of church workers or a body of church people sent to another part of the country or to a foreign country to spread their faith or do medical or social work. Church work in a community, a campaign of a religious work, often including community aid at home or abroad, carried out by a church, Communication of beliefs, the vocation work of a church or other religious organizations or of individuals in communicating their faith in a variety of ways to the wider community.⁵⁷

There has been a lot of debate as to the meaning of the term 'mission'. There have been two extreme views. One extreme understanding of mission is limited to the proclamation of the Word, and the other extreme view is connected exclusively with social action. To deal with this two concepts between evangelism and social action, a holistic understanding of mission has emerged.

⁵⁶ *Seventh Day Adventist Church* (2013).

⁵⁷ Encarta, *World English Dictionary* (London, WIV 5DF: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1999), 1210.

The concept of holistic mission presupposes that Mission should be a “sign of the Kingdom, in which evangelism, social action and the spirit are presented and inseparably related.”⁵⁸ Similarly, Bowen argues that “... the mission includes everything God’s Church continues to be and to do in the world and must be rooted in the character and purpose of God, its source and sustainer.”⁵⁹ From these definitions, one may say that mission simply means to send the “Church into the world to serve, to heal, to preach and to liberate.”⁶⁰

In his discussion of the word ‘holistic’, Myers defines holistic ministry as “one in which compassion, social transformation and proclamation are inseparably related.”⁶¹ In that article, he stresses the inseparable nature of evangelism and social action. It seems clear that a holistic definition of mission implies a total of social action and evangelism. This suggests that holistic mission has to do with the total salvation of humanity. Therefore, to see salvation regarding reward in heaven creates attitudes that lead to withdrawing from the world and its problems. But to see salvation much as a matter for this present age - only expressed regarding socio-economic and political growth – is also a caricature of the gospel. Salvation should be redefined to be more inclusive so that “there is no tension between saving from sin and saving from the spiritual ailment, between the spirit and the social.”⁶² The holistic mission focuses not only on progress and possession of wealth but also on facilitating individuals and communities to achieve a quality of life that is acceptable.⁶³

⁵⁸ A. H. M Zahniser, 1997. *Symbol and Ceremony*. California: MARC., 1997), 185.

⁵⁹ Roger Bowen, *So I Send You* (London: SPCK, 1996), 72.

⁶⁰ C. Sugden, *Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1997), 341.

⁶¹ B. L., Myers, 1988. “Where are the Poor and the Lost?” *World Vision Journal Together* October-December (1988), 5.

⁶² David, Bosch, *Transforming Mission: The Paradigm Shift in Theology of Mission* New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 33.

⁶³ J. R. Cheyne, *Incarnational Agents: A Guide to Development Ministry* (Birmingham: New Hope, 1996), 34.

In the New Testament the word “apostellein” means to send forth for service in the Kingdom of God with full authority (grounded in God). “As the Father has sent me, I also send you” (John 20:21). The church is sent by the Lord (Luke 4:43); the disciples were sent (Matt. 28:18-20). The mission is the participation in the mission of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴

David Bosch distinguishes between mission (singular) and missions (plural). The first refers primarily to *Missio Dei* (God’s mission), that is, God’s self-revelation as the one who loves the world, God’s involvement in and with the world that embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is a privilege to participate. *Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a God-for-people. Missions (the missions *ecclesiae*: the missionary ventures of the church) refers to particular forms, related to particular times, place or needs to participate *in Missio Dei*.⁶⁵

Mission has often been justified regarding concern for the lost or the biblical command to preach the gospel to the end of the world. However, Ott et al., argue that justifying mission on the explicit commands of the Bible makes the mission a human act of obedience.⁶⁶ In the mid-twentieth century, the mission came to be understood as God’s mission (Latin, *Missio Dei*),⁶⁷ that is to say, the mission is rooted in the divine initiative and character of God. Thus, the mission is “God’s mission”. God is a missionary God, and mission is rooted in the sending activity of the Triune God-Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁶⁸ According to Bosch, it was Karl Barth who became one of the first theologians to articulate mission as an activity of God himself, at the Brandenburg Missionary

⁶⁴ Gudder D. (ed.), *Missional Church, A Vision for Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 4-5.

⁶⁵ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 10.

⁶⁶ C. Ott, S. J. Strauss and T. C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission; Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments and Contemporary Issues* (Michigan: Baker Academic Publishing, 2010), 61.

⁶⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Missions*, 389.

⁶⁸ Ott, Strauss and Tennent, *Theology of Mission*, 62.

Conference in 1932.⁶⁹ The term *missio Dei*, the Latin expression for the mission of God, is explained by John McIntosh as “everything God does for the communication of salvation.”⁷⁰ Thus, *missio Dei* springs from God’s boundless and matchless love for the universe He has created, and particularly for the beings within it that bear His image.⁷¹ The ultimate goal of *missio Dei* is, therefore, “the glory of God”, where God establishes His reign in the hearts of people which is evidenced by the conversion of souls and resulting in love, community, equality, diversity, mercy, compassion and justice.”⁷²

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana shares the same mission with the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church which is the administrative headquarters of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist church. The church considers itself as a ‘missionary church’. It believes it has a mandate from Christ to proclaim the gospel in the world. Thus, the church agrees with Bosch that the churches by their cardinal character are a missionary. The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that it exists through the mission⁷³. Burrill confirms this thought: “Adventism was born as a dynamic, mission-centred movement. Passion for sharing the message reigned in the minds and hearts of the early pioneers. They laboured until bone weary; they sacrificed health and possessions in an attempt to reach the world with the saving news of Jesus Christ...Mission drove them! Mission motivated them! Mission was the flame that burned within them!”⁷⁴.

⁶⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Missions*, 389.

⁷⁰ J. A. McIntosh, *Missio Dei* in Moreau (ed), *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Michigan: Baker Books& Carlisle Patermorten Press, 2000), 27.

⁷¹ Kirk, *What is Mission?*, 27-28.

⁷² Kirk, *What is Mission?*, 28.

⁷³ Currier, J. H. *Women in Leadership*. Freedom Ministry.

⁷⁴ Engelbart, T. *Women in The Bible Part I —Women’s Positions in the Church a Response to “The Biblical Role of Women”*. United Church of God an International Association.

Holding on to the understanding that the church of Christ on earth was organised specifically for a missionary purpose, it is viewed that the primary task of Seventh-day Adventist church is to evangelise the world. This is to tell the world that Jesus is coming soon and to teach them to obey the “truth” of God - making disciples of all people.⁷⁵ Johnson also states it as follows: “We are a people of mission, with the entire world our field. From our inception we have been captured, motivated, and energised by the vision of Revelation 14:6”.⁷⁶

The mission of the Church, as articulated in the church's mission statement, is to proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel in the context of the three Angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. Thus, members are to embark on the missionary task to the world by proclaiming the everlasting gospel and the need to worship and keep the commandment of God, the creator of the universe in order not to attract His soon coming judgement⁷⁷. The church's mission is accomplished through preaching, teaching, welfare and healing ministries. The Adventist church believes that the everlasting gospel is about Jesus' mission, which is found in Luke 4:18, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” The church, therefore, sees Jesus' mission as holistic and encourages its members to follow suit.

More so, Bacchicchi notes that Ellen White saw an important mission for women: “Wonderful is the mission of wives and mothers and the younger women workers. If they will, they can exert an influence for good to all around them. By modesty in dress

⁷⁵ Haloviak, B., *Women and the SDA Church*. (1988, October 15).

⁷⁶ Rotea, Z. V., *The role of women in the church and in society*, (1997)

⁷⁷ F. Y., Adu-Gyamfi, *Leading Family Ministries: A Seminar for Local Church Leaders*, 2012.

and circumspect deportment, they may bear witness to the truth in its simplicity. They may let their light shine before all, that others will see their good works and glorify their Father, which is in heaven. A truly converted woman will exert a powerful transforming influence for good. Connected with her husband, she may aid him in his work, and become the means of encouragement and blessing to him.⁷⁸

2.4 Women Involvement in SDA Church

This session focuses on the involvement of women in the mission of the SDA church. It touches on both the contribution of women in Western and Ghanaian contexts.

2.4.1 Involvement of Women in the Western Context

Ellen Gould Harmon, co-founder and messenger from God to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was born on November 26, 1827 in Gorham, Maine.⁷⁹ She was a woman of remarkable spiritual gifts who lived most of her life during the nineteenth century (1827-1915), yet through her writings, she is still making a revolutionary impact on millions of people around the world. During her lifetime she wrote more than 5,000 periodical articles and 40 books; but today, including compilations from her 50,000 pages of manuscript, more than 100 titles are available in English. She is the most translated woman writer in the entire history of literature, and the most translated American author of either gender. Her writings cover a broad range of subjects, including religion, education, social relationships, evangelism, prophecy, publishing, nutrition, and management. Her life-changing masterpiece on successful Christian living, *Steps to Christ*, has been published in more than 140 languages. Seventh-day Adventists believe

⁷⁸ S. Bacchiocchi, *Women in the church: A Biblical Study on The Role Of Women In The Church*. Biblical Perspectives.

⁷⁹ Brocke, E. M., *Adventism in Ghana*, 46

that Mrs. White was more than a gifted writer; they believe God appointed her as a special messenger to draw the world's attention to the Holy Scriptures and help prepare people for Christ's Second Advent. From the time she was 17 years old until she died 70 years later, God gave her approximately 2,000 visions and dreams. The visions varied in length from less than a minute to nearly four hours.

She wrote down the knowledge and counsel received through these revelations she wrote out to be shared with others. Thus, her special writings are accepted by Seventh-day Adventists as inspired, and their exceptional quality is recognized even by casual readers. As stated in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, “The writings of Ellen White are not a substitute for Scripture. They cannot be placed on the same level. The Holy Scriptures stands alone, the unique standard by which she and all other writings must be judged and to which they must be subject”.⁸⁰ As Ellen White herself noted, “The fact that God has revealed His will to men through His Word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour to open the Word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings”. The following is a detailed account of the lives and works of other remarkable women who, meeting all the tests of a true prophet as outlined in the Holy Scriptures, helped found the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Mary E. Britton is also a pioneer of SDA. Mary E. Britton (1855-1925), a Kentucky school teacher and journalist, won notoriety for a powerful speech in 1893 against a bill for segregated seating in railroad coaches that was before the state legislature. The speech inspired the great author Paul Laurence Dunbar to write a poem entitled, “To

⁸⁰ (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Washington D.C., 1988, p. 227).

Miss Mary Britton.”⁸¹ The following year, Mary Britton was one of eighteen founding members of the Lexington, Kentucky Seventh-day Adventist Church, one of the denomination's earliest black congregations, in which she remained a leader for the remainder of her life. Britton continued the fight against segregation during her years as an Adventist, organizing rallies and writing numerous newspaper articles. Additionally, she advocated for woman suffrage and abstinence from alcohol and tobacco and was founding director of the Colored Orphan Industrial Home.⁸²

Similarly, Anna Knight is one of the most influential individuals in the history of African American Seventh-day Adventism. Knight was born in Gitano, Mississippi, on March 4, 1874, to a mother who was a former slave and her white employer. Anna taught herself how to read and stumbled upon Adventism through mail-order literature. To purchase a Bible, she had to pick cotton. Once she was able to purchase the Bible, she learned of the investigative judgment. She was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church later in Graysville, Tennessee, in 1893. In 1922, Anna Knight became the first president of the National Colored Teachers Association of Seventh-day Adventists. In Knight's nearly 50 years as leader of this Association, she was instrumental in financing scores of students' educations; starting dozens of schools; improving Oakwood facilities; serving as advisor to dozens of elementary and high schools in the South; keeping struggling schools solvent; and speaking at hundreds of conventions on pedagogy and school administration.⁸³

⁸¹ Haloviak, B. Women and the SDA Church. (1988, October 15).

⁸² Ibewuike. V., *African Women and Religious Change: A study of the Western Igbo of Nigeria with a special focus on Asaba town*, 2006, 353.

⁸³ Moon, J., The Role of Ellen White in the Development of Adventist Doctrines. *Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary*, Andrews University, 2006

2.4.2 Involvement of Women in the Ghanaian Context

In Ghana, before the year 1975, no female was given any official leadership role of the church except Dorcas society leader who was in charge of the women in the church. Even though women were contributing in other areas apart from the Dorcas Society to the growth of the Church, their contributions were informal and not officially recognized. For instance, Joyce Dolphijn, who happened to be a pioneer of the first church that was established in Ghana, performed an unofficial role as deaconess and women's leader. Again Udo E. Akpan was also a financier to the Nsawam SDA church.⁸⁴

In December 1975 for the very first time in the Hansen Road SDA Church, a woman was nominated by the Nominating Committee for Position of an elder from 1974. Hansen Road SDA Church was growing fast, and the workforce of elders had to be increased. Besides, in October 1975, some elders and church officers had moved out to nurture the Korle Gonno SDA Company. That year, the nominating committee, on which Elder Eddie Lartey and others served, thought it was to elect a woman capable of doing the work of an elder regardless of the attitude of the church towards women. It was at this time that, Mrs. Eunice M. Brocke was nominated the first woman elder of the Hansen Road SDA Church and in Ghana. It was disappointing to the committee and the church when Mrs. E. Miranda Brocke turned down the offer. To press home the need for the appointment, she was counselled by Elder J. A. Bulley, Elder E. C. Tetteh and Elder H. Ofei Quartey, who was the Dorcas Welfare Society's Counsellor and Bible tutor, but Mrs. Brocke was adamant.

⁸⁴ Interview with Pastor Ebenezer Quaye on 15th March, 2015.

Quoting the views of the SDA church members, she noted the following, "Women are not spiritually qualified to lead the church in worship. Women are not to preach". "The scripture says, Women should keep silent in the church". "Today the church is in dire need, so a woman has been nominated. Tomorrow when there will be enough men to fill the position, they will turn round and say, women are not qualified to be elders. Madam, this is a man's domain, step down" Mrs. E. Brocke reasoned out. "Oh no, please, save me this agony and humiliation" she pleaded. Besides there had never been a woman elder in the four SDA churches in Accra at that time, namely, Hansen Road, Labone, Nungua, and the Korle Gonno SDA churches. Korle Gonno church was four months old, Nungua, the church was three years old, and Labone Church was eight years old. This was a period when women were made to feel very low, a time when women were still struggling to find their rightful place in the church.

Historically, certain issues in the past had made the position of women in the church even worse. At one time, some of the men were of the opinion that women should not handle the communion bread and wine, and should not mount the rostrum when they were in their menstrual period. In the heat of these arguments, and with Mrs. E. Brocke and Madam Dorothy Lartey boldly defending the women, Pastor M.A Bediako had to be invited to Hansen Road SDA Church to sit in a discussion with the church to clear certain doctrinal point of argument was based on the Bible record of purification of women after childbirth. The notion was that in that state, the women became unclean, probably, like 'lepers'. The confusion that this caused in the church among women was unbelievable. Some women stopped coming to church when they were in their menstrual period. From time to time, one issue or the other came up to humiliate the women in the

church. All these were championed by a small group of men whom the women secretly called 'Pharisees'.

After careful considerations about the needs of the church, Mrs. E. Brocke accepted the duties and responsibilities designed for an elder but rejected the title 'Elder' and the Church Board unanimously honored her position. At that time, the thorny prevailing controversy was about women officiating and preaching at Divine Service. Though, in 1973, Pastor Ebow Bonnie had broken that stigma about women, there was no higher authority to support his view. Even since this incidence happened, the church in Ghana has continued to officially elect women to occupy various positions in the church.

2.5 Conclusion

There are some significant conclusions that can be drawn from this chapter. The chapter dwelt on the history of the Seventh –day Adventist church by looking specifically at background history of how the church was established globally. It also took into consideration of how some women also contributed to the establishment of the church. The chapter also emphasized on a brief history of the Seventh–day Adventist Church in Ghana and the churches under study. The issues the researcher discussed here are very important because they have portrayed how some women also contributed effectively to the establishment of the church globally and locally. These issues are significant because they help to analyze further the concern at the centre of this study and also helps to emphasize well that women play a significant factor in the establishment of the SDA church.

CHAPTER THREE

A DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF SDA WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ORGANIC GROWTH OF THE SDA CHURCH IN GHANA

3.1 Introduction

The chapter presents literature on the operation of women in the areas of a church. It also shows biblical perceptions of the role of women in the church. The chapter dwells on women as leaders in the church. According to Achtemeier, various issues about women have been the focus of attention and debate not only in connection with many of the structures and institutions of our Ghanaian society but also within the churches, including Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Ghana.

The chapter again presents the empirical findings of a study conducted on the contributions of indigenous women to the Seventh Day Adventist church in Ghana. Interviews were conducted with ten (10) respondents carefully selected from various levels in the Church to present a concrete overview of the study. The various contributions of the women have been categorized below to provide a comprehensive discussion of the contributions.

3.2 Factors that Motivate Women to Contribute to the Growth of the Church

There are various factors that serve as a motivation for women who engage themselves in the ministerial work of the church. One of such factors is the biblical obligation to women who in one way or the other helped the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles in their work. The other source of inspiration also comes from the church's tradition. The two sub-themes below throw more light on these two sources of motivation.

3.2.1 Obligations from the Bible

Philomena Mwaura has argued that the Bible provides a glimpse on some of the roles played by women towards church growth. She cites the role of several women in the Bible such as Deborah, who was a judge of Israel⁸⁵, Huldah, who was a prophetess⁸⁶ and Anna, who was also a prophetess (Luke 2:36).⁸⁷ According to Philippians 4:2 women are fellow workers and have labored and struggled with Paul in his work. The New Testament provides many examples of the priestly service that women rendered to the Lord and His church.⁸⁸

It is very obvious that the Service of women in the Early Church did not make them recipients of Jesus' ministry⁸⁹, but they also served Him and the disciples⁹⁰. Interestingly, in Luke 8:1-3 three groups are distinguished "Jesus," "the twelve with Him," and "some women." The women "served" them from "their own resources" that is, provided financial and material support. The Greek word *diakoneo* ("to minister, to serve"), from which the English word "deacon" is derived, is used to describe what service these women rendered to Jesus and the Twelve.⁹¹ In the New Testament church, it is also noted that women participated in many and varied activities including prophesying⁹², performing charitable services⁹³, and serving as missionary workers⁹⁴. This service of women is highlighted in particular by St. Paul's reference in Rom. 16:1-2

⁸⁵ Judges 4:4

⁸⁶ (2 Chronicles 34:22)

⁸⁷ Mwaura, P. N., *Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches in African Christianity: An African Story: Perspectives on Christianity Series, Pretoria, University of Pretoria, 2005, 411*

⁸⁸ Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:1-3; 24:1-11; Acts 9:36; 18:24-26; Rom. 16:1-13; Phil. 4:2-3, Col. 4:15; 1 Tim. 3:11; 5:3-16).

⁸⁹ (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 7:36-50; 13:10-17; John 4:7-30),

⁹⁰ (Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:1-3).

⁹¹ Campus A. *Women in Evangelism, The Church's Buried Talents?*, 2013.

⁹² Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:5

⁹³ Acts 9:36; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 16:15; 1 Tim. 5:3-16

⁹⁴ Acts 18:24-26; Rom. 16:6, 12; Phil. 4:2-3

to Phoebe as a *diaknon* ("servant, minister"). He also calls her *prostatis* ("helper, patron, protector"); that is, one who probably by virtue of her wealth and social position was able to provide for, support, and assist not only the church in Cenchrea but also the apostle Paul himself. Also, the service of women is also highlighted by frequent references to Priscilla⁹⁵. In the book of Acts, it can be observed that she, along with her husband Aquilla, is engaged in teaching the great orator Apollos the Christian faith. Although it is impossible to determine from the New Testament all the specific tasks these Christian women assumed and performed, there is no doubt that they played a very significant and important role in the life of the early church.

To the SDA women, these sections of scripture clearly serve as a motivation for them to engage themselves in the Christian ministry and to help promote the growth of the church. SDA women see these empowering scriptures as one that teaches Christian women to be actively involved in the local church. They are part of the body of Christ and as members of that body, they are to help it grow 'for the edifying of itself in love'⁹⁶.

In Ghana, studies have shown that women have played significant roles in church growth. This is not peculiar to the SDA church but other Christian churches. Thus according to Grace Sintim Adasis, women like Dora Ofori Owusu, Gladys Maku Nyako, Margaret B. Secu, Paulina Dankwa, and Edith Ofori all from Presbyterian Church of Ghana, were ministers of the church who performed the roles of chaplains in the various Presbyterian Church of Ghana's (PCG) higher educational institutions.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Acts 18; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19

⁹⁶ Ephesians 4:16

⁹⁷ Adasi Sintim, G, Ordained women ministers in the Presbyterian church of Ghana; Roles and challenges. Unpublished Thesis, Department of Studies of Religions, University of Ghana, 2012.

3.2.2 The Church's Tradition as a Motivation for Women's Involvement

It has been a tradition in the SDA church for women to be involved and contribute significantly to the growth of the church right from the beginning of the church till now. In the Western world, women like Ellen White, Mary Britton and Anna Knight have made significant contributions to the growth of the church. In Ghana, many women such as Mary Brocke, Evelyn Boateng, Mary Afriyie and Victoria Torto have also contributed to the growth of the church to reach its current state in many diverse ways. By the examples these women have set, women are consistently contributing to the growth of the church.

In an article, "Foundations of Behavioral Research", Kerlinger asserts that Adventist beliefs have their origins in the Bible and the inspired visions and writings of Ellen White and her interpretation of the Bible.⁹⁸ He argues that Adventists who considered themselves "regular readers of the writings of Ellen White" were almost twice as likely also to have daily personal Bible study as compared to non-readers of the Spirit of prophecy.⁹⁹ One of the clearest evidence of the priority of Scripture in the experience and teaching of Ellen White is a series of seven conferences held by the church's spiritual ancestors 155 years ago, in 1848. It is essential that the SDA church remembers the history and especially the spiritual lessons of those conferences because those conferences laid the foundations for a church built on Scripture, the whole Scripture, and nothing contrary to Scripture.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Kerlinger, F. N, *Foundations of Behavioural Research*, New York, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Inc, 1986, 10

⁹⁹ Kerlinger, *Foundations of Behavioural Research*, 279

¹⁰⁰ Rosenthal, R. and Rosnow, R. L., *Essentials of Behavioural Research*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1991, 69

One of the strongest defenders of the Scriptural foundation of the church was a 21-year-old woman, Ellen White present at all seven of the 1848 conferences. Her emphasis on the authority of the Bible is noted in a speech during a session. She stated, “God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, . The voice of the majority--- not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support”¹⁰¹ She consistently maintained that the Bible alone is the ultimate standard by which all other standards are to be tested. Speaking of the relationship between Bible and the gift of prophecy , she wrote, “The Spirit was not given--nor can it ever be bestowed--to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teachings and experiences must be tested [1 John 4:1, Isa 8:20 quoted]

This remains the foundational teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, enshrined in the very first of the Fundamental Beliefs. But that insight did not just “happen.” Nor will it remain the experience of the church today, just because it is written in the Fundamental Beliefs.¹⁰² Thus, it was through a woman that the Fundamental beliefs of the church were established. Ellen White is regarded by the church as a prophetess and it was through her that the spirit of prophecy (end time message) was given to the church. Many women of the church now see her as their role model.

¹⁰¹ Rosenthal, R. and Rosnow, R. L., Essentials of Behavioural Research

¹⁰² Rosenthal, R. and Rosnow, R. L., Essentials of Behavioural Research

Again Mary Britton (1874) one of the eighteen founding members of the Lexington, Kentucky Seventh-Day Adventist Church, one of the denominations earliest black congregations cannot be ignored as a motivational factor to SDA women today. She remained a leader for life, and her achievement were so numerous which some have already been highlighted in chapter two. Thus women of the church have been following her exemplary lives.¹⁰³

More so, Anna Knight, another outstanding leader of the church, really serves as a motivation to SDA women. In 1922, Anna Knight became the first president of the National Colored Teachers Association of Seventh-day Adventists. She continued to be a blessing to children, adults and the Adventist church as a whole till her demise¹⁰⁴.

It is not surprising therefore that in Ghana too many women have been contributing right from the establishment of the church. For instance, Miranda Brock became the first nominated female Elder in Ghana, Hanson Road SDA Church in 1974. She was nominated due to her dedication and passion for the work of God. She was identified as a great leader and the church and much have been discussed her contribution to her church in chapter two of this work.

Mary Afriyie is one of the great women of the Adventist church in Ghana. She single-handedly constructed a basic school at Mamponteng as well as a church building. She also sponsored some pastors to help them get the required training they needed.

¹⁰³ Rosenthal, R. and Rosnow, R. L., Essentials of Behavioural Research

¹⁰⁴ Rosenthal, R. and Rosnow, R. L., Essentials of Behavioural Research

Evelyn Boateng in her own way sponsored a lot of evangelistic campaigns. She provided them with generators public address systems as well as financial support. She helped establish a lot of Adventist churches as well as win souls for God.

Victoria Torto is the founder of Hansen Road SDA School, which she started initially in her house till they got a permanent place. She also built a simple structure on her land for the Oyarifa SDA church to worship in till they got a permanent place of worship. All the women mentioned above have distinguished themselves contributing to the growth of the church has been highlighted in chapter three of this study.

Thus, the tradition goes on that right from the beginning of the church till date, in every time and era, women have been contributing to the growth of the church.

3.2.3 Relevance of Women in the African Setting

In addressing the transformations in culture, religion and response to changes from pre-colonial to the post-independence era about women, Dr. Akosua Perbi stated that Ghanaian women wear three hats. They are the hats of culture, religion and transformation.¹⁰⁵

Women's roles about culture were expressed in social, political and military spheres. Socially, the kinship structure around which African social relations revolved, to a very large extent, “existed, survived and was perpetuated” by women. This was because women bear, rear and train children thus keeping the lineage alive. The value that traditional African society attached to women was expressed in perceptions of women as the bedrock of the family: economically active, productive and industrious. They were

¹⁰⁵ Adu-Gyamfi, *Leading Family Ministries*, 2012.

also acknowledged as the custodians of knowledge and culture that were expressed in Akan sayings such as “We are going to consult the old lady” when the chief and the elders had to retire and decide on an issue.

The importance of women in the social structure in the past was also exhibited in the central role of women in the criteria for inheritance either through the patrilineage or matrilineage. Among the Akan, for example, who are matrilineal a child is said to possess the mother's blood and the father's spirit. To them, blood is life thus the child ‘belongs’ to the woman and not the man. Politically, succession to leadership, particularly among the Akan, was determined by tracing ancestry through the matrilineage to the founder or head. It has been argued by some scholars like Kyeremanteng that the leading role of some women in the founding of states accounts for some towns being named after them. The influential position of the queen mother in the traditional political set up principally among the Akan also brings to the fore the importance of women. They nominated the king to the throne; served as an advisor to the king and, in fact, had the sole right to rebuke the king in public. Militarily, while some provided moral and material support for the men folk in war others like Yaa Asantewaa were in the forefronts as combatants. The traditional economy also, to a very large extent, depended on women as a labour force in agriculture, trade and industry. In effect, the concept of a housewife, she stated, was a “colonial legacy”.¹⁰⁶

Religion also witnessed some transformations. In African traditional religion, women occupied leadership positions as priestesses of important national shrines. The Christian missionaries introduced formal education, innovations in agriculture and medicine. And

¹⁰⁶ Adu-Gyamfi, *Leading Family Ministries*, 2012.

in these spheres women played important roles as mostly it was their offspring with the Europeans who initially benefited from European education and spearheaded these innovations. Culturally, women play very significant roles in the society, and that serves as motivation for Adventist women. It is, therefore, not surprising that women in the church contribute to the growth of the Church in diverse ways. Since it has been the cultural practice, Ghanaian women work and hold some leadership positions in diverse ways.

Traditionally, the influence and respect that indigenous women held in their societies not only gave them a voice but kept them safe from woman abuse, sexual assault and stalking. Women's responsibilities included providing for themselves, their children, relatives, the sick, elderly, disabled and the community at large. Women are seen as the creators of life in the SDA church and, as a result, the church sees them as individuals that must be involved in all things that contribute to the growth of the church. Women were the nurturers and the sustainers of their communities, building and maintaining housing and supervising family affairs. Land and crops belonged to them, rather than their husbands or brothers. Men were traditionally hunters for the community, with women skinning, packing and preparing the hunt. In the spring, women would join the men in fishing. Men's traditional duties (hunting, conducting trade, defending the community) required them to be often away, so their social position was sometimes weaker than that of women.¹⁰⁷

Historically, many nations were women-centered and matrilineal, meaning a child's ancestry was traced through her mother, and the family property was passed down

¹⁰⁷ Adu-Gyamfi, *Leading Family Ministries*, 2012.

through the female line, from mothers to daughters to granddaughters. In some cases, this was also true of family names. In many nations, not only does a woman own the land, but she also owns the building that houses her family. In some cases, married couples stayed with the woman's family and if subject to abuse or exploitation, a woman's blood relatives defended her. These societal factors are a testimony to the power and influence women held in traditional society.¹⁰⁸ Thus, in the Seventh-day Adventist church, women see themselves as the nurturers and sustainers of the members of the church. While the men usually provide the ministerial need of the church such as baptism, dedicating children and sacred things and evangelism. Women usually nurture and sustain the new converts through need ministration. This includes counseling, helping the needy and teaching them the word of God.

3.2.4 The Impact of Formal Education

Education has been one of the motivational factors that empowers women to contribute to the SDA church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) in Ghana has carved a niche for herself through the provision of education to its members. Pastor Larmie disclosed that the Church currently operated more than 600 basic schools; 14 Senior High Schools (SHSs); three Nursing Schools (including the Kwadaso Nursing Training College) which awards degrees, diplomas and certificates; one College of Education (Asokore College of Education), while the building of the second one is also in the offing; and a private accredited university—Valley View University, formerly the Adventist Missionary College.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Kanawayhitowin, *Traditional Women's Roles*. (Retrieved July 25, 2014, from kanawayhitowin taking care of each others spirit:

http://www.kanawayhitowin.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=42

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Pastor Larmie on 15th November, 2014.

The General Conference Women's Ministries Scholarship Program is established to give scholarships to women who are committed to serving the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who would otherwise be unable to afford a Christian education. Their mission is to empower women, strengthen families, improve communities, and build the church globally by supporting higher education for Adventist women in every division.¹¹⁰ According to Bacchicchi, “The Lord designs that the schools should also be a place where training may be gained in women’s work.” After enumerating certain domestic and educational training to be included, she adds, “They are to be qualified to take any posts that may be offered superintendents, Sabbath school teachers, and Bible workers. They must be prepared to teach day schools for children.”¹¹¹ Mostly, women that the researcher has mentioned in this study have had some level of education and this, in one way or the other, empowered them in their contribution to the growth of the church. Examples of such women include Victoria Tortor, Evelyn Boateng, Eunice Brocke and Victoria Daaku.

As part of its aim to strengthen women and empower them for service in the church, the SDA church adopts various strategies to train and empower their women. One of such means through which the church does this is the organization of seminars and workshop for women in the church. The seminars and workshops that are organized by the church are mostly in two different forms. One deals with income-generation activities. This is done to train women in various income capacity building roles that can help them to overcome the issue of poverty and to enable them to cater for their family as well. This also helps them contribute financially to the growth of the church. The workshop has gone a long way in improving the financial status of some women in the church.

¹¹⁰ adventistwomensministries.org (accessed on 21st December 2014).

¹¹¹ S. Bacchiocchi, *Women in the church: A Biblical Study on The Role Of Women In The Church. Biblical Perspectives.*

Furthermore, to help women study and appreciate the doctrines of the SDA church, the SDA church organizes various seminars based on the doctrines of the church to help the women better understand the church's doctrines. These seminars have also gone a long way in contributing to women's empowerment in the church since most women through such seminars have played various roles in the church.

3.3 The Contribution of Women to the Organic Growth of S.D.A church

As already discussed, organic growth of a church deals with issues such as the internal development of a local community of faith, and the various processes that are put in place to help the growth of the church. These includes; the forms of government, financial structures, leadership and types of activities in which its time and resources are invested.

It can be argued that, numerically, the population of women outnumbers that of men in religion. This is reflected in Christian congregations including the Seventh-day Adventist church.¹¹² The fact that the women are the majority in the church implies that they have harkened to and responded to the Gospel's / Mission's call. In any case, it can also be said that they, at least, provide audience; they contribute significantly towards the numbers of members in the church.¹¹³ Mwaura then rightly said, the attraction of African women to Christianity was not confined to the pioneer period, but today, women still dominate the pews in mainline Churches, African Instituted Churches, Charismatic Movements and Pentecostal Churches.¹¹⁴ Also, women all over the world are the pillars, they witness to the image of God within them, and the hope and renewal for the church

¹¹² Ghana Union Conference, *Church Statistics*, 2012

¹¹³ Getui, M. N., *Women in Mission*, 76

¹¹⁴ Mwaura, "Gender and Power in African Christianity", 87.

rest on this witness.¹¹⁵ Crabtree also states that women do comprise the large majority of active church members and are the sustaining force in the almost every congregation.¹¹⁶ Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana, specific areas where women are involved in the mission include eldership, deaconry, Women's Ministry / Dorcas Society and minimally in scattered and sometimes not so significant church officers. Again, the SDA church also assigns roles and responsibilities to women in the church, and they contribute to the church through such leadership roles.

3.3.1 Women as Local Church Elders

In the organizational hierarchy of the SDA church, there are elders who function as leaders of the church. The term elder means older one, implying dignity and respect. An elder's position is similar to that of the one who had supervision of the synagogue in the context of the Bible. Paul used these terms interchangeably, with the term bishop which means overseer.¹¹⁷

During 1990 General Conference Session in Indianapolis, United States of America, it was voted that women can be elected as elders. An elder may preside at any of the church ordinances, administer baptism, conduct the Lord's Supper, perform the marriage ceremony, or preside at business meetings when members are disciplined.¹¹⁸ The move, however, has neither been fully accepted nor implemented. In Ghana, a nominal number of women have been nominated elders. Among them are Mrs. Eunice M. Brocke and Mrs. Victoria Daaku, Esther Nti and Esther Boafo. These women happen to be members of the four selected churches which include Bantama, Amakom and Adenta.

¹¹⁵ Mwaura, "Gender and Power in African Christianity", 87.

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¹¹⁷ Seventh-Day Adventist Manual 18th edition, USA, Secretariat General Conference of SDA 2010, 78.

¹¹⁸ Seventh-day Adventist, *Church Manual*, 18th Edition, USA, Secretariat General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2010, 76

Mrs. Esther Nti is a nurse by profession and was elected as an elder in the Madina Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Madina district from 1990-2000. During her tenure of office she helped finance the building of a church. She also involved herself in evangelistic campaigns, door to door visitation, and counselling among a lot of activities. These helped in increasing the church membership by forty percent (40%).

The Seventh-day Adventist church, Legon also in the Madina pastoral district, elected Mrs. Sophia Dapaah Mantey, a staff at the University of Ghana, as a Church elder from 1990-1998. She also helped finance the building of their church as well as supporting some needy people in the church.¹¹⁹

Also, Madam Esther Boafo, a lecturer at the Valley View University was elected as a church elder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Valley View University from 2000 to date. She supported single mothers in the church by giving them some capital to begin business. She also helped increase the church membership through evangelism. She organised several workshops and seminars for the church members especially women in areas like church doctrines, the worth of women and leadership skills¹²⁰.

In all these instances, it is in the church's records that their performance was excellent and through their hard work, the church's membership grew rapidly. During their tenure in office, the percentage of growth recorded was between 20 to 45 percent.¹²¹ More so during their tenure of office, in all instances, a permanent church house was built, and almost all departments in their various churches flourished.¹²² Thus, "Women are

¹¹⁹ Adventist Church Record Book Adenta District

¹²⁰ Adventist Church Record Book

¹²¹ Adventist Church Record Book

¹²² Adventist Church Record Book

animators of the church and society, not only during times of crisis, even in times of stability.”¹²³ These women, having been elected as church elders by the church nominating committee in the midst of men, are an indication that people saw they had great potential.

3.3.2 Deaconesses

The church, just like any human institution has many departments with different activities but all geared towards spreading the gospel. From children’s ministry, music, worship, to lay evangelism, women have participated in various church activities, which have contributed to the growth of the church. Rotea notes that women participate in liturgical services, provide the needs of the Church for liturgical celebrations and assist in organizing major events of the church.¹²⁴

A deaconess is the female wing of deacons in the Seventh-day Adventist church. The New Testament identifies the office of deacon with the Greek word “diakonos”, from which the English “deacon” is derived. The Greek word is variously interpreted as “servant, minister, writer and attendant” and in Christian circles has acquired the specialised meaning now attached to “deacon.”¹²⁵ The men who came to be known as the seven deacons of the apostolic church were chosen and ordained to attend to the business of the church. (See Acts 6:1-8.) Their qualifications, slightly less exacting than those of elders, are listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

¹²³ Mwaura, P. N., *Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches in African Christianity: An African Story: Perspectives on Christianity Series*, Pretoria, University of Pretoria, 2005, 411

¹²⁴ Berg, B. L., & Lune, H., *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (8th ed.). Boston, Pearson, 2012, 305

¹²⁵ Seventh-day Day Adventist Church, *Manual*, 2010, 76

Among the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is a requirement that each congregation should have among its church officers, deaconesses. Deaconesses should be chosen for their consecration and other qualifications that fit them for the duties of the office.¹²⁶ Such a service would be carried out by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference. The ordination service should be characterized by simplicity and performed in the presence of the church.¹²⁷ In the four selected churches, some of the women who have been elected as deaconesses include Alice Dampety from Oyafira church, Grace Nwura, from Adenta church, Elizabeth Mensah from Bantama church and Victoria Tetteh, from Amakom church.

These women have each served the church for over five years and have helped in performing the following duties; they prepare the bread for the Lord's Supper, they arrange the ordinance table, pour the wine, place the plates of unleavened bread and cover the table with linen provided for that purpose. They also assist in the ordinance of foot washing, give special aid to women visitors or those who have newly joined the church, see to it that the table linen, towels and other implements used in the celebration of ordinances are laundered and carefully set aside. They also assist at the baptismal services giving such counsel and help as may be necessary regarding suitable garments for baptism. Where robes are used, they see to it that they are laundered and carefully put aside for future use. Again, they help in welcoming members and visitors and home visitation.¹²⁸ The fact that these brethren had been ordained for the special work of looking after the needs of the poor did not exclude them from teaching their faith. On the contrary, Women like Victoria Acheampong, Mercy Okoto from Adenta church and

¹²⁶ Seventh-day Adventist, *Church Manual*, 18th Edition, USA, Secretariat General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2010, 78

¹²⁷ Seventh-day Adventist, *Church Manual*, 79

¹²⁸ Seventh-day Adventist, *Church Manual*, 79

Vida Acheampong have also evangelized, and they engaged it with great earnestness and success.

Deaconesses were included in the official staff of the early Christian churches. “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church [deaconess] in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of me also”.¹²⁹ The above-mentioned deaconesses have been doing their part in caring for the sick, the needy, and the unfortunate. For instance, Comfort Acheampong and Alice Tettey in Adenta church have been nursing Elder Mawutor, who is suffering from stroke and Elder Nimako, an old man and a widower in the community. According to Ibewuiké, women show more sympathy for the sick, needy and destitute. It is believed women have this nature because they give birth. As noted by Sister Boniface of the Asaba mission: “Last week we received a poor old woman who used to sleep outside because her relations didn’t want her When I brought her to the house of our protected one she was dancing with joy”. They also received children, whose mothers died when giving birth to them. Ordinarily, she wrote, they leave them to die. We are happy to take them and care for them as long as God leaves them with us.

As indicated already, the sisters gave medical attention to the sick, the needful and the destitute. They also helped to rescue the outcasts and twins that were cast away and the disabled in the community. They taught them about the salvation and love of God and some later became converts, who played a very active part in the Church.¹³⁰ It is obvious that, without the work of these women, there will be no decency at church. This confirms

¹²⁹ (Rom. 16:1, 2).

¹³⁰ Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., *Handbook*, 1984.

Sundklar assertion that ‘though women appear invisible, they have been the pillars of the parish and take care of the local church and its worship.’¹³¹

3.3.3 Women's Ministry Department/Dorcas Society

In the Seventh-day Adventist church, another area in which women contribute to the church by encouraging women is through the department of women's ministry. The Department of Women's Ministries is committed to encouraging, challenging, equipping, and nurturing Seventh-day Adventist women as they do their part in carrying the Gospel message to the world. The Women's Ministries Department ministers to the spiritual, emotional, physical and social needs of women around the world. It encourages women to improve their potential and participation in the mission of the church. It provides a support system for women who are hurting, and a forum to address topics and issues as they affect women in and out of the church. It promotes programs to mentor young women and encourages young women academically through a scholarship program¹³².

Also, in Ghana, the Dorcas Society is another channel through which women contribute to the church. It is composed of a band of women of the church who devote time and talents to gathering and preparing of clothes, footwear and other supplies for the poor, needy and unfortunate. It also encompasses adult education, visitations, home making, home nursing and counseling.¹³³ From the Adenta, Oyarifa, Bantama and Amakom one can find Margret Piasa, Mercy Asante Okoto, Sara Gyan, Akua Afriyie and Alice Tetteh as women ministries' leaders in their respective churches.

¹³¹ Sundklar, B. and Steed, C., *A History of the Church in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 681

¹³² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Ghana Union Conference: Membership Statistics, 2011* (www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=2105099), Retrieved, April 2013).

¹³³ Getui, *Women in Mission*, 78.

According to Denzin and Lincoln, women also play many vital roles in the spiritual development of church members. They argue that the vibrant spirituality of multicultural Catholic London is driven by women, and the new churches of York though led by men are heavily affected by the agency of women. According to him, churches led by women are likely to grow faster than those led by men. White's book *The Church at Ephesus*, states that women have played significant roles in contributing to the growth of the church using their resources and initiatives. White rightly said, "Our sisters are not excused from taking a part in the work of God" and "there is a wide field in which our sisters may do good service to the Master in the various branches of the work connected with His cause."

The Mission of the women's ministry globally is to uplift Christ in the church and the world. The Ministry seeks to nurture, empower and reach out to women by fostering spiritual growth and renewal among women, mentoring and encouraging Seventh-day Adventist women and young ladies, building goodwill among women in the church that encourages bond of friendship, mutual support and creative exchange of ideas and information and finding ways and means to challenge each SDA women to use their gifts to complement the talents of others for global mission of the church.¹³⁴ In most cases, Department of Women's Ministries at the General Conference brings annual programmes to all churches of which all leaders globally organize and partake with their members. Thus, Ghanaian women's ministries leaders also follow these programmes annually. These include; International women day of prayer, health promotion, and poverty reduction, young ladies in the women ministries activities and evangelism.

¹³⁴ Brocke, *Adventism in Accra*. Accra, 98.

Since 1990, the Department of Women's Ministries at the General Conference has promoted a special day when women have the opportunity to strengthen their spiritual bonds as they pray for and with each other. The International Women's Day of Prayer falls on the first Sabbath of March every year. In past years this special day has been celebrated in a variety of ways: prayer breakfasts, fasting and prayer, consecration services, women preaching the sermons for church services and other special programs. A resource manual, with ideas and a planning guide for making this a life-changing day for women and men in the church, can be obtained from the Conference Women's Ministries director.

The International Woman's Day of Prayer provides an opportunity for women to learn about each other and pray for one another. It is a time to reunite with God and one another to strengthen spiritual bonds. Prayers for women everywhere create a spiritual network of empathy and understanding between Adventist women. Thousands of women (and men) gather to pray on this day. Although the essential purpose of the day is for prayer, the day can also provide women with an opportunity to strengthen their ties with other Christian women as they pray together. Ghanaian women's ministries leaders including women whose names have been mentioned above, organize the women in their churches to partake. According to Mercy Okoto, this programme has helped in shaping the moral lives of many women.¹³⁵

3.3.3.1 Poverty Reduction

In May 2006, five hundred (500) women leaders from all the fields including leaders like Lydia Anthony, Mercy Okoto, Christiana Torto, and Vida Acheampong from Adenta,

¹³⁵ Interview with Mercy Okoto, May 2014

Oyarifa, Bantama and Amakom attended. Investment seminar was organized by the Ghana Union Conference (GUC) Women's Department at the Women's Centre of Valley View University, Oyibi. The women were lectured on wealth creation, small and medium scale industry building, benefits of social security and many more.

Similar activities were undertaken in all the fields during the period under review. These activities were done in collaboration with social groups like the Trade and Industry Ministry, Export Promotion Council, Data Bank, Freedom from Hunger (NGO), and other qualified persons. During the quinquennium session of Seventh-Day Adventists, twenty thousand (20,000) women in Ghana were taken through four hundred (400) training programs and seminars that helped to improve their lives.

3.3.3.2 Health Promotion

Another area in which these women contributed is in health promotions. Women like Mrs. Lydia Anthony and Mrs. Akua Nkrumah all in Adenta District, for instance, organized a program termed healthy living. It was a platform through which they educated the church especially women on the importance of healthy living because the health of women is paramount to the department. Some of the topics include; Good Nutrition, Breast and Cervical Cancer, Menopause, and Family Planning. Thus, healthy living seminars continued to be one of their main programmes. Health seminars and activities were held in all the fields, with the focus on good eating habits, healthy cooking, etc. In January 2008, the Department organized a 3-day seminar in Koforidua with one hundred and nine (109) women in attendance. The women benefited from topics like the proper handling of fruits and vegetables, how to prepare balanced meals and kitchen equipment. Twenty-four (24) nutrition and cooking programmes were

conducted by the fields. In all, three thousand, five hundred (3,500) women benefited from health training workshops in all the fields including women from Adenta, Oyarefa, Bantama and Amakom.

3.3.3.3 Young Ladies Activities

It was the major aim of the Department to mobilize, organize and inaugurate Young Ladies throughout the Union. Therefore, all the Field Directors, as well as those from Adenta, Oyarifa, Bantama and Amakom, were encouraged to draw programmes that will enhance the growth of the group. Due to this, all the fields have inaugurated the Ministry right from the local to the conference levels. Programmes leading to the organization and inauguration of the Young Ladies Ministry in the Fields included retreats, seminars, mini conventions, congresses and motivational clinics. Some of the young ladies performing such roles in the four selected churches include Dora Mawutor, Ellen Kyerewaa Yeboah, Helena Acquah, and Mabel Oti Boadi.

These women have organized programs for the young ladies. For example, the Ladies led out in the June 2006/2007 edition of the International Women Emphasis Week in the churches. They displayed various talents to glorify God. In Adenta church, for instance, Annie Oye led the programme and five (5) new people joined the church.

The leaders mentioned above also planned to build the capacity of the women in all spheres of life through certain programmes. They were able to achieve this through the following programmes:

- Leadership Workshops Seminars: These women organized, at least, three (3) leadership workshops or seminars for the women with a follow-up by the fields. Two thousand

eight hundred (2,800) national leaders in the department benefited from these programmes.

- **Spiritual Upliftment:** These leaders helped in taking their members through refreshing spiritual uplifting activities since the spirituality of the women were paramount. The performance of these women was outstanding. Between one to four days, retreats for spiritual uplifting programs were organized in their various churches with emphasis on fasting and prayers. All night services with Lord's suppers were not exempted. Two hundred (200) of such programmes were conducted throughout the country with about thousand (1000) women praying in various ways, with the spiritual awareness to trust God at all times.

- They also led International Women's Days: all the international and national women's days such as the International Women's Day of Prayer, Women Emphasis Day, Abuse Prevention Day, etc. were observed as such. Emphasis was laid on inviting non-Adventist women to participate. Some of these days were used for evangelism. Adenta, Oyarifa, Bantama and Amakom also partook in these programs.

- **Camp Meetings:** they involved themselves in camp meeting activities such as decorating the Auditorium, cooking for the clergy and the members, taking care of children, singing and preaching the word of God. Programmes to enhance the women's life at camp meetings were run smoothly and beneficially by these women.

- **Social Responsibilities:** As part of the contribution toward the church's social responsibility to the country, these women led the Women's Ministries Department of

the respective churches in rendering various forms of welfare services throughout the country including Adenta, Oyarifa, Bantama and Amakom churches.

All the churches under study have organised poverty reduction programmes. This brought a thirty percent (30%) increase in the overall quality of life of women. Due to the training workshops and seminars, the women were able to acquire some skills for the operation of their personal projects like edible oil production, textile making, food processing, soap making, baking, farming, production of drinks, and medicinal plant productions. Women in Adenta Church, for instance, organized soap making projects. This has facilitated a forty percent (40%) growth in the investing lives of the women and has positively affected their quality of life. Personal investment and the overall finances of the women have grown by forty-five (45%); this has helped boost their morale and confidence. There has also been a forty-five (45%) increase in the health lifestyles of the women. Many women have registered with the National Health Insurance Scheme due to the encouragement of the church elders as well as women's ministry leaders.

3.3.3.4 Sabbath School Leaders

Sabbath School is another area in which women do contribute a lot. They contribute to the various positions and they include; Sabbath school superintendents, Sabbath school secretary, and Sabbath school teachers. In the four selected churches understudy, women such as Ruth Kwarteng a superintendent from 2000 to date, Grace Donkor a superintendent from 2008 to date, Ama Karikari a superintendent from 2006 to 2014 and Akua Afriyie a secretary from 2010 to date. The Sabbath school, the primary religious education program of the Church, has four purposes: a study of the Scripture, fellowship, community outreach, and world mission emphasis. The General Conference Sabbath

School and Personal Ministries Department distributes the Sabbath school Bible study guide for all age levels, provides designs for Sabbath school programming globally, provides resources and training systems for Sabbath school teachers, and promotes world mission Sabbath school offerings.

The SDA church sees Sabbath school as an important branch of the missionary work, not only because it gives to young and old a knowledge of God's Word, but because it awakens in them a love for its sacred truths. It also awakens the desire to study them for themselves; above all, it teaches them to regulate their lives by its holy teachings. A recent study on the place and the role of women in the Seventh-day Adventist church notes one of these areas as mainly Sabbath school teaching (children ministry).¹³⁶ In Adenta, Oyarefa, Bantama and Amakom churches, women constitute between sixty percent (60%) to seventy percent (70%) of Sabbath school teachers. The teachers of the Children's Ministries Department teach them about the Bible from birth through to age seventeen (17). They also provide multiple ministries that will lead children to Jesus and guide them as members of the church. These teachers cooperate with the Sabbath school and other departments to provide religious education to children and fulfil its mission. It includes leadership-building and evangelism.¹³⁷ The women mentioned above through their hard work have taught many children and adults. Some of these children have been baptised into the church due to their teachings, and some adults have gained a deeper understanding of the scriptures. As one man admitted "through weekly Sabbath School studies led by my teacher Akua Afriyie, I've now gained insight concerning observance the Sabbath".¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Getui, M. N., *Women in Mission*, 78.

¹³⁷ Getui, M. N., *Women in Mission*, 78.

¹³⁸ Interview with Benjamin Asafo

3.4 Women- music ministry

Throughout the study, it was realized that the music ministry in the church is one of the areas the women had many contributions. As part of the study, it was discovered that women outnumbered men in the choirs of the churches under study. Singing gives the women an opportunity to make themselves truly present in worship. It gives them the opportunity to step right into the heart of worship and take an active part. In this way, they become givers as well as receivers. Women give their individual voices to the whole ensemble, and in turn, receive the creation of that ensemble.

Some of the women who have been contributing a lot to the music ministry in the selected churches include: Elizabeth Nyamekye – Bantama, Ama Oforiwaa – Bantama, Florence Agyeiwaa – Amakom, Esther Asante - Amakom, Mavis Owusu – Adenta, Comfort Tetteh- Adenta, Naomi Amoako - Oyarifa, and Comfort Mawutor – Oyarifa. The women mentioned above have led various singing groups of the church. For instance, Esther Asante led Bantama choir with about sixty (60) members from the year 1990 to 2000. During this period, the choir was able to evangelize through inspirational songs. Through her effort, many people were drawn to the church. Comfort Mawutor, also from Adenta church, in the year 2005 mobilized the youth of the church, especially the inactive ones to form a singing band. This has made them very active in the church. Some of the activities they undertake are attending rehearsals, minister to the church, and also minister to the community through music.

With music being an art, good music does not only give us pleasure but elevates our minds and cultivates our finest qualities. God often uses spiritual songs to touch the hearts of sinners and to lead them to repentance. Therefore, the purpose of the music

ministry is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ through songs, encourage believers in their walk with Christ, lead the congregation in worship and provide an avenue through which individuals may share their gift and be an integral part of the worship. As the church sings, they build communities and strive to express commonality as well as diversity. Singing reinforces the reasons for communal worship. It speaks of one's common struggles, often moving persons to action toward a common objective.¹³⁹

The importance of music in the Bible is indicated by the fact that God's creative and redemptive activities are accompanied and celebrated by music. At creation, we are told that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). At the incarnation, the heavenly choir sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14). At the final consummation of redemption, the great multitude of the redeemed will sing: "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exalt and give him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to be clothed with the fine linen, bright and pure" (Rev 19:6-8)¹⁴⁰.

By women involving themselves in the music ministry, they enrich worship. They inspire others and reform non-believers through the message found in the music. Their music also lifts the broken hearted and provides them with the joy and satisfaction of fellowship and communal worship.

Helena Acquah, for instance, has been a vocalist for over ten (10) years in Oyarefa church, and she continues to lead the congregation in singing. By leading the

¹³⁹ Church manual, 92

¹⁴⁰ Church manual, 144

congregation in singing, believers can express to God their joy and gratitude for the blessings of creation, deliverance, protection, and salvation. Singing is seen in the Bible as an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord for His goodness and blessings. This concept is expressed especially in Psalm 69:30-31: “I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs.” Christian hymnody contains some of the most tightly packed, concise doctrinal and devotional thought of the church. Through congregational songs, God’s people learn to communicate with God and shape their faith.

Since people tend to remember the theology they sing more than the theology that is preached, a congregation's repertoire of hymnody is often of critical importance in shaping the faith of its people. Here again, it is the lyrics of the music that is of primary importance. It is through these lyrics that God’s people learn the nature and character of God and the Christian life.

Music, quite apart from an associated text, is capable of evoking powerful emotions. Hearts are stirred and feet set to tapping, and the music may even move people to tears. Music can indeed “excite piety,” and depending on its mood, move individuals to penitence, thanksgiving, adoration, love, or any one of a host of emotions. Those who love the Lord are encouraged to sing till we feel our hearts ascending with our tongues.¹⁴¹

The women’s ministry also has its unique way of singing. They sing songs known as “abibidwom”, translated into English as local music, which are composed purposely for

¹⁴¹ Church manual, 143

women. These songs are usually accompanied by clapping and the waving of handkerchiefs or scarves. The musical instruments usually used are clips and bells. All women in the church are involved in singing these songs. Women in the church are asked to stand whenever such songs are sung. In Adenta church, these songs are usually led by Grace Donkor. This is one-way women contribute to the music ministry in the church.

3.5 Evangelism

The word evangelism is derived from the Greek word ‘evangelion’, which means ‘good news’.¹⁴² Like the word ‘mission’, many have written about evangelism, but it is not always clear what the definition is. The 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism defined evangelism as “to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the scripture; and that as the reigning Lord, He now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.”¹⁴³ Walter Brueggemann defines evangelism as a request to choose a new story, using the biblical story as the “definitional story of life and thereby authorizing people to give up, abandon and renounce other stories that have shaped their lives in false and distorting ways.”¹⁴⁴

From its earliest days, Christianity has been characterized by active involvement of women in the ministry. In the New Testament period, these activities are spoken of in the Gospels, the book of Acts, and throughout the Epistles. In the post-apostolic period, there are also references to the involvement of women in evangelistic ministry. These

¹⁴² A. Shorter, *Evangelisation and Culture* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 4.

¹⁴³ J.D. Atkinson & Field, D. H. *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (London: Inter-varsity Press, 1995), 360.

¹⁴⁴ Walter, Brueggeman, *Biblical Perspective on Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press., 1993), 10.

references, however, give only a glimpse of church activity as a whole, and it is difficult to determine the extent of female participation.

Evangelism of the gospel encompasses many activities not only the preaching the gospel by word of mouth.¹⁴⁵ Thus, throughout the Bible, there are antecedents of women preaching or playing prominent roles in the ministry. Several examples include Deborah, who was a judge of Israel (Judges 4:4), Huldah and Anna, who were prophetesses (2 Chronicles 34:22; Luke 2:36), Priscilla, who was active in evangelism and Pheobe who was a deaconess. Indeed, women played prominent roles in the ministry of Jesus. Spiritual gifts are not limited to men as listed in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 12:27) but to women also. Women were commanded by the bible to edify the body of Christ, which included His teachings (Titus 2:4). In modern times, one cannot discount the character of Ellen G White whose numerous writings have continued to guide the church.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, all the respondents cited her as a huge source of inspiration for many of the activities they undertook. This is in addition to others such as Olive Maria Rice, Lucy Stoddard, Emily C. Clemens, Sarah J. Paine and Clorinda S. Minor.undertook. This is in addition to others such as Olive Maria Rice, Lucy Stoddard, Emily C. Clemens, Sarah J. Paine and Clorinda S. Minor.¹⁴⁷

Regarding preaching the gospel, the respondents illustrated other means such as sharing the gospel with strangers and people in their communities and also visitations to various areas in the community. Though men also partake in these activities, this study focuses on indigenous women and their part in these efforts. Activities as part of the purpose of

¹⁴⁵ Kuwornu-Adjaottor, J.E.T. *Spirituality and the Changing Face of Evangelicalism in Ghana*. Ogbomosho Journal of Theology, Volume XVI, No. 1, 2011. 109-126.

¹⁴⁶ Merlin D. Burt., *Understanding Ellen White*. ed. 2015 Pacific Press.

¹⁴⁷ Merlin D. Burt., *Understanding Ellen White*.

evangelism included organizing crusades, donating to the poor, organizing youth for evangelism, and taking care of children in the ministry. According to Madam Mary Afriyie, one of the respondents, what inspired her to make such contribution was the need to help the needy. This always inspired and motivated her. This was her method of evangelism because she did not attend school so she could not read the bible and preach the word of God. Through her support, many people were drawn to the Adventist church (regarding numbers).¹⁴⁸

Though respondents were divided and in some cases unsure as to the actual interpretation of certain biblical contexts with regards to women taking leadership roles in the church, certain roles important to evangelism were highlighted in the interviews. These roles included women's ministry leader, Sabbath school secretary, elder, choir leader, singing bandleader, deaconess and Sabbath school superintendent. As evidenced by the various respondents in whose churches these roles were available, the activeness of the indigenous women in these roles could be commended as a factor that contributed to the growth of the church and the need for increased support for these roles.

In the areas that were selected as case study for this work, the researcher can say that there has been an increase in the spiritual awareness and commitment of women in the church by sixty percent (60%) in the area of evangelism, and they have found the need to trust in God in every situation. In 2012, a church record book of Adenta SDA Church indicated that two young women named Mabel Boadi and Dora Mawutor were

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Mary Afriyie on 25th July 2014.

recognized for giving their time, talents and money to bring light to the eyes of old ladies and widows in Adenta village.¹⁴⁹

Women were trained in their fields for various evangelistic campaigns. Women like Millicent Gyedu, Victoria Acheampong and Sophia Mantey all in Adenta District distinguished themselves in both the organization and implementation of such campaigns. Small group evangelism was encouraged among the women with effective Bible studies to equip them. Five hundred (500) evangelistic training programs were organized with fifty thousand (50,000) women attending and benefiting. The subsequent years after this training saw an improvement in the church's evangelistic programmes with the following records. In 2006 for example, eight hundred and forty (840) people were converted and baptized in the church. The year 2007 had a total of six hundred and fifty-two (652) souls through baptism and in the year 2008, those baptized were one thousand three hundred and sixty-nine (1369). Five churches were planted through women evangelism across the fields. One of the churches is New Legon SDA church that is in the Adenta District.¹⁵⁰

The year 2009 saw a total of one thousand five hundred and eighty-two (1582) people being baptised and forty-five (45) reclaimed in the church. Furthermore, the year 2010 recorded the baptism of four hundred and four persons (404) from January to June. Two churches were planted in the Central Ghana Conference through women's efforts. Mary Afriyie and Evelyn Boateng assisted by providing generators, public address systems as well as money.¹⁵¹ In all, four thousand, eight hundred and forty-seven (4847) persons were added to the church, hundred reclaimed (100) and seven (7) churches planted in all

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Victoria Acheampong, January 2015.

¹⁵⁰ SDA Church record book, pg 20.

¹⁵¹ SDA church record book , pg 22

seven fields during the period under review. These were achieved through five hundred and eighty-nine (589) various evangelistic activities such as personal evangelism, open air campaigns, small group visitation and studies, and the use of the celebration of international days of prayers, abuse prevention, etc.¹⁵² All these activities were carried out by women in Ghana including Bantama, Amakom and Oyarefa churches.

3.6 Teaching and Counselling Ministry

Teaching is the process whereby qualified leaders in the church, guided by the Holy Spirit and using Scripture as their authority, creatively structure and manage formal and informal learning. People in the church who have the interest in becoming teachers of the Bible are trained and equipped to become one. They are led to discover what the Scripture says, what it means, how it applies to their lives, and to respond appropriately to its message. People are also guided in the formation and expression of godly character qualities and essential Christian attitudes in keeping with scriptural emphasis. The teaching ministry is focused on teaching others how to develop a distinct Christian lifestyle in obedience to the will of God and the pattern of Christ, and encourage others to live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Teaching was recognized by the early church as essential to the spiritual growth and development of the individual believer. Acts 2:42 “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 11:26 “And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught many people.

¹⁵² SDA church record book, pg 25

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” The purpose of the teaching ministry is to prepare believers for ministry to the body, that it may edify itself.¹⁵³

As part of the study, most of the respondents noted that one of the gifts and talents of women in the churches were teaching and preaching. Most of the women interviewed mentioned that women in the church use their gift and talents to contribute to church growth by drawing others to the church, improving the lives of church members, motivating, inspiring and praying for their fellow church members. Other women use their gifts and talents to motivate the men and inspire members of the church.

Counselling, as a means of providing assistance and guidance in resolving personal and psychological problems¹⁵⁴, has long been a domain mostly taken by women, especially in the Ghanaian community where women are traditionally acknowledged as nurturers and caring for the home and children. By taking this perception into account and the responses from the various respondents, it could even be theorized that this is a domain exclusive to only women. However there are trained and untrained male counsellors in addition to women.

From the responses, it was shown that there was a natural tendency of church members and even non-church members to consult women, especially older women before they took any decision. In situations of conflict in the church, women were usually invited to be part of resolving the conflicts and seeing to further prevention of these conflicts.

Young women about to be married were assigned or partnered with older married

¹⁵³ Adams, Jay E. *The Christian Counselor's Manual*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973.
Gary R. Collins. *Lay Counselling Within The Local Church*. *Leadership Journal: Pastoral Care & Counseling*, Vol.1 No. 4. 1980.

¹⁵⁴ Adams, Jay E. *The Christian Counselor's Manual*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973.
Gary R. Collins. *Lay Counselling Within The Local Church*. *Leadership Journal: Pastoral Care & Counseling*, Vol.1 No. 4. 1980.

women to be counselled on marital issues and life after marriage. Indigenous women are also pivotal in guiding and counselling the youth in the church and the community as a whole and are quite important to the status of the church. These contributions are not to be taken lightly. In serving the various roles of Sabbath school superintendents, children's ministry leaders, women's ministry leaders, it follows that indigenous women are recognized as the natural people to consult when individuals in these entities are troubled or need counselling. Such women in these positions may be given the training to deal with situations on counselling. In an interview, Mercy Okoto indicated that women, in general, contributed a lot to help in teaching and counselling. Comfort Acheampong mentioned that women contributed by advising and teaching. Lydia Anthony also noted that women contributed to education by organizing the youth and counselling them.

3.7 Financing

Money is an indispensable commodity. It is a medium of exchange for all transactions. The book of Ecclesiastes says money is the answer for everything.”(Eccl.10:19 NIV) According to Bennet E. Niboi, “an enterprise cannot start without the injection of some initial money, and grow without injection of further capital.”¹⁵⁵ The church is a sacred organization, yet it is a human institution with a mandate to spread the good news. Jesus Christ after his resurrection commanded the church to make disciples of all nations. (Matt. 28:19). Evangelism is, therefore, the core business of the church. And this onerous task of the church cannot be accomplished without money. Money, and the ability to sustain and manage it is very crucial for the expansion of the church's mission.

¹⁵⁵ Nii Boi E. Benneth, *Practical Leadership Skill for Christian Ministry* (Accra: Challenge Enterprise, 2004), 15.

The work of Sontag-Padilla, Staplefoote and Morganti states that for-profit and nonprofit organizations like church organisations postulate that financial capacity consists of resources that gives an organization the ability to seize opportunities and react to unexpected threats while maintaining general operations of the organization.¹⁵⁶ Regardless of if an organization is for-profit or non-profit, the challenges of establishing financial capacity and financial sustainability are central to organizational function.¹⁵⁷

According to J.D. Berkley, “the financial strength of a congregation determines its spiritual life and effectiveness.” The church cannot function effectively and grow without money. The church’s responsibility is not only to raise funds to support her activities but is incumbent upon her to ensure prudent management of the funds provided by members of the church. Should the meaning and application of church financing, regarding this study, be restricted to only the areas of collection and distribution of funds and its affiliated activities such as budgeting, accounting and auditing, then the contributions of indigenous women in this regard would be quite small. However, for this study, church financing was expanded to include activities that impacted on the financial status of the church. Thus, donations of materials and equipment were considered. In this light, the input of indigenous women was shown to be quite immense.

The various respondents gave details of the varied donations and assistance that had been received by the church from them. Consulting available public church records highlighted some of the recorded assistance from indigenous women of various walks of life. In some instances, however, there were no public church records for documental

¹⁵⁶ Woods Bowman, “Financial Capacity and Sustainability of Ordinary Nonprofits”, *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, Vol. 22, No. 1. Fall 2011, 37.

¹⁵⁷ Sontag-Padilla L. M, Staplefoote L., Morganti K.G., *Financial Sustainability for Nonprofit Organizations*, (NY: RAND Corporation, 2012), 28.

verification. Statements from the respondents served to illustrate and corroborate their stories about their giving. Donations were in diverse forms, including materials and clothes for church activities, money, the plot of land for the church building, payment of fees for needy students in the church and so on. Indeed, the interviews seemed to highlight that many of the various donations were not recorded but were given verbal recognition. In some instances, the indigenous women were honoured during church activities. Also in some instances, the women made the donations directly to the groups needing the assistance without any involvement of the church as a whole.

In the areas where farming was a lucrative and common occupation, there were a high number of cases where women had given farm produce to the church and church members in need. Also, some cases were talked about where the various church members including women had joined forces to partake in communal labour on farms owned by the church or church elders. Many of these activities were based on the intrinsic motivation of the indigenous women. Without being obligated by any external means, they were willing to serve the Lord with their help and contributions. Also, the number of women in these activities was quite high compared to the men. In the broader scope of activities that contribute to the financial input of the church, these can be said to be quite impactful since it saved the church from spending money to hire workers and buy farm tools (in some instances the women brought their farm tools). With such a dedicated workforce that contributed their quota based not only on the external rewards but also on intrinsic motivation, it could be theorized that an additional benefit of these activities was the increased unity among church members and the further attractiveness of the church to non-members.

In the selected churches, it was discovered that women have been contributing to the financial sustainability of the church. This was in the form of donations to the poor and the needy, payment of school fees, sponsoring of church programmes and building churches with their money. One of such lay women is Mrs. Victoria Daaku. She helped established Gbawe Top Base, Ablekuma Fanmilk, Sakaman and American Town SDA churches.¹⁵⁸

According to some of the elders interviewed, it was disclosed that the financial support of the needy in the church and also the church as a whole has been one of the ways in which people are drawn to the church thereby increasing its growth. Women such as Evelyn Boateng and Mrs Tortor who are members of the Seventh Day Adventist church have contributed financially to the growth of the SDA church in Ghana. Even though they both did not hold any church office, they took evangelism as a part time job.

A significant role that they played included the provision of funds for the training of Adventist ministers and evangelists. Another role they have also played was the provision of funds for the purchasing of evangelical equipment such as generators, public address systems, projectors and books for all twelve (12) administrative churches namely; South Central Ghana Conference, Ashanti South Ghana, Mid-North Ghana, Mid-Central Ghana, Mountain View Conference, Green View Conference, North Ghana Mission, South Ghana Conference, Mid-South Ghana Conference, Eastern Ghana Conference, Volta Administrative Unit and Western North Administrative Unit. They also aided in the construction of many church buildings and offices at Oyarifa, South Suntreso, Stadium, Kwadaso and Old Tafo. In an interview, Mrs Evelyn Boateng

¹⁵⁸ Daaku, V., Funeral and Burial Brochure, 57.

disclosed that she has been supporting the needy and jobless in the church by providing capital for some Adventist women to start work. She also provides funds for needy Adventist children, especially orphans.

According to her, she was motivated or inspired to make such contributions to the church by an incident that occurred to her when she was growing up. She claimed to have seen two key Adventist evangelists named James Adu and John Kwame moving from one place to the other to evangelize.¹⁵⁹ She realized that they had serious financial problems. When God blessed her, and she became financially sound, she decided that since she cannot move from one place to the other to evangelize, she will use her money to support those who did God's work. She did not get any material or monetary support in carrying out such activities for the church.¹⁶⁰

During the interview, she added that there are many other things she plans to do to contribute to the growth of the church, but since she is really old, she wishes other women will emulate and continue the good work. However, she advised that Adventist women should work hard to be financially independent. This, she emphasised will enable them to do God's work effectively. Again she strongly advised women to take their education seriously because she feels her success in the church and society depends, to some extent on the fact that she was fortunate to have been educated to the tertiary level.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Evelyn Boateng on 21st July, 2014.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Evelyn Boateng on 21st July, 2014.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Evelyn Boateng on 21st July, 2014.

3.8 Church Building

Church buildings make it possible for people to get together for various church activities. This is, without question an essential function of church growth and distinguishes them from the classical form of the temple in most religions. In the Old Covenant, the high priest performed the rite of atonement in the Holy of Holies. None but he was allowed to enter, and even he could do so only once in a year.

Church establishment is one area where women's contribution is key. The contribution of women in this area dates back to the biblical recordings of the Pauline churches. In the SDA, the study of Haloviak in her article "*Women and the SDA Church*" observes that the churches in Hornellsville, Gas Springs, Wallace, Silver Creek, Geneva, Angola, Gorham, Fredonia, Avoca, Rushville, Canandaigua and Penn Yan in New York State owe their establishment to women ministers. The churches in Avon, Lakeville, Hemlock, South Livonia and Bath were also established when Mr. Wightman joined his wife as a licensed minister.¹⁶² The common adage that besides a successful man is a woman depicts that women have indirectly contributed to the establishment of several SDA churches across the globe due to the physical, spiritual, social and financial support they gave to their husbands.

In the study, it was found out that Madam Victoria Torto, who was born in 1924 and resides at Oyarifa, Greater Accra Region has contributed financially to the growth of the church in the Adenta District. She is a member of the woman's ministry and has been a children's ministry leader for over 50 years. She has been educated to the tertiary level.

¹⁶² Haloviak, B., *Women and the SDA Church*, 1988.

She is widowed, with five children and has other dependents apart from her nuclear family. She is a school proprietor.¹⁶³

One role she played towards the growth of the church includes the founding of Hanson Road SDA Basic school in her house at Kaneshie after which she handed it over to the church. She is one of the founders of the Oyarifa SDA church. For the church building, she gave a temporal portion of her land and built a structure on it of which they have used for over 20 years until they moved into a new building on a land owned by the church (March 2010). She has worked as a literature evangelist for more than 30 years. She also granted scholarships to students who could not afford to pay their school fees (both Adventists and non-Adventists). In an interview, she disclosed that she got some support (roofing sheets) in the building of the structure of Oyarifa SDA church, but did not get any support in the building of the school.¹⁶⁴

In the interview, she indicated that she is now old and plans on using whatever she gets to contribute to the growth of the church. She also observed that the church is now matured. It celebrated its 125th year's anniversary in the year 2013. She believes that it is through her support among others that the church has reached where it is. She, therefore, encourages Adventist women to work hard to support the church. She added that a woman does not need to hold any position in the church before she can contribute to its growth. Women, even with limited resources, can offer their to help in the growth of the church.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Interview with Victoria Tortor on 15th August, 2014.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Victoria Tortor on 15th August, 2014.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Victoria Tortor on 15th August, 2014.

Madam Mary Afriyie, another respondent from the Amakom Seventh-day Adventist church in the Kumasi metropolis, has also contributed immensely to the infrastructural development of the church. She is a member of the women's ministry. According to her, she has not held any church office before; and never been to school and is unmarried. However, she has other dependents apart from her nuclear family. She was a business woman and one of her activities included helping the needy women. This respondent never gave birth, so she dedicated her life to the growth of the Adventist church and its members. She supported the Adventist Church in Ghana as a lay woman through the building of a Church block at Mampong, Kumasi. Another way she supported the church was through the building of 10 – classroom block Basic school at Mampong.

Other ways in which Evelyn Boateng participated as a lay woman was through building churches at Ntonso, Jamasi, Buoni and Amakom. Evelyn Boateng assisted a lot of people in their education, including Adventist Pastors like Pastor Osei Mensah Isaac and pastor Richard Aboagye. She also set up a fund to care for the needy Adventist women in the Kumasi metropolis. Through this fund, over hundred (100) women benefitted by gaining money for trading and learning of skills such as dressmaking, hairdressing and making of local fabrics (tie and dye).

Taking care of church premises may also be said to be another almost exclusive domain of indigenous women. As evidenced by the respondents and observation of various church activities, one cannot downplay the contributions of indigenous women in this area. Most caretaking activities such as sweeping of the church, decorations and landscaping of the church grounds were and are still handled mainly by women. It, of course, may be attributed to the larger numbers of women in the churches surveyed.

However, it should be noted that the women do contribute and perform creditably in this area, usually without any extrinsic motivation.

In extending the concept of the "church" to also encompass the body of Christ or the church members, the support of indigenous women is still relevant. Again this is linked to the culture of perceiving women as nurturers. In this instance, indigenous women usually take care of activities involving the care and upkeep of church members on various occasions. These include cooking the food at church events and spearheading (and supporting) programmes to help the needy. The women in the church are also usually in charge of supporting and protecting the vulnerable and naïve members of the church.

3.9 Women and their Challenges to Church Growth

The Seventh-day Adventist church believes that all people, male and female, are created equal, in the image of a loving God. The church believes that both men and women are called to fill a significant role in accomplishing the primary mission of the Adventist Church – working together for the benefit of humanity. The Church is painfully aware that throughout the world, in developing and developed nations, adverse societal conditions often inhibit women from fulfilling their God-given potential. The study reveals that lay women and elders in the church face many challenges in the course of carrying out their work. Some of the challenges women face in performing their roles in the church are discussed in the following sub-themes.

3.9.1 Home Responsibilities

Most of the respondents especially the married ones stated that the caring for their children coupled with the church activities affected their performance in many diverse ways. Some of the respondents noted that because they always had to see to it that everything in the home and church were in good position, and their responsibility in training their children to be of good manners and character, they were always late for church activities.

Some respondents also mentioned that married women with younger children had no time because of house chores and the responsibilities associated with motherhood. This point was stressed by many respondents concerning the responsibilities of women at home and how it affected their church activities regarding effectively combining marital roles and church actions.

Again, one challenge that women face as a result of these household chores were poor health. Most of these women according to one respondent were burdened with a lot of work such that it turned out to affect their health. Poor health undermines a woman's ability to be a fully productive participant in God's work. Globally, the health of women is deteriorating. This process is closely aligned to environmental deterioration, declining agricultural productivity, and social demands on women, particularly in poor countries, for the production of large numbers of children. In many parts of the world, the devalued social status of being born female sentences the woman to less claim on food and health care. Fifty percent of all poor women and 2/3's of poor pregnant women in less developed countries are anaemic, robbing them of energy and physical resources to give their best to the new lives they nurture in their bodies. Maternal mortality remains the

leading cause of death among women globally. One-half million women die each year from childbearing-related complications. For every one that dies, twenty are physically damaged in the process of giving life. Maternal mortality has been called the “silent epidemic.”¹⁶⁶

Women in poorer countries routinely work 18 hours per day. In some parts of the world, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, women do 90% of all the agricultural work. Frequently expected to perform a full day's paid work for the financial viability of the family, a woman then faces additional hours of daily housework and child care, often with limited access to necessities such as fuel and water. In many parts of the world, women have no voice in the distribution of family funds, even with their added contributions. Some studies have shown that while some women can make financial decisions together with their husbands, the health, nutrition and education needs of the children are more likely to be given priority. In the affluent world, long working day and high expectations for job performance while maintaining family integrity affects women greatly. Balancing the societal expectations for maintaining an intact and healthy family, while achieving in a highly competitive work satisfaction, results in long days and limited rest and recreational options. The literature on women's health identifies chronic fatigue syndrome as a growing phenomenon among women in both poor and affluent countries.¹⁶⁷ Among SDA women who are mostly engaged in household activities are women with little children who cannot fully engage in church activities.

¹⁶⁶ The role of women in society. <http://www.rsrevision.com/GCSE/shortcourse/equality/sexism.htm> (accessed on July 25, 2014).

¹⁶⁷ The role of women in society, July 25, 2014.

3.9.2 Biblical Misinterpretation of Paul

In looking at the controversial but eye-opening passage that deals with women in a church setting. Paul writes, “I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. She will although be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control” (1 Timothy 2:8–15).

Here, it is discovered that Paul was admonishing the young Timothy on appropriate church life, offering practical guidelines for structuring the church and choosing its officers, with qualifications for each position. Paul also addresses women’s attire, requesting that they avoid the appearance of worldliness by dressing modestly and focusing on propriety, because “ostentatious dress, in the ancient world, sometimes could signal a woman’s loose morals and independence from her husband.”¹⁶⁸ Of course, these general teachings are widely accepted in principle by most churches, but what Paul writes next often causes a serious stir.

For women, Paul says, their role in worship is to “learn quietly with all submissiveness.” That is, within a worship gathering at the church, a woman should remain quiet. But

¹⁶⁸ Douglas Moo, “What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men? [1 Timothy 2:11–15](#)” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1991), 182.

what does he mean by quiet? Paul clarifies, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man.” So this isn’t an absolute quiet, but rather “quiet” in the sense clearly described—without teaching or exercising authority over men. This understanding is in complete agreement with Paul’s discussion in 1 Corinthians 11, which is a passage that demonstrates women participated in prayer and prophecy in the early church.

To understand this limitation on the ministry of women a little better, we need to clarify what the word teach means in this context. First, it is clear this passage is regarding spiritual matters within the church. The epistle itself is pastoral in nature, providing instructions for the church and appropriate conduct therein. Therefore, it doesn’t preclude women from occupations that require instruction of or authority over men outside the church structure. But considering its usage throughout the Scriptures, the term teach is used “to denote the careful transmission of the tradition concerning Jesus Christ and the authoritative proclamation of God’s will to believers in light of that tradition.”¹⁶⁹

Many have argued that though Paul restricts women from teaching men, it was based entirely on cultural traditions that have no place today.

Within the SDA, One of the challenges that women face in the church is that of restriction. 1st Timothy chapter 2: 11-12, which reads, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence”, concerning this text, some of the respondents felt that women should be silenced. However, it was gathered from the study that it is not wrong for women to preach Christ and that the first person to see Christ was a woman. The study also revealed that women were free to operate as choir leader, deaconess, women’s

¹⁶⁹ Moo, “What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men? [1 Timothy 2:11–15](#)”, 185.

ministry leader, church clerks, Sabbath school superintendent, lay activities elders, evangelists counselors, district lay, activity leaders. Some women even help with communion services.

The encouragement for women to seek ordination has come especially from the Christian feminist movement, which arose after the women's liberation movement had come to the fore in the late 1960s. The connection between the two is recognized by Christian feminists themselves. Sara Maitland, for example, writes: "The women's liberation movement has authorized this personal voice in a particular and liberating way."¹⁷⁰ Similarly, Susannah Herzel notes: "Much of the rhetoric used in the debate on women's ordination to the priesthood has been influenced by feminism and the psychological pressures that that movement exerted."¹⁷¹

Paul's statement of limiting women in teaching or exercising authority over men has been challenged in many ways: Many evangelicals see women as being commanded to teach and that the restriction is not solely upon teaching but is teaching in a way that usurps authority away from men. Hence, the women may be allowed to teach men as long as they recognize the fact that they are under the authority of a man. The problem with this view is that authority is inherently involved with the teaching of the Scripture. Teachings of the New Testament are not just facts but an attempt to convince believers with an expectation toward application and following. True teaching necessarily exercises authority. Men cannot rightfully delegate something to a woman that God has limited to men. Some understand Paul's words "I do not allow" (1 Timothy 2:12) to mean his personal preference that is not abiding for the church at large.

¹⁷⁰ Brocke, *Adventism in Accra*. Accra, 67.

¹⁷¹ Brocke, *Adventism in Accra*. Accra, 58.

However, this undermines Paul's apostolic authority. Indeed, Paul commonly spoke in the first and third person, in directing the church (cf. 1 Timothy 2:1, 8, 9) and the context of the book itself is the direction for the church. Some have argued that verse 11 gives a condition that women must meet before being allowed to teach men; that is they must be instructed. After being educated, they are then qualified to teach men. Kaiser would understand Eve's deception (2:14) as being caused by her lack of education. The major problem with this interpretation is that the text itself gives no hint that instruction would reverse Paul's command. Some contend that Paul was just wrong in his thinking, which must be rejected on the grounds of the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16). Each of these objections either chooses to disregard the text or read into it what is not there and, therefore, must be rejected. The plain meaning of Paul's words are clear and must be applied, regardless of the current views of our society.

According to White, "The Lord has begun a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them. They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labour is needed."¹⁷²

The Seventh-day Adventist church believes that its mission would be fulfilled only when women are empowered to achieve their full potentials. At the General Conference Session in 1995, the church emphasised the involvement of both male and female in achieving its mission.

¹⁷² White, *Welfare Ministries*, 145.

3.9.3 Poverty

As part of the study, the researcher realised that in spite of the effort of the Church to curtail the problem of poverty, the issue of poverty remains a major challenge for women. More women need money to finance their activities and be independent. This makes the planning of paid activities for interested individuals quite difficult in the churches. Although some of the fields are doing well in giving their members some support in the form of income capacity building workshops, there is still much to be done. This poverty situation has rendered some women in the church financially unstable and therefore are not able to contribute their quota financially to the growth of the church.

This is the same situation the women in Adenta, Oyarifa, Bantama and Amakom are also facing. According to them, due to poverty, some women find it difficult to financially contribute to church activities like payment of tithe which is a requirement for selecting leaders of the church, payment of project giving, payment their dues as members of women's ministry, or even payment to attend women congresses when they are organized. For instance, on May 11th to 17th 2015 when the women ministries Congress of which many issues concerning women like, leadership skills, spiritual uplifted and health are discussed, was organized in Techiman, only the leader of Adenta church was sponsored by the church, even though some women had expressed interest in attending the event. Due to this, only the Leader attended because the others who were interested in attending could not afford it.

3.9.4 Lack of Leadership Skills

Despite the effort by the church to organize seminars to train women in the church, the study found out that about 55% of women in the church are illiterates, and this, therefore, affects their leadership roles. Women that move into positions of leadership in Women's Ministries mostly need specialized training. Also, as the church looks more into the inclusiveness of women and balance in the leadership of the church, the church mostly expects those who rise to leadership positions in the church to have some level of education. However, as a result of the low level of education among women in the SDA church, the women in the SDA church are currently faced with a lack of leadership skills. Although they have a limited understanding of these leadership skills, they have not gone through any form of training or education to qualify them for certain leadership positions that require actual formal training. An example of such position is the church Accountant position.

3.9.5 Gender Discrimination

One of the challenges that came up as part of the study is gender discrimination. There are many examples of differences in perceived roles between men and women that have led to the direct/indirect discrimination of women. Men have normally held power, and most people live in societies controlled by male values, in some cases. Women were recently allowed to enter paid employment and even then, many jobs were barred to them.

Women have been stereotyped as suitable only as mothers, child-bearers and servants of men. In the past, women spent almost all their adult lives producing and looking after children. Education was limited. Very few jobs were available to them. They were

expected to marry, give up their jobs and to look after their husband/family. This changed after World War II; it was more acceptable for women to work.¹⁷³ It is believed that Women should not work underground as mineral miners. It is also believed that churches should not have women priests. Some firms are reluctant to train women for responsible positions because they may probably take more time off as compared to men, e.g. give birth, or look after sick children.

In the SDA church, women are not prevented from holding leadership position apart from the office of the priesthood. However, when it comes to the election of elders to fill positions in the church, men turn out to vote for their colleague men due to their biased view of the role of women in leadership in the SDA church. Therefore, even though women are playing leadership roles in the SDA church, they are very few.

Another challenge that came up as part of the study is the men's perception that women are less intelligent people. Women have their own unique identity. They can think for themselves, live by themselves, and can do whatever they want. Some men fear that with all this freedom that women are given, they will start to compete with them, and that is the biggest threat that anyone can give to the chauvinistic men of any patriarchal society. On screen, women are looked down upon in every possible way. The words that are employed in specific circumstances are used in such a way that women always appear inferior to men. "Be brave; act like a man," is often said to young boys who feel scared of something. Or if a small child cries, he is told not to cry like a girl. Hence crying, fear, and all other traits that represent weakness is associated with women.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ *The role of women in society*, 2014.

¹⁷⁴ Khan, R. T. *Common man's perception of women*. (accessed on July 25, 2014).

Globally, women for a long time were perceived as having less intellect than men and were consequently barred from educational institutions that would have allowed them to prove their intellectual abilities. An imagining of differences thus disabled them. In 1851, women were, for the most part, considered fragile and delicate and were treated in that way. Their roles were, therefore, limited. They were allowed no means of gaining physical strength or independence. Again, the perception men had of them disabled them. This disability lied not within the women's bodies but within the society of the time. Sojourner Truth offered dramatic proof of the physical and mental strength women could achieve when not limited by society's expectations in her famous speech to the women's Convention in Ohio, "Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And aren't I a woman?" Sojourner Truth was not perceived as fragile or weak by society and was thus not disabled into behaving as such (though I certainly do not mean to discount the ways in which society did disable her through its blatant racism and the institution of slavery).¹⁷⁵

Men, generally perceive women with a traditional mindset and have standard expectations for women to serve and remain sub to the male's demands. For example, women are expected to cook, serve their family, etc. Paradoxically, men also expect women to be outgoing, independent and sexy. These paradoxes lead to the exploitation of women. The hardwired perception of women in society must change. A truly advanced society will treat everyone equally. After all, everyone is equal in the eyes of God.¹⁷⁶ They see women as companions who gives extra support and attention. They perceive women to be complicated and difficult to understand. They also dislike women

¹⁷⁵ *Society disables women*. Serendip studio: <http://serendip.brynmawr.edu> (Retrieved on August 13, 2014)., from

¹⁷⁶ Albert. (2006). *Perception Of Women In Society*. Retrieved July 25, 2014, from RANDTS: <http://myrandts.blogspot.com/2007/03/perception-of-women-in-society.html>

who try too hard to prove men wrong. Most men also acknowledge the fact that sports are generally for men and women who flaunt their sexuality (sexy, sultry, etc.) are attractive. When in a relationship, women are disallowed to see male friends. Some men in the SDA church still hold the view that women in the church are less intelligent, have less ability and less spiritual strength to play certain roles in the church such as eldership, and this is a great challenge.

In Christianity, many evangelical Protestants believe that men and women should have different and separate roles in religion. The role of women is to bring up the children and run a Christian home. Women are not allowed to speak or teach in church and must submit to their husbands. The role of men is to provide for the family and to lead the family in religion. Men must love their wives and only men can be church leaders. Some also believe that men and women should have equal rights in life and society. Women are allowed to study and teach in theological colleges. Women should have all the same rights as men except for the ordained ministry. They have this belief because in Genesis 1:27, it teaches that men and women were created at the same time and of equal status and in the image of God.¹⁷⁷

Christians disagree about the role of women. Some people believe men and women should be treated the same in every way, e.g. be leaders, preachers and priests, too. Christians should recognize that everyone is made in the image of God. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was given to men and women equally. Women should have important roles in the Church, not just arranging the flowers, organizing the crèche or making tea! Christianity has been responsible for women being treated as inferior. The Bible, and the

¹⁷⁷ *The role of women in society*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 25, 2014, from <http://www.rsrevision.com/GCSE/shortcourse/equality/sexism.htm>

way it has been interpreted has encouraged injustice. If a woman feels God is calling her to be a priest, who can argue?

Others believe that men and women are equally valuable to God, but have different roles and important differences, physical, psychological and emotional. They have different gifts that should be put to different uses. It is no good pretending that men and women are the same – they are not. Jesus did not choose men to be his Apostles by accident. Some roles in the church are more suitable for men. Who says raising a family is not important? It is the most important job in the world. We are equal but different. Women should stop trying to be men.¹⁷⁸ Some men in the SDA church still hold the view that women in the church are less intelligent, have less ability and less spiritual strength to partake certain roles in the church like eldership, and that is a challenge.

However, many today are aggressively promoting the idea that women are fully equal with men without distinction and are to have access to each and every position of ministry in the church. Many others are untaught and confused on the subject, not knowing the questions much less the answers. Some hold to a rigid traditionalism that places undue restrictions on women leaving men only to have any ministry in the church. Finally, others believe the Bible presents a vision that respects the gender distinctive of men and women resulting in some limitations on women in the church but at the same time releases women to fulfill their ministries not only in the home but also in appropriate ministries within the church. Thus, according to Ellen White, “Christ stands as the representative of the Father, the connecting link between God and man; He is the great teacher of mankind. And He ordained that men and women should be His

¹⁷⁸ *The role of women in society*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 25, 2014, from <http://www.rsrevision.com/GCSE/shortcourse/equality/sexism.htm>

representatives.” Moreover, women can be instruments of righteousness and for the rendering holy service for the Lord and, that it was Mary that first preached a risen Jesus. Today many Christian women are needed in the great work of preaching the truth. Adventists believe that the Church will fulfil its mission only when women are empowered to achieve their full potential.

3.9.6 Women are their own enemy’s syndrome

It came up from the study that some women do oppose their fellow women who take up leadership roles in the church. This confirms Getui’s assertion that, “women are from different educational background, class and cultural background and can hardly speak with one voice”. The women in the churches under study are also from different backgrounds and are unable to speak with one voice and tend to backbite each other. However, after the researcher has spoken to some of the women, with the notion that women should not work in the church, it was revealed that they are just ignorant about gender issues. They have psychologically internalized gender differences. They are of the view that women should not do certain things.

Unfortunately, most of these women have less or no educational background that they can use to make critical analysis and criticisms on gender issues. They do that out of lack of knowledge on gender issues. They should, therefore, be sensitized to do away with that notion and accept the fact that women have abilities and are more than capable of performing every role. This doesn’t mean they have committed any sin.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the contribution of women to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Particularly, the chapter focused on the role of women in various departments of the church and the biblical perspectives that shares on the involvement of women in the church. The chapter also shows that in recent times, it appears that women are being given the opportunity to take positions. However, the contributions of women to the SDA church has received little research attention.

In tracing the contributions of indigenous women regarding financial means, there was the necessity also to find out why these indigenous women gave in varying measures and means to promote the growth of the church and its members. There were cases where indigenous women were honoured by the church, contributions recorded and citations given. Many, although go unannounced or unwritten in the annals of the church.

From the interviews, parallels were drawn to instances in the Bible where women made contributions to the church and prophets without any reservations. Some of these instances were put forth by the respondents as part of the reasons for the financial contributions. One may note the cases of widows and women in the Bible who gave what little they had to fulfil the prophecy and further the work of God. In 1 Kings 17:7-24, there is the case of Elijah the prophet and the widow at Zarephath. It is understood that the widow had very little and yet she gave what she had to Elijah.

Another inclusion to the above is that of the Elisha and the Shunammite woman illustrated in 2 Kings 4:8-37. Here, we can find another case of a woman contributing what she had to the prophet. In analysing these two stories, an interesting fact emerges;

that is the disparity between the two women and yet the similar result of donating to further Gods work. While the widow had scarce resources, the Shunammite woman was wealthy and married. They both, however, contributed resources to the prophets. Of course, it must be noted that their efforts were not in vain and when in times of trouble, they were rewarded in recognition of their efforts.

Finally, note must be taken of the various challenges faced by indigenous women in performing their roles in the church and contributing their quota to the Seventh Day Adventist church. These are numerous in scope and nature. These include the lack of professional training for certain roles occupied by the indigenous women in the church, poverty and low literacy levels among the women. For certain roles such as counselling and leadership, professional training helps to enhance the quality of the service and will enable the women in such roles to perform better. Poverty is another challenge that impacts greatly on the contribution of indigenous women to the church. It does limit planning of some major activities especially where payment is a factor. Regarding contribution, low or lack of finances makes many unable to contribute as much as they may want to and as meaningfully as they would like. Low literacy levels among indigenous women may place self-imposed limits on activities they may want to contribute and impact negatively on their contributions to the church. Despite these challenges, the indigenous women in the church must be commended for their unfailing contributions and support to the growth of the church and its well-being as shown by the discussed responses from the respondents in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary

This work has focused on the contribution of women to the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana, regarding women from Adenta, Oyarifa, Bantama and Amakom churches. The work has argued that despite that fact so many literature on the history of the Seventh-day Adventist does not highlight the contribution of some indigenous women to the growth of the church, they have arguably played major roles in the mission and expansion of the church.

Using a historical method of approach, this work has recounted some aspect of the history of the church that was very important for this study. The work touched on the establishment of the church worldwide, how it came to Ghana and the various epochs it has gone through to this stage. The study highlighted that the Seventh-day Adventist church is a worldwide “conservative Christian movement, evangelical in doctrine, and professing no creed but the Bible”¹⁷⁹. The church has its foundation and formation from the 1844 great disappointment in the United States as well as the Millerite movement during the mid-19th century.

The work also looked at the contribution of women to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana and factors that motivated them to contribute. Specifically,

¹⁷⁹ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (SDAE)*, rev. ed., 1976, s.v. “Seventh-day Adventist Church;” Nancy J. Vyhmeister, “Who Are Seventh-day Adventist?” in *HSDAT*, 1; Aecio E. Cairus, *Advent Daybreak: The Rise of a Movement That Captivated the Christian World* (Silang Cavite, Philippines: Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2007), 1

the work dealt with how ten special women have contributed to the growth of SDA in Ghana.

The work was also built on the theory that is based on the empowerment of indigenous women to the growth of Christianity in Africa. The theory of empowerment is used in this work to establish the significant role of women in the church. Following this observation, it is conceptualized that women, encouraged in the church will contribute significantly regarding quality to the church through various responsibilities such as facilitating and planning of women's retreats and conferences and facilitating the development of culture-specific Women's Ministries activities for the church.

The study has also argued that women are spiritually qualified to lead the SDA church in worship. Some of the Lay women contribute to the church by preaching the word of God and helping elders in evangelism and visitations. The women in the church believe that through support, the church has reached where it is currently.

The study also shows that women have supported the church financially with the building of schools and building of churches. From the findings, one respondent mentioned that she contributed to the growth of the Adenta SDA by providing assistance for the financing the building of the Church structures.

Also, the study shows that, women hold positions related to Bible classes and worship and that, women contribute to the church by teaching and counselling. From the study, the elders contribute to church growth by teaching, preaching, counselling, nurturing, organizing women, empowering women, counselling women, organizing crusades,

donating to the poor, organizing youth for evangelism, and taking care of children in the ministry.

The study reveals that lay women in the Church face multiple challenges in the course of carrying out their work, especially when their children are young. Most of the respondents stated that their obligation of looking after children in the home affected their church activities since they couldn't balance both activities.

They also faced opposition from fellow women who felt they did not deserve to hold their respective positions. They have come to accept gender discriminations and feel that women don't deserve to hold certain positions in the church.

4.2 Conclusion

There are some significant conclusions that can be drawn from this study. The study has dwelt on the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church by looking specifically at background history of how the church was established globally. It also took into consideration of how some women also contributed to the establishment of the church. The study emphasized on a brief history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana and the churches under study.

The issue the researcher discussed in the study is very important because it has portrayed how some women also contributed effectively to the establishment of the church globally. These issues are significant because it helps to analyse further the concern at the Centre of this study and also helps to emphasize well that women play significant roles in the establishment of the SDA church in Ghana.

On the contribution of indigenous women to church growth, the study shows that women contributed to the church by way of Participating in worship, preaching, guidance, empowerment of fellow women and drawing members (and their inputs in conferences). There are several examples of women participating towards the growth of the church. One of such examples is found in the Bible where there is the evidence of women partaking in singing.

The study shows that by the church activities associated with women, there is significant church growth. The Women's Ministries leader is elected by the church to develop specific ministries to nurture women and equip them for services to God and the church. Such a person is sensitive, has a caring nature and a clear spiritual understanding of the nature of women. She serves as chair of the Women's Ministries Committee and encourages ideas and plans that maximize women's contributions to the mission of the church. As chair, she is responsible for putting together the agenda, moderating discussion, and developing group cohesion through personal sharing, prayer, and fellowship. The finding of the study also shows that some members of the church exhibited the quality of passionate spirituality that contributed to organic church growth.

The findings of the study show that Elders contributed to the church by preaching the word of God and helped in Evangelism and visitations. However, women preachers such as Olive Maria Rice, Lucy Stoddard, Emily C. Clemens, Sarah J. Paine, Clorinda S. Minor, and some others, persuasively preached and published messages centred upon the Second Coming of Christ.¹⁸⁰ Even as a youth, Ellen White shared that heritage, although there was some opposition to the idea of a youthful girl publicly speaking on religious

¹⁸⁰ J. Murray, *The Role of Women in the Church Missionary Society* (Michigan, Grand Rapids, 1996), 66

matters.¹⁸¹ The study shows that some women of the church especially, Elders also preach publicly as in the time of Ellen White.

The finding also shows that lay women supported the education of the needy financially. According to Ibewuike, women show sympathy with the sick, needful and destitute.¹⁸² As noted by Sister Boniface of the Asaba mission:” Last week we received a poor old woman who used to sleep outside because her relations didn’t want her. When I brought her to the house of our protected one she was dancing with joy.”¹⁸³ They also received children, whose mothers died when giving birth to them. Ordinarily, she wrote, they leave them to die. We are happy to take them and care for them as long as God leaves them with us.¹⁸⁴

As indicated already, the sisters gave medical attention to the sick, the needful and the destitute. They also helped to rescue the outcast twins that were cast away and the disabled in the community. They taught them about the salvation and love of God and some later became converts, who played a very active part in the Church. They organized educative programs on financial wellbeing to increase women’s capabilities and creativity, micro-financing, organizing cooperatives and building small scale industries. In the same way, the lay women of SDA church in the four selected churches also contributed to the church through the provision of buildings and other evangelical equipment.

¹⁸¹ Murray, *The Role of Women in the Church Missionary Society*, 67.

¹⁸² Getui, *Women in Mission in the Seventh-day Adventist*, 48

¹⁸³ Getui, *Women in Mission in the Seventh-day Adventist*, 48

¹⁸⁴ Getui, *Women in Mission in the Seventh-day Adventist*, 48.

The study also shows that in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, deaconesses traditionally assist in performing church ordinances such as Baptism and Communion Service. Throughout the Bible, women are equal to men by the nature of their ministry. Several examples include Deborah, who was a judge of Israel (Judges 4:4), Huldah and Anna, who were prophetesses (2 Chronicles 34:22; Luke 2:36), Priscilla who was active in evangelism (Acts 18:26) and Pheobe who was a deaconess. Indeed, women played a prominent role in the ministry of Jesus. No spiritual gift is limited to men in the list that is found in the New Testament, and women were even commanded to edify the body of Christ, which included His teachings and prophecy.

The study also revealed the women in the church inspired church members to worship through music. The church regards Music as a tool for service and evangelism.¹⁸⁵Therefore, women contributing to this area effectively means that they have gone a long way in contributing to the growth of the church.

To conclude the finding of the study shows that the activities of the church involved need-oriented evangelism. These indicate that need-oriented evangelism impacted on the growth of the church and this is what SDA women are contributing according to the study. The women in Ghana, with their various contribution, are satisfied and do not have the urge of being ordained ministers. To them Christianity is about service, thus service to mankind is service to God, They don't have to be ordained to contribute their quota to the growth of the church. This confirms why some lay women like Mary Afriyie and Evelyn Boateng though being women, have sponsor some males in pastoral schools

¹⁸⁵Church manual, 143

to be trained as ministers of the church. Hence, the study shows that Ghanaian Adventist women are comfortable with their roles as women and the roles being played by the men.

4.3 Recommendations

The researcher makes the following recommendations based on the findings made in the work;

It can be argued that from the context of this study and many other biblical verses that God places importance on both man and woman because both were created in his own image (*Imago Dei*). The value of men and the value of women are perfectly equal in the eyes of God. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). The spiritual standing of every human being, regardless of nationality, class, or gender, is the same. The ground at the foot of the cross is level—women matter as much as men. This is abundantly clear from the life and ministry of Jesus and the apostles.

Hence, it is recommended that women, in the church, are Biblically obliged to serve and may be encouraged to take key roles in the church. The males in the church, and also women, who still hold the view that leadership position is only limited to men, may be sensitized on gender equity and issues to do away with that notion. The church must educate women through workshop and seminars to realize that, increasingly, women are becoming more spiritually and intellectually developed to occupy important roles in the church and the society.

Again, throughout the Bible, women are shown as equal by the nature of their ministry. Several examples include Deborah, who was a judge of Israel (Judges 4:4); Huldah and Anna, who were prophetesses (2 Chronicles 34:22; Luke 2:36); Priscilla, who was active

in evangelism (Acts 18:26); and Pheobe, who was a deaconess (Romans 16:1). Women also played a prominent role in the ministry of Jesus (Matthew 28:1–10; Luke 8:3; 23:49; John 11:1–46; 12:1–8). Further, no spiritual gift is limited to men in the lists in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 12:27–31; Romans 12:3–8; 1 Peter 4:8–11), and women were commanded to edify the body of Christ, which included teaching (Titus 2:4) and prophecy (Acts 2:17, 18; 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5).

As you can see, women have an incredibly important role in God's church throughout the ages. It is recommended that the SDA church will take inspiration from these biblical examples and give women the needed role in the church.

It is also recommended that the church board of the SDA church may revise the factors they consider to nominate or select church leaders. The findings show that there are indigenous women serving as elders involved in the church as Sabbath superintendents, women ministry leaders, deaconesses, evangelists and counsellors but they are few. This relates to the literature that, in recent times, the notion of women restricted to key roles of the church including preventing them from been leaders may be reconsidered. This is to attest to the fact that women may then teach men as long as they submit to the authority of men.

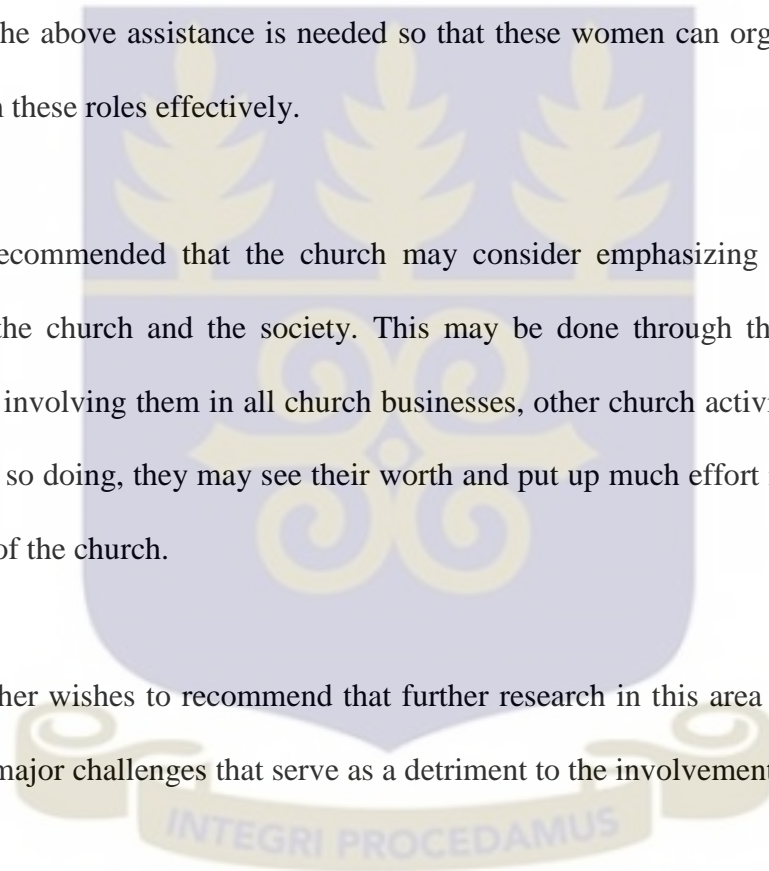
It is recommended that all the indigenous women in the SDA church will be encouraged by taking them through some training to acquire leadership skills. They could also be taken through some ministerial training to enable them effectively hold positions such as choir leaders, deaconesses, women ministry leaders, church clerks, Sabbath superintendents, lay activities, elders, evangelists and counsellors. This encouragement

may also be championed by the women leaders of the church who are already engaged in the activities of the church.

It is recommended that family members of indigenous women may consider giving them the needed assistance in their domestic duties. The study shows that, the indigenous women in their obligation of looking after children in the home, performing modern roles like teaching, nursing and banking, affects their involvement in church activities. Therefore, the above assistance is needed so that these women can organize themselves and perform these roles effectively.

It is also recommended that the church may consider emphasizing the relevance of women in the church and the society. This may be done through their speeches and actions like involving them in all church businesses, other church activities and decision making. By so doing, they may see their worth and put up much effort in contributing to the growth of the church.

The researcher wishes to recommend that further research in this area could be done to look at the major challenges that serve as a detriment to the involvement of women in the church.



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