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ABSTRACT

TRAINING FOR EVANGELISM AMONG
THE YORUBAS OF NIGERIA

by

Joseph A. Ola

Adviser: Norman Miles

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

A PROJECT REPORT

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

TITLE: TRAINING FOR EVANGELISM AMONG THE YORUBAS OF NIGERIA

Name of Researcher: Joseph Adebisi Ola

Name and degree of faculty chair: Norman Miles, Ph.D.

Date completed: August 1989.

Problem

When the Seventh-day Adventist church came to Nigeria in 1914, the Yorubas were the first people exposed to the church's message; today, Yorubas are the least receptive to Adventism when compared to the growth of Adventism in other parts of the country. Urban development in Yorubaland today presents the greatest challenge to the church; Yorubas forming one-fifth of the 100 million people in Nigeria. Most converts among Yorubas are from other denominations, for traditional religionists seldom attend Adventist crusades and are never converted to the Adventist faith. Since evangelistic campaigns lack efficient coordination within the whole church, the responsibility of

evangelism is usually left to the pastoral staff with laity as spectators. This project was designed to train ministers and laity in effective ways to evangelize Yorubas.

Method

The project uses descriptive analytical method to examine Yoruba religion and beliefs. This presents the world view of Yorubas and offers an explanation why Yorubas have not been attracted into the Adventist church. It also indicated why laity, including some pastors, are not enthusiastic about sharing their faith within their communities.

Results

Our study revealed that on the conference-level leadership has not failed to encourage local churches to conduct public crusades--especially when funds are needed for evangelism. Also, many Yoruba religious beliefs have striking parallels with certain Christian concepts. Yoruba cosmology has two orders: (1) Orun, or heaven, the highest order, is the abode of the Supreme Being, Olorun Olodumare, who is less concerned with the day-to-day affairs of men but responds to the call of man in desperate situations, also is the abode of Orisas and the ancestral spirits; (2) while the second order, Aye, the world of human beings: is where mankind has to contend with evil forces and seek external powers to defend them from these evil forces.

Conclusions

Ministers must be trained to know how to present Jesus Christ to the Yorubas. The church must make use of N.T. methods. Evangelizing to make disciples for Christ is an urgent matter for all church members. To reach Yorubas, one must start with what they know before expanding to the unknown.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

TRAINING FOR EVANGELISM AMONG
THE YORUBAS OF NIGERIA

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

by
Joseph Adebisi Ola

August 1989

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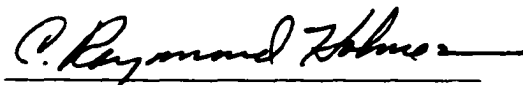
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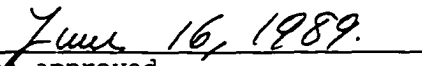

Date approved

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Project

By 1874¹ the Seventh-day Adventist Church had a world-wide vision of its mission, and had appropriated Jesus' commission to His disciples to . . . "go and make disciples of all nations."² The church has strongly identified with the angelic messages in Rev 14:6-8 that portray the proclamation of the "Everlasting Gospel" to all the inhabitants of the world, calling on them to worship God and warning of impending judgment on those who rebel against the Creator of the Universe.

Because of this strong emphasis on the universal commission of the Gospel, the SDA church has vigorously sought to go to every corner of the globe to evangelize those unaware of the good news of the returning Savior Jesus Christ.

The SDA church has used many different methods to spread the Everlasting Gospel of Jesus. The most notable of these have been schools, medical institutions and clinics,

¹Ellen G. White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), 203.

²Matt 28:19, NIV.

the sale of Christian literature and public evangelistic meetings.

It was against this background of the SDA church's understanding of its role in the fulfillment of the Gospel commission that the first Adventist missionaries set sail outside the shores of America to other distant lands. This was the motivation that spurred D. C. Babcock, the first SDA missionary to Nigeria, to go and evangelize among the Yoruba people. His coming on March 7, 1914, marked the beginning of SDA work in Nigeria.¹

Of three main religions among the Yorubas today, namely, traditional religion, Islam², and Christianity, Christianity which was the last to be introduced to Nigerians, in general, and Yorubas, in particular, has been credited with having had the most enlightening effect on the Yoruba people and Nigeria. It was Christianity that changed the life style and patterned a good example for other religions among the Yorubas. Christianity brought technology, social change, and politic. In the words of one renowned Nigerian historian, Emmanuel Ayandele:

¹D. C. Babcock, "A New Field Opened," Review and Herald, 25 June 1914, 13.

²T. O. Gbadamosi, The Growth of Islam Among the Yorubas, 1841-1908 (Atlantic Heights, NJ: Humanities Press, 1978), 20. Gbadamosi contends that there were Yoruba Muslim theologians during the mid-seventeenth century, long before the 1804 Jihad that brought a more visible presence of the Islamic religion to the Yorubas.

Among the three groups of intruders who found their way into Nigeria between 1842 and 1914 . . . the missionaries, the administrators, and the traders . . . the missionaries were by far the most important.¹

This statement is true in that they brought a religion that refined and in effect educated the Yorubas about health principles and set them "free" from idol worship. D. Bosch said that "if those who evangelize are not themselves part of the message they proclaim, there is not evangelism."² In harmony with this general truth, the early Christians among the Yorubas lived up to their messages. It is no wonder, therefore, that Christianity had a good reputation in the mind of the Yorubas.

The SDA church was among the last denominations to evangelize among the Yorubas.³ The church was first introduced to the Yorubas in 1914 when D. C. Babcock, who had worked in Sierra Leone since 1905, arrived in Lagos.⁴ He later travelled inland as far as Erunmu where he settled down to preach to the villagers.

¹Emmanuel A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis (London: Longman Group, 1966), xvii.

²David J. Bosch, Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1980), 19.

³David T. Agboola, The Seventh-day Adventists in Yorubaland 1914-1964 (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1987), 1.

⁴Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, 1976, rev. ed. s.v. "Nigeria," 976.

Writing in the Review and Herald in 1914, concerning this new field, Elder Babcock told the world church about his initial encounter with the Yorubas:

By invitation from the chief at Ibadan I had a very pleasant interview with him. He gave me an earnest invitation to open our work in that city of 180,000 people. Our present location is about sixteen miles from this place. It is on the site of the old city of Erimu (Erunmu) once very large and prosperous.¹

Elder Babcock was very quick to remind his audience about the needs of the new mission field and how it fitted into the overall mission of the church.

With 180,000 souls to warn of the soon-coming judgments, we earnestly appeal to you for your prayers, your men, and your means to sound the last cry of mercy to this part of dark Africa . . . we are entering with courage, believing that we shall reap a harvest for the coming king.²

Elder D. C. Babcock with two other workers from Sierra Leone, R. D. Dauphine and S. Morgue, selected the first mission field at Erunmu. The chief of this town gave them land on which the first Adventist station was build.³ They started a school at Erunmu within five months. "Before the end of 1914, three schools were in operation and seven converts were reported."⁴ The achievement at the beginning was not very promising because some Yoruba leaders who were

¹D. C. Babcock, "Nigeria," Review and Herald, 3 December 1914, 11.

²Babcock, "A New Field Opened," 14.

³D. Agboola, SDA in Yorubaland, 2.

⁴SDA Encyclopedia, 1966, s.v. "Nigeria," 867.

nationalists and loved to keep to the traditions saw Christianity as a threat or another front of the colonial system to oppress and distort the culture. The missionaries did their best.

Times have changed and we now live in a technological age. Among the Yorubas, a revolution of nationalism has taken place and a renewed confidence in Yoruba tradition and culture exists. Even among the Nigerian Christians, this sense of pride in their own cultures is leading to a search for authentic Yoruba Christian expressions. But along with this, the Nigerian nationals have to contend with western civilization, Islamic religion, secularism, and science.

Part of the purpose of this project, therefore, was to explore or find methods of more effective ways for communicating the Everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Yorubas, engaging their pattern of thought into direct new plans of evangelism and for training ministers and laity who in turn will reach Yorubas.

This project does not intend to be either exhaustive or definitive, so ministers, scholars, and laity are encouraged to continue the investigation for better and more effective ways of entering the Yoruba's world of thought with the SDA message.

Justification of the Project

The primary goal of the SDA church in its various forms and with changing degrees of intensity over the past

seventy years among the Yorubas has been the church's determination to make more converts among the Yorubas. As

I. H. Evans wrote:

The greatest work ever committed to man is that of winning souls to the kingdom of God. There are many callings, which possess merit and bring some reward, that are good for men to follow; but never has a work been committed to man equal to this great work of winning souls.¹

The pioneers had a difficult task in winning the Yorubas of their day. What they faced is quite different from the present problems among the Yorubas. According to D. T. Agboola, there was a positive response to the evangelistic work of the pioneers between 1914-1944,² and growth was steady but not spectacular. However, between 1945 and 1964, growth in the work in Yorubaland was declined.

In 1954 the total church membership in Yorubaland stood at only 1,895. There were ten organized churches, four national ordained ministers, two expatriates, and six

¹I. H. Evans, "The Winning of Soul," Review and Herald, 12 November 1914, 9.

²Agboola, SDA in Yorubaland, 22.

licensed national evangelists.¹ At the same time, the population of the Western Region² stood at 6,328,228.

By 1964, the situation had improved somewhat. The SDA membership was 3,434, there were twenty churches, twenty-five evangelists, and thirteen ordained ministers.³ Currently, the population of Ibadan city, where the SDA Mission headquarters is located, is over fifteen million,⁴ but the membership of the SDA churches in the city is fewer than 950 with four churches and two branch Sabbath Schools.⁵

According to the 1988 SDA yearbook, the population of the area covered by Western Nigeria mission field (Yorubaland) is in excess of 24,500,000. The church, however had a membership of 17,793 and seventy-one churches. These figures graphically show that much is yet to be done by the church in its attempt to evangelize the Yorubas.

¹Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Pub. Assn., 1954), 158.

²"Western Region" is the geographical and political name given to the area covered by the Yorubas within the Federation. Today, this area is divided into five states within the Federation of Nigeria.

³Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook, 1964, 180.

⁴William J. Easton Jr., ed., 1985 Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide 116th Edition (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1985), F15, F19.

⁵Sabbath School itself means the church at study of the word of God. The Sabbath School members include everybody, both the regular baptized church members and the prospective ones all studying the word of God in different age groups.

The situation is the same in the organizational structure of the SDA church. No change has been made in the status of the church in Yorubaland since it was declared a mission field in 1914. The mission still relies on appropriations from the world church to run its day-to-day affairs.

Although the membership of the West Nigeria mission field¹ has been increasing in recent years, a critical scrutiny of the statistics reveals that much of the growth is attributable to the influx of non-Yoruba Adventists who have settled in the Western Region of the country. This is especially so in the churches in large cities.² With the Yorubas forming one-fifth of the 100 million people in Nigeria,³ the church faces the challenge of addressing the issue of the indifference of Yorubas to Adventism.

Yoruba converts to the SDA church, it has been noted tend to be from other Christian denominations. Yoruba traditionalists and middle-income Yorubas are rarely reached

¹West Nigeria Mission has its headquarters in Ibadan. It covers the five major states where Yorubas mostly live, namely, Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, and Kwara states.

²Letter and Statistics from pastor J. A. Adeniji, the Ministerial Director of the Nigeria Union of SDA churches in Nigeria, 15 August 1987. See appendix F and G.

³Noel Q. King, African Cosmos, An Introduction to Religion in Africa (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1986), 6.

or converted and rarely attend Adventist evangelistic crusades. The church needs a study that identifies the peculiar Yoruba beliefs and religious practices and the strongly integrated social system that tend to discourage certain Yoruba communities from joining the Seventh-day Adventist church.

During nineteen years of pastoral and evangelistic ministry in the Adventist church among the Yoruba states of Western Nigeria, I have had numerous occasions to witness the problems associated with evangelism among the Yorubas. I know how it feels to make elaborate plans for public evangelism, mobilize the lay-people for such a campaign, put plans into effect, and after four or five weeks of campaign, have little or nothing to show for the effort.

These difficulties have been discussed with pastors and evangelists in Nigeria who are successful when they run crusades in other parts of the Federation, but do not do as well in the unique Yoruba situation. Most of them agree that there should be a deliberate study into how to more effectively evangelize the Yorubas.

The problem is perplexing in that Yorubas respond favorably to the Christian message as it is presented by some other religious bodies. For example, many other Christian churches meet Yorubas' needs in either traditional, faith exercising, or an emotional type of worship. A typical example of these are the Aladura, or Dr.

William Kumuyis of the Deeper Life Ministry Church. This church, which was started among Lagos University students around 1973, is reported to have a membership of about 100,000¹ at the present time.

Enough evidence suggests that Yorubas are receptive to the idea of Christianity, and when approached in the right way give up their traditional religions and become Christians. The question that begs for an answer is why the SDA church has not been as successful as they could have been among the Yorubas.

The project, therefore, is an attempt to make the Everlasting Gospel and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, as they are understood and taught by the SDA church, more appealing to the Yorubas.

This project was born out of my personal conviction that evangelism requires broad participation of all members of the believing church community.² But a glance at the evangelistic activities in Adventist churches in Yorubaland shows that evangelism is deemed to be the responsibility of only one person. The pastor or the evangelist becomes "pastor do-it-all," while the church members remain spectators. It is my understanding that evangelism will not fail where there is adequate leadership

¹The editorial, "Palaver," New Africa (September 1987), 23.

²v. W. Schoen, God's Need (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Pub. Assn., 1976), 2.

involvement and where the involvement includes the members of the church. The gospel impels every Christian to get involved in the spreading of the message of salvation through Jesus Christ to every corner of the world.¹ There is a sense in which all believers are soul winners. Jesus called all his followers to be "fishers of men."² To this end, therefore, the entire church, and not the pastor alone, has been given the commission of taking the message to every kindred and nation of the world, including the Yorubas of the Western states of Nigeria. In the words of Robert E. Coleman: "Whether we have a 'secular' job or an ecclesiastical position, a Christ-like commitment to bring the nations into the eternal kingdom should be a part of it."³ This, in essence, is what the Adventist message stands for.

Another area that has been a burden to me is the matter of how to communicate the message to the Yorubas. Evangelism is the communication of the Gospel, and communication is personal. This project sets out to engage itself in Gospel communication which is personal and people-oriented. Evangelistic strategy is dependent upon proper

¹Matt 24:14; Acts 1:8; Luke 24:47-48.

²Mark 1:17; Matt 28:19, NIV.

³Robert E. Coleman, The Master Plan of Discipleship (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1987), 12.

understanding of individual, social, and cultural context.¹ Communication takes place best in an atmosphere of need satisfaction of the communicant.² Is there a likelihood that there are needs that Adventists can meet among the Yorubas? Where there is an attempt by the church to meet these needs, how effective and efficient have the various branches of the church been in providing this satisfaction of felt needs to the Yoruba people?

Finally, the project claims further justification on the grounds that no previous research has been conducted by Seventh-day Adventist scholars which specifically studies the way to reach the Yorubas.

Description of the Project

This is a "project two"³ paper. It has two parts: the first section is devoted to the distinctive culture of the Yorubas, including their world-view, beliefs, and practices. Also included in this section is a study of the

¹Roger E. Hedlund, ed., World Christianity South Asia, vol. 3 (Pasadena, CA: World Vision International, 1980), 13.

²David M. Robinson, Communication (Columbus, OH: C. E. Merrill Books, 1964), 3.

³Doctor of Ministry Project falls into a category described in the Andrews University Theological Seminary Bulletin as "Project II" in fulfillment of requirements for an alternate curriculum plan under which the candidate prepares two related papers, a theological position that addresses some issue or problem that exists in the church, and a professional paper that addresses the problem from the standpoint of ministerial practice.

theology of evangelism from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. The important principles obtained from the Bible and the works of E. G. White were compared with the evangelistic methods used by Adventists among the Yorubas. Areas of agreement were identified as a prelude to overcoming areas of conflict.

The second section practicalized the principles identified above as being applicable to running a crusade among the Yorubas. These are principles that are proven to attract, enrich, and convert Yorubas to Jesus Christ, and also help to retain them in the community of the Lord (his church).

Limitation of the Project

This study is limited to principal tribes and clans within the Yorubas. These tribes and clans include the Oyo, Egba, Ijebu, Ondo, Ekiti, Ijesha, Ife, Oshun, Igbomina, Efon, and Ilaje.

Since some of the information in this research has not been empirically examined, such theories will be tested in the future.

Definition of Terms Used

Adventism. A term used for the Seventh-day Adventist church in Nigeria, unless otherwise used to refer to the Seventh-day Adventist Church at large, when the term

"Seventh-day Adventist Church" is qualified by the geographical location intended.

SDA. An abbreviation for Seventh-day Adventist.

Overall View of the Study

The project is divided into five chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion, arranged in the following sequence:

Chapter 1 surveys Yoruba society, culture, religion, world view, and their practices.

Chapter 2 presents the theology of evangelism and the principles of it as it is outlined in the Gospels by Jesus Christ and his disciples. Also included is the SDA theology of evangelism as viewed in the Ellen G. White writings in bringing sinners to redemptive knowledge of God and relationship with Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3 presents the Yoruba response to Christianity, hindrances faced by missionaries in the nineteenth century, and that faced by SDAs when they came among the Yorubas. Factors that will produce church growth among the Yorubas today are considered.

Chapter 4 gives a Seventh-day Adventist's response to Yorubas--presenting the doctrine of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit as an example of making the SDA message simple for Yorubas today.

Chapter 5 considers the training of ministers and laity for public evangelism among the Yorubas. A

mobilization of ministers, training them to be able to train others in personal and public evangelism is delineated. An outline for the study is provided.

Recommendations present some suggestions that could appropriately be put into practice if progress is made as desired.

The conclusion, the last part, is followed by the appendices and bibliography.

CHAPTER I

SURVEY OF THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE YORUBA PEOPLE

Yorubas occupy the territory between the Lagos lagoon on the south and the Niger on the north, and between Dahomey (now called Benin) to the west and Benin to the east; they are the predominant race in the western region of Nigeria (now divided into five states). Some of them live in the southwest of the northern regions (now two states).¹ Their land is good for agriculture, being watered annually by adequate rainfall. Samuel Johnson commented that "towards the northeast there are mountains. Inhabitants of this area derive their name from this feature,² Ekiti."³ Yorubas have traditionally been identified with agriculture. They have annual food crops such as yams, potatoes, rice, maize (corn), millet, and red pepper. Cocoa, rubber, and coffee, the major export crops of Nigeria, are mainly grown in this area.

¹Sir Alan Burns, History of Nigeria (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), 28.

²Samuel Johnson, The History of the Yorubas (London: Routledge: Kegan & Paul, 1969), xix.

³Ibid.

Yorubas are regarded as one of the ancient traditional people of tropical Africa. Estimates of their population vary according to the reference one consults. In 1984 King put the number at "perhaps fifteen million."¹ The Yorubas are of profound importance in matters of world civilization. According to King,

People of their culture coming originally as involuntary immigrants have remained to influence Brazil (where they are known as 'Nago'), Cuba ('Lucumi'), and in Sierra-Leone ('Aku'), not to mention Jamaica, the United States, North Africa, and the Islamic world, where many were also carried in slavery. Certainly no other African group has contributed so much to the culture of the Americas.²

Some Yoruba descendants still practice at least some aspects of their tradition in the above-named countries; e.g., "there are residents of New York City who still perform rituals in honor of the Yoruba divinity Sango."³

Yoruba Society and Culture

There are several ethnic groups in Yorubaland, but all of them speak a common language and subscribe to the same world view. They have four major things in common: (1) language, (2) religious practice--the worship of God (Olorun) through a plurality of "lesser gods" (Orisas), (3) a form of hereditary kingship rule based on their

¹King, African Cosmos, 6.

²Ibid.

³E. Thomas Lawson, Religions of Africa (San Francisco: Harper & Row Pub., 1984), 51.

founding city Ile-Ife, and (4) an urban way of life.¹ These four factors distinguish the Yorubas from other ethnic groups and tribes of Nigeria.

The four attributes that unify the Yorubas need to be further analyzed, beginning with their language. Each ethnic group in Yorubaland retains its dialect, which tends to be unique to that particular group; however, there is a general language that all Yorubas speak. All Yorubas understand, for example, the greeting system of the general language, irrespective of one's background. Yorubas greet each other with the words Ekú aroo, good morning; Ekú asan, good afternoon; Ekú ale, good evening.² The common features of their language indicate cultural, historical, and religious affinity, each of which we will touch briefly later.

Some of the principal ethnic tribes into which the early kingdom was divided were the Egbas--their principal town being Abeokuta--Ijebu, Ondo, Ibadan, Igbomina, Ekiti.³ All these have distinct dialect groups, but they all trace their origin to the same ancestor at Ile-Ife.

Yorubas believe in the Supreme God, called Olorun, Owner of the Sky. They have attributes for God, such as

¹Modupe Oduyoye, The Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland (Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1969), 7.

²Ibid., 8.

³Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, xx.

Eleda--Creator, Olodumare--Almighty, Alaye--Owner of life.¹ They worship this Olorun through lesser gods called Orisas. Among Yorubas, Olorun has no equal. Even the worship of their ancestors, which is so important to them, is second to the homage they pay to the God of the Sky.² No temples are built for him, neither do they have a priest for him.

Historically, it has been proved that hereditary kingship rule started with Oduduwa, who led his followers to Ile-Ife. He had seven sons, who later became the ancestors of the kings of the six main Yoruba states. All the kings in Yorubaland who trace their origin to these children of Oduduwa are respected and regarded as gods.

Urban Way of Life

According to Robinson,

Yorubas are probably the most urban of all African peoples. Almost one third live in the fifteen Yoruba big towns with populations of over 20,000 inhabitants, while there are some 250 Yoruba towns and villages with each having populations greater than 1,000.³

Johnson said that

The country was at one time very prosperous, and powerful, but there is probably no other country on this earth more torn and wasted by internal dissensions, tribal jealousies, and fratricidal feuds, a state of

¹Geoffrey Parrinder, West Africa Religion (London: Epworth Press, 1949), 25-26.

²C. P. Groves, The Planting of Christianity in Africa, 4 vols. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1964), 1:53.

³John B. Grimley and Gordon E. Robinson, Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1966), 256.

things which unhappily continues, up to the present time.¹

For centuries the Yoruba have lived together in towns. The urban atmosphere offers the Yoruba peoples their best opportunities to indulge their favorite activities: bargaining, marketing every five days, political disputations, and reading.² In each town or village there is an urban center. Each of these centers has an Oba, king or chief, as the apex of supreme authority which is both political and religious in nature. Each of the cities, towns, or villages provides the focus for one of the various social groups in Yorubaland; nevertheless, the city of Ile-Ife was and still is regarded by them as the center of culture and religion. Each of the urban centers traces its own origin to Ile-Ife. New kings receive confirmation of their status from the paramount King of Ile-Ife. Steel said

their urban way of life was well planned. Throughout West Africa, it was only the Yoruba who had an indigenous urban way of life. Towns like Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ile-Ife, Ogbomosho, Iwo, Oshogbo, Ondo, Oyo, were well developed before the white man came.³

Within each community, Yoruba people have "age-sets" (in which the people in each town or village are organized in age groupings for communal work and play), but it is not widespread in all Yorubaland.

¹S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, xxi.

²John Hatch, Nigeria, The Seeds of Disaster (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1970), 8.

³R. W. Steel, Essays on Africa Population (London: Bonwal Press, 1961), 253.

Volunteer associations are much more common.¹

One can belong to one of the several societies organized for recreation consisting of about fifty persons of the same sex and about the same age. "The societies are usually formed during childhood, and continue until the members have died."² Members of the age group meet for social purposes, usually dress alike, and enjoy rather ostentatious fun. The members of societies or age groups have a distinct relationship with their co-members, which affords further opportunities for spreading any religion or ideology within each urban center.

Concerning family ties, King said that the Yorubas trace their clan and family structure through their male ancestors.³ They also deem important an individual's female ancestors, so far as they can be remembered. They believe in an extended family system. This is one of the links of their urban way of life.

Their Origin

As many recent books and articles written by scholars concerning the origin of these people recently, scholars pointed out, Yorubas have no written history. Johnson said

¹John B. Grimley and Gordon E. Robinson, Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1966), 256.

²Ibid., 257.

³King, African Cosmos, 7.

that their origin is involved in obscurity;¹ but all that one is able to get are traditions carefully handed down from generation to generation. According to Johnson, history is passed on to succeeding generations by state drummers who perform the role of national historians.² These drummers are generally retained by the King of Oyo, and their office has historically been hereditary.³

The next section of this paper studies the role of Yoruba kings in the community.

The Yoruba Kings (Oba)

Yorubas in Western Nigeria believe in the concept of hereditary kingship.⁴ Yoruba kings were often kept from public view. For example, the king was to be seen publicly only a few times in a year.

Although much has been written on the religion of the Yorubas, the constitutional relationship between the king, his chiefs, and the community as a whole has not been fully discussed.

Many changes have taken place in the rituals of kings

¹Samuel Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, 3.

²Ibid.

³I was raised in the palace at Otun Ekiti and, for the first fourteen years of my life, I daily listened to the drummers tell the history of my people, of every king that reigned in Otun-Ekiti, and of their accomplishments. Therefore I can do no more than relate the traditions which have been universally accepted.

⁴Samuel Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, xx.

during the last two centuries. The intertribal wars, the coming of Islam in the nineteenth century, the colonial administrators of the twentieth century, and Christianity have reduced the power of the kings. Some Yoruba kings like the Alafin of Oyo, Ooni of Ile-Ife, Awujale of Ijebu-Ode, and Olubadan of Ibadan, are still very powerful and highly autocratic.

The Yorubas attach great importance to their kings, and one can begin to understand the complexities and sophistication of the Yoruba culture by attempting to understand their kings. The point being made here is that as complex as the Yorubas are, they tend to take a cue from their kings, especially when dealing with less known ideas. The chances of the Yorubas listening to new ideas is greater if they know that those ideas have the support of the king. This contention is borne out by the pioneering activities of Adventism in Yorubaland. In Ekiti and Erunmu, where the early Adventist pioneers had the endorsement of the reigning kings and chiefs, the church prospered. In other Yoruba enclaves where the church did not have that support, the work fared rather badly.

Three Important Stages in Yoruba Life

Yorubas are generally noted throughout West Africa for their merry spirit. This gay temperament is particularly evident in the festivities that mark a birth,

marriage, or funeral. Yorubas are uncompromising in their belief that merry-making is the best and only appropriate response to these stages in a man's life, but they use these occasions to celebrate corporately. Families and clans and the entire community get together on such occasions and emphasize the importance of community and togetherness. It is of utmost importance, therefore, that those spreading any new religion in Yorubaland should at least recognize the place such ceremonies have in Yoruba culture.

We now discuss these three stages in the life of the Yoruba in more detail.

The Marriage Ceremony

Yorubas believe very much in the institution of marriage. It is generally assumed that male and female Yorubas should get married as soon as they reach maturation. Marriage ceremonies are conducted in four major ways today in Yorubaland. The marriage laws and customs have undergone changes brought about by interaction with western culture, but there are some features that are still uniform.

First, we have the traditional law. In this, parents give their daughters to a particular person when they are very young. This may be due to close relationship between the chosen man and the father of the little girl. This arrangement of marriage has been largely abandoned by the present generation, but in many areas of Yorubaland the practice is still honored.

The process of contracting a marriage according to traditional law is simple. The parents of the man go to seek for the hand of the girl from her parents. They call this introduction. Before engagement, parents on both sides investigate and satisfy themselves that the family of the other side is free from the taint of any hereditary disease --e.g., insanity, epilepsy, leprosy, etc. After a period of three to six months, there is an engagement when special gifts are presented by the parents of the man to the parents of the girl. All the clan members of both parties are involved. Articles like yam, money, dresses, shoes, gold, beer, drinks of all kinds, honey, alligator pepper, orogbo (bitter nuts) palm oil, sugar cane, and other household items are presented to the girl's clan. The parents of the man follow this up by paying a specified amount to the girl's clan's people. This serves as the dowry. They use these gifts to bless the marriage. Afterward the elders of the two families set a date for the marriage ceremony which lasts for seven days full of feasting and dancing.

The specific day for the wedding varies from area to area, but in Ekiti in Ondo State, one rule is never violated--it has to be in the night. The bride is accompanied by women from her clan or family, singing and dancing, followed closely by the girl's age mates, as they make their way to the house of the husband-to-be. At the entrance of the house, the bride's legs are washed, and she

is handed over to the oldest woman in her husband's house who blesses their marriage as well as the marriages of all those present. They continue to make merry until the third day when the bride goes and sleeps with her husband. If the bride is not a virgin it is viewed as a disgrace for her and her family. If she is a virgin she is treated with love and tenderness and exempted from any hard work for three months. If she is not a virgin, she is immediately set to work in the house.

The second form of marriage in Yorubaland is the Western church wedding. Those who opt for this system still do the introduction and the engagement, but the marriage ceremony is preferred in the church. According to Nigerian canon law, such church marriages are considered legal marriages. This also involves much expense. Everybody must be well fed. There is drinking for two days, and in some cases, even seven days.

The third form of marriage in Yorubaland is court marriage which is performed by a judge or court clerk who blesses the marriage after asking the couple to make an oath to each other pledging to be faithful. This is a short ceremony. The couple are given marriage certificates which legally bind them to each other as long as they live and remain married to each other. (Most people opt for this form of marriage when the woman is pregnant, when the parents do not consent to the relationship, or when they are

afraid that their partner may seek a divorce in the future.

The last form of Yoruba marriage is the Muslim ceremony. The Muslims still give their daughter to anyone they like without the girl's consent. They call this saraa --gift. The rest of the ceremony is traditional. The yigi is patterned after the Islamic practices of the eastern countries. The women are either eleha--completely covered up so nobody sees their face--or their face is left bare.

In present day Yorubaland, it does not really matter what form of marriage one uses, what is important is that the ceremony is conducted successfully. In this sense, only one important criterion for success exists--the merrier the better. One thing is certain, Yorubas expect one to have a decent marriage ceremony.

Polygamy is accepted and has played an important role in Yoruba marriages. Up until the middle of the twentieth century, it was generally accepted that the more wives one had, the more important one was in the community. According to Johnson, some peculiarities mark the Yoruba's wedded life.

1. Women are never really married twice; they may be inherited as widows, or taken for a wife outside the late husband's family.

2. Largely because of the bride wealth paid to the woman's clan at the time of her marriage, married women are attached forever to the house and family of their deceased

husbands; hence, they can choose another husband from the same family.

3. No woman is without a husband, except in extreme old age; she must have a male protector who is responsible for her.

4. Divorce is very rare, so rare as to be considered practically non-existent. It is by no means easily obtained, especially when there are children born to the union. In the event that a woman is divorced, no other man can take her up legally.¹ But in recent times, especially among the educated, divorce among the Yorubas is on the increase.²

The Birth Ceremony

Yorubas organize a big ceremony when a new child is born. Marriage among Yorubas is for procreation. If there is no child after a year of marriage, usually the elders of both families step in and think of what to do.

Yorubas traditionally respect and care for the pregnant woman. The society had a special group known as the Babalawos whose special responsibility was to take care of pregnant women until the baby arrived. The Babalawo knew the type of medicine to be given to the woman. If there was any problem, the husband sent his wife to the Babalawo.

¹In my last district, where I ministered to 5,000 church members, there was not one divorce case.

²Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, p. 116.

A newborn baby is not called by any name until his/her naming ceremony day. Before the coming of colonial era, a baby boy was named on the ninth day, while the girl was named on the seventh day. Twins were named on the eighth day.

A naming ceremony is a unique occasion when family members from both sides of the family meet and socialize. A Yoruba name always has a meaning. There is always a reason for the choice of name. A child could be named for festivals--for example Abiodun, Odunayo, Ojuolape, Olaleye; for the gods the family worship--Sangodun or Sangodijo (named after the god of thunder, Sango). Grandchildren are commonly named in remembrance of dead grandparents. A grandson is named Babatunde, father has come back, or Babajide, father is resurrected. A granddaughter may be named Iyabo or Yetunde.

Yorubas enjoy merry-making and they use the naming ceremonies to show off their wealth. They spend lavishly to make such occasions as memorable as possible. It is not uncommon for poor people to borrow thousands of naira¹ to put on a lavish show. Friends and relations of the parents engage the services of professional musicians who compose appropriate songs in praise of the parents of the newborn baby. The celebration often goes on for days. In contemporary times, it has become fashionable to hold the

¹Naira--name of Nigerian money.

celebration on weekends.

The Funeral Ceremony

A fundamental component of Yoruba religion is the worship of ancestor spirits. This form of worship is evident during funeral ceremonies. As Ray aptly put it, Yoruba eschatology involves a threefold process-- separation, transformation, and incorporation.¹ The living take great pains to ensure that the disembodied spirit of the dead enjoys the blessedness of his new state, and the way to ensure this is the performance of the elaborate rituals laid down by the elders for the funeral obsequies.

Much importance is placed upon the funeral. It is a social stigma if one fails to perform the funeral ceremony of his dead parents.

There are three major types of funeral ceremonies in Yorubaland--traditional, Christian, and Muslim. Each of these methods of burying the dead has some things in common. (1) In the rural areas, the dead are buried in their homes. It is only in the big cities that public cemeteries are used for burying the dead. (2) A general belief is that the dead still live and can communicate with the living if they choose to. (3) All Yorubas believe that the dead go to Ile-Ife to stay for a while before they go on to the heavens.

¹Benjamin C. Ray, African Religious Symbol, Ritual, and Community, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 143.

(4) They believe that the dead can reincarnate into their family again if their funeral ceremony is well performed.

As soon as an old person dies, the family members are summoned to the family home/compound. The death of such an elder involves feasting, dancing, and very little mourning. Olumide captures this essence in the following words:

In the case of the death of an aged person who is survived by one or more children, joy rather than sorrow characterizes the ceremonies. Death in such a case does not wear a sombre hue. As a matter of fact, death does not evoke the same degree of sorrowful feelings as it does among the highly civilized peoples. It is regarded merely as a process of transition.¹

A "fare-fowl"² is sacrificed for the journey of the deceased to the heavens. Today such animals as goats, lambs, and cows and sometimes even dogs are substituted. The bereaved provide food for all the sympathizers who attend.

The burial ceremony, called "Entry into a covenant with the deceased," both separates the soul of the deceased from the family and gives expression to the family's desire for its continued interest and protection.³ The Yoruba believe that a man's deeds in this world determine his fate in the next, as to whether he will go to hell or heaven to

¹J. Olumide Lucas, The Religion of the Yorubas (Lagos, Nigeria: A. Brown & Sons, 1948), 224.

²A "fare-fowl" is a chicken held throughout the funeral period. It represents the departed soul being whisked to hell and it is offered to propitiate evil spirits. When the coffin is being lowered into the grave, it is sacrificed and the blood poured on the coffin.

³Ray, 143.

join the rest of the ancestors. They also believe that unless the proper rites and ceremonies are performed, the spirit will not be able to join the family spirits, but will be compelled to wander about without rest.

The reason the funeral obsequies are characterized by joyful celebration marked with feasting and merriment is that Yorubas believe that the spirit of the deceased has gone to join the great family of ancestral spirits.¹

However, it is a little misleading to suggest that there is a total lack of sorrow when the death of a popular person or a chief occurs; the friends and relatives who assemble by the bed of the dead one usually raise loud mournful shouts and lamentations. Olumide Lucas further described the scene by saying that some of them assist in turning the corpse to a prone position. Once the body is in this position, they rush into the streets to make a public announcement through cries and singing about what has just happened.²

At Ondo and Ekiti, if the deceased is survived by sons, the eldest is carried shoulder high by his companions who join in the parade waving horsetail or tree branches in a procession of singing and dancing round the town.³

In other parts of Yorubaland, the parade is not so

¹Lucas, 224.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

spectacular. Gun shots are heard, talking drums are beaten, but the funeral cry is very uniform. The mourners usually cry aloud, saying:

Baba wa lo, awa kori! O di gbere, O di arinnako ipade tun doju ala. Maje okun, maje ekolo, ohun ti won ba nje lorun ni ki o ba won je o.

Which being translated means: Our father has gone! We will no longer see him. Goodbye. He has become a disembodied spirit to be met at by-paths or in dreams. Do not eat millipede, nor eat earthworms. Whatsoever they eat in heaven, so eat likewise.

After three hours, the relatives sent to Babalawo who consults the oracle as to whether the death is due to a natural causes or to witchcraft. If the latter is the case, the oracle is asked to point out the culprit. If the oracle declares the spirit of the deceased to be in danger, the Babalawo performs two important ceremonies, one on the corpse and the other in the room where the body is kept. He sprinkles the corpse and the spectators with a concoction made of snails and several kinds of leaves. This done, he proceeds to exorcise the spirit of the deceased from the house, bidding it go to its destination in peace.¹

The corpse, thereafter, is washed by relatives. It is common to keep the body for two or three days before burial. Clothes of all kinds are placed in the grave for the deceased to use in the next world. A goat is sacrificed

¹Lucas, 225.

as soon as the corpse is laid in the grave. The grave is dug usually by male members of the clan or in-laws. The blood of the animal is slowly drained on the corpse. The children of the deceased, one by one, sprinkle small grains of sand on the body as they tearfully wish the deceased a safe journey to the land of the dead.

After this an egungun¹ dancer appears before the assembled members of the family and tells them what has happened in the household since the deceased departed. The egungun impersonates the deceased and embraces his relatives, especially his children. This is the last farewell between the deceased and his family except when he appears annually in the form of the egungun during the egungun festival.

When the ancestor soul of the deceased reaches heaven, it is believed that it goes before Olorun and Obatala and receives judgment. If the person's life has been good, the spirit goes to the good heaven where there is no sorrow or suffering. Here it may choose another destiny and return to earth again as a child. If the deceased has led a bad life, the spirit goes to the bad heaven of broken

¹Egungun is an individual who dresses up to typify the dead. In the image of egungun, the Yoruba celebrate the triumph of the human spirit over Death. The annual egungun is a time of rejoicing and renewal of old ties with the ancestors who are now back physically, though incognito, among the living, blessing the sick and the barren. The egungun sometimes serve as judges to settle disputes in the family or community.

potsherds, where everything is unpleasantly hot and dry, and where it will remain forever.¹

Needless to say, funeral expenses, like expenses during a birth ceremony in Yorubaland, are very great. Besides the great cost of providing ample food and intoxicating drinks, there is the amount that must be paid the various social, religious, and political guilds to which the deceased is attached. All this is done due to the belief that, unless the funeral obsequies are duly performed, the spirit of the deceased cannot obtain rest and peace.

The Religious System of the Yoruba People

We now turn our attention to the religious thought and practice of the Yoruba people. The diversity of Yoruba thought and practice is so great scholars like Lawson recommend studying its art instead.² He cautions that "one must not be intimidated by the complexity because Yoruba scholars³ have themselves already demonstrated elements of

¹Peter M. Martin-Williams, "The Egungun Society in South-Western Yoruba Kingdoms," in Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference of the West African Institute of Social and Economic Research 3 (Ibadan: University College, 1956), 15.

²Lawson, Religions of Africa, 53.

³Among the noted Yoruba scholars who have demonstrated the unity of the religious world view of the Yorubas are A. I. Asiwaju, F. A. Ajayi, Wande Abimbola, J. Olumide-Lucas, Samuel Johnson, S. O. Biobaku, Bolaji Idowu, Harry Sawyerr, and J. Omisade Awolalu.

unity in the religious world view that underlines the thought and practice of the Yoruba."¹

In Ile-Ife and Otun Ekiti, hardly a day goes by without some animal sacrifice being made to one god or another. The question is why do Yorubas engage in these many animal sacrifices? The answer is simple: to please the gods and ensure that there is a good relationship between man and the supernatural. John and Rena Karefa Smart's general remarks about this is particularly suitable to the Yoruba situation. They write:

Africans were--and still are used to constantly seeking to be on good terms with the super-natural or superhuman powers (gods) who inhabit the forest, the caves, the rivers, or the mountains, who control the crops and who determine success or failure in hunting. The important thing in African religion is that every act of daily life has religious significance because through it one may either maintain good relations with the gods or offend them with possible disastrous results.²

Yorubas, therefore, constantly make sacrifices to the gods to appease them. As Thomas Lawson contends:

Any infractions of the rules of Yoruba life on the part of a family member will be brought to the attention of the leader of the family; it is his obligation to mete out appropriate punishment and to perform the correct rites to the ancestors who have been offended by such infractions.³

It is generally recognized by the Yorubas that there

¹Lawson, 53.

²John Rena and Karefa Smart, The Halting Kingdom (New York: Friendship Press, 1959), 9.

³Lawson, 55.

is a hierarchy of deities. Olumide Lucas' outline¹ below is believed to be the correct order in terms of the powers attributed to the deities in Yorubaland. The list is in a descending order of importance:

1. Olorun--The Supreme Deity.
2. The Major Orisas--their numbers may be between 201-1,700.
3. The deified spirits of ancestors and other spirits, of whom Oro, Agemo, and Egungun are the most important.
4. The Minor Orisas. The gradations of status existing between these deities and the major Orisas vary among the Yoruba ethnic groups, especially as the worship of the minor deities is not general in Yorubaland.

Olorun--The Supreme Deity

Olorun is the Yoruba supreme deity who has played a pivotal role in Yoruba religious thought from the beginning of Yoruba history. "He" does represent the most basic level of religious power to Yorubas throughout Yorubaland.

The Yoruba word Olorun literally means owner of the sky or heaven and refers to the high god who lives in the heavens.² About his nature and origin, no one among the Yoruba can conceive. He is above all deities, excelling them in power, honor, and majesty. A Being of unique

¹Lucas, 33.

²Lawson, 57.

character, possessing attributes far too noble and refined to have originated from the thought of an ordinary people. All other powers such as the orisa, the ancestors, and, in fact, all forms of life, owe their form and being to him. But he has delegated many of his powers to the other divinities.¹

Olorun has many other attributes.² He is Eleda. Eleda is a word derived from da to create, from which one gets eda, creation, and then the combination of the word means maker or owner of creation. This term signifies that he is the maker and preserver of the created universe. He is also Alaye, a word derived from ye, meaning to live, and aya meaning life or a living thing. This word denotes owner of life.

Olodumare. Although scholars³ have differed in their interpretations of the word, Bolaji Idowu's translation to mean Omnipotent or Almighty is generally accepted as the most accurate. This is a title given to God by Yorubas today.⁴

Often Olorun is referred to as Baba meaning big

¹Lawson, 58.

²Lucas, 34. Lucas is excellent in his treatment of these attributes.

³Steven S. Farrow, Faith, Fancies and Fetich or Yoruba Paganism (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1926), 27, for example insist that the better interpretations should be "the self existing One."

⁴Idowu, 32.

father. They call on him when in a desperate need. Baba gbawa means "please save us father." Yorubas aspire to have a close relationship with Olorun as is evident by the latter term. Olorun's existence is never questioned by Yorubas. He is the Creator of the world and man. He is the oldest imaginable being. Sawyer says of him, "Like a grandfather, then, He must be the one person who feels a concern for His children. . . . He is therefore a God of justice and mercy, who affords protection to all His children . . . One we meet when nobody else is present."¹

Yorubas tend to speak of Olorun in proverbial and metaphorical terms. They have many proverbs that show the supremacy and excellence of Olorun. A few of the commonly used proverbs illustrating the Yoruba people's understanding of Olorun are as follows:

1. Igi t'Olorun gbin ko seni tole fatu--A tree planted by God cannot be uprooted. This is used to show the power of God; that he is immovable.

2. Asoro se bi ohun t'Olorun ko l'owo si--Any problem that God approves is easily solved. Yorubas use this proverb when faced with difficult situations.

3. Ode t'o nso Olorun, Ori egun ni yio Kusi--a hunter who lies in wait for God will die still waiting. This implies that he is self-existing and omnipresent. No one can see him. Prayers are offered to Olorun but no

¹Sawyer, 8.

shrines are erected in his honor, nor rituals or sacrifices directed toward him. Yorubas conceive of Olorun in such an exalted way that they do not attempt to familiarize themselves with him. But their reverence for him is pervasive. Olorun is constantly mentioned in everyday Yoruba conversation.

To a Yoruba, Olorun is very far from man, yet as Harry Sawyer contends, "Just as one can invoke the ancestral spirits . . . so one may invoke his presence sometimes directly and at other times indirectly."¹ Today his aid is invoked only on rare and special occasions, yet it is believed he can take active interest in the affairs of men when necessary.

The relationship between Yorubas and Olorun is not based on love or even fear. It is, therefore, very difficult for Yorubas to grasp the Christian notion that "God [Olorun] so loved the world that he gave his only son" to die for mankind. The conceptual difficulty arises because Olorun is invincible and cannot die. As has been stated earlier, Olorun has no temples and no "sacrifices" are offered to him, so why would Olorun in effect sacrifice his son?

Having no organized worship for Olorun led Yorubas to the worship of multitudinous gods. The usurpation of the palace of Olorun by the intermediary deities has led to a

¹Sawyer, 9.

loss of the knowledge of His worship among the Yorubas. We now turn our attention to a discussion of some of these lesser gods.

The Major Deities
(The Orisas)

Thomas Lawson's contention that the Yoruba people divide the cosmos into two parts, heaven and earth (Orun and Aiye),¹ is very right. As I have stated earlier, Orun is heaven or sky, and is the abode of the High God called Olorun or Olodumare. But heaven is also the abode of some other lesser gods known as orisas and the spirits of the ancestors and of the orisas. The earth, "Aiye," is the world of human habitation. It is the place where people and animals and the children of the world known as omo'raiye live. The omo'raiye are responsible for sorcery and witchcraft. In Yoruba cosmology, therefore, both heaven and earth are inhabited by major sources of power.

Because Olorun cannot be directly approached, the only access to his favor is through the orisas. The orisas, therefore, are a very powerful focal point in the religious practices of the Yoruba people. The orisas are regarded by the ritual practitioners as a source of religious power that can act for the good or ill of those who come under their influence. King commented on the role of the orisas:

The orisa, then, are the emanations of God's powers, his

¹Lawson, Religions of Africa, 57.

functioning uncertain aspects of his activity as understood by humans. Some are the personification of God's power in nature, the earth, the rivers, the lagoons, the seas. Some are beings who lived as human long ago, their divinity recognized later by their descendants.¹

Orisas come then in two distinct categories: those that are recognized and worshipped by all Yorubas, e.g., Sango, the god of thunder, and those that have a local base and are recognized and worshipped only in the particular Yoruba town or village that they originate.² There are varying claims to the number of Orisas in Yorubaland. Farrow mentions 400³ while King claims it is 1,700.⁴ Some of the more popular Orisas in Yorubaland are introduced below.

Orisa-Nla (Obatala)

Orias-nla, sometimes called Obatala, is regarded by Yorubas to have put finishing touches to man after Olorun had created him (man) in the rough.⁵ Orisa-nla holds a very special place in the heart of Yoruba intellectuals since he is considered to be the dispenser of brains. Orisa-nla's favorite color is white. He lives in a white palace and wears white clothes, so all his followers wear white dress.

¹King, 9-10.

²Lawson, 58-59.

³Farrow, 34.

⁴King, 10.

⁵Lawson, 59. See also Ray, 43.

He is worshipped the fifth day of every week.¹

Oduduwa

The status of Oduduwa is not nearly as clear as that of Orisa-nla. Different versions concern his identify. Some say this is the wife of Orisa-Nla. But the most prevailing thought is that at one time Oduduwa was a human being who was transformed into an ancestral spirit and was given the status of an Orisa after his death. Oduduwa is very popular with all Yorubas because he is regarded as the original father of the Yorubas.² Yorubas often call themselves "Omo-oduduwa," meaning children of Oduduwa.

Orunmila

Orunmila is universally worshipped in Yorubaland. His cult is everywhere. He is regarded as one of the oracles of divinity. "He is endowed by Olorun with special wisdom and foreknowledge and is the accredited representative on earth in matters relating to man's destiny."³ Idowu adds that in Yoruba myth, Orunmila "knows every secret of man because he was there when man was created; therefore he can predict what is coming to pass or

¹Adelowo, Ibid., 33.

²E. Dada Adelowo, "A Comparative Study of Creation Stories in Yoruba Religion, Islam and Judaeo-Christianity," African Theological Journal 15 (1986): 33.

³Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1962), 77.

prescribe remedies against an eventuality.¹

Ifa

Ifa is the greatest oracle of all the Yorubas and is connected with Orunmila. He is consulted on all important occasions. He decides what each person will be in the world and tells the present and the future.²

Ogun

Another major orisa among the Yorubas is Ogun. He is universally accepted among Yorubas as "god of iron." Since cutlasses are used to clear the forest before cultivation, Ogun is accredited with pioneering divination. He prepared the road for the pioneers, the divinities.³ All his worshippers are named after him, e.g., Ogunbiyi, Ogundare, Ogungbemi, Ogundele, Ogunlana, etc. It is a general belief that worshipping him will open up the way of material and spiritual prosperity.

Esu

The role of Esu in Yoruba traditional understanding is very precarious. He is considered as mediator between man, on the one hand, and Olorun, the Orisas, as well as

¹Ibid.

²Wande Abimbola is very knowledgeable in this area, but we cannot go into the detail here. One can check Wande Abimbola, ed., Ifa Divination Poetry (New York: Nok Pub., 1977).

³Idowu, Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief, 86.

other deified ancestors, on the other. He is worshipped throughout Yorubaland, but he has no special shrines.

Esu is a trickster, and is sometimes even mischievous but not totally evil. For example, Yorubas believe that

Esu has within himself good and evil, reverence and irreverence. It is because he embodies the two opposite qualities that he is able to mediate between heaven and earth. It is his contrary qualities that make it possible for him to assume the key role of mediator between the many levels of power conceived of in Yoruba thought, particularly between the world of divine and human power.¹

The Yoruba Bible translation of the word Satan, especially in the NT is Esu, a translation that Bolaji-Idowu rejects. Idowu contends that the early missionaries who translated the Yoruba Bible lacked an understanding of the special relationship between Yoruba worshippers and Esu. He says Esu should be seen not as the NT depicts Satan who uses his own powers to thwart the plan of God in the salvation of man. Esu should rather be likened to the character of the inquiring personality portrayed in the devil as he tries to prove the sincerity of God in the story of Job.²

Because the Yorubas have appreciation for the role Esu plays in their day-to-day life as a mediator between them and the gods, they find it difficult to accept the Biblical association of Esu with Satan who is all negative and totally evil.

¹Lawson, 61.

²Idowu, Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief, 80.

The Ancestors

Among the Yorubas, ancestor worship is very important. Even though many Yorubas have been converted into Islam and Christianity, they still go back to consult their ancestors when in difficulties. Each family has a special shrine where they consult or commune with the ancestors. Thomas Lawson demonstrates an understanding of the role of the ancestors among Yorubas: "In Yoruba religion, the ancestors are religious power capable of acting for the good or ill of their descendants. Therefore, the ancestors are treated with great respect and devotion."¹ There are two classes of ancestors among Yorubas--the deified and the family ancestors. The difference between the two is that family ancestors are venerated exclusively within the context of the descendant group; while deified ancestors are venerated by the whole Yoruba clan who carve out images and put them in a shrine at particular locations in their towns and villages where sacrifices are made on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis.²

¹Lawson, 62.

²My experience as a minister among the Yorubas proves that ancestor worship is held sacred. In 1965 at a church board meeting in Ikun-Ekiti where I was to examine baptismal candidates, a certain elderly man who was converted and ready to be examined was told to read the "Lord's Prayer." The translation given to Lord's Prayer in Yoruba Bible is Baba wa ti mbe Li'orun meaning "Our Father who art in heaven." "Ka" in the Yoruba language means read or count depending upon the context of the sentence. The old man thought he was to number the ancestors and he

The Deified Ancestors

"Deified" ancestors are people who are held in awe throughout Yorubaland. Mostly, these were people who in their life time contributed to the advancement of the Yoruba community as a whole. Their shrines are usually in the center of towns and not at individual homes. Some of them have lived at Ile-Ife. Such ancestors have considerable power and, in fact, ritual practices are associated with them. One of them is Sango who reigned in Oyo. He is said to have performed magic feats, especially the act of causing fire to come out of his mouth when he was angry. Lightening was also associated with him.

We have Orisa Oko who was linked with farming. Only those who needed children could approach Osun at Osogbo. Those troubled by evildoers can go to Ayelala for security at Okiti-Pupa. These and other deified ancestors have attained a very special status in Yoruba religion. In the words of Thomas Lawson, "What is interesting is that their human origins are preserved in Yoruba stories; what is not in doubt is their ability to exert power for good or ill and the necessity of worshipping them."¹

started to mention all his mates who had died. In conclusion he said, "They have all gone to heaven, waiting for us to respect them." Pastor Majolagbe corrected the old man. He was later taught and baptized.

¹Lawson, 63.

Family Ancestors

Before one can be accepted as a good family ancestor, he has to fulfill some good qualities among his family and his town. Such qualities include: (1) He must have lived a good life and, as a result, achieved in the sight of everybody the state of good heaven (Orun-rere) where Olorun/Olodumare and the Orisa live. (2) He must have died at an old age; for this is a good indication that one has fulfilled one's destiny. (3) His offspring or descendants must show their devotion to him by performing the yearly rituals in his/her honor. There are also women ancestors who are paid homage similar to men.

Yearly, Egungun¹ on their behalf will come to settle misunderstanding over the inheritance or assume the role of mediators between the family and the departed loved ones. Egunguns are treated with respect because they are thought to originate from heaven. Yorubas refer to them as Ara-orun kinkin, meaning the heavenly bodies. Some times those who wear the mask tell their family members reports about heaven.² Egungun festival among Yorubas is eagerly awaited

¹Egungun are masked dancers who come yearly or once every three years to visit with descendants. They speak in a funny tone and perform rituals on behalf of people. All Yorubas accept them as spirits of the dead. When an elderly man dies, they escort the body to heaven.

²Once an uncle of mine wore a mask trying to typify my grandfather on a reunion day. He said, when it rained on earth, it was the opposite in heaven. Even though his mask was wet, he said that it was too hot for him to bear. All

each year, either to mark the planting or harvesting of farm crops.

The Secret Societies (Ogboni Society)

No Yoruba man, except those who are members, know much of what goes on in the Society.

Traditionally, children are not accepted as members. One must be at least fifty years old before becoming a member. Secretly members serve as advisors to the King in Oyo town. If a king disobeyed their order, he was made to drink poison and die. The society was strong in Oyo, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode.

Admission into the society is, in most cases, based on administering an oath of secrecy in regard to the mysteries of the cult. The penalty for the divulgence of secrets is always severe, sometimes death.

Oro Guild

The Oro Guild is a male society with branches throughout Yorubaland. Oro stands for the spirits of the gods. It is usually celebrated in the night. No woman is allowed to participate in the celebration. The Oro Guild is dedicated to checking the evil activities of witches in Yoruba society. Guild members go to great pains to create fear in the minds of children and women. In recent times, the guild has been accused of wanting to perpetuate the

the people believed him.

subjugation of women.

Some of the very influential Oro guilds in Yorubaland are Agemo, Gelede, Eluku, and Adamu-Orisa.

Mediation in Yorubaland

The structure of the Yoruba Society encourages a mediator between the many sources of powers. An examination of some of these mediation roles follows.

Olori Ebi

The Olori Ebi is the family head. It is part of his function to maintain a ritual relationship with his ancestors on behalf of the family and reveal the will of the ancestors to the entire family. One can only attain this position by age. He must be the oldest person in the clan, must be respectable, and must have a listening ear. It is the Olori Ebi who consults the Babalawo on behalf of the family in the event of family difficulty. Says Thomas Lawson:

No important event in the household can occur without the Olori Ebi's involvement. For example, the birth of a child, the departure of a daughter to be married, and the funeral of a family member will all require his guidance and his ritual action.¹

The Priest

The priests are specially appointed by the gods they represent. The priests are noticable in public by the way

¹Lawson, 55.

they dress. For example, Sango priests who are men plait their hair and wear red clothes; while those of Obatala wears white dresses. They assume the mediatorial role between the members of the cult and the particular Orisa.

The Kings

Yoruba kings also mediate between the ancestors and the people. Every seven days, the king performs ritual sacrifices on behalf of his subjects to his ancestors. Usually these sacrifices are done on the graves of the ancestors where the King asks for peace for his people and wisdom to rule well. Without his presence at town festivals, the priest cannot perform any rituals.

Orisa Mediating for Another Orisa

As earlier explained, Esu is regarded as a mediator between the Olodumare, Orisas, and human beings. Therefore, before a Yoruba eats or drinks, he/she acknowledges Esu first by pouring libation or throwing the first bite of food outside. This is done to acknowledge his role as one who can disrupt communication between the worshippers and the world of sacred power. When sacrifices are performed, a Yoruba often throws part out and says "Esu Gba" meaning Esu take your share.

Orunmila is another Orisa that can mediate on behalf of other Orisas for mankind. In any form the rituals take among the Yorubas, there is a mediator who establishes a

line of communication between the worshippers and their objects of devotion.

The diagram in appendix H illustrates the explained organization of how rituals and roles or religious powers in the Yoruba religious system are conducted.¹

The Diagram

There are two levels of power with various Orisas. The first is Orun meaning Heaven. It is the dwelling place of Olodumare, the Orisas, and the dieties who are subordinate to Olodumare.

The second level of power is that of Aiye or (Aye) the earth. Omoraye translated means children of the world.² They always create problems and hardship for human beings. These are antisocial human beings who uses their power for the destruction of the society. They use their power to manipulate and twist human personality.

Individual Ritual for Cleaning

Yorubas have a strong belief that people should occasionally be cleansed from evil spirits. The Babalawos are mostly the mediators in the cleansing rituals. The cleansing process sometimes involves or takes many forms:

¹The diagram is a modified version of the diagram in Lawson, 65. See appendix H.

²The Omoraye are evil spirits like witches and wizards. They may be likened to what is recorded in Gen 6:2 "the daughters of men."

bathing in a stream, shaving one's head or washing the hair on one's head into a stream. Other times the process calls for rolling on the ground or putting dust on the head. It may call for a white/black chicken or pigeon and rubbing it seven times around his/her body and releasing it into a river or nearby bush.

Community Rituals (Festivals)

Awolalu discussed ways by which the community is cleansed yearly of evil spirit.¹ This type of cleansing is done all over Yorubaland. In Ile-Ife it is called Tele festival.² It is a festival that lasts for seven days. On the final day, all Ile-Ife citizens symbolically sweep out impurities from the corners of their houses. They wait for Tele outside their houses and when he passes their streets they shout "Eeeooo" three times. At the third shout, they raise their hands over their heads and say, "Take disease away! Take death away! Take misfortune away! Take impurities away!"³ It is a general belief by the people that their sins, misfortunes, and other calamities are

¹Evil Spirit in the sense of sickness, death of youth, and calamity over crops.

²Tele is a name given to a stranger who probably is not a Yoruba man but yearly has to carry a special load containing impurities, disease and death in a symbolic way. (This load is today a goat already sacrificed to remit the lives of Ile-Ife community.)

³J. Omosade Awolalu, "Scape-Goatism in Yoruba Religion," Orita 19 (June 1987), 6.

transferred to Tele by this act, who ceremonially takes them away into the far forest. Immediately after this act, all residents of Ile-Ife run into their houses, lock their doors, and remain indoors until the next day. According to tradition, Tele was usually sacrificed, but today the goat that he carries takes his place.

After this survey of Yoruba cultures--their religion, worldview, and beliefs--this paper turns its focus to the theology of evangelism as outlined in the gospels.

CHAPTER II
THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM AS OUTLINED
IN THE GOSPELS

During his earthly ministry, Jesus' first words to his disciples were, "Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."¹ His last words to them were, "Go, make disciples of all nations."² The two statements were commands. They symbolize the master's direction for all his followers at all times.

Maybe this was the reason why the apostles were so concerned about spreading the message of salvation to their then world.³

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave specific instructions for the gradual spreading of the Gospel, starting in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the lands of the Gentiles.⁴

Each Christian generation must follow the same process by making their own home Jerusalem and spreading the

¹Matt 4:19; NIV.

²Matt 29:19; NIV.

³Mark 16:15.

⁴Act 1:8.

Gospel to other lands where the good news has not been heard.

The Yoruba people of Western Nigeria fit into this mold. They are eager to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. but like any other group of people, the Yoruba have to be approached in appropriate ways if they are to be won over for Christ. This section of the paper, therefore, seeks to outline an evangelistic strategy that will meet the needs of the Yorubas.

Lewis Drummond has said, "If the church would effectively evangelize today, it must do so from a strong theological base."¹ Theology and evangelism must go together so that sinners may be reached for Christ. C. E. Autrey went so far as to say that "there can be no effective and permanent evangelism without theology."² Although numerous scholars have reacted differently to the idea of merging evangelism and theology together, Lewis Drummond states emphatically that there are three main reasons why the two must unite. He contends first of all that one cannot separate the two because this concept was not in the Bible;³ they are mutually inclusive of each other. Second, he argues that without sound theological content, evangelism

¹Lewis A. Drummond, Evangelism The Counter-Revolution (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972), 41.

²C. E. Autrey, Basic Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1959), 13.

³Drummond, 41.

will degenerate into sentimentalism, emotionalism, and gimmicks.¹ Third, he contends ministers who recognize the duality of the two concepts and evangelize from a strong theological base are honored by God.² "Theology defines evangelism and evangelism describes theology."³ It is not an overstatement to say with Lewis Drummond that "theology is to evangelism what the skeleton is to the body."⁴ Evangelism is theology exposed, expressed, and expounded. We attempt here to define evangelism and show how it blends with theology.

Evangelism: A Definition

Scholars, ministers, and evangelists all have different definitions for evangelism. Douglas Webster defines evangelism simply: it "is the proclamation of the gospel."⁵ Robert Coleman says "evangelism is the hand reaching down to the lost with the offer of life. . . . The good news is that God has acted to save a people for

¹Ibid., 42.

²Ibid.

³Sunder Clarke, Let the Indian Church Be Indian (Madras, India: Christian Literature Society, 1980), 52.

⁴Drummond, 43.

⁵Douglas Webster, What Is Evangelism? (London: Highway Press, 1964), 105.

Himself."¹ Pope Paul VI said, "Evangelism means bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity, and through its influence, transforming humanity from within and making it new."²

Evangelist Billy Graham added another dimension to the definition when he stated that evangelism means "spreading the gospel of Christ. . . . It is a message that demands a response--a response of faith, followed by discipleship . . . that people may understand God's offer of salvation and response in faith and discipleship."³ To John Stott, evangelism is more than verbal proclamation, preaching the gospel should be accompanied by signs of the approaching kingdom and new life in obedience and community.⁴

The concept of evangelism pervades in the New Testament. The verb form (Εὐαγγελισαῖσθε) appears fifty-two times in the NT. Luke alone use it twenty-five times. The noun form (Εὐαγγελίου), good news, appears seventy-two

¹Robert E. Coleman, They Meet the Master: A Study Manual on the Personal Evangelism of Jesus (Huntingdon Valley, PA: Christian Outreach, 1973), 8.

²Robert J. Hater, ed., The Relationship between Evangelization and Catechesis (Washington, DC: National Conference of Diocesan Directors of Religious Education, 1981), 2.

³Billy Graham, A Biblical Standard for Evangelists (Minneapolis: Worldwide Pub., 1984), 8.

⁴John R. W. Stott, Christian Mission in the Modern World (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 18-19.

times in the NT with Paul using the term at least fifty-four times. Mark has seven references of the word. Evangelist is mentioned three times in the NT (Acts 21:8; Eph 4:11; 2 tim 4:5).¹

In summary, evangelism in the NT means glad tidings, good news, a message of hope that fills the heart of the receiver. It is a proclamation of good news of a risen Savior; good news of God's kingdom (Matt 4:23; 9:34; 24:14). It is also a proclamation of good news of salvation from sin for all men (Rom 1:16-17; Mark 13:10, 16:15; Acts 15:7). It is a message that seeks for people, recognizing their needs and ministering to them. In the words of Ben Campbell, "The task of evangelism is to communicate the love of God to persons, enabling them to find a personal faith in Christ, membership in his body, and growth in discipleship."²

What Is Theology?

Jacques B. Doukhan defines theology as "a study which is concerned with the relationship between God and man, and which takes into account man's intellectual, social,

¹William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, eds., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 318-319.

²Ben Campbell Johnson, Rethinking Evangelism, A Theological Approach (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 12.

economic, and political environment from which he experiences an understanding of God."¹

Theology provides the structure for evangelism. Evangelism and theology have always been linked together. Lewis Drummond explains the relationship between evangelism and theology in this way:

. . . a knowledge of theology makes the presentation of the gospel message plain: it makes the evangelist more sure of his message, a genuine understanding of the rich content of the Bible will fill one with zeal, theology is an important agent in conserving evangelistic result.²

According to David Bosch,

Theology is practiced in solidarity with the church. Its primary functions are to explore the nature and content of the gospel and to inquire whether ecclesiastical practice faithfully reflects the gospel."³

Therefore, if a church does not have a theological base, it soon becomes a social organization trying to improve only society and boosting its own ego.

The truth of the matter is that both evangelism and theology need one another because together they make the message certain and more clear. The best example of theology and evangelism working in unison is seen in Jesus Christ's ministry on earth. He was both teacher and evangelist, and it is his example that is the foundation of the Good News. Because "Theology means thinking about God

¹Jacques B. Doukhan, Interview, 3-13-89, Andrews University Library, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

²Drummond, 43.

³David J. Bosch, 22.

through Christ and evangelism tells about Christ, any theology of evangelism should be deep rooted in what Jesus did and said."¹

Jesus' principles of evangelism are eternal and universal. They transcend all cultures and all peoples. We therefore study Jesus' principle of evangelism and discover how they are applicable in Yorubaland.

Principles of Evangelism as Outlined
by Christ in the Gospels

Each generation in the history of man has found certain methods more productive than others for reaching people of their time with the message of salvation. Our age is not an exception. Many times the church has relied too long on one method, even though the political or social situation calls for a change. When this happens, the evangelistic thrust of the church is slowed down.

This is the time for the church to go back to its roots and rely on the timeless universal principles of evangelism that Jesus embodied and used so effectively during his first advent. This paper, therefore, focuses on the evangelistic principles that Jesus utilized in his day and which are still viable in our own day. Lewis Drummond once wrote

The gospel itself is always unchanging. But every generation has the right to hear the good news

¹A. Skevington Wood, Evangelism: Its Theology and Practice (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1966), 27.

communicated in a fashion that genuinely addresses its message in current forms and to man in his present sociological environment.¹

For us today this implies change, often drastic change in our methods and ways of approach to programs.

Below are some of the principles that emerge as we study the way Jesus related to the people He wanted to win for His Kingdom.²

Respect for People

One of the principles Jesus used to redeem sinners to God was respect for the sinner as human beings. Knowing full well that sin had separated man from God and that the glorious personality had been ruined, Jesus sought in his ministry to reach the sinners' hearts without destroying their self worth. He pointed out their sin and filled their empty heart with heavenly, comforting messages. "He recreated and reordered the individual personality."³ When Jesus met Nicodemus, he did not rebuke him; he left him with the simple message: "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."⁴ Like Christ,

¹Drummond, 23.

²I am indebted to Gaines S. Dobbins who wrote Evangelism According to Christ (New York: Harper & Bros. Pub., 1949), for most of the ideas in this section.

³Dobbins, 197.

⁴John 3:3 (NIV).

all his followers today must rebuke sin and point people to the Redeemer of sinners.

Jesus met people individually. He healed them and set them free. Latourette comments:

. . . Jesus addressed himself to individuals and gave them of his best--the woman of the street, the short saturated, tax gatherer who had climbed a tree to see him, the Roman officer with a sick servant, the child who seemed to be lying dead, and her distraught parents.¹

In all these instances Jesus walked with them and showed his love to them individually. In the words of Robert E. Coleman, "One cannot transform a world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be changed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master."² In dealing with the Yorubas as with any community, we must recognize that they are different and have different assumptions about life and existence. However, we must always show respect to them because the Saviour did the same. Never may we approach any people we hope to win for Christ as though they were inferior, backward, or sub-human.

Employing Tact

Jesus used tact to reach sinners. When the first two disciples timidly followed Him, Jesus tactfully took them

¹Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), 40.

²Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1964), 24.

out of the crowd to speak privately with them. In leading men to God, we must be tactful, courteous, considerate, and kind.¹ Jesus never attacked people for what they did or believed in. He always showed them a better way and in time the people became attracted to this new way. As his followers, we cannot do any differently. We should refrain from saying or doing to the people we hope to convert anything that might be offensive to them. The Christian's main responsibility is to seek to enrich the lives of others for Christ. When we try to get an individual to change his/her religion and to adopt a new religion, we indirectly enter into that person's life. In a situation like this, it is extremely essential that we are courteous in the process. Therefore, we need, like Christ, to be very tactful. Jesus was tactful with the woman at the well. He expected a change of life. He got the woman to submit her life without offending her. When trying to reach the Yoruba to renounce the practice of polygamy when his culture has always sanctioned it, we must be careful and tactful that such a person is not embarrassed in the process.

Utilization of Opportunity

There are many ways to lead people into the knowledge of the gospel of our Lord. Many situations in people's lives serve as a way to open the truth to them. We must not

¹Dobbins, 201.

always follow just one method. Dobbins has said that "As soon as an evangelistic procedure becomes institutionalized it begins to lose its power. There is no set procedure according to which the lost are led to Christ."¹ People can be led to meet Christ from different occasions of the Yoruba cultures. A few are at naming ceremonies, funeral services, and marriage ceremonies. Everywhere must be considered fertile ground to spread the gospel. Christ met the Samaritan woman at the well. Peter was met in his fishing boat. It may be that we must daily seize the opportunity open for us by the owner of the work.

Need for Strategy

In reaching the people of his day, Jesus used strategy. He started his ministry with a group of followers. "He trained them by allowing them to observe the Master at work."² He later sent them out two by two to evangelize. Arthur C. Archibald said that "he organized them into definite groups of two, that they might become systematic soul winners."³ For those who evangelize our society today, we must understand, like Jesus, that

¹Ibid.

²Gregg E. Townsley, "A Description of the Unchurched American with Implications for Intentional Evangelistic Witness" (Doctor of Ministry thesis, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1983), 101.

³Arthur C. Archibald, New Testament Evangelism (Philadelphia: Judson, 1946), 42.

evangelism was "an intentional, thought-out process of principle and organization."¹ Jesus started his ministry among His own people, the "lost sheep of Israel."² His message to them was the good news³ of God's Kingdom. He performed many miracles; so did His disciples.⁴ When the twelve disciples were sent out, Jesus specifically instructed them as to what to take and what to eat. Every evangelistic outreach must follow a set strategy or else there will be little success.

With regards to the Yorubas, we need dedicated men and women who will be trained to reach the people. Jesus used a few men to begin, and he was ultimately successfully. If we adopt his principles the salvation of multitudes will be the result.⁵

Involvement in the Life of the Individual

Jesus began his ministry preaching in synagogues.⁶ This practice was short-lived,⁷ because he was thrown out

¹Townsley, "A Description of the Unchurched American," 102.

²Matt 15:22.

³Matt 10:7, Luke 4:18-21, John 14:16.

⁴Matt 10:8.

⁵Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism, 34.

⁶Matt 4:23.

⁷Matt 12:9-15.

for getting too much involved in the lives of others. He took his message to the streets of Capernaum,¹ Jerusalem, and other big cities of Judea.² He went to private homes³ and other places where people naturally gathered.⁴ The record has it that Jesus was best received in the common places rather than in the synagogues. Jesus went where the sinners were. We, as his followers, must also go to such places today, because it was in such places that Jesus touched the sinners of his day. We should not expect the people we want to lead to Jesus to seek us out. The injunction in Rev 18:4--"Come out of her my people"--is not a justification for isolationism. We must go into the community to touch souls for Christ. Leighton Ford made this observation.

Christian isolationism has been a constant barrier to evangelism. Many Christians have been so afraid of being contaminated by worldliness that they have avoided any social contacts with unconverted persons. As a result, they have no natural bridges for evangelism; what witnessing they do is usually artificial and forced rather than the spontaneous outgrowth of genuine friendship. . . . Part of Jesus' attractiveness which drew secular people like a magnet, was his wonderful love of life, his natural appealing friendliness. Luke shows

¹Matt 8:5-13.

²Matt 9:35.

³Matt 9:10.

⁴Matt 13:2; 9:1,36; 8:1.

Jesus going from dinner party to dinner party, teaching the Gospel to the guests.¹

If we would do today as Jesus did in his day, if his followers would take to the cinema halls and bars downtown, "many in the church would rise-up and shout in opposition."² We would be tagged as liberal, worldly disciples. Jesus believed that the Gospel was to be spread in real-life situations and circumstances. Edwards G. Townsley comments:

. . . though He counted success in His public synagogue gatherings, and though they doubtlessly served to introduce individuals to His message, it was His personal contact in places of natural ministry that undoubtedly had the most impact.³

A zealous soul winner of our day will always be criticized for mingling with sinners. To the pious legalist, such conduct appears scandalous to the establishment, but there is "joy in heaven over such matters" that seek out the sinner in the secular section of life.

Robert Coleman outlined eight principles of Jesus' ministry in his book Master Plan of Evangelism. Though he did not arrange these principles sequentially, his logic is progressive for the modern ministers. Among the principles he pointed out are the following:

¹Leighton Ford, "The Christian Persuader," quoted in David Watson, I Believe in Evangelism (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1976), 95.

²Townsley, "A Description of the Unchurched American," 104.

³Ibid.

Selection. Jesus began his ministry by calling a few individuals to follow him. The strategy upon which he built his evangelistic programs is quickly seen. His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes; rather, Jesus wanted others who would reach the multitudes.¹

Those that Jesus selected to work with him were to be fishers of others, and they, too, would accomplish that ministry by selecting others as Jesus had selected them.

Coleman said:

The initial objective of Jesus's plan was to enlist men who could bear witness to His life and carry on His work after He returned to the father. John and Andrew were the first to be invited as Jesus left the scene of the great revival of the Baptist at Bethany beyond the Jordan (John 1:35-40), Andrew in turn brought his brother Peter (John 1:41,42). The next day Jesus found Philip on his way to Galilee, and Philip found Nathaniel (John 1:43-51).²

Jesus could not have individually given to the multitude the personal care they needed; hence, he got men who portrayed his life style to do the job for him. They were to be leaders, the foundation of his work.

Association. Coleman said that when Jesus had finished calling these individual men to follow him, He made it a practice to spend enough time with them.³ In a real sense, it was Jesus' association with them that accomplished the training and discipleship. During the calling process,

¹Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism, 21.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 38.

he said to some, "Follow me,"¹ to others, the call was, "Come and see,"² and still to others he said, "Come . . . and I will make you fishers of men."³ Christ did not ask them for any recommendation or credentials, he rather asked for loyalty. The "follow me" from his lips to them means an invitation to share time with him.⁴ Commenting on the importance of association, A. B. Bruce said:

In the training of the twelve for the work of apostleship, hearing and seeing the work of Christ necessarily occupied an important place. Eye and ear witnessing of the fact of an unparalleled life was an indispensable preparation for future witness bearing. The apostles could secure credence for their wondrous tale only by being able to preface it with the protestation: 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you'. None would believe their report, save those who, at very least, were satisfied that it emanated from men who had been with Jesus.⁵

Day by day the association between Christ and His disciples grew closer. Jesus ate with the disciples. He slept with them and shared difficult times with them.⁶ It was through them that the good news of the kingdom would be made known to the world. Jesus, therefore, made his

¹John 1:43.

²John 1:46.

³Mark 1:17; Matt 4:19; Luke 5:10.

⁴Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13.

⁵A. B. Bruce, The Training of the Twelve (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan PUb. House, 1963), 41.

⁶Luke 8:22-24.

association with the disciples a chief priority.

Association is very important in evangelism.

Demonstration. Jesus used demonstration extensively throughout his ministry. When preaching, Jesus used the Scripture to solve most of the problems.¹ He used Scripture to counsel.² He made his disciples observe him at prayer to God his Father. In reaching the sinners of his day, he left them a life style. After a parable was given, Jesus took time to explain its hidden meaning to them. Coleman said that Jesus did not ask anyone to do or be anything which he had not demonstrated in his own life, thereby not only proving its workability but also its relevance to his mission in life.³ Wherever Jesus was and whatever he was doing, the disciples were there to notice and thereby learn.

Delegation. Jesus gave opportunities to his disciples to perform some duties while he was with them. He delegated specific responsibilities to them on certain occasions: i.e., his disciples went to get accommodations for the whole group.⁴ On another occasion, the disciples baptized the new converts as he watched them.⁵ He also sent them out two by two to go and preach and conduct campaigns.

¹Matt 4:4.

²Matt 5:21-22.

³Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism, 80.

⁴Luke 22:7-13.

⁵John 4:1-2.

All of them carried out their duty in the belief that they were acting for Jesus himself.¹ Ministers today need to delegate work to church members so that much work will be done for the Master.²

Supervision. As Jesus sent the disciples out and when they returned, he made it his duty to evaluate their success and failures. Jesus saw supervision as a necessary part of his work. Coleman said that during the period of evaluation or suspension, "Jesus was helping them to understand the reason for some previous action or getting them ready for some new experience."³

Jesus grouped his disciples after their evangelistic tour because they needed rest in body and soul. As they rested, Jesus had the opportunity to comment on their performance. "He rejoiced in their success; but nothing less than world conquest was His goal, and to that end He always superintended their efforts."⁴ He told them that the Holy Spirit would supervise their work after he had given them to the Spirit's direction. Today, Christian workers are never without personal supervision. Jesus said, "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the age."⁵ Pastors

¹Matt 10:40; Luke 9:6,10.

²Coleman, The Master's Plan of Evangelism, 94.

³Ibid.

⁴Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism, 103=104.

⁵Matt 28:20, NKJV.

must try to supervise by making their followers reach the goals set for them, not by making them do more than their ability but by expecting the best of them.

Social Action. "Society is made up of persons whose uniqueness is their individuality."¹ Evangelism that does not have effect on society is illegitimate or deceitful. In reaching society, Jesus Christ first reached individuals; these saved individuals can then spread the new experience to their society. Examples of these were the Samaritan woman² and the man who called himself Legion, possessed by devil, healed at Gadarenes.³ Gaines S. Dobbins comments:

Evangelism as preached by Christ is the "good news" that Christ has the remedy for ignorance, abject poverty, social injustice, race discriminations, economic disorder, neglected childhood, prostituted manhood and womanhood, family disorganization, community conflict, the wreckage of war. Against each of their destructive forces, evangelism sends forth the "good news" of saved persons living together in a good society according to the will of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.⁴

This does not say that the church should secularize itself in relating to social disorder, but certainly it should bear the "good news" to relieve the oppressed. Jung comments:

The church must be willing to involve itself actively in mission. This inevitably means the willingness to take risks, to dare to stand with the alien and the stranger, to promote social justice and self-sacrificial love. . . . The church cannot be content to withdraw into

¹Dobbins, 213.

²John 4:28-30.

³Luke 8:38-42; Matt 8:27-40.

⁴Dobbins, 213.

its own spiritual sanctuary, or remain an isolated enterprise.¹

During His time, Jesus responded to social action. He cleansed the temple, his call to repentance included areas of social injustice. Jesus encouraged his followers to pay tax. His last prayer for the church was to keep it in the world to do better service for man and God.² We as his followers must win the world with love.

Today we need all these principles of Jesus so that we can reach our world for the kingdom. Coleman comments: "Nevertheless, unless the personal mission of the Master is vitally incorporated into the policy and fabric of all these plans, the church can not function as she should."³ Evangelism is done by men reaching out to other men for Christ. It is an expression of God's love towards man. God is ready to use man. Again, Coleman warns, "Until we have men imbued with His Spirit and committed to His plan, none of our methods will work."⁴

We now turn our attention to the way the apostles utilized what Jesus taught them; and see how we can make it applicable in our day.

¹L. Shannon Jung, Identity and Community: A Social Introduction to Religion (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 145.

²John 17:14-26.

³Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism, 112.

⁴Ibid., 113.

The Apostles and the Unfailing Commission

According to the record in Matt 28:18-20, J sus spoke his farewell words to his disciples. In this speech, Jesus assured his disciples that "all power in heaven and on earth" belong to him. He followed up the promise never to leave them with the assignment to reach the whole world in his name. They were to make disciples of all nations, people, and tongues. They took the last message seriously since it was Christ's last desire.

The church started as a small group, but on the Day of Pentecost 3,000¹ souls were added to their number. A few days after Pentecost, another 5,000² new members joined their ranks. All this happened even though the church lived in a hostile environment. The message of the church was in direct opposition to the Jewish religion³ and to the worldwide conquest of Imperial Rome.⁴ The apostles had no educational prestige, because they were mostly common fishermen. They had no temples, church buildings, or a seminary, yet they had phenomenal success. The factors that contributed to their impressive achievement is the subject of the next section.

¹Acts 2:40.

²Acts 4:4.

³Acts 24:5-7.

⁴Acts 16:20-24.

The Gift of the
Holy Spirit

Before the Holy Spirit came upon them, they were totally united. They prayed¹ fervently for guidance and direction. On the Day of Pentecost they were together in one place.² He met them ready to carry the message to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the Gentiles.³

The message they were to take to the world was an urgent one. It was a message that gave hope to all mankind, that which awakened the slumbering Israelites. It was a message that made Gentiles become members of God's family. Slaves received the message and became free. Filled with the Holy Ghost, they had a simple message: that Jesus, the one they know, is the promised Messiah. They quoted from Scripture to support their contention. They included in their message the activities of the Holy Spirit who now dwelt with men and women as a guarantee of God's new work in Christ Jesus.⁴

The content of their message differed as they reached the Gentiles. Among the Gentiles they stressed the universality of God's action in Jesus Christ to meet human

¹Acts 1:14.

²Acts 2:1.

³Acts 1:8.

⁴Townsley, "A Description of the Unchurched American," 112.

need. Coleman, relating the power of the Holy Spirit in evangelism, said:

The secret of the whole endeavour is to let the Spirit of Christ [Holy Ghost] have His way. God's work can not be done in the energy of the flesh. Only the indwelling Third Member of the Holy Trinity can produce the ministry of the Son. As this is realized, the life of Jesus becomes real; He lives and works through His disciples.¹

We certainly need the Holy Spirit within us today so we can launch an attack upon the world with the Gospel.

Witnessing: The Only Concern

All the disciples were aware that the Great Commission was Jesus' command to make disciples. They knew they must succeed at it. "If every creature is going to hear the Gospel, then every believer must preach the Gospel."² To them, there was no distinction between clergy and laity. Everybody proclaimed the Gospel, some even gossiped about it. Without the aid of any modern equipment or transportation, the Gospel shook the Roman Empire until there were converts within the yard of Caesar.³ They were bold⁴ and excited with the message. After they were scattered from Jerusalem following Stephen's death, the disciples turned themselves into missionaries. We need in

¹Robert E. Coleman, Evangelism on the Cutting Edge (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming Revell Co., 1986), 136.

²James A. Stewart, Evangelism (Swengel, PA: Reiner Pub. 1966), 94.

³Ibid., 95.

⁴Acts 4:13.

the church today such missionary-minded Christians who will undertake anew the conquest of our world for Christ.

They Took Time to Pray

The early record of the church shows that the disciples were a prayerful group.¹ Before and after great times of persecution and witness, they retired to their homes to pray. Even at his dying moment, Stephen had a prayer on his lips. He said, "Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit, . . . Lord do not hold this sin against them."² Today we have lost the power of prayer, hence we lack the energy to launch an attack on Satan. We need revival to learn how to pray.

Motivated by Love

Love was the foundation of the fellowship among the believers in the early churches. They not only preached the message, they practicalized it. They had everything in common.³ Everybody was equal among the early Christians. They were of one heart and one soul. Michael Green wrote of them:

Their loving fellowship broke down the natural barriers between blacks and whites, between masters and slaves, between rich and poor, between those from Jewish and Greek backgrounds. They shared their goods, their meals, their worship--everything, as Justin put it, except their

¹Acts 1:24, 2:42, 3:1, 4:31.

²Acts 7:59 (NIV).

³Acts 4:32.

wives (the very area where the pagans were most willing to share, as he unkindly reminded them!).¹

Commenting on the character that developed within the early church, David Bosch called it the "gospel of love and charity."² According to him, "this was a witness that included alms, care of widows, orphans, the sick, prisoners, mine-workers, the poor, slaves, and travellers."³ Today we need the crucial love, without it there can be no effective evangelism. "The world has to see in Christian circles a warmer, more accepting and caring fellowship than they can find anywhere else--and until they see that they are not going to be interested or impressed with God-talk."⁴

They Had Endurance

Another astonishing feature of these early Christians was their endurance. In the face of imprisonment, persecution, even death, they endured. Most of them were publicly flogged.⁵ When Paul and Silas were thrown into prison, their feet in the stocks, and their backs bleeding,

¹Michael Green, Evangelism--Now and Then (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 24-25.

²David J. Bosch, "Evangelism and Social Transformation," in The Church in Response to Human Need, Tom Sine, ed. (Monrovia, CA: Mission Advanced Research & Communication Centre, 1983), 273-274.

³Ibid.

⁴Green, 25.

⁵Acts 5:40.

they sang and praised God.¹ Those who were stoned to death² prayed for their enemies. We need an enduring spirit in order to be worthy ambassadors for Christ in our day.

United in Message

The disciples were united in message and purpose. Theirs was a church that had the luxury of doctrinal unity. It is said that a church that comes into being at any given place is the child of the witness that produced her. When problems about the Gentiles arose among them, it was easily solved. The Holy Spirit led out. Paul knew only one body, one Spirit, one hope of their calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.³ Throughout their records, unity is seen. They presented Jesus Christ and him crucified to the world as the Messiah.

Home Meetings

Apart from their public preaching in marketplaces and synagogues, the early disciples ran home meetings. Also Holy Communion was conducted in such meetings.⁴ Some meetings will be impromptu gatherings. The home is a priceless asset because it has an informal setting which makes the listeners feel relaxed, thus making participation

¹Acts 16:22-25.

²Acts 14:19.

³Eph 4:4-6.

⁴Acts 2:46.

easy. The early church grew rapidly with such home meetings, especially when persecution was great and no church buildings were available. We may still need home meetings today, especially for those living in cities where the church building is far from their homes. We need to motivate the church today to ask which of these principles is applicable to our environment. Dwight M. Pratt comments:

All saving evangelism must take its pattern from his method and spirit--it must know the worth of the individual and give itself unstintedly to personal work; it must gather little groups for counsel and instruction; it must love the multitude with a great compassion, and be willing to pour out life in supreme sacrifice in order to save.

The Christian's inspiration to personal work comes from the individual ministries of Jesus. His apostles gained their power from imitating him. Every great evangelist from Paul to the present day became a soul-winner by reproducing his method and spirit. The gospel is direct and personal from beginning to end.¹

While success has attended God's church in specific areas of the world, we still have other areas in which SDA churches are yet to make a great impact. Each culture demands new methods. The question facing the church today is what possible new methods or strategies can be implemented to make the love of Christ and his message more effective? This is an area in which Ellen G. White's writings are of special help. We consider her admonitions relating to evangelism next.

¹Dwight M. Pratt, The Master's Method of Winning Men (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1922), 27.

Ellen G. White and the Adventist
Understanding of Evangelism

The Seventh-day Adventist church believes that it was established by God to prepare the whole world for the second coming of Christ. They base this belief on the three angels' messages recorded in Rev 14:6-12. In this regard, Seventh-day Adventists have been aided in their understanding of their evangelistic role by the writings of Ellen G. White, one of the early pioneers of the movement. It was Ellen G. White who wrote, "To us [SDA] has been committed a great work--the work of proclaiming the third angels' message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people."¹ She further defines the duty of the Adventist church:

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light-bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. . . . They have been given a work of the most solemn import,--the proclamation of the first, second and third angels' message. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.²

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the commission given to Jesus' disciples is also given to the church today. "A crucified and risen Saviour is to be uplifted before

¹Ellen G. White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1913), 209.

²Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), 119-120.

those who are without God and without hope in the world.¹ We as a church must combine our efforts with the plan Jesus Christ and the Apostles have laid down.

Outlining this New Testament principle, Ellen G. White counsels that in reaching people of our day, personal labor must be employed. Because it is this alone that can produce true success.² Jesus devoted his time to public ministry by preaching to large audiences but he made sure he touched each heart with his message.³ Ellen G. White described five principles that Jesus himself used in reaching people and indicates that the church can use those principles today to bring people to God. She emphasized the use of public, personal, medical, and literature evangelism as well as education as excellent ways of evangelizing.

Public evangelism involves preaching to a large audience. She favored a gathering of large audiences to hear a preacher,⁴ but she indicates that public evangelism is most effective if individuals take a personal and active part in preparing the public to hear the preacher. In other words, public evangelism must work hand in hand with

¹Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Pub. Assn., 1936), 29.

²Ellen G. White, Christian Service (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 1947), 119.

³White, Evangelism, 35.

⁴Ibid., 122.

personal evangelism. Personal evangelism opens the field for public evangelism to follow.¹

Medical ministry is another concept presented to the Seventh-day Adventist church by Ellen G. White. She repeatedly stressed the point that "health reform is one branch of great work which is to fit a people for the coming of the Lord. It is as closely connected with the third angel's message as the hand is with the body."² The object of this ministry, she further said, is to restore men and women to the moral image of God.³ This made the medical ministry a vital part of evangelism.

Jesus Christ started his ministry to restore and reconcile the world to his Father by reforming the physical habits of man. We are encouraged to follow the same principles. Medical ministry must not only function side by side with soul-winning activities but must be used as an "entering wedge for presentation of the gospel."⁴

Another principle outlined by Ellen G. White in proclaiming the gospel is the literature ministry.

The lay members of the church are to share in the work of soul saving. By means of missionary visits, and by a

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 7:254.

²Ellen G. White, Counsels on Health (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1951), 20-21.

³White, Christian Service, 140.

⁴White, Evangelism, 513.

wise distribution of our literature, many who have never been warned may be reached.¹

"I have been shown," she further said, "that our publications should be printed in different languages and sent to every civilized country, at any cost. What is the value of money at this time, in comparison with the value of souls."²

This ministry will place the truth of the church in the hands of people that preachers cannot reach. It will also correct the wrong impression of the people about the church and its teaching.³

Education may be an evangelistic tool. Ellen G. White once said the work of education and the work of redemption are one.⁴ God is the source of all true knowledge, the object of education is to direct man's mind to God's revelation.⁵ The teacher who accepts the God-given responsibility to inspire his students "with principles of truth, obedience, honor, integrity and purity --principles that will make them a positive force for the

¹White, Medical Ministry, 313.

²Ellen G. White, The Colporteur Evangelist (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1933), 28.

³Ellen G. White, Counsels to Writers and Editors (Nashville, TN: Southern Pub. Assn., 1946), 140.

⁴Ellen G. White, Education (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), 30.

⁵Ibid., 16.

stability and uplifting of society," she said, is "in truth a co-worker with Christ, a laborer together with God."¹

The question is which of the above principles can effectively work for the church today among the Yorubas of Nigeria in view of the political situation? If we cannot use any, what other principles can be used to meet the theological and sociological needs of the Yorubas? These questions are addressed in the next chapter.

¹Ibid., 30.

CHAPTER III

YORUBA RESPONSE TO CHRISTIANITY

Christian missionaries and other white travellers were unable to penetrate the Yoruba interior before the 1840s.¹ Penetration of the Yoruba interior was impossible basically because of the poor access roads that led to the interior, and the persistent inter-tribal wars between the Egbas, the Oyo, Ife, Ijesha, and the Ekitis. Peel noted that the Christian missionaries were able to enter the interior of Yorubaland only after the collapse, in 1820, of the great Oyo empire ruled by the Alafin.² The collapse of political order led to the destruction of Oyo-town and paved the way for major social changes in Yorubaland.

A new Alafin of Oyo built new Oyo and settled his army at Ibadan.³ All Egbas captured were sold to the Spanish and Portuguese slave owners. Some of them were rescued on the high seas and later were settled in Sierra Leone, a colony established in 1792 by British abolitionists

¹S. O. Biobaku, Sources of Yoruba History (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 15.

²J. D. Y. Peel, Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 36.

³Ibid., 37.

for repatriated slaves.¹ Christianity was first introduced among the Yoruba to the repatriated slaves in Freetown, Sierra Leone. These settlers were called Creoles.² It was these Creoles, mostly Egbas, who were used by the missionaries to open a way to the Yoruba interior.³ These Creoles began to return to Abeokuta, Lagos, and other small towns of Yorubaland in 1845.

Christianity first came to Yorubaland with the visit of the Methodist missionary, T. B. Freeman, to Abeokuta in 1842.⁴ The following year the Church Missions Society (CMS) followed the Methodist lead.⁵ By 1860 there were Christian stations at Abeokuta operated by the Methodists, Church Missions Society, and the Baptists. There were churches in cities and towns like Badagry, Lagos, Ibadan, Old Ijaye, and Ogbomosho as well. There was a great interest in the new religion by the people of Abeokuta and Lagos primarily because these were metropolitan areas and also because the Creoles were more active in these two places.

Most of the early converts to Christianity were middle- and lower-class Yorubas. The churches built schools where vocational trades were taught. The new converts were

¹Ibid., 38.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Peel, 48.

⁵Agboola, SDAs in Yorubaland, 7.

also taught legitimate trades. By and large, it appears that the church sought to mould the Yoruba society according to the image of the Victorian Christian middle class.¹

By 1914 when the first Adventist missionaries entered Yorubaland, the area was already a Christian mission field. As stated above, at their first mission station in Erunmu, the Adventist pioneers built a school.²

According to Agboola, by the end of 1914, three schools were in operation and seven people had already been converted to the new faith.³

From Erunmu, the Adventist message went further north to Sao, a town about seven miles from Ilorin. The missionaries took an active role in the community projects. They build roads, bridges, and introduced health principles to the community. Local people were taught simple hygiene. The sick were treated with "modern" medicine.⁴ Following these three humanitarian activities, it did not take much to convince the community about the love of God. Converts were many. The Adventist message captured the town of Sao.

In 1915, a new station was opened at Ipoti Ekiti, and

¹Peel, 48.

²Those attending the first school established later became Adventists. They were converted by the message they were daily taught in the school.

³Agboola, SDAs in Yorubaland, 2.

⁴Ibid., 2-3.

immediately there was mass conversion due to the distinctive Adventist message.¹

In 1916, three stations were opened and three vocational schools were established where reading, arithmetic, writing, and Bible studies were taught. In Agboola's words, "the students were taught trades like brick-making and brick laying, carpentry and furniture-making, agriculture and gardening."²

One could see that the pioneers of the Adventist work in Yorubaland followed the five major evangelistic principles Adventists use in reaching out to new people, namely public, personal, and literature evangelism, education and medical ministry. Since Adventists were latecomers in Yorubaland, we must examine the problems faced by other missionaries who came into Yorubaland before them.

Difficulties Encountered by Nineteenth Century
Christian Missionaries in Yorubaland

Gordon Robinson has written extensively about the early missionaries in Yorubaland, and many of my comments are taken from his study.

Slavery

When the missionaries first set foot in Yorubaland, there were inter-tribal wars. Slaves were captured and sold

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., 4.

for commercial purposes. When abolitionists started to free the slaves, they were fighting against an established social practice of the day. Gordon commented:

Naturally, it was the divorcing of superfluous wives, and the freeing of slaves that formed the greatest difficulty for the missionaries--it meant nothing less than breaking up a social system developed and fortified by long centuries of custom.¹

The early missionaries condemned all these practices as being un-Christian. This posed both a cultural and economic problem. On this ground, many rejected the gospel.

Islamic Religion

When Usuman dan-Fodio came with his holy Islamic war around 1830, many Yoruba kings and rulers were displaced. This act distorted the established Yoruba customs and destroyed their big towns and villages. It was hard for missionaries to convince the recently imposed Muslim rulers to join other religions.

Inaccessible Roads

Commenting on the roads in the area, Duval said that for more than fifty years, travelling was perilous and difficult due to the Islamic wars.² He further said that work in the interior was at a standstill, e.g., the Ogbomosho station was not visited for a long time. Before

¹Grimley and Robinson, 277.

²Louis M. Duval, Baptist Missions in Nigeria (Richmond, VA: Education Department, Foreign Mission Board, S.B.C., 1928), 112.

one Brother Smith could get there in 1885, he paid 5 British pound for the first twenty-five miles for protection and permission. He also paid tolls at various points along the road.¹ This type of attitude made the spreading of the Gospel or revisitation of established groups almost impossible.

Polygamy

Polygamy was one of the greatest difficulties faced by the early Christian missionaries. Polygamy was a basic part of the social system. Polygamous individuals were the wealthy and influential people of each community, starting with the kings and chiefs to the nobles. Missionaries of all Christian denominations in Nigeria condemned the practice. Those who practiced polygamy were effectively banned from participating in Christian rites like baptism and communion services. So these influential people remained traditional religionists and became stumbling blocks for conversion among Yorubas. They used their influence and position to stop and sometimes persecute converts. Occasionally they disallowed preaching.

Kings/Chiefs/Family Heads

Christianity calls for a change in life style, something many kings, chiefs, and family heads found

¹Ibid.

difficult to do. They love to practice their father's traditions as they are successors of it.

Robinson quotes a chief who explained why he could not be a Christian. He said,

When we get old we do not care to change our religion, and I shall die believing in the gods my fathers trusted. But my children and my people, they are young, and will like a new religion, and will do as you say. Let them follow the white man.¹

Loyalty to tradition, polygamy, and a belief in the traditional gods all contributed to the unwillingness of the kings, chiefs, and family heads to embrace Christianity.

The White Traders

The attitude and behavior of the white traders contradicted the teaching of the missionaries, a situation that confused the Yorubas immensely. Yorubas considered all white people to be missionaries, so when the white traders sold and drank alcohol and engaged in slave trade, they sensed a double standard and would not have anything to do with the white-man's religion.

The Priest/Babalawos

The priest and Babalawos had long enjoyed the respect of the Yoruba community, so when the white missionaries' religion threatened their position and standing with the community, they used what influence they had to subvert and oppose Christianity. They formed secret societies and

¹Grimley and Robinson, 279.

created fear in the minds of those who accepted Christianity. Their opposition led to the persecution of Christians in many towns of Yorubaland.

Spirit Worship

Yorubas believe in spirits and the devil. They perform a lot of sacrifices to appease these spirits and their ancestors. The contention by Christians that charms could have no effect on them was not readily believed. Their belief in spirit worship made it difficult for them to accept all the premises of Christianity. Converts turned to look to the Bible, the Lord's Supper, and baptism as forms of charms.

Language Barrier

Another barrier to the work of early missionaries in Yorubaland was language. Yorubas have many different dialects, and the missionaries often did not stay among the Yorubas long enough to understand and learn to communicate with people in the local dialects. They often left for furlough and by the time they returned they were often sent to an entirely different area.

Health

Mosquitoes played a negative role in the efforts of the missionaries to bring Christianity to the Yorubaland. Many early missionaries died from malaria because they did not have a cure for the disease then. Other health hazards

that mitigated against the missionaries were the tsetse flies and guinea worms or filariasis. Due to these many missionaries left Yorubaland.

Without any doubt one can see that in the nineteenth century, before the British protectorate was established, the propagation of the Gospel was very much more difficult than it was later. The political supremacy of whites and the truth of what they said was by no means accepted. Ajayi, commenting, said that "they had to persuade people with whom they treated on roughly equal terms, their doctrines and the practices which they entailed were tough, and it was not clear how one would benefit from subscribing to them."¹ Missionaries were equally involved in political situations, siding with one party or the other, especially when such a war did not permit the spreading of the gospel.

Some hinderances to the work of Adventist pioneers also occurred in Yorubaland. These are compared with the difficulties still faced by the church today. This enables us to understand why the progress of the work is slow.

Difficulties Faced by SDA Work in Yorubaland

Yoruba history is not complete without examining the influence of western mission churches. All over the area covered by Yorubas, one can notice vast influences not only

¹Peel, 49; also in J. F. A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891 (London: Longmans, 1965), 174.

upon the people but also on the physical environment; for example, building of good houses and in some interior areas, building of good roads and teaching about agriculture.

Seventh-day Adventists were not only late arrivals to Yorubaland, they also came during the world depression. Trade slowed down and contacts with the outside world were greatly diminished. This happened at a time when literacy, education, and western civilization was increasing in Nigeria. This was also the period of growth for some of the indigenous churches in Nigeria.¹ Some specific hindrances that made the work of Adventists among the Yorubas difficult are the following:

Islam

As earlier stated, Islamic leaders conquered many Yoruba towns and cities. They imposed their laws and rulers on the people. Later, many Yorubas accepted the Islamic religion. Muslim priests built up a large interest in Islam in big cities like Ibadan which was then hostile to missionaries. "Yoruba paganism was naturally open and syncretistic, and the magico-religious techniques of a religion whose showing was politically very impressive must have been very attractive for the Yorubas."²

¹Grimley and Robinson, 306.

²Peel, 47.

The Muslims in the Yoruba context did not push their converts too hard. Their doctrines and teachings were simple and accommodated the Yoruba customs and rituals. A Muslim could drink, smoke, and marry up to four wives, if he desired. Conversion to Islam did not make the same initial heavy demands as Christianity which required a complete abandonment of the convert's old traditional religion.

An old adage states: "Igbagbo koni ka ma soro"--our new faith does not disallow us from our traditional rituals. A man can become a Muslim without needing to understand all the teachings of his new faith. "The simple affirmation 'there is no god but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet' is sufficient for a man to be accepted into Islam. It did not attack polygamy, even where this involved more than four wives."¹

Islamic religion became a hinderance to Christianity because it accommodated Yoruba oral traditions. People found that the Islamic religion would not change their belief in veneration of ancestors, smoking, nor demand heavily from them; therefore Yorubas accepted islam readily. Adelowo said that "Islamic religion melted into Yoruba oral

¹Michael Crowder, West Africa under Colonial Rule (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1968), 357.

tradition and was widely accepted by Yorubas."¹ The ethical values and theology were acclaimed by Yorubas.²

They also persecuted many early Christians, and especially Adventists, in Kwara states where Muslims were predominant. Some Adventists lost their jobs, some were refused marriage partners within their localities. They were isolated and no one was willing to associate with them. Isolation means rejection to the Yoruba. Today, it is still hard to convert Muslims. Ede SDA Grammar School was built to convert Muslims, but none of them joined the church. So it is all over Yorubaland. The religion of the father is automatically the religion of the children. When a child is converted to Christianity, he is indirectly rejecting his clan and parents. That is one of the major reasons why, in the area where Muslims dominate, Christianity is less attractive to young people.

Polygamy

Harry Gailey said that a convert to Christianity was required to deny himself of many things which the clan or tribe considered normal and proper. The greatest general effect of Christianity was the stress placed upon the

¹E. Dada Adelowo, "Islam and Yoruba Religion in Contact: An Episode of Acculturation," Africa Theological Journal 13 (1984): 49-59.

²E. Dada Adelowo, "A Repository of Theological and Ethical Values in Yoruba Oral Traditions, The Quran, the Hadith, and the Bible," Africa Theological Journal 15 (1986): 139-140.

community and the extended family system. Christianity required a man to limit himself to one wife. If he already possessed more than one, he was forced to divest himself of the others, sending them and their children back to their families.¹

Missionaries could not harmonize the gospel with polygamy, but it was difficult for them to reason with new converts. M. N. Campbell, president of the European Division Conference, reported: "Our workers have taken a clear cut stand on the question, and require every convert to send away to their father's homes all but one wife before he can be baptized and admitted to the church fellowship."²

About the adverse effect of polygamy on Adventism during 1924, McClements, the first president of SDA work in Yorubaland, said, "The greatest of all hindrances seemingly is polygamy in Nigeria."³

The membership of the church between 1914 to 1918 was about 250. It increased to about 1,039 in 1944.⁴ It is safe to say that the membership would have doubled every

¹Harry Gailey, History of Africa from 1800 to Present (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972), 201.

²M. N. Campbell, "Mission Work in West Africa," Review and Herald, 28 July 1921, 10.

³W. McClements, "Nigeria," Review and Herald, 25 September 1925, 9.

⁴Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Pub. Assn., 1918 and 1945), 237, 207-208.

year had it not been the non-compromising stand the church took against polygamy.

Yoruba Traditions, Cults and Heathenism

In a recent letter from Mrs. Rebecca Modupeola Dada, a prominent Yoruba Adventist evangelist, she remarked that of all the problems mitigating against the rapid acceptance of Christianity by Yorubas, the most pertinent is the unwillingness on the part of Yorubas to forego completely their ties with traditional religion practices. They still find it difficult to cut off ties totally from traditional worship practices such as divination.¹

Secret cults, and other forms of traditional practices made evangelism among the Yorubas difficult at the time of the pioneers. Today the situation has not changed. Many children were killed or starved to death because of long-held traditional beliefs. McClement described an incident where a child was starved to death because the baby developed its upper teeth first. Yoruba's believe this to be a bad omen² and children who develop this way are left to die, rather needlessly.

McClements visited another Yoruba village where nearly all the children were suffering from smallpox. He noted that no attempt was made to isolate the sick ones from the healthy ones. They were all left to mingle with one

¹Rebecca M. Dada, Letter Joseph Ola, 25 October 1988.

²W. McClements, "Nigeria's Great Need," Review and Herald, 1 May 1930, 14.

another. The people believed that the terrible disease was a sign that one of their gods was displeased with them. From day to day sacrifices were offered to appease the offended deity, but still the disease continued to spread. Within ten days over seventy boys and girls were carried away from that one village. "Such is the awfulness and cruelty of the heathenish superstition that still blights the lives of thousands of these people,"¹ McClements concluded.

Many early Adventist pioneers were persecuted. A massive attempt was made by the worshippers of traditional religion to intimidate them and to stop their work, but they were relentless in their efforts.

Because some members did not bow to Egungun (the supposed departed spirit of the dead that annually visited their relatives), they were constantly harassed by those who believed in Egungun. It was customary to remove one's cap from one's head and prostrate oneself at the sight of Egungun. Violators of this rule were flogged mercilessly. At Oke-Ila, one of the strongholds of the Adventist work in Yorubaland, when an Adventist was flogged for not bowing down to Egungun, there was rioting.²

¹W. McClements, "Medical Work in Nigeria," The Advent Survey, April 1932, 3.

²Editor, "Souvenir Program of the Golden Jubilee Anniversary by the SDA Oke-Ila Orangun 1922-1976" (Ibadan: Starlight Press, 1972), 20.

David Atolagbe related a story about two Adventist women who went to market at Otun-Ekiti on the day that certain rituals were being performed by the followers of traditional religion. As punishment for violating the rule that women should be indoors during such ceremonies, the traditionalists went to the compound of these women and destroyed everything in sight. All the livestock in the neighborhood was killed. The property of innocent neighbors was deliberately destroyed so their neighbors would hold the women responsible for their loss, and also to serve as a warning to the entire community about the dangerous consequences of infringing upon the rules set by "pagans."¹ Some members in Ikun-Ekiti were imprisoned,² while some met their death at Odo-Owa.³ Because of all these problems, many Yoruba men and women were afraid to join the church.

Change of Culture

When the missionaries came to Yorubaland with the Adventist message, they also knowingly or unknowingly clothed that message in the cultures of the white man. The

¹David Atolagbe, "Souvenir Program of the Golden Jubilee Anniversary of the SDA Otun-Ekiti, 1923-1973" (Ibadan: Starlight press, 1973), 3.

²Editor, "Souvenir Program of the Golden Jubilee Anniversary of SDA Church Ikun-Ekiti 1924-1974" (Ibadan: The Starlight Press, 1974), 8.

³Editor, "Souvenir Program of the Golden Jubilee Anniversary of the SDA Ipoti, 1915-1965" (Ibadan: Fine Arts Press, 1965), 7.

new adherents were taught new ways of dressing. Both church members and workers were led to believe that the way the white man dressed was the Christian way. Without thinking very much about it, they gave the impression that Yoruba ideas, customs, and institutions were worthless, and in some respects, even unChristian. There was great resistance and stubbornness to give up such traditional practices as the beating of drums, dancing when burying the dead and showing emotion during worship which were frowned at by the missionaries. Church workers could not join their communities in social events like eating new yams or singing the praise of dead heroes (Ewi), even though these did not involve idol worship but were social interaction among the community. All clans gather together to rejoice. During this period, marriage ceremonies or sharing of inheritance may take place.

Lack of the Adequate Training
of Yoruba Church Workers

According to Gordon Robinson, one failure of the missionary bodies in the early days of their evangelism among the Yorubas was the neglect of training Yoruba ministers.¹ David Babalola came to a similar conclusion in his paper, "The Origin and Progress of Adventism in Yorubaland." He noted that early missionaries did not emphasize advanced training of Yoruba workers on the

¹Grimley and Robinson, 240.

mistaken grounds that Jesus Christ and his disciples did not attend any school, yet through the help of the Holy Spirit, they became great workers for God.¹ Until January 1959, no national Yoruba man held any responsible position in the church organization in Yorubaland.² Instead of educating the nationals, to help with the work, the early missionaries preferred to have their fellow overseas workers work with them. This attitude is illustrated by an appeal Elder Babcock made to the church members in America: "What can we accomplish with a few inexperienced men, and 17,000,000 people to warn? England has done nobly in providing sufficient money, but we need men, we need them urgently."³

The native pastors were as poorly paid as they were educated. Because they were so poorly paid, the native ministers could not afford decent dress. It was not uncommon to see native ministers go to church in faded and threadbare clothes that had been handed them by their fellow white missionary ministers. Yorubas did not believe that a man's religion should make them poor, so the youth had a negative impression of the ministry. In fact, the ministry was associated with poverty in Yorubaland, a perception that

¹David O. Babalola, "The Origin and Progress of Adventism in Yorubaland, Nigeria, 1914-1944" (Research Project for the Course Hist692, Andrews University, 1977), 29.

²Agboola, SDAs in Yorubaland, 20.

³Babcock, "Nigeria," 10.

made the ministry unattractive to young and talented converts.¹ Many ministers today working for West Nigeria mission are yet to have more than a high-school education.

Transfer of SDA Institutions out of Yorubaland

The transfer of Adventist church institutions from Yorubaland to other parts of West Africa also slowed the progress of the work in the area. In 1946 the Union Mission headquarters was transferred to Accra, Ghana. The Adventist press followed in 1951. In 1947 the Adventist Training College was also moved from Ibadan to Ihie, East Nigeria.² The church made these transfers because it was responding to development trends at the time, but the transfer was a huge loss to the work in Yorubaland. These institutions were prestigious to the Yorubas and the work. By this action, the social influence Yoruba Adventists had in the communities where these institutions had been was reduced.³

Government Restrictions

In the middle of the 1970s, the federal government of Nigeria embarked on a policy of naturalization of foreign

¹For the past ten years the Adventist Seminary of West Africa has been able to produce only twelve ministers among the Yoruba youth, and only five of these are in the ministry. The East Conference had about fifty. See ASWA record bulletin 1979-1989.

²Agboola, SDAs in Yorubaland 1914-1964, 15.

³Ibid.

and privately owned institutions. Some of the first institutions to be nationalized by the government were schools. The policy affected the only Adventist secondary school in Yorubaland--Ede Adventist Grammar School. This institution was taken over by the government in 1975. This school had long been a recruiting base for students for the Adventist College of West Africa,¹ also in Yorubaland. As soon as the government took over Ede, the enrollment at ASWA was drastically affected, negatively.

Sensing that the federal government had designs on ASWA, the ASWA board voted to change the name of the school from college to seminary in 1975. However, though the school was saved from a government takeover, the government imposed strict restrictions upon the educational programs the school could offer, with the result that the school was reduced to offering religious programs only. Even though the school is affiliated with Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, the government refuses to recognize the validity of the diplomas obtained by ASWA students. Since all the graduates of the institution cannot be pastors, even if they wanted to be, they cannot all be employed by the church. Hence, many parents and young people have been discouraged from sending their children to or attending an

¹ASWA--The Adventist Seminary of West Africa--the theological school established in 1959 by the SDA church to train ministers for West African countries. It was formerly named Adventist College of West Africa, the name was changed to Seminary so that the government would not nationalize it.

"unrecognized" school. This situation has been a major disappointment for the church work not only in Yorubaland but throughout West Africa.

The government also took over the administration and operation of the SDA medical facilities in the whole country, including the SDA hospital at Ile-Ife. The hospital was a vital part in the evangelistic work of the church in Yorubaland. When it was taken over, it effectively crippled the influence of the church in Yorubaland. Many of the workers, most of them SDAs, lost their jobs and baptisms in the area declined drastically. The nursing school, formerly run by the hospital, was equally taken over. Many Adventist students had to get a government education that does not portray good medical behavior. The church lost many potential medical personnel as a result of the take over and the church has not been able to regain its momentum since. The hospital was returned to the church a few months ago (January, 1989). Gradually the past glory may yet return, but the nursing school has not yet been returned to the church.

Urbanization

From the beginning, SDA evangelism was centered in the villages and small towns. In the words of Russell Staples, these were Christian villages "usually a mission

enclave separated from traditional society."¹ That is, the converts into the church in these villages formed another society within a society. This attitude frightened people away from the church. Even when openings occurred in a few cities, the church buildings were very small. A good example was the church at the headquarters in Ibadan which was built in 1923. The seating capacity of this "representative" church was less than 700. In Lagos, the Union headquarters is yet to put up a decent church building.² For some twelve years, its 300 plus members have worshipped under a tarpaulin shed. Commenting on this issue, Agboola said,

Most of the people who accepted the Adventist church were, for the first three decades, villagers. At the first, the gospel message was not received in the large towns and cities of Yorubaland.

This was because the Adventist missionaries tended to move far inland and preach in the villages and small towns. Another reason was the fact that the Yoruba kings (Oba) tended to direct the Adventist pioneer-missionaries to the villages around the capital towns. They did not like the new Christian faith right in their capital cities.³

During the early seventies (1970), there was an "oil

¹Russell Staples, "100th Anniversary of Adventists in Africa," Adventist Review, 30 July 1987, 20.

²A new building has just been started for the purpose now.

³D. Agboola, SDAs in Yorubaland, 31.

boom"¹ in Nigeria. This caused the villagers to migrate to cities in search of oil money. Many Adventist members from the villages were part of those who went to the cities. Most of these people, in time, obtained jobs that compelled them to work on the sabbath day, so they became backsliders. According to Dele Adebara, these groups of Adventists also had some personal problems that could have been solved had they been visited and encouraged by SDA ministers in the cities.²

Another group of Adventists Adebara identified as leaving their villages for the cities were those with families. The new city houses were far from the only small church in the city, and because they could not afford a taxi fare every Sabbath, they preferred to stay away. Soon they, too, quit going to church.³ This was another hinderance to the progress of the work.

SDA evangelism was usually among the middle- and lower-income class of Yoruba society. It rarely reached the upper, educated class and the rich. This did not help the growth of the church, since these latter classes control the

¹"Oil Boom"--The Federal government of Nigeria always exports oil to the Western world. An increase in oil prices made the government increase the salary of all workers. They call the period "Oil Boom" period.

²Dele Adebara to Ola, 9 November 1988. The letter is titled "Evangelism Among the Yorubas, Some Overlooked Channels."

³Adebara, Letter, p. 3.

government and economy of the country. The SDA church has no voice in the higher echelons of society and, until something is done to correct this situation, the church will continue to have a limited impact on mainstream Yoruba life.

Church Discipline of Members

The standard for disciples of church members was considered too rigid and either made the church unattractive to new members or caused a lot of attrition. Many early missionaries did not make any effort to understand the culture of the Yorubas but were quick to interpret any Yoruba practice they did not understand as a violation of Christian ethics which needed to be disciplined severely to serve as a deterrent to others.

Usually there were conflicts between these measures and the culture of the people. For example, procreating for one's dead senior brother through his widow is a prescribed law among the Yoruba people. If the widow refused to leave the family, Yoruba culture allowed such a woman to pick one of the relatives of the deceased to get children in the name of the deceased man. But the early SDA missionaries concluded that this constituted adulterous behavior. Such members were disfellowshipped. Many Yorubas became frightened about this and decided not to join the church, even though they were attracted to its basic teachings.

CHAPTER IV

A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST'S RESPONSE TO YORUBAS

In the previous chapters an attempt was made to show that the Yorubas tend to relate to the practical side of life and that they are conscious of their cultural heritage. What this means for the SDA church is that a way must be found to break the wall of separation existing between the church and the Yoruba culture.

Therefore, in this second part of the project, it is first my intention to suggest how ministers and laypersons can be trained in order to reach Yorubas. Second, the project recommends some ways that will make contemporary Yorubas more open to embrace the Adventist faith.

I would like to make a disclaimer at the outset. When training others for a more effective evangelism among the Yorubas, I do not compel everybody to adopt my methods, nor do I suggest that I have found the final answer to penetrate Yorubaland with Adventism. That ultimately is the Lord's work, and he will accomplish that through the Holy Spirit and other agents he chooses to use. What the project hopes to do, however, is initiate discussion about

how to make Adventism more attractive to Yorubas.

In an editorial published by the International Review of Missions in 1983, the following observations were made:

Christians live in the midst of people of various cultures, faiths and ideological persuasions. Although modernization and technological developments tend to impose a uniform culture on people, many people are becoming increasingly aware of their own cultural heritage and are seeking new ways of affirming it. Christians in different parts of the world are also challenged to search for symbols, images and thought patterns in which to express their faith in ways which make more sense to themselves and their neighbors.¹

The Seventh-day Adventist church finds itself in the midst of the Yorubas whose cultural heritage has withstood the encroachment of many foreign ideologies and religions. Therefore, one of the most pressing contemporary dialogues Adventists have to face and deal with is the concept of Yoruba culture. How much of it can be absorbed or rejected? Anthropologists and other behavioral scientists say that to be human is to be immersed in a specific culture.² Culture concerns both the internal life of people and the immediate environment in which they live. Anthropologists further say that comparisons between cultures tend to be made unfairly on the basis of whatever criteria are deemed important by

¹Editorial, "Witnessing in a Divided World, Learning and Living the Gospel," International Review of Mission 72 (1983): 41.

²Chang-Shik Lee, "Culture and Church Growth: A Study on Cross-Cultural Mission Affecting Church Growth in Korea, 1884-1910" (D.Min. dissertation, School of Theology of Claremont, 1983), 4.

the one who does the comparing.¹ Chang S. Lee states that cultures must not be rated as inferior or superior to each other, but, rather, as more or less equal to each other in their overall ability to meet the felt needs of their members.² Rather than moralizing about the good or bad in the given culture, one should accept the validity of the culture.³

In the light of the above observations, it is not an overstatement to say that people can be Christians without being Western or European. No New Testament author would suppose that Christianity is irrevocably tied to a specific culture or national character. Christ is always preached as Savior of the nations.⁴ If Gentiles in the first century could become Christians without becoming Jews, then it should be possible to articulate the Adventist message in non-American terms and symbols to reach the Yorubas.

The Need to Emphasize the Victorious Christ Concept

We begin the discussion of how Adventism can be made more attractive to Yorubas by examining some of the scholarship that suggests a predisposition on the part of

¹A. Beals and H. Hoijer, An Introduction to Anthropology (New York: MacMillan, 1959), 720.

²Lee, 9-10.

³Ibid.

⁴Norbert Greinacher and Alois Muller, Evangelization in the World Today (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 2.

West Africans towards the messages of Christianity. Harold Turner studied eight thousand texts used in a church in West Africa. The result of the study were very profound and insightful and gives a meaningful portrait of the type of Christian topics that appeal to the majority of the West Africans.

The study found that the sermons tended overwhelmingly to stress topics that emphasized hope and victory over the difficulties of life. Wrote Staples about H. Turner's findings:

In the Old Testament the passages most frequently used related to the healing of Naaman and the raising of the Shumanite's son. He found relatively little interest in the incarnation, life and death of Jesus, but much interest in the triumph and entry into Jerusalem, the temptation in the wilderness and the resurrection. . . . Considerable attention to the healing and liberating miracles.¹

Staples also refers to a related study by John Mbiti who observed that African Christians were not particularly enthusiastic about such christological titles as "Messiah, Christ, Son of David and Son of Man." On the other hand, they found such other titles as "Son of God, Redeemer and Lord; and alongside of these, Servant of God more meaningful." And as Staples writes:

Behind these titles is a concern for a mighty Christ who can drive away the deep dark forces that threaten the stability of life, for a Christ powerful enough to

¹R. Staples, "Christianity and the Cult of the Ancestors: Belief and Ritual among the Bantu-Speaking People of Southern Africa." (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1981), 366-367.

provide the blessings and benefits that are needed in this life, for a liberator and a redeemer. And because death in African societies is frequent and awesome, there is interest in a Christ who not only rose from the grave himself but can deliver his people from the fearful grip of death.¹

What is clear about these and other studies is that many African Christians are more at home with the victorious, conquering, compassionate Christ. The Yorubas of Western Nigeria are no different. Seventh-day Adventist evangelists and missionaries, aware of studies like these showing such strong cultural preferences in their conception of Christianity, will do well to make use of the implications of the study.

And what are the implications? For one thing, if the church wants to minimize the gulf between it and the Yorubas, it would make use of those Christian symbols that emphasize the aspects Yorubas are more likely to relate to. Most of the time, what the church needs are a few sermons that attract the initial attention of the Yorubas.² If it takes preaching the type of sermons that they are more likely to respond to, by all means we have to preach those sermons. What good does it do to preach about the incarnation of Christ, or the investigative judgment, or, for that matter, such Adventist topics as righteousness by

¹Ibid., 368.

²Sermons on creation, state of the dead, and Supreme Being are quite appropriate for this purpose.

faith and its attending trail--sanctification, justification, or glorification? Or the mark of the beast syndrome? There is nothing wrong with these topics. What is wrong is if we preach them at the wrong time, i.e., evangelistic meetings.

Many Yorubas are not that familiar with the depths of such topics and are confused if we introduce them early in our encounter with them. When we begin from their familiar ground or with topics they can identify with, and they become interested in what we are saying. Later we can introduce any topic we deem essential to their proper understanding of Christianity--but not until.

In chapter 3 of this project I referred to areas of Yoruba religious thought that had been negated by the early missionaries. In their zeal to ensure that the demons were chased away from Yorubaland completely, they displayed an arrogance that tended to exorcise God Himself from the Yoruba culture. It is my contention that God has revealed himself to the Yorubas, too. On the basis of general revelation, there is a point of contact between the Yorubas and the Christian religion.

There are striking parallels between the world view of Yorubas and many biblical accounts just as there are significant differences. It is incumbent upon the church to explain those points of agreement between the two bodies as a prelude to discussing the difficult differences. In doing

so, we should use some concepts of the Yoruba understanding of God as a bridge to illustrate our point of reaching the Yorubas with the gospel of Christ. By showing that the Adventist church has common grounds with Yorubas, the church, for the first time, would be presenting Adventism to Yorubas in a non-confrontational manner. In the past, the church had offended many who attended its meetings just by the topics presented. A typical subject that many people have taken exception to had been the "Mark of the Beast." This clearly maligned other churches. I believe this must be preached with caution. In this section I present some of those areas of commonalities for consideration.

God as Creator

This is a point where Adventist Christians and Yorubas agree in great detail. The New Testament teaches that God has put his imprint on his creation.¹ Ellen G. White comments: "The things of nature are the Lord's silent ministers, given to us to teach us spiritual truths. They speak to us of the love of God and declare the wisdom of the great Master Artist."² Everywhere, God has left his mark. Again Ellen White comments:

Now sin has marred God's perfect work, yet that handwriting remains. Even now all created things declare the glory of His excellence. There is nothing, save the

¹Rom 1:19-20.

²Ellen G. White, The Adventist Home (Nashville, TN: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), 147.

selfish heart of man, that lives unto itself. No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground, but ministers to some other life. There is no leaf of the forest, or lowly blade of grass, but has its ministry.¹

No wonder that Paul and Barnabas persuaded the people of Lystra to refrain from worshipping God's creation as gods, calling on them to return to the Living God who made heaven and earth.²

Beliefs about Creation: Yoruba and Adventist

In the Bible, we are presented with a small glimpse of existence before creation. In the words of the narrator of Genesis, "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep" ³. Yorubas generally believe that before the creation, the earth was a "watery and marshy" waste.

So this small common ground between the two faiths or beliefs should be used to initiate the meaning and implication of the entire creation, because beyond this point there are significant differences in the details of the two creation stories.

For example, while the Bible is explicit that God was the sole agent of creation--"He commanded and it stood

¹Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), 20.

²Acts 14:15-17.

³Gen. 1:2(a)

firm,"¹ in the Yoruba account, other divinities were commissioned to do the work of creation. An interesting description of the detail of creation according to the Yoruba version is told by Dada Adelowo:

In Yoruba religion, Olodumare summoned the arch divinity, Obatala, to His presence and charged him with the duty. To carry out the operation He gave him a leaf, packet of loose soil . . . and for tools, a five-toed hen and a pigeon.

When the arch divinity arrived he threw the loose soil on a suitable spot of watery waste. Then he let loose the hen and the pigeon; and these immediately began the work of scattering and spreading the loose soil. The operation continued for some time until a large part of the waste was covered. The chameleon was sent to inspect the operation two times. It was on the inspection that the work was certified good--that the earth was "wide enough" and sufficiently dry for human habitation and operations.²

It is important to emphasize the similarities in this account--because this recognizes the Yorubas as having an important insight in the creation story that is comparable to the Christian understanding of the same concept. This is important because for the first the Yorubas will feel they also have something to offer or a view that is recognized as valid or acceptable to Christian theology.

Once this recognition has taken place and the Yoruba feels that his or her views matter, an atmosphere of respect is created to engender a discussion about the many areas of dissimilarities--and there are many areas of discrimination.

¹Ps. 33:9.

²E. Dada Adelowo, "A Comparative Study of Creation Stories in Yoruba Religion," 31.

When Paul was confronted by the cynicism of the Epicurean and stoic philosophers at the Areopagus in Athens, he had ample evidence to denounce them as pagans and idol worshippers, because evidence from their environment made them appear as idol worshippers. But Paul resisted this easy impulse. Instead, he sought for areas of commonality between the religion he was expounding and the religion of the "men of Athens." Once he made up his mind to look for redeeming features in the practice of the idol-worshipping Athenians, it was easy for him to discover the inscription to the "unknown god." From this small crack, Paul was able to present the gospel of Jesus Christ to a people whose outer appearance portrayed them as heathen.

The result of his ministry among the Athenians is remarkable in that even though some mocked at him, others pledged to "hear him again on this." They did, and Luke adds what is always music to the ears of every evangelist, "Some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris and others with him."¹

The Bible not only presents God as the creator of heaven and earth,² it also identifies heaven as the abode of God and His angels.³ In Isaiah (66:1), God Himself identifies heaven with his throne; in Deut 26:15 a call is

¹Acts 17:32-34.

²Gen. 1:1; Acts 14:15-17; Rev. 14:7.

³Rev. 4:1-11; 5:1-14.

made to God to "look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless they people Israel; to John (1:9), God is "the Lord God of heaven" and in the Lord's prayer, Jesus taught us to pray to "our Father which is in heaven."¹

Here, as well, Adventist evangelists can show the similarity in belief with the Yorubas belief systems regarding the heavens. Yoruba understanding concerning the heavens and its relationship with the supreme being can be gleaned from the meanings of the names and titles given to Olodumare. Dada Adewolo² has an impressive list of these titles. Some excerpts from his list are: Olodumare is:

Alala funfun-Oke, literally, "the One clothed in white robes." The white robes is an allusion to the sky.

Oba to fi awoosanmo bora, the King who clothes Himself with the sky--heaven.

Oba orun, the King who dwells in the heavens. The permanent canopy of heaven belongs to him and manifests Himself to the entire created earth.

Concerning the appellation, Olorun, Adewolo has this to say:

The word can be broken into the following component parts: O-ni-orun, the owner of the skyey heaven. It now becomes clear the Olorun, Oluwa Olodumare, Eleda [all essentially meaning] God is the Creator of the heavens. And in this connection, He has no rival, no equal, no

¹Matt. 5:45.

²E. Dada Adelowo, "A Comparative Study of Creation Stories in Yoruba Religion," 30.

competitor, no partner. The creation of the heavens is His sole prerogative.

It is important that such similarity be vigorously pointed out, not that they are essential for salvation, but because they can be the springboard for breaking down prejudices and misconceptions in the mind of the people. If Christianity and Yoruba traditional beliefs are shown to have some things in common, then it could be demonstrated that the differences could be explained in favor of Christianity. The chances of the Yoruba people even paying attention to what we have to say is conditioned on our understanding of their world view. If we do not, our attempts to make Adventists of them will fail because we did not communicate with them in a similar language.

There are still other areas in the Yoruba account of creation that run counter to the Genesis account and these need not be overlooked. A case in point is the duration of time God used in creation itself. While the Genesis account shows that the creation was completed in six days, and God rested on the seventh day, in Yoruba religion, the creation is said to have been completed at day four, and the fifth day was "set apart for the worship of Olodumare and for rest."¹ Consequently, as Adelowo suggests, "Yoruba traditions have it that some major divinities still have their sacred days every fifth day."

¹Ibid., 36. It should be pointed out, though, that there is no concensus on which day is the fifth day.

The Yoruba understanding of "Days of rest" or the "Day of the divinities" is closely connected with the worship of Supreme Being; but, as Adewolo points out, even though Yoruba religion considers the "day of rest" to be sacred, "[they] do not see anything bad in entrusting on their daily routine after the worship of God."¹

In the past, many Yoruba traditionalists who had become interested in Adventism have not made a smooth transition from their religion to Adventism. They wanted to go about their routine business after worship. This is where it is important to stress both the similarities--the belief in a rest day dedicated to the worship of God--and the differences--Adventist understanding of the day of rest goes beyond the worship service. I believe that when Yorubas are made aware of the similar areas of belief on this point, and the differences are carefully pointed out, it is easier for the new converts to observe the whole day because they become conscious of the uniqueness of Adventism in this regard.

¹Ibid., 37.

God as Ruler and Sustainer
of His Creation

Jesus' reference to the care God gives to the birds and lilies¹ make the point that God is the ruler and preserver of his creation. "Thus speaks the Lord who is God, he who created the skies and stretched them out, who fashioned the earth and all that grows in it, who gave breath to its people, the breath of life to all who walk upon it."²

Yorubas also believe this. They affirm the kindness and providence of God. He has final authority over everything. Yorubas have the saying: Awimayehun, asoro matase--which means, God spoke and it stood firm, he commanded and it was so. It is Olorun alone who gives the rain instead of drought; food to mankind instead of hunger and famine; joy instead of pain. Even though the Babalawos are consulted to bring rain, they know who deserves the honor. They always emphasize this: Iba d'owo Olorun, Iba d'owo enia--meaning honor to God first then to man. They believe that God has the final say. Even the Babalawos can be approached with the Adventist message by appealing to their proverbs. It would be easy for the Christian Adventist to establish contact with the Yoruba traditionalist when he utilizes the Yoruba traditional

¹Matt 7:25-32.

²Isa 42:5 (NEB).

proverbs in presenting the message that "The Lord of heaven and earth does not live in stones. . . . He is not far from each one of us . . . for in Him we live and move and have our being."¹ Yoruba people readily agree with the two attributes of God in this passage--his sustaining power and his omnipresence and immanence. Yorubas have a popular proverb that goes: Ibi gbogbo nile Owo--meaning everywhere is a holy ground for God. This knowledge would lead them from idols to worship the true God, for God is not housed in images of gold, silver, and stone. No wonder Yorubas do not build temples or places of worship for God as they do for Orisas.

God as Judge

The ideal of justice is very important to Yorubas. This is evident by the numerous adages that reflect this concept. A few examples include: Olorun ni oba adake dajo--God is Judge and King who ruled justly. He is the final court of appeal. Fija fun Olorun ja fi owo le'ran-- it is God who defends the defenseless. Malu ti ko ni iru, Olorun ni nle esinsin fun--it is God who drives away the flies from a cow who has no tail. To the Yoruba, God dislikes evil and punishes the evildoer. This knowledge can be utilized by the Christian Adventist in presenting to the Yorubas the

¹Acts 17:24,27,28.

Biblical doctrine of judgment.¹ Another popular proverb Bo pe b'oya, ile yio pa osika--either now or later the earth will slay the wicked. (Earth here means God.)

Pneumatology

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit can also be presented in an attractive way to the Yorubas. On the compound of every palace in Yorubaland is the Ogbagba, or Igi Oba, or Odan or Iyeye tree. Usually a bowl or pot of water is placed on this tree. The general beliefs about this water is that it is the water of life providing sustenance to the living. It is to remind the king's household of God's presence. This tree usually has three branches, and it is interpreted to be the three powers of Olorun. People look at this tree and say, Aaro meta kiida obe sina--the trinity never fails. The Seventh-day Adventist Christian can use this phenomenon to explain the concept of the trinity, with the third person being the Holy Spirit whose primary role is to protect people from danger, evil forces, and the powers of darkness.

Christology

The fundamental difference between the Christian faith and all other religions is the place of Jesus Christ. It is this that makes a difference between general and special revelation. To all Christians, Jesus is the Son of

¹Act 17:31.

God, as the Bible explains.¹ One of the greatest challenges of this project is how to present the gospel of Christ, His birth, life, death, and resurrection to Yorubas.

In public evangelism, we start with subjects too difficult for many people to understand. One cannot accept Christ until one knows enough about him. But King Jesus, truly man and God, make sense to Yoruba men, since they usually make their heroes gods.

The humanity of Jesus can be easily presented to the Yoruba man. In Yoruba society, generic man fully realizes himself as man by belonging to a family, clan, or tribe. In an evangelistic crusade among the Yorubas, Christ's identity as a man would have to be emphasized. He must be presented as One who was born through Mary, had brothers and sisters, of the tribe of Judah, and a descendant of David, the great "king" of Israel. In this light, the baptism of Jesus can be explained as his decision to continue to belong to his community in much the same way as young people between the ages of 20 and 25 in Yorubaland decide on their own to partake of the initiation ceremony that ushers them into adulthood and the mature community.²

Christ's humanity can also be shown by his dependence on powers beyond himself. This is important because in

¹John 3:16; Matt 1:22-23; 3:16-17.

²This practice is particularly prevalent in Ekiti (called "Omo egbe") and Oyo (referred to as "awon ewe").

Yoruba anthropology, the finitude of man is demonstrated by man's dependence on the ancestral spirits--through sacrifices, prayers, rituals, and libation. Thus the occasion when Jesus prayed to God would be a concrete expression of his total dependence on God.¹

The sinless life of Jesus can be presented as a life so dependent upon God that he did not engage in any anti-social behavior. His life was a life of absolute loving service, so perfect that He died for man. To the Yorubas, this would essentially make Christ a hero . . . a person who demands respect and worship. Jesus would become an ancestor par excellence.

The divinity of Jesus can also be expressed, not through the use of the term "God," but rather through a description of his activities in a manner reminiscent of the activities of God the Father. This would not only be acceptable to the Yoruba man but would also be in harmony with biblical examples. It is significant to note that the New Testament rarely uses the term "God" for Jesus Christ. Brown has shown that all such occurrences are in liturgical formulas and rarely, if ever, in narrative and epistolary literature.² In the Synoptics, Jesus rarely applied the expression "Son of God" for himself. Hence, Jesus' divinity

¹Luke 22:40-42.

²Raymond E. Brown, "Does the New Testament Call Jesus God?" Theological Studies 26 (1965): 545-573.

should be presented in such functional terms as his wielding divine power in miracles, his eternity and pre-existence, his creative ability, and his sinlessness. In this way, the Yoruba man would see Jesus as a "man not like other men," and One who possesses the same characteristics and does the same work as God.

In the light of the above, the most appropriate Christology for the Yoruba man would be one in which Jesus would be seen as a unique link (mediator) between Olorun and man.¹ Since the Yorubas envision God (Olorun) as both oba (King) and baba (Father), Jesus can be presented as the spokesman of God that he was and still retain his divinity. Asojuoba or Aremo, meaning Crown Prince,² is one who possesses royal authority and in all public matters is himself a king. Thus, Yorubas will understand Christ's royal priesthood. Throne of Olorun would become a symbol that the people of God are united. Since Jesus in his capacity as Aremo officiates on this throne with his Father (God), Yorubas can be urged to go "boldly before the throne of grace to obtain help in times of need."³ Let them know that their coming does not require any gift on their side. It would be comforting to the Yoruba man to know that the

¹1 Tim 2:5-7; Heb 8:6, 9:15, 12:24.

²Samuel Johnson, Th. History of the Yorubas, 47. This is a name for the eldest son of Yoruba kings who have equal power with the father.

³Heb. 4:16.

one officiating at that throne is their own "Ancestor," and he is willing to give them power to overcome all adversities brought about by evil powers. Having lived a perfect sinless life,¹ Jesus can be presented as one who would help the Yoruba man overcome his frailty, finitude, and natural proneness to evil. It is a popular saying that if a person can accept Jesus as a personal Saviour and Lord, such a person will accept other doctrines if presented with love.

It is my present conviction that contemporary Yoruba Adventists cannot exert much influence on the Yoruba people² and, consequently, the church will not grow unless it adapts itself to its environment. When the message of the church is conveyed through Yoruba symbols and its policies cease to be just another off-shoot of colonial practices, the future of the church will look bright.

We know that the Gospel does not have to be seen and understood through the lenses of Western glasses or accepted via Western images before it is accepted by God; God encompasses all cultures and languages.

Yet it is the responsibility of Adventist Christians to adopt the best possible methods to maximize the result of their ministry everywhere. That is why capitalizing on the unique similarities between Adventist doctrines and Yoruba

¹John 5:18-20.

²This is so, because ministers and laypersons are yet to receive the training on how to present the SDA message to Yorubas in their own setting or culture.

religious thought to open a meaningful dialogue with Yorubas is a step that should be taken with haste if the church wishes to make gains in its evangelistic endeavors in Yorubaland. Given time and adequate training in the principles enunciated above, I believe that great strides can be made for the church in Yorubaland in the twenty-first century.

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CHAPTER V

TRAINING MINISTERS AND THE LAITY FOR PUBLIC EVANGELISM IN YORUBALAND

One of the responsibilities given to believers of every generation is to reach the unsaved with the message of salvation. Through the years, Adventists have developed many different methods to accomplish this task. Public evangelism is one of the resources which the Lord has given the church to help reach people who do not know Christ. The local church evangelistic crusade is one method used to make new converts for Christ.

While some today may question the relevancy of the evangelistic crusade, many pastors have found it to provide a very successful avenue for reaching the unsaved. Often the doubts raised concerning the effectiveness of these meetings are a result of difficulties which a pastor has experienced or heard from others. The evangelistic crusades offers many benefits to a local church that engages in it.¹ The first benefit that the evangelistic crusade provides is

¹I am indebted to Richard P. Evans who wrote his dissertation entitled "A Manual for Conducting Evangelistic Meetings in the Local Church in Suburban America" (D.Min. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1986) for most of the ideas on public crusades.

that people come to know Jesus Christ. When the unsaved are present and the Spirit of God is working, conversion usually takes place.¹ As it takes place, enthusiasm develops which spreads through the entire congregation. A wise minister is able to build on this in the weeks that follow to encourage further outreach to the lost.

Second, public evangelism encourages the congregation to invite those to whom they have witnessed to hear the new preacher, or the church pastor. They hear the same message from a different voice and the Holy Spirit usually uses this new setting to touch the hearts of such invited guests to make decisions for Christ. Their faith and those that invited them are strengthened as a result. It also encourages those who invited them to continue their faithful witness when they see their work rewarded.²

Third, evangelistic meetings occasionally encounter those who have rejected the message of salvation on previous occasions. The crusade provides an opportunity to water seed previously sown. Paul said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth."³

¹Richard P. Evans, "A Manual for Conducting Evangelistic Meeting in the Local Church in Suburban America" (D.Min. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1986), 198.

²Ibid.

³1 Cor 3:6.

Fourth, the evangelistic meeting can be used as a teaching tool to show believers how to witness. As the evangelist presents the messages night after night, laymen can observe and from there pick up new methods of reaching the unsaved. Another incentive is that old church members who may be dependent may be revitalized for Christ.

Fifth, the evangelistic meetings can also provide motivation for people to go out and witness. When one listens daily to an energetic preacher, one who is enthusiastic about winning souls for Christ, the enthusiasm can be contagious. When people's hearts are touched, they are easily challenged to witness.

Sixth, sometimes an evangelistic series awakens the church that has been lukewarm and provides an avenue for members to bury their differences.

Finally, the evangelistic meeting is one way that God can reward the obedience of his people. As they bring their unsaved family members, friends, and acquaintances, they too can be happy that they have contributed to the cause of God.

When the evangelist is sent by the conference to conduct a crusade and proper preparations are made before he arrives, most of the difficulties associated with this type of outreach are eliminated.

Robert Coleman commented that

The responsibility to evangelize the world rests with every Christian. No one can be excused on the basis of

not being gifted or called. For Jesus has made it quite clear that His disciplining ministry is woven into the fabric of His life, and its ultimate objective, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is to bring God's good news to every creature.¹

This is right in the sense that evangelism can only be done by live Christians who witness individually and collectively for Christ. This is in many respects the New Testament style of evangelism. Thus, ministers who are adequately trained in the art of public evangelism are extremely important in any plan to conduct evangelism among the Yorubas. The question is how do we begin and what are the ways to train ministers who will later train their church laymen? Below are some methods suggested to meet our present needs.

Invitation for Training of Pastors/Laymen

The invitation to pastors and laymen for training is patterned after Jesus' invitation to his disciples to become "fishers of men." He spoke to each of them in a language they understood. Ellen G. White said:

Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. No sooner does he come to know the Saviour than he desires to make others acquainted with Him. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver.²

¹Coleman, Evangelism on the Cutting Edge, 140.

²Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1909), 102.

This part of the project seeks to help pastors and lay people learn how to share and present to others what Christ has so freely given to them. The work which Jesus' disciples did, we also are to do. The beginning of our work is to train the pastors for a week. Lay people are to be trained over a weekend at camp meetings. We consider first the training of the pastors.

First a letter¹ is sent through the president's office to pastors who want to improve their evangelistic outreach. These pastors would attend the meetings to learn and put their learning into practice. These training sessions would be conducted at appropriate times and at the right venue. At the moment, the most appropriate site for conducting the meetings is at the campus of the Adventist Seminary of West Africa. The campus is centrally situated and would give students the opportunity to attend as well. Appropriate lectures for teaching the pastors are outlined below.

Lectures and Outlines

Lecture 1

A. Who are the Yorubas?

1. The history of the Yoruba origin
2. The religion of the people
3. The development of our SDA work and problems facing the church

¹See appendix C.

Aim: To let the ministers know the problem of the church and what remedy is to be given.¹

B. The three religious groups of the land

1. The Christians/Independent African churches
2. The Muslim
3. The traditional religions

Aim: To let them know the beliefs of these people and how to approach them in a non-confrontational way.

Lecture 2

A. The call to witness as pastor/evangelist

1. The Gospel Commission--Matt 29:19-20
2. Eph 1, 2, 4, 5
 - i) Hearing the Gospel (Eph 1:13)
 - ii) Speaking the Gospel (Eph 4)
 - iii) Including the Gospel (Eph 2)
 - iv) Giving the Gospel (Eph 5:2)
 - v) Holy Spirit and the Gospel (Eph 1:19-20)

Aim: To let laity know it is their duty to witness.

B. Ellen White's admonitions

1. The Acts of the Apostles (p. 9)
2. The gospel worker
3. Evangelism
4. Ministry of healing, (p. 102)

Aim: To teach that witnessing is for all; that members are to disciple

Lecture 3

A. Mobilizing the whole church for visitation

1. Paul's message in Rom 1:8, Phil 4:23
2. Leadership role
3. The responsibility of laymen in witnessing

¹The education is to enlighten them to the similarity and the dissimilarity between Christianity and Yoruba traditions.

Aim: To involve laymen in taking a leadership role as pastors.

Lecture 4

How to Run a Public Crusade

A. Setting of goals

1. Survey to know the community
 - a. Know why the survey is to be done
 - i) It helps to determine the religious thinking of people in any particular community
 - ii) It gives further opportunity for members doing the survey to make friends and share the claims of Christ
 - iii) It provides an atmosphere for training people in how to share their faith with others.¹
 2. Set a goal of numbers of baptism
 3. Determine sermon titles based on the survey²

B. A revival for the home church

1. A week of revival, preaching about the act of getting out to reach others
2. Point out the duty of reaching the Yorubas, our family members, and friends for Christ
3. Conclusion of the revival calls for the need of volunteers to assist in the coming public campaigns
4. Divide members into prayer groups

C. A formation of bands among the volunteers

1. Advertisement Committee
2. Prayer Committee
3. Music Committee
4. Visitation Committee
5. Ushers Committee
6. Health Committee
7. Finance Committee (budget committee)

¹A copy of community religious survey is adapted from Bill Bright's book Share the Abundant Life (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1971), 53. See appendix A.

²See the note on the Lecture VIII. Important principles of sermon titles.

Lecture 5

Aim: To teach how to conduct a systematic follow up

- A. Motivation: Benefits of a good plan for follow up.
- B. Directions: Aids for promoting spiritual growth
 - 1. How to conduct the regular follow up meeting (letters, telephone calls)
 - 2. How to schedule and direct personal follow-up appointments
 - 3. How to introduce the convert into the church
 - 4. How to introduce the convert into deeper spiritual friendship with Christ
 - 5. How to introduce basic steps toward Christian maturity
- C. Pastor's Bible class
 - 1. Bible study formation--informal style
 - 2. Testimonies period (sheet for it)
 - 3. Need for prayer; how to encourage them to pray
 - 4. Questions and answers
- D. Bridging the credibility gap
 - 1. Selection of spiritual friends
 - 2. Pastor, lay leaders, visitation
 - 3. Baptism
 - 4. How to involve the new converts in the sharing of faith

Lecture 6

- A. Introduction of evangelistic messages
 - 1. How to communicate the fundamental beliefs of SDA in non-confrontational ways
 - 2. How to make the message relevant to Yorubas in their own setting.

Lecture 7

Audiovisual Aids

1. Movies/videos
2. Slides
3. Overhead projectors
4. Loud speakers, etc.

Lecture 8

The arrangement of topics and titles of the sermons.

Let us explain briefly what is to be done in each lecture.

Content of Lectures

Lecture I: The Yorubas and Their Religion

In this lecture I will talk about Yorubas' oral tradition and survey their history to show that God has led the Yorubas as a nation. Today, God will finally reach the Yoruba through Jesus Christ his Son.

I will also explain why the SDA church has not been as successful at soul winning among the Yorubas as have the other churches. The remedy is to make the university-educated Yorubas as well as high-school students the target of the church's evangelistic thrust. When converts are made among this class of Yoruba citizens, the church ensures that its future is better established. Furthermore, details of the fundamental beliefs of some leading religious denominations as well as that of Yoruba traditional religion among the Yorubas will be given to pastors in attendance.

During its evangelistic campaigns, the church can exploit the popular Yoruba myth about Moremi and her son

Oluorogbo to its advantage when introducing Christ to the audience.

In Yoruba mythology, Moremi was a woman who donated her only son Oluorogbo to the goddess of a river called Esinmirin in order to save the city of Ile-Ife, the central city of the Yorubas. The point should be established that if Moremi could give her only son to the river goddess in order to save Ile-Ife, could not also God, the Creator of heaven and earth, do the same in order to save all mankind.

Lecture 2: Soul-winning Experience

This lecture is to lead ministers into a soul-winning experience.

1. Drive to get everybody to witness for Christ. No one can be a soul winner, no matter how gifted the person might be, if he/she does not have Christ within himself. Create an atmosphere of unity among the ministers so they can reach out to others. (Base sermons on Eph 1-5.)
2. Make use of tracts that contain the beliefs of the SDA church. These should be made available for distribution by every adult members of the church.
3. Present statements from Ellen G. White's writings showing that every church member should witness and make disciples for God. Pastors attending the lecture should designate the last weekend of each month to

training members for witnessing in their local churches.

Pastors will be trained how to train their laymen to lead visitors to Christ. Impress it on the pastors that their churches must be soul-winning churches every day of the year.

Lecture 3: The Concept of
The Concept of Sustained
Evangelism

One practical way to sustain evangelism in the church after the public campaign is to divide the church community into sections or divisions to take care of the new converts.

Divide members in a way that they can be closer to those new converts or visitors, and then begin a weekly visitation program. Let the laity know ahead of time what to discuss with new converts as they visit them (some of these speeches will be printed and given to laity Sabbath afternoon after official lectures).

Doctrines of the church must be simplified for laity, and the pastor must include the doctrines of the SDA Church in his yearly calendar.

The key to sustained evangelism is continued training. Plan soul-winning campaigns and visitation programs that will keep the church members busy for the Lord Jesus Christ. The local church must run at least two big public campaigns within a year and two revival services

lasting for three weeks in a year. A pastor must not expect one campaign to be the solution to reaching his community in one year. Constantly seeking for the lost sheep must be the mark of the church.

Pastor's Role in Sustaining Evangelism

1. Continue to win souls. If you stop winning souls once you have begun, your church members will lose their zeal and follow your negative example.

2. Let members know you are winning souls. This is not to inform them, but to constantly remind them that this has become the theme of your church and of your life. In your sermons make references to people you have spoken to occasionally; bring the people you have led to join the church to give a testimony.

3. Use the announcement period. A pastor can increase his effectiveness as a leader by planning his church announcements. An announcement can be both entertaining and informative. Every time you make announcements, make some reference to soul winning and/or church visitation.

4. Pastors must give credit to soul winners. (a) When some church members begin an effort to witness openly for Christ, recognize their effort during your sermons. (b) When you introduce new converts into the church, give recognition to the one who won them to Christ. Allow those

who won the converts to introduce them to the church. Let them stand and be recognized together. (c) Allow new converts to give testimonies. This is very important to the Yorubas. Let the lay person who was involved in the conversion tell his side of the conversion process. Then as a pastor take a moment to remind the people of why this has happened. "It happened because we have people going out every day visiting in homes and talking to people about Christ."

Lecture 4: The Crusade

There are specific things to be done before the crusade date. One must take note first of the two-season climate in Nigeria--the rainy and the dry. It is appropriate to do the campaign in the dry season, usually from November to late February.

Plan so members can invite their relatives, neighbors, and city, town, or village age-group friends to the meeting and have them submit their names so they can be visited before the date of the crusade.

Plan a revival for the church members for a week. The sermon must center on getting out to reach others. Make the urgency of the soon coming of Christ another base. Entitle the sermon, "The Great Commission." There are three reasons why the message must reach our community.

1. Because Christ commanded it (Matt 28:18-20). We are

in spiritual warfare and Jesus Christ, our commander-in-chief, has commanded us to "go."

2. Because men are lost without Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
3. Because men everywhere are hungry to know God.

With a proper strategy, we can see the Great Commission fulfilled in our generation. In order to make disciples, we must be true disciples for we will reproduce after our kind. With this conclusion, pass paper to members to volunteer in assisting during the campaign. Let each select the areas in which they can be helpful. Make prayer the center of the revival.

Prior to the decision to have the crusade, a demographic study of the area in which the campaign is to be conducted should be done to determine the main target of the campaign. Use the survey. With the numbers of volunteers after the revival, form church members into committees.

The Committees

Plan with the groups that you have within the church depending on the number of your volunteers.

Advertising Committee

Advertising is the very life blood for the success of a product in the world of business. Without it, new products would either fall short of their ultimate potential or fail completely before the public has a reasonable chance

to try them. The proper advertising of an evangelistic meeting is no different and is crucial to its ultimate success. Failure to do an adequate job in this area will probably result in diminished numbers of people who attend the meeting. This, of course, translates into a far less-effective meeting for the evangelist or the pastor. In order for the unsaved to be reached for Christ, it is essential for them to come under the ministry of the Word of God. Once they have the opportunity to hear a clear presentation of the gospel, they are better able to make an intelligent decision concerning their salvation. Proper advertising assists the people of a local church as they seek to invite their friends and neighbors to hear the visiting evangelist.

Possibilities for advertising. There are countless avenues for advertising a church meeting in Yorubaland. The only limitations to the options lie in the creative talents of the individuals responsible for advertising and the financial resources available for advertisement. The advertisement committee in charge must think in terms of the realistic and the affordable. According to the survey of Philip Evans, when one wants to reach the community, personal invitation ranks number one. This is followed by

mail, newspaper, advertising, printed handbills, radio advertising, posters, and finally television.¹

If the advertisement is made to look like a news item, many local radio and TV stations as well as newspapers will carry them free of charge. Many free advertising opportunities are available to the church and the local church should do well to seek these out.

When doing these advertisements, have a well-written news release and picture for each paper, radio, and television. Another very important free advertisement avenue open to the church is encouraging church members to invite their family and friends to the meeting.² The church should involve its total membership in the advertisement effort because in the end they will make the difference in the success or failure of the meetings. Without them, the best advertising campaign will be a costly exercise because the personal element will be lacking. Yoruba people tend to follow people they know like members, clan, relatives, or friends when dealing with unfamiliar things.

¹Philip R. Evans, "A Manual for Conducting Evangelistic Meeting," 65.

²This is because Yorubas have a high regard for personal invitation. In the big cities like Ibadan, Oyo, Ilesha, Abeokuta, Lagos, or Kabba the mail system will work faster and newspaper and printed handbills will reach someone within a day or two. Most homes in both villages and small towns in Nigeria today have radios and televisions.

Well-designed literature for inviting people to the meeting is essential. It can be in the form of a letter or handbill.¹ It must be designed as a personal invitation and must include a map to the place of the meeting.

The last form of advertising is posters.² Posters are effective in small communities but do not work well in large cities. The church should find out which of these advertising items is most effective in the area where the meeting will be held. Advertisements are to be attention getters. Items like bumper stickers and balloons could serve that purpose well. The items would be imprinted with the message of the coming meeting and are quite inexpensive when purchased in bulk quantities.

After the church has agreed on the type of advertisement to use, it is suggested that the preliminary exploration into the advertising possibilities begin two months in advance. Unless the church starts early, time will slip by and the deadlines will add pressure to the already tight schedules of the people involved. Use one month to plan and another to advertise.

Finance Committee

An evangelistic crusade must plan financially so a finance committee should be established. The need for

¹See appendix E for a copy.

²See appendix D.

financial planning is even more crucial given Nigeria's ever worsening inflated economy. Some typical areas that must be budgeted for are: advertising, gifts, evangelist, renting of hall; electricity--including electrical components such as bulbs, wires, standing generator; pulpit; music (invitation of special choir or individual artist); printing; and secretarial supplies.

The finance committee should always try to spend within its allotted budget and resist the temptation to overspend. However, proper care must be taken to ensure that bills are paid on time, that the evangelist is adequately provided for, and the gifts are quality products but at moderate prices.

Because of the complexities involved in the financial planning for events like evangelistic meetings, it is suggested that people within the church who have business experience should be entrusted with the financial planning.

The Prayer Committee

It is difficult to point to one aspect in preparation for an evangelistic meeting as more important than any other. Every detail has its proper place in the overall plan for a successful crusade. Yet, when it comes to the subject of prayer, its importance cannot be over emphasized.¹

¹Philip R. Evans, "A Manual for Conducting Evangelistic Meetings," 161.

The Bible is clearly emphatic concerning the role and effect of prayer in the Christian life. Unless the Spirit of God is working in answer to prayer, all "expert" preparation for the crusade will be in vain. Fervent prayer is daily needed in saving souls for the master. God never promises to bless the plans for the church, but He does promise to answer its prayer.¹

According to the account of early apostles, corporate prayer preceded Pentecost.² Even after Pentecost, the converts or believers continued to devote themselves to prayer together.³ Before the apostles witnessed, according to the records in Acts of the Apostles, fervent prayer preceded their acts.⁴ The Holy Ghost then descended and they "began to speak the word of God with boldness." Prayer led to filling; filling led to powerful witness.

Three to four months before the crusade begins, families within the church must be asked to pray for the success of the meeting. A more concentrated church-wide effort should commence approximately three weeks before the start of the campaign and every one should be encouraged to begin praying daily.

¹Ibid.

²Acts 1:14.

³Acts 2:42.

⁴Acts 4:31; 4:24.

Sometimes, it is good to divide church members into groups of threes or fours for the purpose of prayer. They could send the names of those they are intending to invite to the meetings to the church so that the whole congregation could pray for them. The mid-week prayer session could be devoted for this.

During the revival week, a week before the meetings, prayer groups may meet in selected homes throughout the city or community. Scheduling meetings on different evenings allow more people to attend than if they are held on the same night every week.

Two days before the crusade, between five and seven individuals could be selected to form a special prayer band. Their main duty would be to pray for the evangelist every night as he mounts the pulpit to speak. The chairman of the band must co-ordinate all of the prayer activities so that everything goes smoothly. The congregation should be encouraged to become involved in this intercessory prayer ministry whose concern is for reaching the lost for Christ. When the church catches the spirit of prayer and begins to take it seriously, God will work through his people.

Music Committee

A music committee should be formed very early and charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating all the music for the crusade. Music plays an important part in any evangelistic meeting. It sets the tone of the service from

the very beginning and can be greatly used by the Holy Spirit to prepare hearts for the message of salvation.¹

There is an added incentive to take advantage of the common appeal of music, because Yorubas in general appreciate music in any form. In Yoruba religion, music provides the medium through which the worshippers are in constant ecstatic communication and communion with their God and gods.²

About a month before the campaign begins, a standing choir or singing group must be ready with inspiring songs. The best song leader in the district or in the church must be recruited for each week. Such a person must be able to conduct the audience nicely at the beginning as all the people sing together either from slides shown on the screen or from a song book prepared for the occasion.

A common hymn or gospel melody that elevates faith must be selected, e.g., "Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine," "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," "Amazing Grace," etc., also traditional local folk songs like "Ore-Ofe Ohun Iyanu," "Oba kanle f'okun weri," "Esu kole duro de Jesu," "Emi y'io so o d'a apeja enia," etc. Each song leader should have a pleasant personality and be a person who is able to get people to sing so the spirit of the service is not only

¹Philip R. Evans, "A Manual for Conducting Evangelistic Meetings," 176.

²Ademola Adegbite, "The Drum and Its Role in Yoruba Religion," Journal of Religion in Africa 18,1 (1988): 15.

relaxed but happy, informal, and friendly. There must be a theme song for the campaign.

The organist, pianist, guitarist, drummers, all play vital roles in creating this special atmosphere for the evangelistic meeting. Since the invited guests usually have pre-conceived ideas about the church, the opening impression of the service will go a long way towards changing their minds and getting them in a mood for the evangelistic message. Therefore, the skill of these individuals on their instruments could make a difference in the ultimate response of an unsaved person when the call is made. This is not the time to try new music or a new musician, use what you have so the program can touch hearts that are present.

I highly recommend here that it is appropriate to use local instruments and music so it has meaning for the guests.

Begin the prelude of music five to ten minutes before the service starts. Follow the program systematically.

It is vitally important to convey to every one involved with the music for the week that they have a commitment for the times they are scheduled. They must let the chairman know in advance if they can not be available for their schedules. When a service is well planned and musically co-ordinated, it is essential for the musicians involved with the special music to be available on schedule.

The entire music program should not be more than fifteen to twenty minutes.

Ushering Committee

Ushers are needed not only during the service but as a welcoming committee to those who attend the meetings. Efficient ushers are a great asset to any evangelistic meeting. These men and women should be selected two weeks in advance of the crusade's beginning. They should be appropriately attired so they present a positive image as they carry out their duties. Pathfinders and Adventist youth in uniforms are uniquely suited for this role. They must be committed to each night they are scheduled. They must be at the crusade grounds fifteen minutes prior to the service and be ready to begin their duties at that time. They must arrange the chairs, work hand in hand with the electrical committee, and see that all literature and song books are in order. They should make visitors' cards available to all visitors and encourage them to sign the cards. They must treat visitors and members with like courtesy. They must be alert during service in case any difficulties arise. They must help anyone who needs their assistance. They must greet people with warm, friendly smiles and make visitors feel homely at the meeting. They always leave a lasting impression on the visitors' mind. They, too, must be praying as they serve in the program.

Visitation Committee

The chair of this committee must have the map of the city, town, or village and know where each member lives. He groups members and makes sure members invite their friends and neighbors.

The pastor should encourage the church members two weeks before the campaign to invite prospects to the meeting. From this time, the crusade must be uppermost in the minds of each member. Encourage members to make personal visits to the home of every person they intend to invite to the meetings. Before the day the meetings begin, the church can have a visitor's day and church members can be encouraged to invite guests to the church--among them, the local chief or the Oba (King) and leaders of other churches in the community.

A piece of literature must be given to all invited to the meeting. Once the crusade has started, do not stop the effort to invite people even if they have already been contacted. Just because they do not attend the first night does not disqualify them from being invited later. Nobody knows which sermon the Holy Spirit will use in touching the hearts of the unsaved. Every one in the church must be involved in this band. All of this calls for a lot of sacrifice on the part of church members, but when they do this faithfully, attendance at the meeting will be great and provide potential for converts greater.

Health Committee

One of the greatest areas where Adventists can reach the Yoruba community is on health work both in rural and urban areas. Where the preaching of the word is sometimes forbidden, health evangelism has potential to stay on.

Reuben Hubbard comments that

Secular men and women sit in the waiting rooms of Adventist physicians and dentists. They occupy beds in Adventist hospitals. They attend health programs sponsored by Adventist churches and hospitals. But they are not being won, because many Adventists health professionals have failed to perceive their healing gift as a means of church growth.¹

The health band is recommended for two reasons: first, to attract men and women to the meeting; second, to use it as a means of reaching the community. The doctors and nurses within the church form this band. They give a lecture for about ten minutes each night on preventable diseases. They work with audiovisual aids to teach diseases common to the environment. If possible individuals could receive free treatment at the meeting site. In case of over-crowding, an ambulance must be available to assist victims to hospitals. It is essential that the period devoted to the campaign be well utilized by all these committees in order that the people may be converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

¹Reuben A. Hubbard, "Master Planning for Church Growth" (D.Min. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1985), 151.

Lecture 5: Follow Up Work

My experience as a minister among the Yorubas attests to the fact that because there is little or no follow-up work after evangelism, many converts are lost. It is easy to plan other areas of the campaign and forget totally the crucial area of follow-up. It is very important for the church to plan for the souls God will give them when the crusade has ended. Neglecting such souls is like giving birth to a baby and then starving the child to death. According to Philip Evans, "The church needs to anticipate in faith the harvest which God will give them and be prepared to minister to these new converts, enabling them to begin their progress in the Christian life."¹ When this is done thoroughly, growth will be seen in the lives of the new converts.

After the crusade, names and addresses of those who have given their lives to Christ must be compiled so that follow-up work among them can be properly coordinated. Visits to the homes of these people is very important, so a new relationship with Christ and friends can take place. According to Evans the goal for each convert should be growth in the Christian life, baptism, and integration into the total church program.²

¹Philip R. Evans, "A Manual for Conducting Evangelistic meetings," 191,

²Ibid., 192.

Good follow-up materials should be made available so that the new converts can become involved immediately with the things of the Lord. When this is done properly, they, in turn, can become productive church members who are ready to gather disciples for the Lord.

Some materials to be used for the follow-up work are tapes or videos of the crusade where they first attended and were converted. Books will be given to the converts to read. For those who cannot read, arrangement can be made to get spiritual friends who can read it to them.

Such books to be read are George E. Vandeman's What I Like about the Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, Charismatics, and Adventists¹; Morris Venden's How to Make Christianity Real²; and Ellen G. White's Christ Object Lessons³ and Steps to Christ.⁴

Each Sabbath for the next quarter after conversion, new converts must have their own Sabbath School class so they can make friends. Initially, this class is to be taught by the pastor. Testimonies and interaction between

¹George E. Vandeman, What I like about the Lutherans, the Baptists, Methodists, Charismatics, Catholics, Our Jewish Friends, and Adventists (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1986).

²Morris Venden, How to Make Christianity Real (Siloam Springs, AK: Concerned Communications, 1986).

³Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons (Nashville, TN: Southern Pub. Assn., 1900).

⁴Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1906).

the converts, the old members, and the pastor must continue. One must make the class informal, but the real goal is to teach SDA fundamental beliefs all over again. I recommend the third and fourth quarters Sabbath School Lesson Study Quarterlies of 1988. These lesson books contain SDA fundamental beliefs.

One final word suggested by Evans is that the greatest need of the new converts is personal relationship with someone from the church.¹ Meeting the new converts at least once or twice a week for another eight weeks helps them grow into maturity in the Lord. If one can go to them more than that, it is equally good.

We must plan the follow-up in advance with faith. It is our objective to see the new converts in our fellowship and have them become equally active witnesses for the Lord.

Lecture 6: The Evangelistic Messages

Undoubtedly, the most crucial areas of evangelism is the message. No matter what preparation is made--engaging advertisement, beautiful hall, professional singers with good musicians--if the preacher cannot communicate the message to reach the audience, all effort in is vain.

Jesus was able to reach the people of His day because they could hear him clearly. He spoke so that all in the

¹Philip R. Evans, "A Manual for Conducting Evangelistic Meetings," 192.

audience, old and young, male and female were touched. The Bible says, "The crowds were amazed at his teaching because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law."¹

It is the duty of an evangelist to communicate the love of God to people in such a way that they can find faith in Him. And more, he must lead to acceptance of Jesus Christ and to membership in his body, the church. The good news of God's love to people must be communicated in such a way that people can understand the message, and come to know that God loves them, but that he hates sin.

In order to accomplish this, among the Yorubas many things regarding their culture must be noted by the evangelist. First, the style of presentation of the message must be tailored to meet the culture of the Yoruba people. An evangelist must seek to break the barrier between himself and his audience. To do this, he needs to understand his audience. Although the Jews were angry with Peter and the disciples on the day of Pentecost, yet their hearts were touched when Jesus was presented in a new way to them.

Yoruba people generally are not easily impressed by abstract theology. They do not easily warm to deep theological treatises but they will sit for hours and listen to stories. This is because the art of story-telling is the primary way Yoruba elders passed on the knowledge,

¹Matt 7:28 (NIV).

tradition, and secrets of the clan to succeeding generations. According to S. O. Abogunrin:

The three main religions in Africa are not sharply divided over the issue of the existence of God, who is the Creator and Lord over all. The adherents of the three religions have little or no disagreement at all over this point. But the Christian insistence on the uniqueness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ and the fact that Jesus is the only Lord and Saviour distinguishes Christianity from the other religions.¹

Therefore, Seventh-day Adventist theologians and evangelists can utilize the same method of story telling in presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Yorubas. In adopting the story format in the presentation of the Gospel, the evangelist or the pastor would be following in the steps of the Master Evangelist himself. On many occasions during his earthly ministry to both Jews and Gentiles, Jesus used stories and parables to communicate his message.²

As has been pointed out in chapter 4 of this project, Jesus will be accepted by Yoruba traditionalists if he is presented as the divine son, as one who lived to fulfill a specific assignment in the theocratic government of the universe. Yoruba traditional religionists would willingly add Jesus to the many divinities that already exist in the system.³ To Yorubas, Jesus is one of the many saviors and

¹S. O. Abogunrin, "The Cosmic Significance of Jesus Christ in the African Context: An Exegesis of Phillipians 2:5-11," *Orita* 20 (June 1988): 3.

²Luke 10:29-37; John 3:1-21.

³Abogunrin, 4.

one of the many ways leading to God. Here is an entering wedge, but one must be careful how this point is presented; if not, it will create danger and a new challenge. How can we then explain the uniqueness of Jesus as Lord and Savior in the light of the claims of the founders of traditional religion? If Jesus Christ is more than the Yoruba divinities, what essentially distinguishes him from the gods and goddesses of the people? How do we explain the relationship of Jesus to God without really compromising the uniqueness and supremacy of God? Below is an answer which may give comfort to Yoruba people.

The whole plan of salvation can be presented to the Yorubas in the form of a story. God can be presented as the Father of all human beings. Yorubas have no problem with a universal God who created everything and everyone. The story would begin with Adam and Eve. They were created and placed in the garden. They were to take care of God's garden. God gave them specific rules about which tree they should eat from and which they should not. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and in disobeying they sinned. The penalty for their disobedience was death.¹

But God did not cast them off that easily. As our Father, he has insight to maintain the original relationship with his children in a number of ways: He sent one prophet after another but they were all either disbelieved or

¹Gen 3:19.

mistreated. In the end, he sent his own son to come in the form of a human being. He lived a sinless life on earth and showed mankind the way back to God. Lay emphasis on the incarnation of Jesus, coming in human form to render selfless service, total forgiveness of himself and obedience to God will catch Yoruba attention.

Point out also that sin separates man from his maker. Man is "uncomfortable" in the presence of God and in the world today. As a result man is constantly running away from God. That is why God sent Jesus Christ. Just as through Adam sin entered the world, through Jesus salvation came to man. Jesus had become the source of life and forgiveness to the world. In this sense, Jesus is the second Adam. Jesus did not disobey God like the first Adam who was not satisfied with his creaturely position and, therefore, yielded to the temptation to be like God.¹ The first Adam, without thinking, attempted to grasp at equality with God, but in consequence of pride and refusal to subject himself to the overriding dominion of the Creator, he lost his power and became a slave of those things he was to rule over. Consequently, he lost the glorious image of his Maker. But the second Adam, Jesus, had a different attitude. He followed the path of lowly obedience in order to be exalted to the position of being on the right hand of God.

¹Gen 3:5.

Jesus offers his righteousness as a gracious gift to sinful men. His death and glorious resurrection are the basis for the believer's redemption, reconciliation, salvation, and glorification.

When we preach to Yoruba people in this way, they are more likely to respond to Adventists and to the Gospel because such preaching strikes a cord in the Yoruba psyche because of the use of story telling as a medium for transmitting important information in Yoruba culture.

Second, the evangelist must present the message with utmost clarity. He must be able to communicate a clear gospel so the unsaved understand the plan of salvation. His opening words must grasp the attention of the audience immediately. Often the interest of the listener, especially the unsaved, is won or lost for the entire message at this point. We have attacked other religions enough! Let us state our own case with love without insulting other religions. If we put ourselves in their place, and we went into a meeting and the speaker daily attacked our church, I do not think we would go there again the next day. An appropriate illustration, story, or attention-getting question is effective in introducing the main body of the message.

The evangelist must communicate the Gospel message without antagonizing people of other religious persuasions. It is true that he is to preach Christ, but there is a world

of difference between preaching Christ and antagonizing others. He may win the argument but he may lose the precious souls for Christ. His duty as a preacher is to put the message across so individuals will be convicted to take a stand to follow Jesus all their lives.

Third, the evangelist must take seriously the questions his hearers are asking, only then will he be relevant. From his introduction, he must be able to move smoothly into the main body of the message. The relevancy of the message is in the sense that it meets their needs and their salvation. D. J. Bosch puts it this way:

If we communicate only that part of the gospel which corresponds to people's felt needs and "personal problems" (Are you lonely? do you feel that you have failed? Do you need a friend? Then come to Jesus!) while remaining silent on their relationships to their fellowmen, on racism, exploitation and blatant injustice, we do not proclaim the gospel. This is the quintessence of what Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace" and again "Christianity which does not begin; but Christianity which ends with individual ends."¹

God is infinitely concerned with salvation of the individual, but his purpose is for the healing of creation and the proclamation of his Son's coming. Therefore, an evangelist must master the Scripture, not only in giving Bible study but also in preaching expository sermons. Make the exegesis very solid, keep the hermeneutical principles thoroughly in mind, and do not quote out of context. The message must be thoroughly biblical, with the meaning

¹Bosch, Witness to the World, 20.

developed from the text rather than superimposed upon it by the evangelist. The message must touch the hearts and lives of the audience: therefore, the evangelist must be able to communicate in a way that his audience understands, delivering the message under the power of the Holy Spirit.

His message must be convincing and interesting, well illustrated, and designed to apply the gospel truths in a practical way. It must be a message relevant for today, showing how the Scripture and its message of salvation can meet the needs of today's world. This message will at times deal with issues of interest, but the designed purpose is to show how Christ and the salvation which he offers is the ultimate solution to any problem.

Evangelists must preach with enthusiasm, not making the meeting dull but interesting. They must encourage the listeners to say, "We will come tomorrow." I repeat this, the evangelistic meeting is not the place for scolding the saints and trying to rid them of sinful practices. Such admonishing of the saints may result in questions or attitudes in the minds of the unsaved causing them to reject the very Person whom they need to trust for their salvation.

Finally, the conclusion of the message must be designed to motivate the unsaved to action. At the end of the message, the opportunity to respond should be extended to the people. Failure to do this may result in the evangelist losing many people who would otherwise stand for

Christ. Emotionalism must not be a part of the appeal. Make the appeal very clear and straight. My experience indicates that when papers are distributed so those interested may write their names and addresses, many of the addresses are fictitious. Appeal to the people to walk to the altar. Let there be solemn music and allow them to walk up to the altar.

The duration of sermon that a Yoruba man will normally take is 20 to 25 minutes. Normally an invitation can last four to six minutes. We must remember that the message is the heart of the evangelistic meeting. Every evangelist must come to the altar with a well-prepared sermon that is able to touch the needs of the audience before him. Not only must the message be relevant to the times but also must be totally biblical, fashioned from a proper exegetical and hermeneutical base. "The expectation of the minister is high because the cause of Christ demands nothing less than the best possible effort when seeking to reach a lost world for Christ."¹ Therefore, as a minister for each night, make sure you have an objective for each sermon, e.g., Sabbath. By the end of the message the audience must be able to cite five reasons why Saturday, not Sunday, is the Sabbath. Or the audience should be able to give, list, or discuss reasons why men today ought to keep

¹P. Evans, "A Manual for Conducting Evangelistic Meetings," 142.

Saturday instead of Sunday. Let us consider another peculiar topic, the state of man after death. The objective must be clear, the audience must be able to list five texts showing that one can only be alive at the resurrection. And what about the second advent of Christ? By the end of the night's message, the audience must be able to list or explain five characteristics or manners of Christ's second coming.

The four parts of righteousness by faith must be explained in simple terms during that sermon. These are reconciliation, justification, sanctification, and glorification. Once more the appeal must be specific to the objective of the sermon.

There are four types of sermons. They are topical--where the topic makes the outline; textual--where the text is the model used to outline of the sermon; expository--where the outline comes from the passage, chapter, or book; and biographical--when the outline comes from personal experience. One thus uses lessons from the life of the character to accomplish one's objective.

Ellen G. White counsels ministers to use the most familiar associations.¹ She went further saying that one must use illustrations from nature,² or use it to make truth

¹Ellen G. White, Evangelism, 55.

²Ibid., 148-149.

stand up clearly and straight.¹ Illustrations make sermons interesting, the point clearer, or bring a point home. It helps the audience to remember the message and helps the minister to repeat his point without boring the audience.

There are ten kinds of illustrations: (1) figures of speech, (2) analogy, (3) allegory, (4) parable, (5) historical allusion, (6) biographical incident, (7) personal experience, (8) anecdotes, (9) imagination, and (10) nature. Out of all these, Jesus used two, mostly, parable and nature. Do not build a sermon around illustrations or use negative illustrations for positive truth. Limit the number and use a variety of illustrations. Do not glorify self.

The five major sources of illustration are the Bible, observation in nature, life, farming, business, sport, women in the home, labor/work, and politics. Another source is the newspapers, the fourth is general reading: religious books, hymn writers' biographies, poetry, science, medical journals, nature books, etc. The last source is pastoral works: our day-to-day experiences as a minister.

Remember that when a minister cannot put the message across to people, it means he himself does not understand the subject. A sermon preached to an audience in an evangelistic meeting should be like a tree with one stem, spreading the branches. It should have one root, deeply

¹Ibid., 206.

rooted in the Bible, holding firm the truth and blossoming like a flower for everybody to admire.

Lecture 7: Audio Visual Aids

For ages Satan has used audiovisual aids to capture the whole world. Little of what we preach can change the minds of those captured by Satan. Why should Christians today allow Satan to monopolize effective communication?

An evangelist must know perfectly how to make use of audiovisuals in his evangelistic meeting. Audiovisuals can improve the communication gap and bridge a great change in making the minister's message effective. To improve our social interaction and to meet the need of the audience, audiovisual aid fills the gap. In the swiftly expanding Yoruba society, a minister must help his audience to learn more, learn faster, and remember it better and apply it more effectively.

Audiovisual aids relate to man's five senses: taste, touch, sight, smell, and hearing. According to Reuben A. Hubbard, audiovisuals capture 83 percent of man's attention.¹

There are three major classes of visual aids. The first group is the "doing" aids. This class involves dramatic participation, contrived experiences, and direct purposeful experiences. The second group is "observing"

¹Hubbard, "Master Planning," 85.

which involves radio/record, still pictures, motion pictures, exhibits, field trips, and demonstrations. The third group which has a more permanent retention uses "visual symbols." How then can audiovisuals be used to enhance the work of the evangelist?

They can help the minister to teach his subject matter more effectively. For one thing, the aids provide freshness and variety as well as giving needed reinforcement and widening of the range of experience and understanding of the audience. When properly utilized, audiovisuals can encourage active participation and assure order and continuity of thought for the audience.

Various public relations agencies have utilized audiovisual aids to market their products by advertising through mass media--TV, radio, newspaper, etc. They employ daily visual layout with logos, slides, newspaper, pictures, magazines, or billboards. An audiovisual aid must have, if possible, music in order to capture the attention of the people.

The evangelist can use slides or motion pictures dealing with current events relevant to his presentation: slides or films showing the harmful effects of cigarette smoking on the lungs, for instance, could be excellent when dealing with the topic of temperance or health.

When an audiovisual aid is done properly and used effectively, it helps both the minister and audience to get

along very well, and souls will be touched by the Holy Spirit. Denys Saunders says, "You remember 10% of what you hear, you remember 50% of what you hear and see, and you remember 90% of what you hear, see and do."¹ Let us involve our audiences in the three steps when running crusades. If they hear, they forget easily. If they see and do, they remember and know. Most of our crusades in the past have emphasized the hearing of the message, not enough have gotten the audience involved directly. Visuals can give a more accurate impression, for they define facts and make information precise and easy to comprehend. Make the visual meet the need of the people. There is no reason to show slides of foreign countries when local materials are available. To reach the Yoruba society of today, go to specific towns and take slides to illustrate your points. In this technologically sophisticated society of today, audiovisual aids are an essential component of the evangelist's tools.

Lecture 8: Topic Titles and Arrangement

One of the major problems facing an evangelist is to find a way to get people to come back each night to listen to his message. K. Wiggins says, "Experience teaches that one of

¹Denys J. Saunders, Saunders Visual Communication Handbook: Teaching and Learning Using Simple Visual Materials (London: Trinity Press, 1979), 15.

your greatest aids to this end is the title of your sermon."¹

Sermon Titles

Sermon titles should create a desire on the part of the audience to want to hear the sermon. It must motivate people at an emotional level. If the title is relevant and suggests a knowledge of a specific need of the audiences, people will come to listen.

As a minister, one must have an insight to the audiences's attitudes, beliefs, questions, and desires. In the words of Wiggins, "Too many preachers answer questions people are not asking and offer solutions to problems people do not have."²

Important Principles of Sermon Titles

I am highly indebted to K. Wiggins and his insight in the area of sermon titles.

According to Wiggins, people are interested in four basic things when it comes to sermon titles: benefits, news, curiosity, and cheerfulness and positiveness. The evangelist must word the titles of his sermons in such a way that it creates an impression in people's minds that they

¹Kembleton S. Wiggins, Soul Winning Made Easier. The Psychology of Getting More Decisions (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1975), 35.

²Ibid.

will receive a special benefit by attending or will hear some startling, worthwhile news. "The more specific the offer of the benefit is, the more power to pull your title will have!"¹ Ellen G. White said that the gospel must be made attractive. "His blessings He presents in the most alluring terms. He is not content merely to announce these blessings; He presents them in the most attractive way, to excite a desire to possess them."²

When one begins a title with "How to . . ." and "The Truth about," these are especially effective in getting audiences to want to listen. Make sermon titles positive and not negative, e.g., "How to Win over Tension and Worry," "How to Choose the Right Husband or Wife," "How to Know My Right Partner," "The Amazingly Simple Secrets of Lasting Happiness," "The Seven Secrets of Jesus' Happiness," "How Will the World End?" "Was Jesus God, Man, or God Man?" "How to Get Your Prayers Answered." One must make titles attractive, cheerful, and positive. They should be answers to questions or solutions to problems people have. Most doctrinal sermons drive people away. We must remember that doctrines are not ends in themselves. They are answers and solutions.

How do we know the problems facing the community where we are to conduct a crusade? By visitation, reading

¹K. S. Wiggins, Soul Winning Made Easier, 36.

²Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, 826.

letters to the editor in the newspapers or magazines, observing the titles of books that sell well, using the titles of sermons other evangelists find powerful, and, finally, conducting a survey among the audience. Spend much time thinking and framing them. If the evangelist yields his will to the Holy Spirit, his thoughts will be enlightened for more good titles.

After one has presented each of the seven pillars of SDA beliefs (faith), e.g., health reform, stewardship, the second coming, the sanctuary, seventh-day sabbath, the state of the dead, and the spirit of prophecy, a very interesting subject should be advertised for the night you plan to organize the baptismal class.

Wiggins gave a suggestion that subjects must be arranged in three major blocks:

1. Salvation through Christ only.
2. What Christ wants you to believe and to do.
3. Decisions to enter Christ's last-day church.¹

One cannot believe and do any thing Christ asks him to do if he does not know him. Ellen G. White said, "When they surrender heart and mind and will to God, they are then prepared candidly to weight evidence in regard to these solemn testing truths."² If they understand the truth, the people will obey. Ellen G. White said, "Bring the people to

¹K. S. Wiggins, Soul Winning Made Easier, 38.

²Ellen G. White, Evangelism, 485.

the point of decision. Show them the importance of the truth--it is life or death. With becoming zeal, pull souls out of the fire."¹ This is how human minds work. The preacher's goal is to get action for Jesus.

According to K. Wiggins some subjects must be presented in the manner listed before in order to get a favorable result.

1. The subject of baptism must be preached exactly one-half week before the first scheduled baptism, so that the convert can be more convinced.
2. The Sabbath subject should be preached one-half week before the subject of baptism. This will allow the convert to be prepared and be steady.
3. All major doctrines must be touched at or before the subject of baptism.
4. Every major doctrine should receive more than one treatment (a question box will help).
5. Rev 14:6-12 and Rev 18:4 must be stressed during the week of baptism and even after in the pastoral class. Make the subject a fulfillment of these prophecies as it is interpreted by the SDA church.²

"Great will be the result of evangelism if one follows this

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies 1:152.

²K. S. Wiggins, Soul Winning Made Easier, 38-39.

method above. It is advisable to use four or six weeks to run a campaign."¹

Before completing the pastors' training session, I must make it compulsory that the pastors in training to submit an outline of how they will train lay members of their churches. Every member must be a soul winner for Christ. I must make a schedule of when to visit each of the twenty districts in the field for a follow-up among the laymen. The training will end with a public campaign for a testimony of the success of the program.

Bridging the Gap: SDA Beliefs and
Yoruba Ceremonial Practices

As stated earlier, the Yorubas are a fun-loving people. They love to celebrate what they consider to be the three important aspects of existence: birth, marriage, and death. They celebrate through music and dancing.

Up till now, the SDA church has taken the stand of non-involvement in some of these celebrations as it is performed by Yorubas. They have based this on the theory that members must be different from the world. Therefore, SDA members are not allowed to celebrate more than the religious aspects of the ceremonies. Such social practices as feeding family members and friends, playing traditional music, and dancing to its tune are frowned upon by the church. The irony of all this is that the church did not

¹Ibid.

replace what they took from the Yorubas with any form of social activities where they can relate to each other.

In effect, those who love to become Christians or join the church are forever looked upon as outcasts among their friends, their clan, and their relatives.

I, therefore, do not believe that the church's stand on some of these social issues is justifiable, because so many souls are lost to the world who otherwise could have been saved.

I further believe that the church should take the stand of moderation and decency instead of total abandonment which, as a result, alienates itself from the Yoruba people and their culture. We need to meet the Yorubas within their culture with the Gospel of Christ without hurting them. "The Christian faith is not a new culture but a truth that can be expressed in any culture. All preachers should realize that . . . the form of the message must be adapted to the culture and preparation of the persons that are to receive it."¹

Music

I have demonstrated in this project that the Yorubas are very musical. In their traditional worship, music takes a large part. Yoruba history recounts the role music has

¹Wayne Weld and Donald A. McGavran, eds., Principles of Church Growth (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1971), 7-11.

played as a communicative medium within and outside of the community. Describing this tradition, Richard Lander (1830), after one of his visits to the palace of a Yoruba traditional ruler, reported: "The chief was seated outside his house under its verandah surrounded by about a hundred of his wives and musicians with drums and fife."¹ Drums and other instruments are used in Yoruba religious worship. When it is ritual ceremonies, other drums and instruments are used. Strictly, dundun² is used for both social and religious occasions. "Dundun drums do not fall within the category of Orisa drums such as lqbin or Ipese in that it was not created by Orisa at the beginning."³ Presently, the church has banned the use of indigenous music during worship.⁴ This action has caused many people to leave the church and has created unhappiness among many church members.

How could a people worship their God joyfully when

¹Richard Lander, Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition in Africa (London: Henry Colbum & Richard Bently Press, 1830), 91.

²Dundun is bi-membranophonic that has two fixed membranes whose vibrations produce its sonority. They cover the hollow with skins or strips (Awo) made from goat, deer, or antelope, skin fastened and pulled tightly over them in a transversal way.

³Adegbite, "The Drum and Its Role," 17.

⁴See NUM Executive Committee Minutes of October 2, 1986, No. 153 for the action taken by the Nigeria Union on this issue.

they are forbidden from using their own native instruments, ones they are accustomed to using to praise their Maker?

When worship is dull, Yorubas find experience unappealing and, consequently, leave the church. In order to make worship meaningful and appealing to the Yorubas, they must be allowed to use their musical instruments, moderately and reverently, in worship. The Psalmist's call to believers was:

Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. . . . Praise him with the timbrel and dance: [Pipe] Praise him with string and instruments and organs. . . . Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.¹

Funeral Ceremonies

Yorubas are very particular about how their dead are buried. Therefore, they have special ways of burying their dead. They mourn for the death of the young ones and cry over their graves for seven days, but they celebrate at the funeral of those who die in their old age. If the deceased lived well, honorably, and had children, his funeral becomes an occasion of joy and celebration.

The reason for the celebration is simple: Children of the deceased rejoice that they survived their parents and that they lived honorably. They also praise God that the deceased has gone ahead of them to join his/her ancestors, so there is dancing and feasting for many days.

¹Psalm 150:1-6.

Up till now the stand of the Adventist church on funerals has been to end the ceremony at the burial service. But many church members have disregarded the church's stand and celebrated the traditional way, dancing and all. When this happened, "devoted church members" have called on the church board to discipline the violators. Often the church is polarized as a result--causing a lot of pain to everybody.

I feel that the way a man buries his deceased, expensive or not, has nothing to do with his salvation. As long as there is no idol worship involved, or veneration of ancestry, even the dancing and¹ the merry making could be used as evidence of believers faith in the power of God to make things good at the second coming. The people are not ready to accept the Western culture of burying the dead. As long as alcohol and other local drinks, palm-wine, etc., are not served, moderation and modesty must be the slogan of the church.

Marriage

The marriage ceremony in Yorubaland is expensive and merry. Presently, the position of the SDA church is that there be as little after-wedding socialization as possible.

¹The type of dance we are talking about here is not like Western dancing, all the people move round the town with the drummers in front. There is no holding of members of the other sex. It is for celebrating and socializing of age groups within the community.

For example, the church is vehemently opposed to the bachelor-eve celebration.¹

The youths are kicking against this rule and the church is losing many of them to other religious bodies who accept such ceremonies. Sometimes, they even perform their weddings in other churches just to take advantage of their allowance of merriment.

It is, therefore, my recommendation that the SDA church, like other Christians, should allow their youth to enjoy their marriage ceremonies with music and merriment; as long as they respect SDA health principles.²

Polygamy

The issue of polygamy is one that the church has to come to grips with in its relationship with Yorubas. In the past the church has taken many positions on the question, many of which have proved incapable of addressing the fundamental problems. At the moment, the debate on what to

¹Bachelor's Eve is the night before the wedding day. All friends, or age group members of the couple, gather at the bridegroom's house to dance and eat all night to celebrate their friend's impending marriage. Usually a local band plays at this gathering throughout the night.

²General Conference of SDA Church Manual, rev., 1981, 220, "When the principles of healthful living are practiced the need for stimulants will not be felt. The use of intoxicants and narcotics of any kind is forbidden by nature's law."

do with polygamists still goes on.¹ In recent times many reasons have been given to explain why people in sub-Saharan Africa tend to be polygamous, but I am not interested here in the causes of polygamy, as such, important as these may be. I recognize the fact of the practice in Yorubaland and am aware that the current church position, i.e., before a man becomes a baptized Seventh-day Adventist, he should first divorce all the wives but the first one, has a very disturbing implication to the Yoruba understanding of marriage.

In the Yoruba culture, the act of marriage is a "sacred" one, and those who enter into the relationship unite more than just two lives. They also unite families and sometimes whole communities. A divorce of a wife signifies a divorce of the family relations that were established before the divorce. A divorced woman is usually a disgrace, and her disgrace is shared by her family and her people. It is a sign that the woman failed in her duty to be a good wife, and her family and clan take that usually as an extension of their inability to train her well.

¹R. L. Staples, "The Church and Polygamy in Sub-Saharan Africa" (A working paper produced at the request of the General Conference of SDA, September 1981), 39. According to Staples, the official position of the church presently is that "Polygamy is an inferior form of marriage that is not acceptable within the church under any circumstances. It is a form of marriage which falls far short of the Christian ideal but under rare and extenuating circumstances Christians can manage to live with it." Also, see Staples, Appendix, pages 45 and 46 of the same paper for further decisions of the church.

Because of some of the external implications about divorce, very few divorces happen in traditional Yoruba marriages. So, when a man gets up one day and tells the woman's elders and clan members that he is divorcing his marriage, not because the woman is to blame but because he has found a religion that says he must do so and that is what pleases God, the entire community feels offended and demeaned and often express their displeasure in different, often violent ways.

The society is all the more confused when the man explains that the same Bible frowns at divorce, that God intended that marriages, once contracted should be honored in all situations except when infidelity is involved. When they discover that other Christian denominations using the same Bible do not ask their new members to divorce their second or third wives, they conclude that the man seeking a divorce as well as his church are "ope"--scum of the society.

What to do about polygamy in this set-up while maintaining both Biblical and church standards is a great concern of mine. There are no easy solutions, but I contend that people who come to know about the SDA truth at a time when they have more than one wife should not be given that difficult option of choosing between the women they are married to and has children with and joining the church. I do not believe that any person should be presented with such

alternatives. I believe that God still overlooks the time of ignorance (Acts 17:30a), and especially in matters of marriage and children, God will take into consideration where we were all born.

In cultures where polygamy is illegal, it is easy to understand why we are quick to ask the man to separate from the other women. After all, it is just asking the man to stop an illegal practice. But in Yoruba culture, where polygamy has societal blessing, the church would do well not to offer "easy" solutions.

My contention is that if a person was a polygamist before being exposed to Adventism, the church could and should baptize that person if his marital status is the only criterion barring his baptism. And my sole basis for such contention is that sometimes God himself takes into consideration special societal situations; he is aware that one man comes from here, another there.

On the other hand, the church has a right and should refuse baptism to all persons who are exposed to the teachings of Seventh-day Adventists on the question of polygamy and deliberately enter into polygamous relationships after that knowledge. The principle here is that "to him who knows how to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). In this case, the sin becomes one's refusal to abide by a better light. Nobody who is exposed to the good and the not-too-good and chooses the

not-too-good should be given the privilege of full membership.

It is easy, therefore, to understand where a polygamist (one who was one before he became exposed to Adventist) could be baptized into full church membership, and the same person disfellowshipped if he takes on another wife after his baptism. The issue here is that, while a man's or woman's polygamous past should not bar them from church membership, they are not to take that as a license for future post-baptism polygamy.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus far, I have tried to show that Yorubas are a distinct people in the sense that they have a religion and culture which has for years made it impossible for them to be truly converted into other religions. They venerate their ancestors, make heroes of their kings and nobles, and their form of traditional religion confused the Creator with his creation and placed great importance on social relationship.

This project has highlighted some similarities and dissimilarities between Yoruba traditional religion and Christianity. Though God gave a general revelation of himself to mankind, including the Yorubas, the special revelation that comprised the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus has not been presented to the Yorubas by the SDA church in a thorough and adequate manner that will make Yorubas accept Jesus readily. Therefore, this project has pointed out how best to train ministers and laity in order to acquaint the Yorubas with this revelation so that they can make intelligent choices about Jesus.

As Adventists, it is our duty to give Yorubas a new vision about God, about Jesus Christ and about the Holy Spirit.

The present work in Yorubaland is moving slowly because much of what is done is done by only the ministers. This project encourages local pastors to train the laity to be active partners in public evangelism. C. E. Bradford said:

Churches that hold one or more series of evangelistic meetings during the year are more likely to grow than those that do not. However, public evangelism has produced more frustration than growth in some places because of the meager results for the time and effort involved and because of the high drop-out rate. This is not a criticism of either evangelists or their methodology but a call to recognize the supportive role the local church must play to make public evangelism effective. Public evangelism must be tied to local church ministry. Where the congregation has been meeting needs in the community and has established friendship bonds with non-members, the public series may be the ideal vehicle to lead to decisions for Christ and the church.¹

Bradford has rightly pointed out the problem faced by the SDA church in Yorubaland, and this is what this project has attempted to address. In the past, there has been a break in communication between the mission and local church about whose responsibility it is to conduct public evangelism. This project encourages everybody to be involved in the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Like the early Apostles, the church is admonished to preach Christ to the Yoruba people, be cognizant of the Yoruba world view, utilizing it for the purpose of making Adventist positions more attractive to them without necessarily compromising the fundamental beliefs of the

¹C. E. B. Bradford, "Analyzing the Local Congregation," Administry (Winter 1988): 7-8.

church. In presenting Christ to the Yorubas, this project encourages the evangelist, church pastors, and other soul winners to start from the known and gradually lead the people to that which is not well known, making use of the methodology Paul used at Ephesus and Athens.

Our teachings about Christ must stress the Lordship of Christ over all evil forces. He should be made to come across as the victor who is powerful enough to conquer death.

This project developed an ideal that will strengthen the church evangelistic outreach by focusing on a person to person-oriented witnessing, before public evangelism finally reaps those already contacted into the church.

It also has developed methodology for retaining new converts into the body of the church so that they too can become agents for Christ within their communities.

The project also outlines steps pastors could take to improve their sermons, giving more attention to biblical preaching, and placing greater emphasis on Jesus Christ and the spirituality of the members. Ministers should place more emphasis in preparing and presenting sermons on doctrinal truths, since most old converts are attracted to the SDA churches among Yorubas because of its doctrines.

The project reiterates the fact that in the Christian community evangelism is the most effective way to renew humanity to God. "How can they hear if no body tells

them." The person who has heard, accepted, and found himself enfolded in the Good News (Gospel) of Christ is eager to spread it to others. When we sow the seed, God will provide the means to bring its germination about.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The rapid growth and development among the Yorubas today demand an understanding of urban missiology. The contention of this study is that the SDA church has before it the opportunity for gathering a great spiritual harvest in the towns and cities among the Yorubas of Nigeria if certain adjustments are made in the church's present attitude and policies concerning Yoruba culture and heritage. We seek here to recommend some adjustment that could be made by the church in order to reach the Yorubas.

Principle of Church Growth

Leaders of the SDA church working among the Yorubas have not given good study and application of principle of church growth. Peter C. Wagner has said that church growth is "a science which investigates the planting, multiplication, function and health of Christian churches" as they relate specifically to the effective implementation of God's commission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19-20).¹

¹C. Peter Wagner, Church Growth and Whole Gospel (New York: Harper & Row Pub., 1981), 75.

The science of church growth has many "principles" which have helped the growth in many local churches toward the fulfillment of their world mission. These principles are the sociological and cultural implications of church growth. Church growth experts like McGavran and W. C. Arn defined this church-growth principle as "a universal truth which, when properly applied, contributes significantly to the growth of the church and denominations."¹ Since Adventists believe that they have the truth of the best message, there is no reason why the Good News cannot go round the whole of Yorubaland if proper methods are utilized. The church should interact dynamically with Yoruba culture. Church growth never occurs in a cultural vacuum. We must have respect for Yoruba history. One must always take a long look backward and forward in order to gain souls for Christ.

Education

The work of Adventist churches among the Yorubas has grown slowly because the educational level of the minister has not kept pace with that of the country in general. This has created problems in that many poorly educated ministers do not work effectively among the educated classes. In addition, political events of the country have resulted in the loss of control over the

¹Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, Ten Steps for Church Growth (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 15.

church's schools and hospitals. The only institutions left to the church in Yorubaland is the Adventist Seminary of West Africa (ASWA).

In the past, our schools were the nurseries of Christian congregations in some villages and the schools' classrooms were used as churches on Saturdays. For years the Abule-Oja SDA church in Lagos met in the classrooms of the church school. Today the church no longer has such a privilege.

The church should not be too hesitant in its dealing with the government. The church tends to act slowly for fear the government may take over the school (ASWA). While such possibilities always exist, it would not be made to cripple the effectiveness of the school.

The owners of the land where ASWA is built gave it with an understanding that it was going to be a university. An uproar may occur if nothing is done in the near future.

We must move to the development of technological education. An undergraduate school which can be recognized by the Nigerian government is needed so all our young people can have any type of education they desire in our own college. Presently, graduates from ASWA, even though they have Andrews University degrees by virtue of ASWA's affiliation with Andrews University, cannot work with the government or in private sectors in Nigeria.

If our young people continue to be educated in public institutions, there may be dangerous consequences for the church in the near future. Public education destroys the high standards of morality that SDAs emphasize. This is not the situation in the public university where "he that plays the pipe dictates the tune."

We must allow the Seminary to remain where we can give proper education to our future ministers. Their education must reflect the culture of the area where they are to work. Today, they know American history better than Nigerian history.

Many of the young workers from ASWA have not become able soul-winners who manifest true spiritual leadership. Young graduates want to work in cities and not rural areas. There is a large gap between the intellectual development and the spiritual development of the workers and the city dwellers. Some of the graduates are trained academically but not spiritually or physically. One cannot give what one does not have. For the past four years the Seminary has had difficulty attracting evangelist teachers, so the graduates cannot organize a public crusade successfully.

Young people believe in heroic deeds; because there are no dynamic evangelists to emulate, many of the young pastors have no example to follow. We must supply

ASWA with qualified, dedicated evangelists who will train the ministers.

Vocational education is very important today in Nigeria. Our pastors who are trained in ASWA must be able to do at least one of the following: carpentry, bricklaying, baking of bread, or agriculture. We need this so they work among lay people and help in building our churches or developing farming in their community. If they can prepare people to get jobs, a lot of souls will be touched for Christ.

Child-Care Centers

We must encourage our churches in cities or towns to develop child-care centers where we can mold the lives of our young people. Ile-Ife nursery school, started by Dr. David Babalola, has had a great influence on its community.

Laymen Training

In order to be effective among the Yorubas, our worker's training program should aim at developing spiritual, soul-winning churches. Lay workers should be visibly involved in the ministry. Ellen G. White said that "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until men and women comprising our church membership rally to work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers."¹ Lay people and full-time workers must

¹E. G. White, Testimonies, 9:117.

work hand in hand to manage an expanding program of evangelism and care for the new churches that will be raised up. The gap between the ministers and lay people must be bridged by involving them in the program and decision making of the church.

Pastoral Leadership

R. H. Schuller defined leadership as thinking ahead, planning for the future, exhausting all possibilities, envisioning problems, and dreaming up salvation to them, and then communicating the possibilities and problem-solving ideas to the decision makers.¹ This is called leadership. We need to train people for leadership positions right now in Yorubaland. Leadership is the key to church growth. If the church is to really succeed in its mission of witnessing effectively to the non-Christians, Yorubas today must develop dynamic, aggressive, and inspiring leaders. Most of the present leaders have not attended the Seminary or even run a public crusade. They have not pastored churches on the local level. This is not helping the church because they themselves cannot lead out in the area where they do not have any knowledge. We need leaders who know the basic fundamentals of church growth. We need leaders today who can tap special abilities that God

¹Robert H. Schuller, Your Church Has Real Possibilities (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1974), 49.

has given to certain members within the church and use them for propagating the three angels' message.

We need leaders who can evaluate situations properly and experiment without fearing the result for the good of the work. We need leaders who can examine the feelings of members and workers and not use the "policy" as a stumbling block to growth. Pastoral leadership is the first sign of a healthy church, followed by a well-mobilized laity, both of whom are urgently needed in the work in Yorubaland.

Worship

We need to make a great change in this area.

David Agboola commented on this saying:

On the whole the introduction of indigenization programme in worship seems to make worship more meaningful to the worshipers. When they sing with their African beats and rhythms and in their own language, it seems that they understand their services to God much better.¹

The missionaries discouraged the use of many local instruments as accompaniment in church worship because they claimed the same instruments were used in idol worship. They allowed drumming in the service only once a year (thanksgiving day). To many church members, this is hypocritical of the church. In the Western world, there is no distinction between instruments used for church worship--flute, trumpet, organ, drum, piano, etc.--and what is used

¹D. Agboola, SDAs in Yorubaland, 61.

by professional "worldly" musicians. If the Western churches can use instruments, Yorubas should not be discouraged from using theirs at worship. Again if Yoruba can beat the drum once a year and God is not offended, they can use it twice a year, or four or eight or always. All that one needs to teach the churches is modesty and moderation because no musical instrument is inherently good or bad. The same instruments can be used for good or bad purposes depending on who is using it. That is where we should direct our attention.

Public Evangelism

The church is created for the purpose of witnessing and is viable only so long as witness is accomplished through it. The sole aim of witnessing is to make disciples of others. The entire Yorubaland is very open for the Adventist message, which should be accomplished effectively through public evangelism. Ellen G. White states that:

The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency.¹

The church in the scriptures is the community of believers whose lives have been transformed by the Holy Spirit. Its existence is rooted in the reality of the faith of its

¹Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press pub. Assn., 1911), 9.

members and its continuance is based on the communication of what God is like to others.

It seems our church (SDA) in the past has concentrated on the vertical and neglected the horizontal aspects of life among the Yorubas. We must now balance the communication of the gospel as well as work to feed the hungry and house the homeless. It will be seen, for example, as a sign of genuine concern if the church opened shelters for the homeless and the poor in some communities in Yorubaland where the poor can be fed and the homeless housed. Our evangelism can be turned to this area.

ADRA

The Adventist Development and Relief Agencies (ADRA)¹ have been developed very well in some West African countries. It is needed right now in Nigeria. It is now time to extend the same service to the Yorubas, because the same economic conditions that make ADRA a necessity in any country of Africa is prevailing in Nigeria today. The church should go into agriculture, for example, and teach its converts about the dignity in labor.

Personal Evangelism

I recommend that personal evangelism be practiced in Yorubaland in the same manner as the first-century

¹ADRA is the means by which the SDA church reaches the underdeveloped countries of the world and sends relief to disaster areas.

Christians did. Church members should meet throughout the week in the homes of members in small groups on a rotation basis, for heart-to-heart fellowship. This enables the church to meet the need of the members who are sometimes inadvertently neglected. It would be a perfect program for our generation today. Our lay people ought to be trained to be able to give Bible studies to people in their homes. We can develop a Bible study based on SDA fundamental beliefs.

Radio/TV Evangelism

The Voice of Prophecy (VOP) program was very popular among Yorubas. Maybe it is time to re-introduce it. We can either sponsor the old ones or allow a Nigerian to be the speaker. This is the era of television ministry in Nigeria, and the church would do well to be a part of it now.

The Yoruba society would support such ministry if the program could reach them. Good speakers are needed for television evangelism and such talents abound in the church in Nigeria. If the independent churches in Nigeria can afford to evangelize via the television, the SDA church can do the same.

Youth Work

We must develop our youth work better than it is presently. Local churches ought to be encouraged to support a program for the youth. We recommend that we have a youth

center for the church where we have modern facilities for the youth. A center where social activities can be performed.

Contextualization

Paul states his idea clearly in 1 Cor 9:22-23 when he says, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessing."

This means that Adventists must be committed to winning and nurturing the Yorubas in the faith and that they place that goal above their prejudices of their traditions and preferences. It means they will be willing to change the way they have been thinking about the people, the way of music, worship, etc. We must note here that we are not advocating the change of the gospel or to compromise truth with error, but we must be flexible.

Health Work

We must find a way to reach more people with our health work. Seminars presented to businesses and clubs should be advanced. Such seminars could be printed to reach more people. Now that Ife SDA hospital has been given back to the church, we must make an appeal to get good workers to the hospital and make the general effort to have a Christ-centered caring and compassionate health ministry in Yorubaland.

Tolerance Towards People

To make disciples of Yorubas requires that they be accepted and loved. To pull down the wall that has separated us from the Yorubas for years, we must have a spirit of tolerance towards them, without compromising our fundamental beliefs. In other words, we must relate to sinners but not to their sins. Jesus made disciples by his personal life. One does not teach faith or love with words alone. The hearts of the disciples were not set on fire by theories alone. Fire kindles fire, iron sharpens iron, faith call forth faith, life begets life. We must be salt in the life of these Yorubas. We have "come out" of the Yoruba society too long. We must go back into the society and help the sinners to know the truth. We closed the door on the Yorubas and shouted to those inside from our position of comfort outside to join us. We must not be so strict as to avoid the Yorubas. The church must be like a hospital. It is different from a regular home, but the sick must go there to be healed of their sickness. When we open the door for the Yorubas, our church will meet their needs.

Christ's prayers in behalf of His disciple was for God not to take them out of the world, but that He should protect them from the evil one, because "they are not of the world, even as Christ was not of it" (John 17:15-16). Ellen G. White said, "The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them.

Ministered to their needs and won their confidence. Then He bade them follow me."¹ The SDA church must reach out to the Yorubas in its worship, preaching, educational work, social programs, and pastoral care for the community in which it is situated.

If we are aggressive in preaching and live opposite to our preaching, we will not grow. The implication is that there are those who will never understand the message, however plain and simple it is made for them. Thus, the gospel can be lived only as an example to them.

Knowledge of Urban Dynamism

We need to train leaders in urban dynamics. This training will help SDAs in initiating work in new areas. This type of education will help leaders to know where to go at a specific time to begin a new church. Knowledge of urban dynamics will also help leaders to obtain and/or build buildings for churches. Other denominations train their workers in this area and, therefore, are able to secure lands in cities like Lagos, Abuja, the new capital, Ibadan, Ile-Ife, Oyo, and Abeokuta. Such knowledge will also enable church personnel to know when to purchase land at a reasonable price.

¹Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing, 143.

Knowledge of urban dynamics will assist in an efficient distribution of workers. One will be able to put hard-working pastors in fast-developing areas of the cities. Often the church in Yorubaland has not made any strides because the people to capitalize on openings have been absent.

Prayer

The down-to-earth emphasis on prayer to meet all problems of this life is of far greater concern to Yorubas, as well as to people all over the world, than just a message of eventual salvation for some future life in eternity. We must have a room for people to meet for all-night prayer. When I organized such meetings four years ago in the Ibadan District, the result was excellent. It reduces the fear which people have about evil spirits and witches. We must allow faith to grow and encourage members to have prayer partners. If Jesus, the Son of God, was able to pray all night, not once, not twice, but many times to his Father, why should we not do the same in our day? Fasting and prayer go together. We must encourage these practices among our members. Those who attend will call their friends and many souls will be won for the Lord.

Comforting

One of the greatest ways to touch people's lives is to comfort them in their hour of grief. We as a church

must believe in reaching people around us. It will not cost us anything to pray for people or visit them. We do not need much knowledge of the Bible to comfort people. This is a pastoral work that every member can get involved in. If we want to succeed among Yorubas, let us comfort them when they need comforting.

Challenge

Let us challenge the society by living a good example for them to follow. We must live what we preach to the community. We must not fake our religion, for this can be easily detected. Our behavior can challenge them to know Jesus better than we preach. In our business with the people, let our members be honest so people will know that we are Christians indeed.

Channel

We must channel them to Christ. As a church our work is to guide others to Christ and set people on the path of making a happy home. We must channel people's thinking to the path of knowledge. We must avoid the question "Why" they are what they are, but all members must be able to ask "What." The response will be great.

If we really comfort, challenge, and channel their thinking to the Lord, they will be converted to Jesus Christ. We must offer all that we have to reach the Yorubas for Christ.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS SURVEY

COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS SURVEY

1. Sex Male Female

2. What is your occupation?

Professional technical <input type="checkbox"/>	Manager <input type="checkbox"/>
Pastor <input type="checkbox"/>	Salesman <input type="checkbox"/>
Farmer <input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher <input type="checkbox"/>
Trader <input type="checkbox"/>	

3. Are you a member of any religious group or church?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Used to be	<input type="checkbox"/> About to join

4. Would you care to give the name of this group?

<input type="checkbox"/> Not a member	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheribu & Seraffu
<input type="checkbox"/> Baptist	<input type="checkbox"/> Anglican
<input type="checkbox"/> Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/> Apostolic
<input type="checkbox"/> Jehovah Witness	<input type="checkbox"/> Celecia
<input type="checkbox"/> Deeper Life	<input type="checkbox"/> Methodist
<input type="checkbox"/> Presbyterian	<input type="checkbox"/> Roman Catholic
<input type="checkbox"/> Seventh-day Adventist	<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

- Religion

5. At what age did you become a member?

<input type="checkbox"/> Not a member	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5
<input type="checkbox"/> 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-18
<input type="checkbox"/> 19-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-30
<input type="checkbox"/> 31-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 41 and up	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

6. At present, how often do you attend service?

<input type="checkbox"/> More than once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a week
<input type="checkbox"/> Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/> Twice a month
<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom	<input type="checkbox"/> On festival days
<input type="checkbox"/> Never	

7. Are you married? Yes No About to

8. How many children do you have? _____

9. Are they enrolled in Sunday School?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

10. About which religious founder do you know the most?

Orimulade _____ Mohammed _____ Buddah _____ Moses
 Oyingbo _____ Jesus Christ _____ Osofa _____ Jesu

11. Who is Jesus Christ according to your understanding?

_____ Second Person in Trinity
 _____ Saviour of man
 _____ Just a good man
 _____ Creator, Supreme Being, Rule of the World

12. In your opinion, how does one become a Christian?

Christ _____ Believe in Chirst as personal Savior
 _____ Understand and follow the teachings of
 _____ Join the church of my father
 _____ See a minister
 _____ Confess my sin to a priest
 _____ Believe the Bible
 _____ Live a good life
 _____ Hold personal convictions
 _____ Baptism
 _____ Born as a Christian
 _____ I do no know

13. According to earlier results of this survey, the majority of people today feel the need for a more personal religious faith, why do you think they have this need?

_____ I don't know
 _____ Insecurity
 _____ Need guidance
 _____ Need to believe in something
 _____ Away from home and family
 _____ Conflicting moral standards
 _____ Complex world problems
 _____ Need additional strength
 _____ Because of fear of witches
 _____ Other

14. Do you feel the need for a more personal religious faith?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Will in future

Interviewer

Date

Community

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PASTORS TO BE TRAINED

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PASTORS
TO BE TRAINED

Background Information

- 1.1 Name _____ Age _____
- 1.2 District _____
- 1.3 Size of Sabbath School members
- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 0-50 _____ | 50-100 _____ | 100-250 _____ |
| 250-500 _____ | 500-1000 _____ | 1000+ _____ |
- 1.4 Church location _____ Village _____ City _____
- 1.5 How long have you been the pastor of your present church?
_____ Years _____ Months
- 1.6 Have you been ordained? _____ Yes _____ No
If YES, when? _____
- 1.7 Do you believe public evangelism is still relevant in the local church in the 1980's? _____ Yes _____ No
- 1.8 Do you think the Conference should be conducting public evangelism and it is not for the local church to do?
_____ Yes _____ No

Specific Questions Concerning
Church Activities

- 2.1 When last did you conduct evangelistic meetings in your church?
_____ One year _____ Two years _____ Five _____ None
- 2.2 How many evangelistic meetings have you had in the last five years in your district? _____ Number

2.3 When was your last evangelistic meeting held?
Year _____ Month _____

2.4 When do you think is the best time of the year to schedule evangelistic meetings in your area:

Name the month of the year: _____

2.5 Why?

2.6 How long should an evangelistic meeting last?

4 weeks _____ 6 weeks _____ 8 weeks _____

2.7 Do you think public evangelistic meetings are as effective today as they were twenty years ago?

Yes _____ No _____

2.8 If not, why not? _____

2.9 Do you believe that public evangelistic meetings will be as effective in the future as it has been in the past? Yes _____ No _____

Church Budget

3.1 Do you have a church budget? Yes _____ No _____

3.2 How much do you set aside for crusades?

Each week _____ Month _____

3.3 How do you raise money for reaching the community?

3.4 What do you consider an appropriate amount to use for public campaign? Amount _____

Preparation for Public Evangelistic Meeting

4.1 What are your greatest fears in having another pastor in your church to conduct the meeting?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

4.2 In your experience as a pastor, when should people start to:

1. Pray for the meeting _____ weeks before
2. Home special meeting _____ weeks before
3. Inviting people to meeting _____ weeks before

4.3 In your experience what is a realistic timetable for the following advertising:

1. Promoting meeting in church _____ weeks before
2. Poster advertising _____ weeks before
3. Door to door advertising _____ weeks before
4. Mail advertising _____ weeks before

4.4 In your opinion rank in order of importance the following types of advertising?

1. Personal invitation _____
2. Newspaper advertisement _____
3. Radio _____
4. TV _____
5. Local chief _____
6. Handbills _____
7. Posters _____
8. Others _____

4.5 What will you do during evangelistic meetings?

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Visitation _____ | Counseling _____ |
| Pastors class _____ | Sleep _____ |
| Youth rally _____ | |

4.6 Do you find it helpful to conduct revival service for your church before public evangelism?

- Yes _____ No _____

4.7 Who should conduct it? Local Pastor _____
Invited Guest _____

Church Expectation of the Crusade

5.1 What type of sermon do your people like?

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Expository _____ | Topical _____ |
| Textual _____ | Others _____ |

5.2 How do you judge the success of the crusade?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

5.3 What time should be spent in the following
Singing _____ Offering announcement _____
Preaching _____ Invitation _____

5.4 What do you contribute to the failure of less members participation in public crusade?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

5.5 What will keep your people going back to the meeting the following night?

Closing Comments

Please list anything which you believe might be helpful in making the people in your area accept Adventist more readily?

APPENDIX C

INVITATION LETTER TO LECTURE SERIES

Dear Fellow Believers:

We are living at a time when nobody seems to be certain about anything anymore. There are many young men and women walking the streets who openly confess that they have difficulty believing in God. Many people are still asking the same old questions--What is life's purpose? Why are we here? Where are we going? If there is a God in heaven, why does he allow such evil and suffering to go on?--but they are not satisfied by the answers they are getting.

This is an invitation to you to attend a series of lectures that concentrate on biblical answers to these and other probing questions. Because we have dedicated ourselves to make our Christian faith evident in our individual communities, it behooves us to acquaint ourselves daily with information that helps us to achieve this objective.

Pastor J. A. Ola, evangelism lecturer at ASWA will lead out in the lectures. These lectures have been presented in many localities and many participants have indicated that they have been blessed by them. You are invited to the campus of the Adventist Seminary of West Africa in Ithishan Reno, Ogun State to take part in this harvest of blessings. The lectures begin at 7:30 pm on Friday June --- and end after the last presentation at 11 am on Sunday June ---.

The West Nigerian Conference is hosting the lecture series, and has undertaken to foot the bills for both accommodation and feeding for the three-day lecture period. All you need to do is be present. Because we have limited space, we would be very grateful should you indicate your desire to attend by May 26 so we can reserve a place for you.

May the Lord richly bless you as you continue to find effective ways of making Him better known to your world.

Date completed: August 1989.

APPENDIX D

POSTER



FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

You Are Invited To Hear

Dr.
A world wide evangelist

Speaking to Modern Man About
Faith of Our Fathers or Jesus Christ

AT
ARAMOKO TOWN HALL

7:30 P.M. Starting March 15, 1989

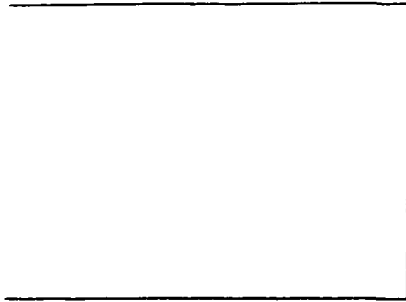
Features:

- ① Free gifts
- ② Movies on complete life of Jesus
- ③ Songs

COME WITH YOUR FRIENDS/FAMILY

APPENDIX E

PERSONAL INVITATION HANDBILL



**FAITH OF OUR
FATHERS**

You Are Invited to Hear

DR.

A world renown Evangelist
His topic for the first night is

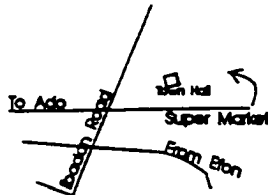
**FAITH OF OUR FATHERS OR
JESUS CHRIST**

Come With ALL Your Burdens
And There Will Be Room
For Them At
JESUS FEET

WHERE Aramoko Town Hall

WHEN 7:30 p.m.

MARCH 15TH, 1989



PERSONAL INVITATIONS HAND BILL (BACK)**ENROLLMENT APPLICATION**

This program is offered to a few people, therefore we would like you to fill out the form below to assure us you will come. We have limited seats.

Name

Address

Street

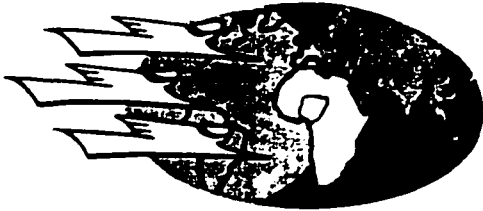
City

FAITH OF OUR FATHER'S CRUSADE
16 Aolebo Street
Oke Ola Oshogbo
Oyo-State

Or Phone: 2341-41111

APPENDIX F

ADENIJI J. A. LETTERS



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WEST-NIGERIA UNION MISSION CHURCH IN NIGERIA
(NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS)

P. O. BOX 207, IKEJA, LAGOS, NIGERIA Telephone: 964884. Telex: 26709 NUMSDA. Cables: ADVENTIST IKEJA, LAGOS

OFFICE OF CHURCH MINISTRIES

29th April, 1988

Pastor J. A. Ola
500 Garland Apt. D-12
Berrien Springs
Michigan 49103
U S A

My Dear Bisi

Your letter of April 14, came to hand a couple of days ago.

Let me hasten to congratulate Anike on her successful completion of her M.A. programme in early childhood psychology. I also wish both of you successful graduation in June and August respectively.

I remember I have answered your request on the problems and suggestions for solution on the work among the Yorubas since 1914. You can refer to that.

To meet your request for the copy of the resolution of West Nigeria Mission on the matter of drumming enclosed you please find copies of the followings:

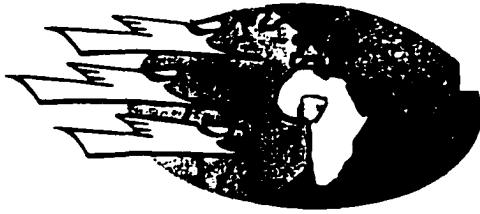
- (1) A Report of the Music Committee on Drumming and Dancing in the Church, June 30, 1986.
- (2) The Minutes of the Nigerian Union Mission Executive Committee Meeting, October 2, 1986, Item 153.
- (3) Other people wrote on the subject earlier on copies of which you might have got.

So I think all these will meet your present need. God bless.

Next time I will send materials on our stand on "CAN" to you. Till then, remain faithful and keep fit. Greetings to you all from all of us.

Yours very sincerely


Pastor J. A. Adeniji



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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NIGERIA

(NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS)

P. O. BOX 207, IKEJA, LAGOS, NIGERIA Telephone: 964884. Telex: 26709 NUMSDA. Cables: ADVENTIST IKEJA, LAGOS
OFFICE OF CHURCH MINISTRIES

6th July, 1987

Pastor J. Ola
500 Garland Apt. D-12
Berrien Springs
Michigan 49103
U S A

My dear Bisi

Thanks for your last letter of 19th May, 1987. My physical disability has been responsible for the delay in giving the letter the urgent attention it deserves. Also your request to supply the information needed required some research since it has to be collected and coordinated.

By the help of my good secretary, Bright Ogbenya, we have been able to come out with the enclosed paper.

I hope the information therein will serve your purpose. God bless.

I am improving daily. The pain in my right leg is as the result of the slipped disk I sustained in Ghana in 1959. I hope to get over it some day.

Greet Anike and the children for all of us.

Yours very sincerely

Pastor J. A. Adeniji
Director

APPENDIX G
STATISTICS 1977-86, NUM

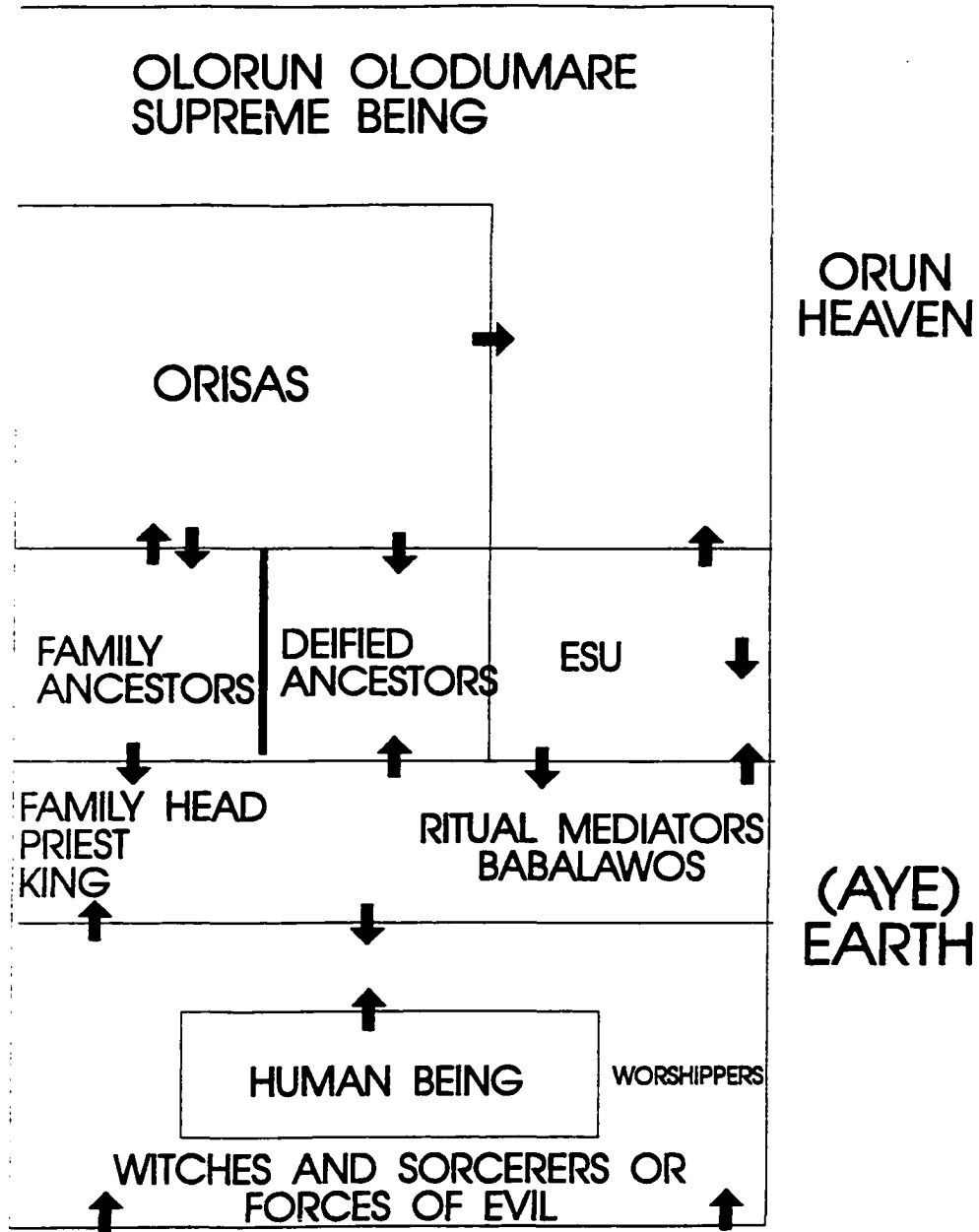
1977-86 STATISTICS

YEAR	BENDEL MISSION			CRM STATION			EAST CENT. MISSION			EAST NIG. CONF.			NORTH NIG. MISSION			RIVERS MISSION			WEST NIG. MISSION			NO. WORKERS
	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	NO. CHURCHES	NO. WORKERS	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	NO. CHURCHES	NO. WORKERS	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	NO. CHURCHES	NO. WORKERS	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	NO. CHURCHES	NO. WORKERS	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	NO. CHURCHES	NO. WORKERS	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	NO. CHURCHES	NO. WORKERS	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	NO. CHURCHES	NO. WORKERS	
1977	435	2	9				21,296	142	126	3,432	25	48	4,328	30	32	7,430	55	64				
1978	504	2	11				21,931	152	175	3,970	26	45	4,723	35	56	7,423	55	79				
1979	622	5	25				23,370	158	186	4,347	27	41	5,002	37	80	7,870	55	104				
1980	728	5	20				25,271	172	209	4,812	28	47	5,545	39	84	10,033	55	87				
1981	852	8	23	662	14	23	25,606	171		4,661	30	44	5,721	43	60	10,936	57	103				
1982	906	8	20	728	6	19	27,631	184	197	5,604	34	52	6,124	44	63	12,486	57	128				
1983	1,171	9	34	708	6	44	28,934	171	204	5,983	34	49	6,385	49	53	13,273	57	127				
1984	1,566	9	36	831	10	20	29,914	196	185	6,413	38	48	6,915	50	74	14,908	65	133				
1985	1,883	9	27	1,011	10	19	32,013	200	230	7,315	38	73	7,580	50	66	15,808	65	132				
1986	1,718	9	24	1,082	10	25	26,959	170	170	8,341	42	73	8,250	52	63	17,068	70	90				

/

APPENDIX H

WORLD VIEW OF THE YORUBAS



MEDITATION IN YORUBALAND

This diagram was modified out of the one made by E. Thomas Lawson, Religion of Africa, 65.

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