

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Masters of Arts in Leadership

Adventist University of Africa

School of Postgraduate Studies

**TITLE: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND
ETHNIC CONFLICT IN LAGOS MAINLAND CONFERENCE
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**

Researcher: Umezuruike Onyeokeriga Uchegbue

Faculty Adviser: Obarido Okochi, DMin

Date Completed: September, 2013

This project examines the relationship between socio-economic factors— leadership, welfare needs of members, population, and representation on the one hand, and ethnic conflict on the other, in Lagos Mainland Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Structured questionnaires were designed and administered to 150 members across the eight districts of the conference. Interviews were also granted to selected members in the conference.

The findings of this research reveal that socio-economic factors such as leadership, welfare needs of members, population, and representation lie at the root of ethnic conflict in this Conference. The seemingly poor representation of the Igbos in the leadership of the conference in spite of their population edge (about 80,000 population) over other ethnic groups including the Yoruba; the absence of a formidable welfare plan for members when bereaved, sick or experiencing disaster;

the insensitivity to and poor understanding of ethnic identities and feelings, and the poor leadership style of the conference have been identified as factors fanning the embers of ethnic conflict in the Conference.

This research designs and recommends the adoption of a comprehensive membership-oriented welfare plan in curbing church-related ethnic conflicts. In addition, proportionate representation of all ethnic groups in the conference leadership and administration, without devaluing merit should be considered. Furthermore, good pastoral leadership, care, empathy, respect, love, and understanding of ethnic identities and differences are what pastors owe to the fight against ethnic conflict. Church leaders cannot succeed in curbing ethnic conflict when they are infected with ethnic chauvinism and subjectivity.

Adventist University of Africa

School of Postgraduate Studies

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC
FACTORS AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN
LAGOS MAINLAND CONFERENCE
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

A project

presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Leadership

by

Umezuruike Onyeokeriga Uchegbue

September 2013

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC
FACTORS AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN
LAGOS MAINLAND CONFERENCE
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

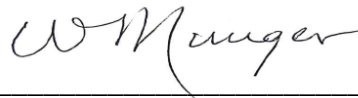
A project
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Leadership

by
Umezuruike Onyeokeriga Uchegbue

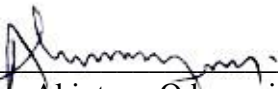
APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:



Adviser: Obarido Okochi, DMin



Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies
Willard Munger, PhD



Reader: Akintayo Odeyemi, PhD

Extension Centre: Babcock University, Nigeria

Date: September, 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xi
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of Study	4
Significance of the Study	5
Justification for the Study.....	5
Limitation	6
Delimitation of Study	6
Methodology and Procedure	6
Methodology	6
Population of Study.....	7
Sample Population	7
Instruments and Material	7
Data Analysis	7
Procedure	7
Definition of Terms	8
Ethnicity	8
Conflict	8
Socio-economic Factors.....	9
2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION.....	10
Phenomenon of Ethnic Conflict	11
Biblical Perspective of Conflicts	11
Ethnicity and ethnic Conflicts in Africa	15
Causes of Ethnic Conflict	19
Colonial Roots	19
Competition for Scarce Resource	20
Primordial feelings and Considerations	21
Poor State Structure	22
Poverty	23
Cultural Misunderstandings	23
Ethnic Conflict in Bible Times.....	23
The Jews and Samaritans in Ethnic Conflict	24
Ethnic Conflict in the Jerusalem Church	25

Peter and Cornelius' Conversion.....	27
Paul and the Circumcision Group	28
Ethnic Conflict in the Contemporary Church.....	31
Ellen G. White's Counsel on Church-Related Ethnic Conflicts	37
Seventh-day Adventist Church Statement on Ethnicity	39
Summary	41
3. DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING OF LAGOS MAINLAND CONFERENCE	42
Geographical Location of Lagos Mainland Conference.	42
Economic Condition of Lagos Mainland	45
Territory of Lagos Mainland Conference.....	45
History of Lagos Mainland Conference	46
Leadership and Workforce of Lagos Mainland Conference	50
Membership of Lagos Mainland Conference	51
4. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION....	53
Questionnaire, Program Design and Evaluation.....	53
Presentation and Analysis of Questionnaire	53
Analysis of Data from Questionnaire	69
Program Preparation	74
Objectives	75
Program Design	75
Program Evaluation	78
Observation and Conclusion	78
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	80
Summary.....	80
Conclusions.....	83
Recommendations.....	84
APPENDIX	87
Questionnaire.....	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	99
VITA.....	92

LIST OF TABLES

1. Membership by districts	52
2. Ethnic composition of selection churches	52
3. Educational qualification	54
4. Employment status.....	54
5. Ethnic group.....	55
6. Type of employment.....	55
7. District	56
8. Pastors incite ethnic conflicts through their utterances, attitudes and leadership styles	56
9. Ethnic conflicts can be reduced by Church Leaders through dialogues, sensitization and display of understanding	57
10. Members who are well grounded in the doctrines, policies and administration of the Church are more likely to handle issues in a better way without getting involved in conflict	57
11. Illiteracy and low education may play a major role in ethnic in the Church	58
12. Wealthy members don't care about some of the welfare and ethnic related issues in the Church.....	58
13. Lack of welfare package in the Church for the needy members may cause ethnic conflict	59
14. Participation of members in the activities and programmes of different Church departments will strengthen their faith.....	59
15. Lack of adequate understanding of the Church doctrines, policies and activities may lead to poor handling of issues by member	60
16. Effective preaching, teaching and nurturing of members by the Pastors can increase members' spirituality	60

17. How the Church handles the burial of late members is satisfactory	61
18. How the Church handles the burial of late members is satisfactory (Cross tabulation).....	62
19. The kind of associations and friends' members keep play role in their involvement in ethnic conflict.....	62
20. The appointment and election of leaders in the conference can lead to conflict	63
21. The appointment and election of leaders in the conference can lead to conflict (cross Tabulation).....	63
22. The population of all ethnic groups in the Church should be reflected in all the leadership levels of the Church including conference	64
23. The population of all ethnic groups in the Church should be reflected in all the leadership levels of the Church including the conference (cross tabulation)	65

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I give all thanks to God, Almighty for His providence and leadership in my life especially in the course of my study and this research work. I am indeed grateful to my project supervisor, Pastor (Dr.) Obarido Th. Okochi. His painstaking supervisory effort in ensuring quality in this work cannot be quantified.

I am greatly indebted to my friend and Colleague, Pastor Happy Kona for taking the pain of typing this work and for his enormous contribution to the success of this work. I also recognize my indebtedness to my bosom friend Pastor E.O Grillo and his family for their immense support to me in the course of this work. Pastor Grillo furnished me with relevant materials and also read this work in spite of his tight schedule. I cannot fail to mention my friends; Mr. and Mrs. Chibueze Nwokocha, Elder and Mrs. Goodluck Allison and Elder and Mrs. Chucks Arukwe for their support and contribution towards the success of this project. My Cousin, Mr. Kingsley Nwaimo and my Nephew, Mr. Henry Nwogu was of immense good to me during this period. Also worthy of mention in the success of this project is Pastor (Dr.) Sunday D. Adu. For reading through this work and making useful suggestions, I am immensely grateful.

To Elder Bestman Umezurike and his family as well as the Elders and members of Ijebu-Ode, Ojokoro and Alimosho Districts of Seventh-day Adventist Church I hold out my heartfelt gratitude for their immeasurable support, understanding and prayers.

The leadership of the defunct South-West Nigeria Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church and the current leadership and administration of the Lagos Mainland Conference deserves mention for the magnanimous sponsorship granted me to run this Master Program.

I am grateful to my Parents Elder and Mrs. Jephther .I.J Uchegbue. You are dear and special to me. Thank you for bringing me into the world and for your colossal investments in me as well as your advice. May God continue to bless you. To all my siblings and uncles I appreciate you all. My deepest appreciation goes to my wife, Shepherdess Chigozirim Blessing Umez-Uchegbue for her resilience, love, support, motivation, and constant care for me. I also appreciate my son Master Chiemela Delbert Ayomide Umez-Uchegbue for enduring my absence in the course of this research work and my second son Chimaroke Emmanuel Ayodeji Umez-Uchegbue who was born on the day I wrote my last examination for this programme.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The existence of ethnic conflict in virtually every part of the world shows its pandemic nature and global scale. Francesco Caselli and Wilbur John Coleman II rightly observe that, “Ethnic discrimination, exploitation, and conflict are frequently in the news, and pervasive throughout history. In many countries ethnic groups are or have been visiting violence on each other, sometimes on a horrific scale (the word genocide, by definition, refers to a type of ethnic conflict).”¹

According to James Fearon and David Laitin cited in Francesco Caselli and Coleman II, there are about 58 ethnic civil wars between 1945 and 1999. This figure constitutes 51% of the total number of civil wars.² It is also noteworthy to observe that besides the violent ethnic conflicts that often appear in the news, are non-violent ethnic conflicts which are even possibly more pervasive and endemic. These non-violent ethnic conflicts take different forms and expressions.

The global community is troubled and haunted by the physical and emotional outcomes of ethnic violence. The genocides in Rwanda and Darfur; the ethnic

¹ Francesco Caselli and Wilbur John Coleman II, “On the Theory of Ethnic Conflict,” accessed on Feb. 14 2013, www.faculty.fuqua.duke.edu/.ethnic.pdf.

²James Fearon and David Laitin, “Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity,” *International Organization*, 54, no. 4 (2000), 845-877.

cleansing of Bosnia; sectarian violence in Iraq¹; the incessant inter-ethnic clashes in Nigeria are just a few of ethnic conflicts that have left indelible scars of hatred, anguish and pain on the memories of individuals, communities and the society. This is not to mention the loss of millions of lives as well as properties worth more than can ever be estimated.

Nigeria has continued to experience ethnic crises. The only civil war fought in the country was fought along ethnic lines. Since then, feelings of marginalization, discrimination, suspicion and distrust have not failed to color the coexistence of the various ethnic groups in this multi-ethnic nation. The Niger Delta restiveness and unrest was a thorn in the flesh of the Government and the people of Nigeria. This cannot be divorced from ethnicity. It can be regarded as a form of ethnic conflict. It was a way in which angry youth albeit misguided forms of expression of grievance, felt they could forcefully bring the Government which had hitherto dismissed their plight and grievance as inconsequential to her knees. The Niger Deltans were essentially ethnic group who despite their huge contribution to the national wealth have gotten only peanuts in return. Moving away from the Niger Delta to Northern Nigeria, one is appalled by the scale of violence and brutality that is carried out on the back of the twin forces of ethnicity and religion.

In the religious arena, ethnic conflicts have not failed to rear their ugly heads. For example ethnic and socioeconomic related crises have continued to plague the Christian Churches in spite of their teaching and belief of oneness and unity in Jesus

¹Bojana Blagojevic, "Causes of Ethnic Conflict: A Conceptual Framework," *Journal of Global Change and Governance* III, no. 1 (Winter 2009) accessed 14 February 2013, [http:// www. globalaffairsjournal.org](http://www.globalaffairsjournal.org).

Christ. Series of ethnic conflicts exist in Churches leading to the polarization of most Churches. No wonder one could see Churches with ethnic undertones. For examples in Nigeria we could see Ibo Churches or Yoruba Churches of a particular denomination.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church appears not to have been spared too as it has continued to wrestle with the problems of ethnic conflict. It is against this backdrop that this research seeks to find out the role of socio-economic factors in ethnic conflict in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lagos Mainland Conference.

Statement of the Problem

Most Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Lagos Mainland Conference are multi-ethnic in composition. Consequently, there is the need to give proper consideration for this diversity in view of the conflict potential it is likely to have which in turn may negatively impact on the mission of the church. Incidences of ethnic related conflicts abound. In spite of the Church affirmation and teaching of the oneness and unity of all believers in Christ, divisions, dissatisfactions and conflicts rooted in ethnic differences have continued to threaten the unity in diversity profession of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, especially in Lagos Nigeria. The unity in diversity so preached by the Church has barely grown beyond the realm of theory as its implementation seems to be a mirage. Like the Nigerian political situation where socio-economic factors lie at the root of most ethnic conflict,¹ the Church's experience on ethnic conflict can hardly be successfully divorced from similar socio-economic factors. Although the Church differs greatly from the political

¹Gesiye Angaye "Causes and Cures of Conflicts in Nigeria," 2003, accessed February 27 2013, www.nigerdeltacongress.com.

context of Nigeria in terms of role, mission, nature and many more other ways, it is noteworthy to point out that the Church is a subset of the country in terms of membership. Consequently, it may not be strange to find some problems facing the nation making incursions into the Church openly or through the back door. At such, the following questions deserve attention: if resource control and wealth distribution lie beneath most ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, should the Church take bold steps at addressing the needs of its members in ways that leave no ethnic groups feeling marginalized¹? Does the level of members' awareness and rootedness in the doctrine, teachings and policies of the church have any relationship with their involvement in ethnic conflict? Do the yearnings and welfare needs of the members have any correlation to members' involvement in ethnic crises? How does a good understanding of the cultural differences and perspectives of various ethnic groups on issues bordering on welfare relevant to ethnic conflict? Additionally, what is the role of the pastor as a leader in this situation?

In various efforts aimed at curbing ethnic conflicts within the Church in Nigeria the economic difficulties of the members have hardly gained the attention and interest of the attempts towards prevention and quelling of ethnic conflicts. While the Church leadership tries to address this problem, it is important to take into account the role of the pastor in attaining a relatively ethnic-conflict-free Church.

Purpose of the Study

In the light of the problem identified above, this study among other things, seeks to identify certain socio-economic factors that may trigger conflict in a multi-

¹Marginalization of minor ethnic groups has been identified as a strong catalyst of ethnic conflict in Nigeria. Similarly, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lagos and neighbouring states, there is Association of Seventh-day Adventist Members from East Nigeria Conference (ASDAMEC) which among others seek to address the socioeconomic needs of members.

ethnic church congregation. Secondly, this study will examine the relationship between the socio-economic factors and ethnic conflict in the Church. In addition, it also seeks to highlight the role of the Pastors and Elders as leaders, in ethnic conflict. Furthermore, the study will also propose a program for addressing ethnic conflict within the church from a socio-economic point of view.

Significance of the Study

Undeniable and obvious is the reality of ethnicity with its attendant cultural diversities in the church. These diversities when wrongly perceived and misconstrued have led to ethnic conflicts. Besides this, is the fact that a good number of members are not in the high rungs in the socio-economic ladder. It is therefore significant that we have a proper understanding of the relationship between ethnic conflict and the socio-economic factors in the Church. Very significant is also the role of the pastors whose level of understanding of the issues at play in ethnic conflict is germane to prevention, and proper handling of ethnic conflict. Consequently, an attempt to carefully examine and clarify the correlation between ethnic conflict and socioeconomic factors is a contribution towards the growth, unity and mission of the Church.

Justification for the Study

The subject of ethnic conflict in the Church is not new. Attempts have been made at resolving this issue. While the Church consistently affirms and preaches the theological principle of unity in diversity, it does appear that little or insufficient efforts and attention have been made in addressing the socio-economic dimension of the problem which is a more practical approach, and/or maybe the efforts are not yielding the desired fruits, thus the need for this research.

Limitation of the Study

This research should have been carried out throughout the country where there are multi-ethnic churches. However the researcher decided to limit this work to the Seventh-day Adventist church in Lagos Mainland Conference only for thorough sampling and in-depth analysis. Beside this, some of the key persons involved in these conflicts when contacted refused to comment on the issue for fear of its documentation.

Delimitation

The subject of ethnic conflict is obviously broad and multi-faceted. In the light of this, this research seeks primarily to examine the role of socioeconomic factors in ethnic conflicts among Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Lagos Mainland Conference. However, since the issue of ethnic conflict is not exclusive to any context, relevant literatures on the subjects of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts are also reviewed.

Methodology and Procedure

Methodology

The research design is descriptive and phenomenological in that it aims at capturing and describing the experience and situation of the people in respect to the subject under study. As Stan Lester puts it, phenomenological research “normally translates into gathering ‘deep’ information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participants observation.”²

²Stan Lester, “An Introduction to Phenomenological Research,” 1999, accessed February 25 2013, www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf.

Population of Study

The population of this study comprises of the members of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Lagos Mainland conference. There are total number of 62 churches and Companies in eight Districts.³

Sample Population

The sample population was purposively selected from eleven Churches namely: Ogba, Alimosho, Maryland, Mafoluku, Shasha, Ajegunle, Valley Side, Ikorodu, Ajasa, Ikotun and Bariga. These Churches capture all the eight districts in the Conference. This selection is informed by an attempt to determine the pervasive nature of ethnic conflict in the Conference.

Instrumentation and Material

The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire complemented by some interview questions. A total number of 150 copies of the questionnaires were distributed out of which 112 were retrieved from respondents.

Data Analysis

Data collected from questionnaires are analyzed using the SPSS.

Procedure

This work is divided into five chapters: Chapter one is Introduction. In this chapter, the background to the study is laid and the problem addressed in this study is succinctly stated. It also presents the methodology and the procedure adopted in addressing the problem raised in this study.

³ District is an Administrative Unit of the Conference comprising of two or more Churches within a certain geographical location.

Chapter 2 employs a historical methodology, reviews relevant literatures on the subjects of ethnicity and ethnic conflict and its relationship to socioeconomic factors.

In Chapter 3, the information regarding the field of survey which is Lagos Mainland Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church were given.

Chapter 4 presents and analyses the data collected from the survey. Variables were measured and careful observation made which helped the researcher to arrive at a conclusion. It also presented the programme development, implementation and evaluation. Chapter 5 is the summary, conclusion and recommendations drawn from the study.

Definition of Terms

Ethnicity

The term “ethnicity is derived from the Greek word *ethnos*, which roughly translates to nations.”⁴ Ethnicity can be referred to as the common characteristics of a group that distinguishes them from most other people of the same society. It is based on commonality of ancestry, culture, language, nationality or religion or a combination of these factors. In this research, ethnicity is used to denote people distinguished by elements of culture such as language, dress, ancestry and ideology.⁵

Conflict

According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, conflict is a state of disagreement or argument between opposing ideas and principles. In this

⁴Bhakti Satalkar, “Difference between race and ethnicity,” 2010, accessed February 14 2013, <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/difference-between-race-and-ethnicity.html>.

⁵Ibid.

work, the word conflict denotes fight, war, clash, opposition, disagreement, divergence, argument, quarrel, discord, tension, opposing views, fracas and any situation generally opposed to peaceful coexistence.⁶ Conflicts may range from mild forms such as verbal argument to severe forms such as violence.

Socio-economic Factors

Socio-economic factors include, age, sex, education, income. Measures of socioeconomic status include deprivation, income, housing affordability, home ownership, overcrowding, population, family, welfare, leadership, resource control and culture.

In this project, the following socio-economic factors are considered: resource control, welfare, representation, population and leadership.

⁶Encarta Dictionary, 2010.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This work takes into cognizance the abounding work of researchers and scholars on the subjects of ethnicity and ethnic conflict as well as conflict and conflict management. Hence this chapter reviews relevant literatures in these areas under the following subheadings: the phenomenon of ethnic conflict; Causes of ethnic conflicts; ethnic conflict in the Bible Times; ethnic conflict in the contemporary church; Ellen G. White’s counsel on ethnicity in the Church and Seventh-day Adventist Church on ethnicity.

The Phenomenon of Ethnic Conflict

Conflict can be seen as an “inherent incompatibility between the objectives of two or more characters.”¹ According to free online dictionary, conflict is : “1. A state of open, often prolonged fighting; a battle or war. 2. A state of disharmony between incompatible or antithetical persons, ideas, or interest; a clash”² Conflicts abound all over in human life: family, workplace, politics, and religion, even within an individual.

¹Robbert V. Edgar and Henry E. Jacob, *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing* (Prentice-Hall 2011), 103.

²Farlex Online Dictionary “Conflict,” 2013, accessed 12 February 2013, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/conflict>.

Biblical Perspective of Conflicts

Prior to the entrance of sin on earth, God had already provided a serene environment for man and all other creatures. According to the Bible, conflict in the human society is traceable to the Garden of Eden, the first abode of man. The parties involved in this case were God, Satan, Adam and Eve.¹ The second incidence of conflict occurred between Cain and Abel both of whom were sons of Adam and Eve, which resulted to the death of Abel.² From this point onward, man has continued to live with the reality of conflict. The incidence in Genesis 11 where God is said to have confounded the language of the people is noteworthy. Accordingly, the entire people on the earth prior to this event were united by one language and speech and they agreed to build a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens. The motive for this was to make a name for themselves so as not to be scattered in the face of the earth. This agreement and plan was in conflict with God's plan for humanity. Consequently, God confused their language. The result of this divine action and interference is the phenomenon of the diversity of language. The theological implications of the universal unity in language and the ill-fated project of the tower of Babel is not the focal point of this work. What is deducible from this incidence however is that, it added another element of diversity- language to the human society. From this point, universal agreement has been an elusive mirage. It can also be deduced that unity in language was a powerful force. Parenthetically, it is noteworthy to mention that just as lack of understanding in language led to the abandonment of the tower of Babel project, conflicts can be reduced and maintained when parties

¹Genesis 3.

²Genesis 4.

show and demonstrate understanding Conflicts are fueled by a plethora of factors including ethnic diversities which have continued to plaque humanity. The messages in the Bible are presented against a backdrop of conflict. Conflict according to the Bible however has a supernatural dimension. Man's conflict with his fellow man is seen as the resultant effect of man's conflict with God and or his alliance with Satan- the supernatural being known as the originator of conflicts.³ Revelation 12: 7-9, 12 describes the ejection of Satan from heaven to the earth and the consequence of this to the inhabitants of the earth. And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him... "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time." Revelation 12: 7,9,12 NAS

In the passage above, Satan started conflict in heaven with God. What probably began as the cherishing of prideful thoughts and inordinate ambitions by Lucifer in heaven later erupted a fierce war. The nature of the war is not revealed but it ended in the banishment of Satan and his allies from Heaven. He was cast down to the earth. In the fury and frustration of his losses in the battle in heaven, Satan came to the earth with a mischievous determination to ensuring that man lives in perpetual conflict and unhappiness. This may pass for an explanation of the motive behind the temptation and consequent fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Man's fall

³See Isaiah 14: 12-19, Ezekiel 28:12-19 and Rev 12.

was on one hand, an act of disobedience to God's express instruction or Law and on the other hand a form of obedience to and an alliance with Satan. By securing man's alliance, Satan hopes to continue to wage the war of values with God which he began in heaven. By this, Satan continues to maintain an opposing stance to whatever God says, does and stands for. This is the Biblical perspective of all conflicts including ethnic conflicts.

Conflicts can be said to be one of the resultant effect of the diversities among people in religion, philosophy, ethnicity, socio-economic status and even personalities. Some scholars are of the opinion that religion plays a chief role in many conflicts. Charles Kinbal says that "it is somewhat trite, but nevertheless sadly true, to say that more wars have been waged, more people killed and these days evil perpetuated in the name of religion than by any other institutional force in history".⁴ Blaise Pascal in expressing the same opinion said that "men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."⁵

In Nigeria alone, the decades of religious bloodbath are well known. They have received wide publicity in the international media. Locally, these events have almost become a good news warehouse for Nigerian journalists as it provides them with a long list of cover stories.⁶ Jowondu lists the following as identifiable features of religious conflicts:

1. It occurs in all human society
2. It involves co-operation among two or more entities
3. There must be exhibition of mistrust dishonesty and disloyalty

⁴Charles Kinbal, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (San Francisco: Harper, 2002)1.

⁵Blaise Pascal cited in Dave and Neta Jackson, *Christian Heroes* (IL: Tyndale House Publisher, 2005), 45.

⁶Jan Boer, *Nigeria Decades of Blood 1980-2002* (Ontario: Essence Publishing Belleville, 2004)1.

4. There will be use of arms against one another
5. Destruction of life and properties
6. Intolerance⁷

Jowondu's assessment of religious conflict is interesting but flawed by his equation of conflict with violence as many religious conflicts may not lead to visible violence especially as not all conflicts result in "destruction of lives and properties Charles describes the link between conflict and violence in a more objective way when he explains that every conflict may not lead to violence, but more often than not, behind most violence is conflict. The assumption that there is a link between violence and conflict cannot be seen to be out of place."⁸

According to David W. Kare and Mel McCullough, religious conflicts arise when opinions, positions, and proposals clash with regard to choices the Church is making in its ministry. If a conflict erupts over whose proposals, positions and opinion will prevail, then the Church is in conflict.⁹

Ethnicity as a factor in human diversity has also been blamed for conflicts. When people of different cultures, backgrounds and languages are brought together, there are bound to be ethnic crises. Sujit Sivasundaram believes that God is sovereign over ethnic and linguistic differentiation.¹⁰ He argues that according to the Bible, God intended from the beginning that man spread over the face of the earth. He notes that even, before the ill-fated tower of Babel project, that mark the beginning of

⁷Jowondu Ibrahim, "Peace Process in Africa: An Examination of third party intervention in Religious Conflicts in Nigeria" in Adams K. Arap-Chepkwony and Peter M. J. Hess (eds.), *Human View on God: Variety not monotony*, (Eldoret: Moi University Press, 2010), 181.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Jowondu.

¹⁰Sujit Sivasundaram "Unity and Diversity: the Church, Race and Ethnicity," 2008, 14 February 2013, accessed <http://www.jubilee-centre.org>.

linguistic diversities, Genesis Chapter 10 has a record of table of nations. This was not based on physical dissent but rather related to geographical and territorial ground.¹¹ Sujit seems to imply that even before the language of man was confounded, ethnicity was already implied in God's plan for humanity by virtue of His intention for man to spread all over the earth. One need not be burdened with the merit and nitty-gritty of this argument. What is paramount and worthy of note is that the confounding of language at the Tower of Babel brought a major element of diversity among human beings. Llyod and Nyamutera believe that the fulfillment of God's instruction to Adam and Eve: Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it, would inevitably warrant diversity as separation will ultimately lead to the development of unique cultures.¹² They assert that "even our physical features would change. God, in His wisdom, planned that some of our physical features would become modified ... to be better adapted to the environment of the part of the world He had chosen for us."¹³

Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflicts in Africa

According to Emma E.O Chukwuemeka and V.N.O Agbara, "the human society, and in fact the entire universe is simply squarely a complex entity. To that extent, individuals and groups have their own complexities, needs, aspirations, hopes, goals, opinions, views, and values which could be social, economic, religious, psychological or political."¹⁴ Anugwon sees the term ethnicity as a phenomenon that

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Rhianoon Llyod and Joseph Nyamutera, *Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict* (Geneva: Mercy Ministries International, 2010), 9.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Emma Chukwuemeka and V. Aghara, "Niger Delta Youth Restiveness and Socio-economic Development of Nigeria," *Educational Research and Review* 5, no.7, (2010).

“tends to cut across continental boundaries and capture contemporary African realities and socio-cultural processes.”¹⁵ To him, ethnicity arises in any situation where a group of people, irrespective of the size possesses a different cultural and linguistic feature from those of its neighbours; uses this as a basis for solidarity and interaction with others.¹⁶ But Simbowale and Sunday believe that ethnicity though dominant “is neither absolute nor immutable, nor is it inherently destructive, nor are ethnic identities pre-ordained.”¹⁷ To them, ethnic identities are consciously and purposefully constructed and constantly modified by the people as vehicles for meeting their goals and aspirations.¹⁸ There seems to be a general consensus in opinion among scholars that ethnic conflicts in Africa are a product of colonial imperialism. Nwosu asserts that the colonization of Africa and other third world states ensured that people from different or diverse cultures were forced to live together under one country.¹⁹ In the same vein, Vandenberg, said that mooted under colonialism was the problem of ethnic conflict because Africans were not allowed to participate or take control of the center power. But rather were kept divided into administrative districts by Europeans.²⁰ Welsh’s belief about the violence and intractable internal conflicts that have plagued

¹⁵Edlyne E. Anugwon, “Ethnic Conflict and Democracy in Nigeria: the Marginalization Question,” *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 15, no. 62 (2000).

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Tokunbo Sinbowale and Oladipipo Sunday Osinubi, “Ethnic Conflicts in Contemporary Africa: The Nigerian Experience” *Journal of Social Science* 12, no 102 (2006).

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹I. Nwosu, cited in Tokunbo Sinbowale and Oladipipo Osinubi, “Ethnic Conflicts in Contemporary Africa: The Nigerian Experience,” *Journal of Social Science* 12, no. 102 (2006).

²⁰Tokunbo.

African Societies is not different from that of Nwosu and Vandenberg. He sees the conflict in Somalia, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan, Rwanda and even Cote d'Ivoire as the failure on the part of the state in this sub-Saharan Africa to cope with ethnicity. Nnoli cited by Anugwon, view ethnicity as a class phenomenon, which emerged from the desire of the colonizers to exploit the colonized.²¹ He further maintains that "ethnicity in Africa emerged and persisted either as a mechanism for adaptation to the imperialist system or an instrument for ensuring a facile and more effective domination and exploitation of the colonized."²² While he is arguable on the same page with many scholars on the ethnic problems in Africa, his assertion that ethnicity is a child of colonialism may be termed an exaggeration. It may be right to say that the colonizers created ethnic conflict and not ethnicity. But his assertion that "conflict as an aspect of ethnicity is more pronounced in society where the inter-ethnic competition for scarce resources is the rule, particularly when inequality is accepted as a given wealth is greatly esteemed" is commendable and offers an explanation for the persistent and incessant ethnic conflicts in Nigeria.²³

Although, it is clear that colonialism has brought ethnic conflict, the end of colonialism has not brought an end to ethnic conflict. Anugwon puts it this way:

The end of colonial era, however, does not mean that the objective realities upon which ethnicity was built have disappeared. The selfish need for the privileged classes to further their interests and subjugate the underprivileged by instigating and intensifying ethnic sentiments, still abound. At best, one privileged group, the white colonizers have been replaced by another privileged group, the indigenous agents of neo-imperialism.²⁴

²¹Anugwon, 64.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid,67.

²⁴Anugwon, 65.

This appears to be the ugly situation in Africa. Most of the bloody ethnic conflicts recorded in Africa are post- independence. The Rwanda, 1994 Genocide is a good case to point. The Darfur crisis is also another case.

This is particularly true about Nigeria that has continued to witness ethnic crises. The 30-month (1967-1970) bloody civil war was hinged on ethnicity. It was occasioned by the attempt of the Igbo people in the South-east region of the country to carve out a country for themselves.²⁵ There is no gainsaying that the ugly memories of this war have continued to linger in the minds of the Ibos who suffered defeat and severe loses in the war. The statistics of ethno-religious conflicts in the Northern part of the country is stunning. It has been shown that not less 35 cases of ethno-religious conflicts have rocked the North between 1980 and 2008.²⁶ These include:

- Kano, in 1990, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1999, the conflict is between Hausa-Fulani and non-indigenes but with religious underpinnings.
- Bauchi: the conflict of TafawaBalewa was between Hausa and Sayawa. The conflicts were ethnic but communal underpinnings. It occurred in 1980, 1990, 1991, 1995, and 2002.
- Kaduna has been another nub centre of ethnic conflict in this region. In Kafanchan, in 1996, 1998, 2006. Likewise in Zango Kataf violent ethno-religious conflict of 1992 was between Atyap and Hausa-Fulani on ethnic basis but with religious and communal dimensions.
- In Plateau state, Jos is known as a peace town until the eruption of ethnic crises in the state: 1996, 2000-2002, Hausa and Birom in Jos, Bukur, BarikinLadi, Hausa-Fulani, Bogos, Birom and Hausa Fulani in Mangu. With numerous others in Langtang, Pankshin, Wase and Yelwan Shendam areas.
- In Benue, Taraba and Nassarawa states there has been conflict between Tiv and Jukun as well the Tiv and Hausa-Fulani.²⁷

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷M. Yusuf, "Conflict Management in Northern Africa," 2009, February 14 2013, accessed <http://mmyusuf.blogspot.com/2009/01/ethnic-conflict-management-in-northern.html>.

In fact, religious conflicts have continued in Jos until recently. In April 15, Nigerian Tribune reported that no fewer than 40 lives were lost in the frequent blood bathing in plateau State, especially in 5 local government areas of the state including Jos south.²⁸

Causes of Ethnic Conflicts

Bojana Blagojevic believes that each ethnic conflict has its own unique causes and features. Although there are common denominators in all ethnic conflict, the prominence and roles of these elements differ from one context to another.²⁹ He asserts that “all multi-ethnic societies when subject to a convergence of a particular set of factors and conditions carry the potential of ethnic conflict.”³⁰

Colonial Roots

Most studies on ethnicity and ethnic conflict point accusing fingers at the colonial masters as the root cause of ethnic conflicts in Africa. They see ethnicity and the incidence of ethnic conflicts as the child of imperialism. Sinbowale and Sunday believe that British colonial Master provided the cradle for ethnicity and under the guise of embarking on the mission of unifying the warring ethnic groups; they created the ethnic walls among the people that make conflict inevitable.³¹ This view is also shared by Anugwon who believes that the kind of ethnic rivalry and competition among the ethnic communities in Nigeria is traceable to contact with the colonial

²⁸Nigerian Tribune, April 15, 2013.

²⁹Bojana Blagojevic 3.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Tokunbo Sinbowale and Oladipipo Sunday Osinubi, “Ethnic Conflicts in Contemporary Africa: The Nigerian Experience,” *Journal of Social Science* 12, no. 102 (2006).

Masters.³² Emmy Godwin does not agree less with Anugwon when he asserts that “the divide-and –rule strategy adopted by the colonial Masters saw the separation of the Nigeria people along ethnic lines in separates areas called “Sabongari”, in the North and “Abakpa” in the eastern part of Nigeria.³³ The South African experience is no different as the colonial Masters employed policies that deepened the differences between Zulus and Xhosa, Ndebele and Vendas, Tswana and Qwaqwa, and using culture, residence, occupation, and status, segregation of those of mixed race from the whites, they entrenched racism and ethnic segregation in the country.³⁴

Competition for Scarce Resources

Nnoli also believes that the competition for scarce resources among ethnic groups in the society may engender conflicts especially in a multi-ethnic democratic setting where the rule is that strong ethnic groups want to control who gets what, how and when.³⁵ Similarly, Emmy Godwin believes that almost all ethnic conflicts in Nigeria are hinged on economic factors chief of which is the competition for scarce resources.³⁶ He sees the competition for property, rights, jobs, education, language, social amenities and good health care facilities in Multi-ethnic societies like Nigeria and South Africa as the key player in the ethnic conflicts that have continued to

³²Anugwon, 61.

³³Emmy Godwin “Ethnic Conflict Management in Africa: A Comparative Case Study of Nigeria and South Africa,” (May 2005).

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵O. Nnoli, “Ethnic Politics in Nigeria”, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers 1978), cited by Anugwon.

³⁶Emmy Godwin.

plague both countries.³⁷ It cannot be gainsaid—land is a major issue that occupies a significant place in many ethnic conflicts.

Primordial Feelings and Consideration

It is paramount to consider primordial feelings as one of the factors in ethnic conflicts. According to Blagojevic, another cause of ethnic conflict is memories and emotions of conflict. This he called a primordialist approach to ethnic conflict.³⁸ In this situation, the existence of past animosities and hatred among ethnic groups and cultural groups become a prominent factor in conflicts.³⁹ Blagojevic believes however, “historical roots in collective memory” can be established in ethnic animosities.⁴⁰ Similarly, Edwin asserts that psychology—the fear and sense of insecurity among ethnic groups is a cause of ethnic conflicts.⁴¹ He convincingly notes that in many cases, extremists ride upon these fears to polarize the society. And this is often fueled by the memories of past traumas which breed feelings of distrust and suspicion.⁴² In 2012, the now late celebrated and revered Nigerian author and novelist Chinua Achebe in his book; *There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*, alleged that Federal government of Nigeria through the then Finance Minister, Obafemi Awolowo blocked the supply of food to the Igbo during the civil war. This to Achebe was genocidal to the Igbos. It is noteworthy that this came about 43 years after the war has

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Blagojevic, 5.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

ended. This means that people still continue to harbour feelings and emotions of hatred, suspicion and distrust for people of other ethnic groups in reference to incidences and events in the past even after many years.

Poor State Structure

Lake and Rothschild, however see ethnic conflict as a product of weak state in which case the state is hijacked by a particular ethnic group to its favour.⁴³ The failure of the government of most African countries after independence to ensure equitable distribution of resources across the board of all ethnic groups in the societies have continue to make ethnic conflicts intractable. Blagojevic puts it thus:

The instability and uncertainty that result from a major structural change and the institutional inability to regulate inter-ethnic relations provide a perfect condition in which political entrepreneurs can manipulate ethnic emotions in order to mobilize groups for their own political purposes. Politicians exploit ethnic differences by drawing upon historical memories of grievances and whip up hatred in order to gain or strengthen their power...The success of political entrepreneurs in mobilizing ethnic groups into violent conflict depends on the strength of the existing state institutions⁴⁴

Citing Crawford, she states “ if states provide a legitimate arena for entrepreneurs to compete and if resources available for allocation are abundant, identity politics...will be legitimate and stable”⁴⁵ However, when the state fail, ethnic identities become the last resort of the people in their struggle for a fair share in the resources of the state.

⁴³Lake and Rothschild cited by Emmy Godwin.

⁴⁴Blagojevic.

⁴⁵Ibid.

Poverty

Yet another cause of ethnic conflict is poverty. In the context of the problem in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, Chukwuemeka and Aghara maintain that “a lot of people, especially the grassroots are suffering in the midst of plenty, and unless they are made comfortable to some extent, this crisis will keep escalating.”⁴⁶

Cultural Misunderstandings

Duane Elmer believes that misinterpretation and poor understanding of the culture of others lie at the root of many ethnic conflicts.⁴⁷ According to him, in a world that has become a global village where different cultures, racial and ethnic groups cannot but meet and interact, “cultural differences, coupled with every one’s natural tendency to ‘do it my way,’ make conflict inevitable.”⁴⁸

Ethnic Conflict in Bible Times

It appears that where there is a plurality of ethnicity, deliberate and concerted effort are required to prevent conflict. The Old Testament is awash with incidences of wars most of which were inter-ethnic. The Israelites fought wars with neighbouring nations which were of different ethnic groups. In the New Testament, instances of distrust and discrimination based on diversity of ethnicity are present. The following cases are noteworthy.

⁴⁶Chukwuemeka and Aghara, 400.

⁴⁷ Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflicts: Building Relationships for effective Ministry* (Downers Grove IL: Intervarsity Press 2006).

⁴⁸ Ibid., 21.

The Jews and Samaritans in Ethnic Conflict

The nation, Israel split into two kingdoms in 931 BC after the death of Solomon. This was in fulfillment of Prophet Ahijah's prophecy concerning the Kingdom. This was an expression of God's displeasure with King Solomon whose heart was turned from the Lord by the numerous foreign women he took as wives. (I Kgs 11: 1-13, 26-40). Upon the death of King Solomon, prophecy came to fulfillment-Rehoboam's (Solomon's son and successor) lost ten of the tribes of Israel to Jeroboam, a former minister in King Solomon's cabinet. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin became one kingdom and were referred to as Judah. The other ten tribes known as Israel seceded under Jeroboam. From this point onward, the two kingdoms co-existed. The relationship between the two kingdoms was characterized with a mixture of hostility and alliance depending on the reigning kings.

However in 721 BC, Israel, the northern Kingdom was dealt with a devastating blow that forced them into near extinction.

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah Hoshea the son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel, and he reigned nine years. And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, yet not as the kings of Israel who were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his vassal, and paid him tribute. But the king of Assyria found treachery in Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year; therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria invaded all the land and came to Samaria, and for three years he besieged it. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. And this was so, because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs which the kings of Israel had introduced.⁴⁹

⁴⁹2 Kings 17:1-8.

But the Assyrians were not done with Israel yet, hence “the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria, and dwelt in its cities.”⁵⁰

This was how Samaria, lost its pure Jewish fabric and nature both in blood and religion. Their worship was corrupted and it is this loss of its true Jewish basics in terms of culture and religions that earned the Samaritans the prejudice and disdain of the New Testament Jews. John 4:9 “The Samaritan woman said to him: How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” This can be described as an ethnic conflict. But Jesus’ attitude and example was a clear departure from this pattern, Jesus ministered to Samaritans. (John 4). The famous parable of the good Samaritans⁵¹ by Jesus is a rebuke to Jewish chauvinism and prejudice against the Samaritans.

Ethnic Conflict in the Jerusalem Church

The fledgling Jerusalem Church of the apostolic era was not completely immune to the problem of ethnic conflict. Luke in Acts of the Apostles informs that “In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.”⁵²

The categorization of the Jews as either Grecian or Hebraic, to most scholars lies in the twin factors of language and geography. The Grecian Jews or Hellenist

⁵⁰2 Kings 17:24.

⁵¹Luke 10:25-37.

⁵²Acts 6:1.

Jews (New American Standard Version) were the Jews in Diaspora (the Jewish Dispersion in the West) born outside of Palestine in the Greek cities some of whom had retired to Jerusalem, their homeland.⁵³ However, the Jews in Babylon and Syria (the Jewish Dispersion in the East) were not classified thus as the Jews saw these places as extension of the Holy Land. Alfred Edersheim informs that “the Trans-Euphratic Jews, who 'inhabited Babylon and many of the other satrapies, were included with the Palestinians and the Syrians under the term 'Hebrews,' from the common language which they spoke.”⁵⁴ The Hellenist Jews spoke Greek as their major language. They were not spread abroad in the Grecian world by the factor of captivity but they were majorly traders who found the commercial buoyancy of the Grecian world as means to an end. They were more in number and wealthier. The Hebrew Jews on the other hand were the Jews who born and brought up in Palestine-Jerusalem and other Judean settlement. They spoke Aramaic. It is likely that Hellenist Jews who resided Jerusalem may have been discriminated against and looked upon with dislike and suspicion by the native Hebrews on account of their language, values and cultures which are largely Greek.⁵⁵

Longenecker informs that: “According to the Talmud, Pharisaism made little secret of its contempt for Hellenists...They were frequently categorized by the native-born populace of Jerusalem as second class Israelites”⁵⁶ That this prejudice found its

⁵³Paul Kroll, “Exploring the Book of Acts 6,” 1995, February 14 2013, accessed <http://www.gci/bible/acts6>.

⁵⁴Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, (HDM Digital Copy, 1883).

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 53.

⁵⁶Longenecker, cited in Paul Kroll, “Exploring the Book of Acts 6,” 1995, February 14 2013, accessed <http://www.gci/bible/acts6>.

way into the early Church is evident from the case reported by Luke in Acts 6:1-6. According to this report, the Grecian Jews complained that their widows were being “overlooked by the daily distribution of the Church”. It is possible that this problem of inequality in the welfare of the widows was merely a surface issue. It may be a manifestation of a deeper conflict between the two groups- Grecian and Native Jews in the Church. That the differences in these two groups lie in background, culture and language- major elements in ethnicity makes this conflict more of an ethnic one.

Peter and Cornelius’ Conversion

Peter who was the first to preach the gospel to the Jews was also the first to preach to the Gentiles officially. This was after a vision which made clear to him that the Gentiles also had a right to the gospel and salvation. According to the Bible in Acts of the Apostles Chapter 10: 9-20, Peter in a trance or vision was shown or given a basket full of all kinds of unclean animals to eat but he rejected replying that he has not eaten anything that is common or unclean. Today’s missiologists would have called Peter ethno-centric because while the apostle Peter knew that Jesus said he should go into all the world and preach the gospel,⁵⁷ he still had trouble speaking with a Roman centurion name Cornelius simply because he is not from his race or ethnic background. Peter’s action or message here is that “no religio-ethnic or cultural conditions must be met to qualify for God’s salvation blessings.”

Despite the deep-seated taboo, Peter unequivocally announces that he has learnt a lesson from the heavenly vision which providentially culminated with the arrival of the Gentile messengers and spirit’s instruction, “Go with them, not making

⁵⁷ See Matthew.28:18-20.

any destructions”(Act 10:9-19). Peter puts it tersely: “God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.”⁵⁸

Just as the cultural barrier between holy and profane (the common), clean and unclean has come down externally so the prejudicial barrier between races and ethnic group forever removed. Therefore no human being is to be treated as profane or be seen as one that cannot be saved by God’s saving and sanctifying work.⁵⁹ Peter here, demonstrated deep respect for the Holy Spirit and have acted on his new insight by going to Cornelius house without objection, (Compare Acts 10:20) and expected to be informed by being invited.⁶⁰

This historic meeting has been orchestrated by God himself to inaugurate the mission to the Gentiles. This can be seen in the response of Cornelius. Cornelius vision coupled with his subsequent obedience is the most repeated features of his conversion narrative. No wonder Luke continues to emphasize that the Gentiles mission is Gods will and was crafted for a purpose and insisted that without God’s intervention it would not have happened.⁶¹

Peter’s message “God does not show favoritism” shows that God is impartial in His dealings with persons from every nation (ethnicity). This term is not restricted to people from a nation state but also to any racial, ethnic or cultural grouping by which humans distinguish themselves. Peter submits that persons in every nation (ethnos) who fear God and do right are acceptable (dektos), welcome to him.

⁵⁸ Acts 10:28.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Paul and the Circumcision Group

The long range result of the council of Jerusalem was the liberation of Christianity from the observance of the ceremonial Jewish laws. The Jerusalem council in Acts 15 was convened to resolve among other issues the circumcision controversy.⁶² The main factor on which this controversy was hinged is the Jewish and Gentile dichotomy. While the Jews by their tradition rooted in the Abrahamic covenant circumcised their male children on the eighth day, an attempt and campaign by some Jewish Christians to impose this ritual as a prerequisite for acceptance into the Christian faith on Gentile converts generated a heated controversy. The council resolved that the Gentile should not be required to undergo circumcision. From then henceforth, faith became the only means by which man receives salvation. No wonder Christianity is freed from becoming a sect of Judaism, because this faith is for all people.⁶³ Also, there were minor demands to conciliate Jewish believers such as: refraining from eating blood or things strangled, Gentiles converts were also asked to avoid the sin of idolatry and immorality—sins that would be a special temptation to converts from a sinful pagan environment. It will be clearly seen that all these requests and resolutions were designed to facilitate good relationship between Jewish and Christian converts to Christianity. Paul was willing to make concessions that were harmless such as these in order to facilitate his work, but he would not permit Titus to be circumcised at Jerusalem because Gentile freedom from the observance of the Jewish ritual law was the principle for which he was fighting.⁶⁴

⁶² David Smith, *The Life and Letters of Saint Paul* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

It is noteworthy to say that the Church was bound together the new law of love, which propels the observance of the Jewish moral laws out of law to God rather out of a sense of duty, and this became the basis for Christian ethics. Interesting to note also is the democratic fashion in which the Church met and resolved its great problem. The decision was made by the Church and its leaders under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ Jewish Christians who had been saved by faith, were left free to observe the Law of Moses as voluntary task if they so desired. Leaders and laity of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lagos Mainland Conference must not forget the Jerusalem council experience. The Gospel is very clear with regards to ethnicity. The Kingdom of God is not a new “generic” culture, but a family which includes people from a great variety of cultures. In the body of Christ, no one culture dominates or dictates to another. Everyone and every culture stands equal and humbly before God in their culture but not of that culture.⁶⁶ The culmination of the history of the world would be when Christ followers will join the multi-ethnic choir out of every tribe, nation and tongue and praise God for ever (Rev 14:7).⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Donald Guthrie, *The Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 1974).

⁶⁶ Donald R. Jacob, “The Gospel and Ethnicity” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, Scott Moreau, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 323.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Ethnic Conflict in the Contemporary Church

The fact that ethnic conflict has found its way into the Church is no longer news. Although the Church is conceptually a nation of believers where ethnic identities and expressions are made subservient to faith in Christ, conflicts arising from ethnicity are not uncommon.

In Africa, for example, there appears to be a corresponding escalation of ethnic conflicts with the growth and proliferation of Churches in the Continent.

Rhianoon Llyod and Joseph Nyamutera paint the situation thus:

Though all commend the African Church for its growth in numbers, many are puzzled by its lack of effectiveness in the war against tribalism... There are many mono-ethnic Churches where people of other ethnic groups are not made to feel welcome. Even in the Churches where different ethnic groups co-exist, leaders and other office-bearers are often selected according to their ethnic group and not according to their gifting. Intermarriage between different ethnic groups is often frowned upon, even openly opposed. In times of ethnic conflict within the Country, the Church is often part of the problem instead of being part of the solution, with the same divisions and hatred existing within the Church as in the community. And most people don't see anything wrong in this.⁶⁸

Sujit Sivasudaram in his work "Unity and diversity: the Church, race and ethnicity" opines that using ethnicity as a chief criterion for defining identity can result in the marginalization of ethnic minorities⁶⁹. In his words "the affirmation of ethnic diversity can give the individual believer and the local congregation a sense of cohesion and belonging."⁷⁰ He suggests the application and celebration of the principles of unity and diversity. According to him, unity results when ethnic differences among believers disappear in Christ. On the other hand there is diversity

⁶⁸Sujit Sivasundaram.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid.

when ethnic differences among believers are understood and respected.⁷¹ According to him, “unity with believers from different background is crucial; for all believers are equal in worth in God’s sight. Yet diversity can be celebrated as God’s given and ethnic heritage can give a sense of rootedness.”⁷² Sivasundaram says further that congregation should endeavour to reflect the diverse ethnic background of the Church in the selection of members into leadership positions.⁷³

He further asserts that:

The multi-ethnic Church is a tremendous resource for evangelism, by drawing attention to the diversity of its members, the Church might present alternative to the cultural relativism so prevalent today. The post-modern onlooker might reduce Christianity to the needs of a particular local community, or might explain it in terms of the attractiveness of its symbols and ideas for individuals. They might seek to differentiate black Christianity from white Christianity. The multi-ethnic church challenges these assessments by presenting the gospel as something that holds for people everywhere, and which is visibly followed by all ethnicities...Churches should seek not be organized primarily in terms of ethnicity, or for that matter class or age, as this detracts from the biblical principles of unity in diversity.⁷⁴

Although Sivasundaram suggests this in the context of the local congregation, there is no gainsaying that this also applies to the Church at other different levels. His advocacy for the multi-ethnic Church and discouragement of mono-ethnic ethnic church in the context of the gospel and evangelism deserves attention. Evangelism which is germane to the existence of the Church cannot flourish in the context of ethnic conflict. In addition, the universality of the gospel and breakdown of ethnic barricading walls in Christ implies that God expects His Church to be multi-ethnic. This means that the establishment of mono-ethnic churches is not a solution to ethnic

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

conflicts in the Church. Forming mono-ethnic Churches is solving a problem by creating another problem. Therefore, the Church must apply the principle of unity in diversity carefully, prayerfully and practically.

Rhianoon Llyod and Joseph Nyamutera corroborate Sujit when they explain that the Church is a nation that is made up of people from different ethnic group who love God.⁷⁵ They therefore describe the Church as an international, multi-ethnic nation where different cultures are represented and each ethnic group brings out its own splendour. (Revelation 21:24-27).⁷⁶ In their own words, “we don’t lose our natural identity as we join in the Holy Nation, but our ethnic identity becomes part of the higher, far more glorious, identity of being a citizen of the Holy Nation.”⁷⁷ This means that as Christians, we either see our ethnic identity as foremost or allow our ethnic identity to be redeemed. In the latter case, we do not lose our ethnic identity, but such identity finds its rightful place within our primary identity as Christians.⁷⁸ In God’s Holy Nation, “all divisions disappear while distinctiveness is still honoured.”⁷⁹ Rhianoon Llyod and Joseph Nyamutera explanation is beautiful and quite practical. It calls for the avoidance of two extremes- ignoring or suppressing ethnic identity and on the other hand the tendency of placing primacy on ethnic identity. Their model for the Church in which ethnic divisions disappear and ethnic distinctiveness remains honoured is helpful.

⁷⁵Rhianoon Llyod and Joseph Nyamutera, 15, See also Revelation 5:9-10.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

The above models though wonderful and well known, have not prevented the incidence of conflict coloured with ethnic factor in the Church. The conflict that rocked the African Church of Nigeria in 2008 is a good case in point.

In 2008, nine Venerables were presented to the college of Bishop to be elevated to the post of Bishops. The following nine candidates were presented: The Ven.E. O Oguntayo, The Ven.E.AAdemola, the Ven. I.A Obie, the Ven. B.A Sogbesan, the Ven. I.I Benson, the Ven. M.O Adeyemi, the Ven. H.O Adetoro, the Ven F.E Bunmi Ogunmodede and the Ven. J.O Oke. These names we appeared in the minutes of the General Committee meeting of April, 17, 2008. However the college of Bishop which is the body saddled with the responsibility to screen and ratify candidates for the elevation to the office of Bishop, approved eight out of the nine of the candidates nominated for elevation.⁸⁰ An excerpt of the minutes of the meeting to this effect reads: “Approved of eight Venerables to the post of Bishop and directed that they should be consecrated”⁸¹. The person omitted was the Ven. J.O Oke. The lay people queried the exclusion. To this the Primate explained that there were only eight vacancies available to be filled. What however came as a shocker to the generality of the people was the conspicuous omission of the Ven J. O Oke’s name in the list of another set of Venerables presented for elevation.

The laity again queried the omission of Ven. J.O Oke’s name. A section of the College of Bishop also expressed discontent at this. This brought a division in the College as the Primate and the Chairman of the College, Most Rev. (Dr) A.Onadutun Onanuga came under pressure to include Ven J.O Oke’s name. Consequently Oke’s

⁸⁰Minutes of the General Committee Meeting of the African Church, Nigeria held at St. John African Church Cathedral, Utu-Abak, Annag Diocese, November 20, 2008, 7.

⁸¹Ibid.

name was included in the list- the Ven.J.O .Oke, the Ven. I.K A Anjuwon, the Ven. R.S Afolabi, the Ven. A.I Dawodu, the Ven I.O Brownson, the Ven. M.E John, the Ven. A.P Ikat and the Ven. I.K.D Briggs.⁸² It was at this point that Rt. Rev Bishop Oduleke E.O, brought to the notice of the entire Church that the eight candidates presented for the elevation were not screened by the College of Bishop before the date for the their consecration was fixed. Against the backdrop of the revelation of the procedural breach that characterizes the process, the deputy lay President, Chief Ebenezer Olubukola proceeded to the court and obtained an order restraining the Church from consecrating the new Venerables. The minutes of the General Committee meeting of November 20, 2008 explained that the Deputy Lay President did what he did in a bid to put things right.⁸³

The Primate however ignored the order and consecrated them nonetheless. This disregard for the court order by the Primate compelled the Deputy Lay President to approach the court again to pray the court that the Primate be charged for contempt of court. In a swift reaction, Justice Bisi Adegbite said that such contempt of court against the Church is shameful. The Judge ruled that the consecrated Bishops be disrobed.⁸⁴ The National women wing of the Church wrote a letter of concern and urged that the case be withdrawn and settled amicably within the Church.⁸⁵ The vice lay President of Ibadan Diocese, Sir Francis ‘Kunle Oni said, “We should be tolerant and avoid washing our dirty linens outside.”⁸⁶ After the execution of the court order to

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., 8.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., 7.

disrobe the newly consecrated Bishops, the Primate later pleaded with the Church to accept the list of the eight Venerables for elevation to the office of the Bishop.

Strong condemnations trailed the issue that generated into court cases. The College of Bishops and the Primate were slammed for negligence and dereliction of duty. To forestall any kind of this ugly incident, the conditions and requisite for the elevation of venerable to the office Bishop were reiterated and strengthened. A call was made at the General session of the Church for the College of Bishops to “work as a team and be guided by the Holy Spirit.”⁸⁷ The College of Bishops was sent back to revisit and reexamine the candidature of the eight venerables and other fresh nominations. At the end of a thorough screening process, four out of the eight original names were approved while four were dropped.⁸⁸ The names of the ones dropped are: I.D. Brownson, I.K.D. Briggs, M.E. John and R.S. Afolabi.⁸⁹ But the South-South brethren of the Church rejected the Bishops that were posted to serve in their region on the grounds that their sons were denied elevation.

Appeal for the elevation of the dropped Venerables was made but accepted only on one condition- that they retire a week after elevation. This condition was accepted and peace reigned.⁹⁰ Although not explicitly stated, ethnicity lies at the base of this conflict. The second list of the Venerables consecrated without due process had Venerables from the South-South. Hitherto, sources said no Venerable from the

⁸⁷The African Church General Committee Report for the period of May 5, 2008 to May 6, 2009 submitted to the 108th annual General Conference, 7th-10th May 2009 12.

⁸⁸Report of the Annual General Conference of the African Church for the period of May 10, 2010 to May 4, 2011 held at Holy Trinity African Church Cathedral, Bethel (New Site) Imepe, Ijebu-Ode Diocese, May 5-8, 2011, 14.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

region has been elevated. Moreover, three of the four Venerables dropped were from the region. It is probably in a bid to consecrate these Venerable on the ground of ethnicity that the entire candidates were shielded from the ability test that the screening was design to ensure. Consequently, the consecration of these Venerables was an attempt albeit the breach of due process to please people of the region. To say it in another way, it was a sacrifice of merit on the altar of ethnicity.

One revealed fact is that the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda is a convincing case that the Church has failed to disinfect itself of the virus of ethnic discrimination and conflict. Both the Catholic and Protestant Churches in Rwanda are multi-ethnic, and the Genocide in Rwanda occurred within religious groups. In the majority of the communities, it has been shown that members of the same Church killed their fellow members and even in a number of cases their own Pastor or Priest of the other ethnic group other than theirs.⁹¹ Unfortunately true for even the Seventh-day Adventist Church. That is why we must always be careful of the whims of the arc enemy.

Ellen G. White on Church-Related Ethnic Conflicts

Ellen G. White made no explicit statements on ethnicity and ethnic conflict. This may be due to the fact that the issue in her time and context was more of racism than ethnic conflict. However, she offered practical and useful counsel in the context of the racial prejudices that prevailed among the White against the African Negro of her time. In spite of abolishment of slave trade in early 1880s, the prejudice against the blacks in the United States continued to linger. This situation became an

⁹¹Timothy Longman, "Christian Churches and Genocide in Rwanda: Revision of a Paper Originally prepared for Conference on Genocide, Religion and Modernity United States Holocaust Memorial Museum," 1997, February 14 2013, accessed <http://faculty.vasal.edu/tilongma/church&Genocide.html>.

impediment to the spread of the gospel work especially among the blacks. It is against this backdrop that she offered the following counsel:

Let as little as possible be said about the color line, and let the colored people work chiefly for those of their own race... In regard to white and colored people worshiping in the same building, this cannot be followed as a general custom with profit to either party--especially in the South. The best thing will be to provide the colored people who accept the truth, with places of worship of their own, in which they can carry on their services by themselves. This is particularly necessary in the South in order that the work for the white people may be carried on without serious hindrance... Let the colored believers be provided with neat, tasteful houses of worship. Let them be shown that this is done not to exclude them from worshiping with white people, because they are black, but in order that the progress of the truth may be advanced. Let them understand that this plan is to be followed until the Lord shows us a better way.⁹²

Ellen G. White's counsel that the blacks should be allowed to worship in separate Churches may appear discriminatory on the surface. But this, according to her, was to ensure that the work of evangelism did not suffer from unnecessary impediment. She noted that the prejudice the White had against the black can only be ignored at the detriment of the work.⁹³ She states:

I am burdened, heavily burdened, for the work among the colored people. The gospel is to be presented to the downtrodden Negro race. But great caution will have to be shown in the efforts put forth for the uplifting of this people. Among the white people in many places there exists a strong prejudice against the Negro race. We may desire to ignore this prejudice, but we cannot do it. If we were to act as if this prejudice did not exist we could not get the light before the white people. We must meet the situation as it is and deal with it wisely and intelligently.⁹⁴

This counsel may have been given in the best interest of the work in the Southern part. Given the fact that the wounds and scars of slavery were still fresh in the minds of the people, not taking this into cognizance may be a disservice to the course of God

⁹²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for Church*, 9: 204-207.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 208.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 204.

work. However, beyond the immediate context of the South, Ellen G. White gave a counsel which should be a guiding principle in dealing with ethnic conflicts:

Through faith in Christ we become members of the royal family, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. In Christ we are one. As we come in sight of Calvary, and view the royal Sufferer who in man's nature bore the curse of the law in his behalf, all national distinctions, all sectarian differences are obliterated; all honor of rank, all pride of caste is lost.⁹⁵

Ellen G. White in dealing with the problem of racism in her time was practical, sensitive and conscious of the current mood of the people. Her counsel was tactful and was given at the best interest of the work. But many years have passed; we cannot continue to dwell in the past and harbour prejudice on grounds of race and ethnicity.

Seventh-day Adventist Church Statement on Ethnicity

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has the following statement on racism in its official web page:

One of the odious evils of our day is racism, the belief or practice that views or treats certain racial groups as inferior and therefore justifiably the object of domination, discrimination, and segregation.

While the sin of racism is an age-old phenomenon based on ignorance, fear, estrangement, and false pride, some of its ugliest manifestations have taken place in our time. Racism and irrational prejudices operate in a vicious circle. Racism is among the worst of ingrained prejudices that characterize sinful human beings. Its consequences are generally more devastating because racism easily becomes permanently institutionalized and legalized and in its extreme manifestations can lead to systematic persecution and even genocide.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church deplores all forms of racism, including the political policy of apartheid with its enforced segregation and legalized discrimination.

Seventh-day Adventists want to be faithful to the reconciling ministry assigned to the Christian church. As a worldwide community of faith, the Seventh-day Adventist Church wishes to witness to and exhibit in her own ranks the unity and love that transcend racial differences and overcome past alienation between races.

Scripture plainly teaches that every person was created in the image of God, who "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). Racial discrimination is an offense against our fellow

⁹⁵Ellen White, *Selected Messages* 1:258.

human beings, who were created in God's image. In Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal. 3:28). Therefore, racism is really a heresy and in essence a form of idolatry, for it limits the fatherhood of God by denying the brotherhood of all mankind and by exalting the superiority of one's own race. The standard for Seventh-day Adventist Christians is acknowledged in the church's Bible-based Fundamental Belief No. 13, "Unity in the Body of Christ." Here it is pointed out: "In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Any other approach destroys the heart of the Christian gospel."⁹⁶

According to the Church's official site, "This public statement was released by the General Conference president, Neal C. Wilson, after consultation with the 16 world vice presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, on June 27, 1985, at the General Conference session in New Orleans, Louisiana."⁹⁷ This statement which is about 28 years old deserves amendment. First, the Fundamental belief referred to in the statement as Number 13 is currently in 14th position in the Church list of Fundamental belief. Secondly, the statement addresses the issue of racism. It is silent about the ethnic conflict which is prevalent in Africa that controls significant membership of the world Church. Although race and ethnicity are sometimes used interchangeably, the indices of racism are usually biological and physiological features- skin colour, hair, eyes, body hair and fingerprints.⁹⁸ Ethnicity however encompasses both cultural and physical difference between people and it is generally preferred by commentators to race.⁹⁹ In the light of this, the Church 28 years old

⁹⁶Seventh-day Adventist Church "Official Statements" 2013, February 14 2013, accessed <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main-stat18.html>.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Sujit Sivasundaram.

⁹⁹Ibid.

statement on racism does not capture the current ugly reality of ethnic conflict in Africa.

Summary

From the foregoing, it can be stated that conflict has continued to trail the human existence right from time immemorial. It has become a reality which one cannot ignore or live in oblivion of. Most often conflict arises based on diversities of religion, socio-economic status, ethnicity, personality just to mention but a few. The twin factors of religion and ethnicity seem to occupy the tops rung of the ladder. The African and in particular, the Nigerian experience has proven this beyond any shade of doubt. Ethno-religious conflicts are the most incessant in the country. Ethnicity, although neither inherently evil nor a negative factor, has continued to be used by many as a tool to wage war. Thus the prevalence of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria has become a common reality. The bad policy of ‘divide and rule by the colonial master proceeded by the failure of state institutions to ensure equitable distribution of its resources across the borders of ethnicity have led people to use ethnic identities to harness support and strength in their bid to grasp power and resource control. The result of such efforts has not been anything too far from conflicts and violent clashes along ethnic lines.

What is bewildering in all these is the scantiness of work and research on ethnic conflict in the Church. We find issues of power, politics, representation and resources in the Church just as it is in the country. Yet little or nothing has been done on the relationship between these factors and ethnic conflict. Is the answer in this little or no attention of ethnic conflict in the Church to be found in the assumption that the Church has no issues with ethnicity as it relates with resources and other factors? Facts suggest otherwise.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING: LAGOS MAIN LAND CONFERENCE

This chapter highlights some basic information about Lagos Mainland Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It also describes the territory and the demographic constitution of the field.

Geographical Location of Lagos Mainland Conference

Lagos Mainland Conference covers part of Lagos State. Lagos State is located in the south-western part of Nigeria and shares boundaries with Ogun State both in the North and East and is bounded on the west by the Republic of Benin. In the South it stretches for 180 kilometres along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. The smallest State in the Federation, it occupies an area of 3,345 square kilometres, 22% or 787sq. km of which consists of lagoons and creeks.¹⁰⁰

Lagos State is occupied by the Aworis in Ikeja division and Ogus in the Badagry Division. While the indigenous population of Lagos are Aworis, there is, nevertheless, an admixture of other pioneer immigrant settlers collectively called Lagosians but more appropriately the Ekos. The indigenes of Ikorodu and Epe Divisions are mainly the Ijebus with pockets of Ek-o-Awori settlers along the coastland and riverine areas. Although the State is basically a Yoruba speaking environment, it is nevertheless a socio-cultural melting pot attracting both Nigerians

¹⁰⁰ Nigeria Information Guide “General Information” 2004, February 14 2013, accessed http://www.nigeriagallery.com/Nigeria/States_Nigeria/Lagos_State.html.

and foreigners alike.¹⁰¹ Figure 1 shows the map of Nigeria with all its borders. Figure 2 shows Lagos state; Figure 3 shows major urban centers in Lagos, while Figure 4 shows local government areas in the region.



Figure 1. Map of Nigeria Showing its Borders¹⁰²



Figure 2. Map of Nigeria Showing Lagos State¹⁰³

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, February 14 2013, accessed https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/Nigeria_political.png

¹⁰³Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, February 14 2013, accessed http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/28/Nigeria_lagos_state_map.png



Figure 3. Map of Lagos State showing major urban centers.¹⁰⁴



Figure 4. Map of Lagos showing local Government areas¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, February 14 2013, accessed https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/lagos_Map.PNG.

¹⁰⁵Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, February 14 2013, accessed http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/74/Lagos_Island-Map.png.

Economic Condition of Lagos

Lagos is the commercial capital and economic nerve center of Nigeria. It is the most industrialized city in the Country. It is the leading port city in the country chiefly for imports of consumer goods, foodstuffs, motor vehicles, machinery, industrial raw materials and wide varieties of other goods.¹⁰⁶ It is the capital and seat of many industrial, commercial as well as religious institutions. With the presence of seaports, the Murtala Mohammad International Airport located in the suburbs northwest of the city center coupled with its status as the western terminus of the Nigerian railway, Lagos state is noted for its dense population and heavy traffic situations on its roads.¹⁰⁷ Except for housing the political seat of the country which was moved to Abuja in 1992, the city is regarded as the headquarters of virtually all aspect of the Nigerian life. Every ethnic group is said to be represented in Lagos. This has given rise to a popular axiom “Lagos is no man’s Land” among residents of the city. It is this cosmopolitan and commercialized nature of the state that has contributed to the multi-ethnic nature of the congregations in Lagos. This explains partly for the multi-ethnic composition of most Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Lagos. People from all walks of life contribute financially and use their influences to acquire properties, sponsor evangelistic efforts and establish Churches.

Territory of Lagos Mainland Conference

The territory of this conference shall cover part of Ifo and Ado-Odo Local Government areas of Ogun state and Agege, Alimosho, Ifako- Ijaye, Ikeja, Kosofe, OshodiiIsolo, Shomolu and Ikorodu Local Government Areas of

¹⁰⁶ W. Redmond, *Lagos (Nigeria)* Microsoft® Encarta® [DVD]. (Microsoft Corporation, 2008).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Lagos State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and any other Local Government that may be created from these territories.¹⁰⁸

History of Lagos Mainland Conference

The history of the Lagos Mainland Conference can be better presented in the context of the history of the Church in the city of Lagos. But this cannot be divorced from the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria. The Seventh-day Adventist Church came into Nigeria in 1914. This was through the arrival of the Church's missionary, Elder D.C Babcock (an American) and his family. He was accompanied by R.P Dauphin, a Ghanaian and S. Morgue, a Sierra Leonean. They left Freetown, Serra Leone, by boat in February 1914. The team arrived the Port of entry of Nigeria, Lagos on March 7, 1914.¹⁰⁹ This was as a result of a voted action by the then West Africa Missionary Conference in Freetown, Serra Leone that considered Nigeria as an un-entered area. The conference considered the need to evangelize the country with the Advent message as urgent.¹¹⁰

Prior to the arrival of the Adventist Missionaries, the following missionaries from other denominations were already in the Country:

1. The Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS)
2. The foreign Mission Committee of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.
3. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society
4. The Catholic Society of Africa Mission (SMA) of France and

¹⁰⁸Lagos Mainland Inaugural Constituency Session held Jan.10th- 12th, 2013, p. 21.

¹⁰⁹Dayo Alao *90 Years of Adventism in Nigeria (1914 – 2004: A Compendium)*, 19.

¹¹⁰Lagos Mainland Inaugural Constituency Session held Jan.10th-12th, 2013, 17.

5. The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States.¹¹¹

On arrival in Nigeria, Babcock toured the hinterland of western part of the Country in search for a suitable location. He finally settled at Erunmu located in the present day Egbeda local Government Area of Oyo State.¹¹² Before his exit from the scene on account of his failing health, D.C Babcock together with his team established three Churches which are: Erunmu Church, Sao Church and Ipoti Church.¹¹³

In 1919, Pastor William McClements came to Nigeria to take over from Elder D.C Babcock. It is from these centres mentioned above that the Church spread in the western part of Nigeria until 1927 when Pastor McClements who was the sole Administrator of the Adventist work in Nigeria then found a place at the outskirts of Ibadan – Oke –Bola to establish as Headquarters.¹¹⁴

By this time, the Eastern part Nigeria has been entered with the Adventist message through the effort of an English missionary named J. Clifford in 1923. In 1930 the Eastern part was organized as a mission field with the first indigenous president, Pastor A.J Dickey. Similarly the Northern part of the country was entered with the Adventist message in 1931 when the Adventist Missionary, Elder J.J Hyde established a kind of clinic for the jigger infested people in Jengre in what is today known as Plateau State.

¹¹¹Alao.

¹¹²Ibid, 90.

¹¹³Ibid, 23.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

In 1930, a decision was made to organize Nigeria as Union Mission especially because of the rapid growth of the Church in the eastern part of the country, Aba to be precise. The field was immediately sub-divided into the following four sections namely: South-Eastern, South –Western, North-Eastern and North-Western Missions.¹¹⁵ Under this arrangement, North-Western and South-Western mission covered the Yoruba land until 1944 when they were merged together to form the West Nigeria Mission.¹¹⁶

The Western Nigeria Mission was organized into Conference status in 1989 as West Nigeria Conference with headquarters still at Oke-Bola Ibadan. The territories then covered were: Oyo, Osun, Kwara, Lagos, Ondo, Ogun and Ekiti States. This conference continued to grow in membership and finance which made reorganization inevitable. At a mini-constituency meeting on June 29, 1997 held at Oke- Bola, Ibadan, it was voted to re-organize the West Nigeria Conference into two conferences. This decision was ratified by the Executive Committee Meeting of the West Nigeria Conference which was held on 14th of January, 1998 and thus the South-West Nigeria Conference started as an Administrative Unit formally.¹¹⁷ On December, 10, 1998, the South-West Nigeria Conference which territory comprised Ekiti, Ondo, Ogun and part of Lagos States was inaugurated as full-fledged Conference with Pastor J.M.A Oyinloye as the pioneer president, Pastor H.B Smith as Pioneer Secretary and Elder J.O.P Afolayan as the pioneer treasurer.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

Due to the increasing growth of the church in the South- West Nigeria Conference which had her headquarters at Km 4, Oba-Ile road, Akure, Ondo state and in line with the union field restructuring agenda of Pastor Oyeleke Alabi Owolabi, the president of the North-Western Nigeria Union, the SWNC field was recommended to be re-organized into two or more Conferences. At the duly called constituency session of the SWNC, at Akure on Thursday, February 3, 2011, it was recommended and voted “to restructure SWNC into two or more conferences and empower the incoming administrator to implement it in liaison with union leadership.”¹¹⁹ In view of this, the newly constituted executive met in Akure, SWNC headquarters and ratified it thus: “voted to restructure South-west Nigeria Conference into three Conferences as stated bellow: Lagos, Conference Ogun Conference and Ekiti/Ondo Conference.”¹²⁰

The executive committee also voted “to recommend to the North-Western Nigeria Union executive committee for necessary action”.¹²¹ It was based on this action, that the Union executive meeting at her 2011, mid-year meeting voted and called a special (mini) constituency meeting on July 17, 2011 for final ratification.

At that historic event, Pastor (Dr.) Ezekiel A. Adeleye by exactly 2:37 pm moved the motion to re-organize the then SWNC structure into three conferences and the motion was seconded by his treasurer by exactly 2:38pm and the house voted unanimously in favor of the motion.¹²²

It was this action that led to the inauguration of the Lagos Mainland Administrative Unit on November 26,2011 at the Seventh-day Adventist church Ogba

¹¹⁹Lagos Mainland Inaugural Constituency Session held Jan.10th- 12th, 2013.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid.

where the following people were appointed as administrative officers' Pastor: (Dr.)

R.A. Akintunde- President, Pastor E .O. Adeniyi-Secretary, and Elder A.B.

Adedokun treasurer.

After 13 months and ten days, the Lagos Mainland Conference had her Inaugural Constituency between 10th and 12th of January, 2013; the Lagos Mainland Conference was formally inaugurated as a Conference with Pastors Adeniyi E.O, Jimoh I. A. and Elder Adedokun A.B. as the pioneer President, Secretary and Treasurer respectively.¹²³

Leadership and Work Force of Lagos Mainland Conference

The following are the officers and Directors of the Conference

President- Pastor Emmanuel O. Adeniyi
Secretary: Pastor Ibrahim I. Jimoh
Treasurer: Elder Adeyimi B. Adedokun
Ministerial Secretary/ Family Life Director: Pastor Adebisi D. Olajide
Director, Evangelism/ Sabbath School/ Personal Ministries/ Global Mission:
Pastor Michael F. Adekola
Director, Publishing Ministries: Pastor Samuel A. Adebayo
Director, Youth Ministries/Chaplaincy: Pastor J. A.F Okorie
Director, Children Ministries: Mrs. Chika Agonmuo
Director Adventist Women Ministries: Mrs. Adebisi
Director, Adventist Men Organization: Elder John Akande
Director, Education: Elder Joseph Alao
Director, Strategic Planning: Elder Victor O. Oyenuga.
Director, Communication: Deacon Dave Emelike
Director, Stewardship and Trust Services: Elder KelechiObiakwata.
Public Affairs and Religious Liberty: Elder Paul Ananaba (SAN)¹²⁴

The following are the field pastors:

Samuel A. Adebayo, Bariga District Pastor
Samuel A. Adekanye, Oworo Church Pastor
Michael F. Adekola, Ikorodu - District Pastor
Moses O. Ajibola, Ajasa Circuit Pastor -(Ojokoro District)
Folorunso O. Akinola, Iju Circuit Pastor- (Ogba District)

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Report of Lagos Mainland Conference inaugural Constituency.

Oluseyi C. Akinola, Ogba Church Pastor- (Ogba District)
Mosuru A. Akinwande, Ogijo Circuit Pastor- (Ikorodu District)
David O. Dada, Gowon Estate Circuit Pastor- (Alimosho District)
Stanley A. David, Mafoluku Circuit Pastor - (Maryland District)
Ibrahim A. Jimoh, Ojokoro - District Pastor
Tunde M. Kehinde, Hillview/ Idiroko Pastor - (Ikorodu District)
Joseph. A. F Okorie, Maryland - District Pastor
Adebisi D. Olajide, Ikotun -District Pastor
Princewhite M. Robbert, Ijegan Church Pastor -(Ikotun District)
Olujimi A. Sofowora, Ketu -District Pastor
Umezuruike O. Uchebue, Alimosho - District Pastor.

Other workers are:

Oluremi A. Ogidan (Mrs) Office Secretary
Omotola O. Olaifa (Mrs) Office Secretary II
Oluwatunde J. Aina, Accountant.¹²⁵

Membership of Lagos Mainland Conference

As at the time of inauguration (January 12, 2013), the Conference has the membership strength of 5, 685 worshippers in 62 Churches and Companies in eight Districts. The Districts are Maryland, Ketu, Alimosho, Ikotun, Ojokoro, Ikorodu, Ogba and Bariga Districts.¹²⁶

The total membership is distributed as shown by the tables that follow. Table 1 shows the membership of the Lagos Mainland Conference is 5, 685 worshippers.

¹²⁵ Report Lagos Mainland Inaugural Constituency Session (Jan.10th- 12th, 2013), 7- 8.

¹²⁶Ibid.,19.

Table 1. Membership by Districts

District	Membership
Alimosho	484
Bariga	528
Ikorodu	910
Ikotun	432
Ketu	1215
Maryland	1149
Ogba	536
Ojokoro	431
Total	5, 685 ¹²⁷

Table 2 shows the ethnic composition of some selected Churches in the Conference according to their Church's record book. Out of the total membership of 2770 drawn randomly from eleven churches across the eight districts in Lagos Mainland Conference, 2,292 (82.74%) are Ibos while the remaining 478 members (17.25%) are from Yoruba and other ethnic groups put together.

Table 2. Ethnic Composition of selected Churches

Church	District	Total population	Population of Igbo		Others	
			No.	Percentage	No	Percentage
Ogba	Ogba	348	232	66.67	116	33.33
Alimosho	Alimosho	151	103	68.21	48	31.79
Maryland	Maryland	738	713	96.61	25	3.39
Mafoluku	Maryland	210	208	99.05	2	0.95
Shasha	Alimosho	81	71	87.65	10	12.35
Ajgunle	Ketu	238	236	99.16	2	0.84
Valley Side	Ketu	310	200	64.52	110	34.48
Ikorodu	Ikorodu	294	264	89.80	30	10.20
Ajasa	Ojokoro	107	42	39.25	65	60.75
Ikotun	Ikotun	97	79	81.44	18	18.56
Bariga	Bariga	196	144	73.47	52	26.53
TOTAL		2, 770	2,292	82.74	478	17.25

¹²⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

QUESTIONNAIRE, PROGRAMME DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION

This chapter deals with presentation and analysis of questionnaires. It also presents a model programme that will address the socio-economic factors that lead to ethnic conflict in Lagos Mainland Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church. It also provides a model for implementation and evaluation of the design here presented.

Presentation and Analysis of Questionnaires

A total of one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were given out to respondents across the eight districts of the conference randomly. However 112 of the questionnaires were completed and returned by the respondent. The questionnaires, drawn in English language were administered personally by the researcher in the months of April and May, 2013. The result and data obtained from sections A and B of the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS.

From Table 3, 28 respondents are SSCE holders, 26 are OND, and 40 hold HND/BSc/BA as qualification. 10 others hold MSc and MA, 4 respondents have other qualification while 4 of the respondents did not indicate any the qualifications given.

Table 3. Educational Qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SSCE	28	25.0	25.9	25.9
	OND	26	23.2	24.1	50.0
	HND/BSc/BA	40	35.7	37.0	87.0
	MSc/MA	10	8.9	9.3	96.3
	Others	4	3.6	3.7	100.0
	Total	108	96.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	3.6		
Total		112	100.0		

In Table 4, 11 (9.8%) respondents did not indicate their employment status. 76 (67.9%) indicated that they are employed, while 13 respondent (11.6 %) were not employed.

Table 4. Employment Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employed	76	67.9	75.2	75.2
	Unemployed	13	11.6	12.9	88.1
	Student	12	10.7	11.9	100.0
	Total	101	90.2	100.0	
Missing	System	11	9.8		
Total		112	100.0		

Table 5 shows that out of the 112 respondents, 28 (25.0 %) were Yoruba, 76 (67.9%) were Ibos, 2 (1.8) were Hausas while the remaining 6 respondents came from other ethnic groups in the country.

Table 5. Ethnic Group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yoruba	28	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Ibo	76	67.9	67.9	92.9
	Hausa	2	1.8	1.8	94.6
	Others	6	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

From Table 6, 21 respondents (18.8 %) are Civil servants, 31 respondents (27%) are private employees, 41 (36.6 %) are self- employed while 19 (17%) choose from any the options provided.

Table 6. Type of Employment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Civil Servant	21	18.8	22.3	22.3
	Private Employee	31	27.7	33.0	55.3
	Self-Employed	41	36.6	43.6	100.0
	Total	94	83.9	100.0	
Missing	System	19	17		
Total		112	100.0		

From Table 7, Bariga and Ketu districts had 7 (6.3%) respondents each. There were 9 (8.0) respondents each from Ikorodu and Ogba districts each. Ojokoro had 12 respondents, (10.7 %) Ikotun had 16 (14.3 %) respondents ,Alimosho had 23(20.5%) respondents while Maryland had the highest number of respondents- 29 (25.9 %)

Table 7. District

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Alimosho	23	20.5	20.5	20.5
	Bariga	7	6.3	6.3	26.8
	Ikorodu	9	8.0	8.0	34.8
	Ikotun	16	14.3	14.3	49.1
	Ketu	7	6.3	6.3	55.4
	Maryland	29	25.9	25.9	81.3
	Ogba	9	8.0	8.0	89.3
	Ojokoro	12	10.7	10.7	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 below shows that 58 (51.8 %) and 36 (32%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed in that order that some Pastors incite ethnic conflict through their utterances, attitudes and leadership styles. 9 (8.0%) respondents are not sure about that but 8 (7.1 %) and 1 (0.9%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Table 8. Pastors incite ethnic conflicts through their utterances, attitudes and leadership styles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	58	51.8	51.8	51.8
	Strongly Agree	36	32.1	32.1	83.9
	Not Sure	9	8.0	8.0	92.0
	Disagree	8	7.1	7.1	99.1
	Strongly Disagree	1	0.9	0.9	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows that most respondents believed that Pastors and Church leaders can curb ethnic conflict in the Church through dialogue, sensitization, showing understanding, to the feelings of ethnic groups and providing good leadership. This is shown by data above: 47 (42.0 %) and 60 (53.6 %) respondents agreed and strongly

agreed in that order. Only 4 (3.6 %) respondents said they were not sure about that while one (0.9 %) respondent strongly disagreed.

Table 9. Ethnic conflicts can be reduced by Church Leaders through dialogues, sensitization and display of understanding

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	47	42.0	42.0	42.0
	Strongly Agree	60	53.6	53.6	95.5
	Not Sure	4	3.6	3.6	99.1
	Strongly Disagree	1	0.9	.9	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

In Table 10, 53(47.3 %) and 43 (38.4 %) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that members who are well grounded in the doctrines, policies and administration of the Church are more likely to handle issues in a better way without getting involved in conflict. 6 (5.4 %) respondents were not sure while 7 (6.3 %) and 3 (2.7 %) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Table 10. Members who are well grounded in the doctrines, policies and administration of the Church are more likely to handle issues in a better way without getting involved in conflict

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	53	47.3	47.3	47.3
	Strongly Agree	43	38.4	38.4	85.7
	Not Sure	6	5.4	5.4	91.1
	Disagree	7	6.3	6.3	97.3
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 shows that 43 (38.4 %) and 32 (28.6 %) respondents agreed and strongly agreed in that order that illiteracy and low education play a major role in ethnic conflict in the Church. 3 (2.7 %) and 12 (10.7 %) strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively while 22(19.6 %) respondents were not sure.

Table 11. Illiteracy and low education may play a major role in ethnic in the Church

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	43	38.4	38.4	38.4
	Strongly Agree	32	28.6	28.6	67.0
	Not Sure	22	19.6	19.6	86.6
	Disagree	12	10.7	10.7	97.3
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

Table 12 below shows that 39(34.8%) respondents agree that wealthy members don't care about some of the welfare and ethnic related issues in the church. 15(13.4%) strongly agree, 35(31.3%) said that they were not sure, while 20(17.9%) and 3(2.7%) disagreed and strongly disagreed in that order.

Table 12. Wealthy members don't care about some of the welfare and ethnic related issues in the Church

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	39	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Strongly Agree	15	13.4	13.4	48.2
	Not Sure	35	31.3	31.3	79.5
	Disagree	20	17.9	17.9	97.3
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

Table 13 shows that 48 (42.9 %) and 25 (22.3%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed in that order that lack of welfare package in the Church for the needy members may cause ethnic conflict. On the negative side, 2 (1.8%) and 21 (18.8 %) respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively while 16 (14.3) were unsure.

Table 13. Lack of welfare package in the Church for the needy members may cause ethnic conflict

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	48	42.9	42.9	42.9
	Strongly Agree	25	22.3	22.3	65.2
	Not Sure	16	14.3	14.3	79.5
	Disagree	21	18.8	18.8	98.2
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 below shows 54 (48.2 %) and 55 (49.1 %) respondents agreed and strongly agreed in that order that of members in the activities and programmes of different Church departments will strengthen their faith. Only one respondent each responded not sure, disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 14. Participation of members in the activities and programmes of different Church departments will strengthen their faith

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	54	48.2	48.2	48.2
	Strongly Agree	55	49.1	49.1	97.3
	Not Sure	1	0.9	0.9	98.2
	Disagree	1	0.9	0.9	99.1
	Strongly Disagree	1	0.9	0.9	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

Table 15 shows that most respondents believed (50 agreed and 55 strongly agreed which constitute 44.6% and 49 %) Participation of members in the activities and programmes of different Church departments will strengthen their faith. Only one (0.9 %) respondent strongly disagreed while the columns of disagree and not sure had 3 (2.7 %) respondents each.

Table 15. Lack of adequate understanding of the Church doctrines, policies and activities may lead to poor handling of issues by members

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	50	44.6	44.6	44.6
	Strongly Agree	55	49.1	49.1	93.8
	Not Sure	3	2.7	2.7	96.4
	Disagree	3	2.7	2.7	99.1
	Strongly Disagree	1	0.9	0.9	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

From Table 16 below, it can be seen that 45(40.2 %) and 65 (58.0 %) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that effective preaching, teaching and nurturing of members by the Pastors can increase members' spirituality. The remaining 2 (1.8 %) respondents said they were not sure.

Table 16. Effective preaching, teaching and nurturing of members by the Pastors can increase members' spirituality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	45	40.2	40.2	40.2
	Strongly Agree	65	58.0	58.0	98.2
	Not Sure	2	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

Table 17 reveals that majority of the respondents- 41 (36.6%) were not sure that how the church handles the burial of late members is satisfactory. 22 (19.6) and 8 (7.1) of them agreed and strongly agreed in that order while 24 (21.4 %) and 17 (15.2%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that how the church handles the burial of late members is satisfactory

Table 17. How the Church handles the burial of late members is satisfactory

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	22	19.6	19.6	19.6
	Strongly Agree	8	7.1	7.1	26.8
	Not Sure	41	36.6	36.6	63.4
	Disagree	24	21.4	21.4	84.8
	Strongly Disagree	17	15.2	15.2	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

Table 18 shows that out of the 28 Yoruba respondents, 7 agreed, 3 strongly agreed, a majority of 12 were not sure, while 5 and 1 disagreed and strongly disagreed in that order that how the Church handles the burial of late members is satisfactory. Responding on the same statement, of the 76 Ibo respondents, 13 agreed, 5 strongly agreed, 26 were not sure while 17 and 15 disagreed and strongly disagreed in that order. The two Hausa respondents were not sure, while among the 6 respondents from the other ethnic groups, 2 agreed, 1 was not sure, 2 disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed.

Table 18. How the Church handles the burial of late members is satisfactory (Cross tabulation)

Ethnic group	Yoruba	Ibo	Hausa	Others	Total
Agree	7	13	0	2	22
Strongly Agree	3	5	0	0	8
Not Sure	12	26	2	1	41
Disagree	5	17	0	2	24
Strongly Disagree	1	15	0	1	17
Total	28	76	2	6	112

Table 19 shows that many respondents believed that the kind of associations and friends members keep play a role in their involvement in ethnic conflict. The responses show this: 60 (53.6 %) and 21(18.8%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively. 20 (17.9%) were not sure while 10 (8.9 %) and 1 (0.9 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed in that order.

Table 19. The kind of associations and friends' members keep play role in their involvement in ethnic conflict

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	60	53.6	53.6	53.6
Strongly Agree	21	18.8	18.8	72.3
Not Sure	20	17.9	17.9	90.2
Disagree	10	8.9	8.9	99.1
Strongly Disagree	1	0.9	0.9	100.0
Total	112	100.0	100.0	

In Table 20, out of the 112 respondents, 46 (41.1%) and 32(28.6%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the appointment and election of leaders in the conference can lead to conflict. 15 respondents said they were not sure, 12 disagreed while a minority of 7 strongly disagreed.

Table 20. The appointment and election of leaders in the conference can lead to conflict.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	46	41.1	41.1
	Strongly Agree	32	28.6	69.6
	Not Sure	15	13.4	83.0
	Disagree	12	10.7	93.8
	Strongly Disagree	7	6.3	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0

From Table 21, out of the out of the 28 Yoruba respondents, 12 respondents agreed, 3 strongly agreed 5 said they were not sure, while 7 and 1 disagreed and strongly disagreed in that order that the appointment and election of leaders in the conference can lead to conflict. Among the 76 Ibo respondents, 29 agreed, 28 strongly agreed, 9 were not sure, 5 disagreed while 5 strongly disagreed that the appointment and election of leaders in the conference can lead to conflict. The one of the two Hausa respondents agreed while the other was not sure. Among the 6 respondents of the other ethnic groups, 4 agreed, 1 strongly agreed while 1 strongly disagreed.

Table 21. The appointment and election of leaders in the conference can lead to conflict (cross Tabulation).

	Ethnic group				Total
	Yoruba	Ibo	Hausa	Others	
Agree	12	29	1	4	46
Strongly Agree	3	28	0	1	32
Not Sure	5	9	1	0	15
Disagree	7	5	0	0	12
Strongly Disagree	1	5	0	1	7
Total	28	76	2	6	112

From Table 22, a total of 44 and 26 respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the population of all ethnic groups in the Church should be reflected in all the leadership levels of the Church. Both responses constitute 62.5 % agreed including the Conference. 15 respondents which is 13.4 % are not sure while 27 respondents (24.1 %) disagreed.

Table 22. The population of all ethnic groups in the Church should be reflected in all the leadership levels of the Church including the conference

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	44	39.3	39.3	39.3
	Strongly Agree	26	23.2	23.2	62.5
	Not Sure	15	13.4	13.4	75.9
	Disagree	12	10.7	10.7	86.6
	Strongly Disagree	15	13.4	13.4	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

From Table 23, out of the 28 Yoruba respondents, 12 agree, 1 strongly agreed, 5 are not sure, 5 disagreed and 5 strongly disagreed that the population of all ethnic groups in the Church should be reflected in all leadership levels of the Church including the conference. Among the 76 Ibo respondents, 31 and 22 agreed and strongly agreed respectively, 10 are not sure while 5 and 8 respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. One of the two Hausa respondents strongly agreed while the other strongly disagreed. Out of the 6 respondents from other ethnic groups, 1 agreed, 2 strongly agreed, 2 disagreed while 1 strongly disagreed.

Table 23. The population of all ethnic groups in the Church should be reflected in all the leadership levels of the Church including the conference (cross Tabulation)

	Ethnic group				Total
	Yoruba	Ibo	Hausa	Others	
Agree	12	31	0	1	44
Strongly Agree	1	22	1	2	26
Not Sure	5	10	0	0	15
Disagree	5	5	0	2	12
Strongly Disagree	5	8	1	1	15
Total	28	76	2	6	112

Responding to the question, “kindly list causes of ethnic conflict you know in the Lagos Mainland Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lagos, Nigeria” in the section C of the questionnaire administered, members identified the following as causes of ethnic conflicts.

1. Preferential treatment given to some members by leaders
2. Ignorance of the word of God by Members
3. Poor understanding of Church policies by members
4. Leaders’ poor administrative skills
5. Inadequate prayers for unity.
6. Inequity of engaging pastors from other ethnic backgrounds other than Yorubas
7. Selection by tongue (language)
8. Prejudicial remarks by leaders
9. Unconverted members
10. Non-recognition of other ethnic groups in key positions at the Conference
11. Lack of welfare package for members

12. Tribal sentiments, discrimination, favouritism, nepotism, imbalance in appointment, selfishness and greediness.
13. Presence of culture in mode of worship and entitlement/support during burials.
14. Undemocratic appointment of Church officers and conference directors
15. Intolerance, historical grievances and lack of transparency among
Church leaders
16. Ignorance of the role of the Holy Spirit in forming our principles,
values and choices
17. Choosing leaders by tribe.
18. Superiority complex and cultural chauvinism.
19. Ostracizing members that are not rich.
20. Unfair treatment and the culture of impunity by Presidents past and
present.
21. The mentality of “this is our land and no more” by the Yoruba brethren
especially at the helm of affairs in the Church.
22. Minority trying to control majority by hook or crook.
23. Illiteracy
24. Devil
25. Selfish ambitions.
26. Deprivation and denial of members of what they considered their
privileges as bona fide members of the Church on ground of ethnicity.
27. Lack of self-control
28. Marginalization
29. Class distinction

30. Autocratic leadership styles of Pastor
31. Unfaithfulness and partiality of leaders.¹²⁸

When requested to suggest possible ways they believe the issue of ethnic conflict in the Church can be addressed, the following were garnered from the 112 respondents.

1. Leaders should avoid being judgmental
2. Openness
3. Let everything be done with the fear of the Lord and in sincerity.
4. Dialogue and round table discussions among all parties involved
5. Prayer and Bible Study
6. Counseling
7. Applying the principle of “let this mind be in you which also in Christ Jesus”
8. Pastor should show members true love and care.
9. Equal treatment of members regardless of their financial and economic status.
10. Church leaders should be selected prayerfully and not by sentiments.
11. Our Pastors and Elders should practice Christianity instead of politics
12. Allow the love of Christ to reign.
13. Reliance on God
14. Ensuring equilibrium in the hiring and appointment of Pastors
15. Good leadership and administrative skills by leaders
16. Inclusion of members of different ethnic groups who are qualified in administration of the Conference

¹²⁸ This is a summary of the array of opinions and views expressed. Similar views were harmonized to avoid repetitions.

17. Fear of God and obedience to His commandments.
18. Deeper and cordial relationship between leaders and members.
19. Appointment of members and pastor into leadership positions should be based first and foremost on ability and Spiritual gifts.
20. Recognition of the welfare needs of members.
21. Equal treatment of all members.
22. Proper accountability from all stakeholders in the Church
23. Appointment of leaders who are detribalized and unbiased to people of other ethnic groups.
24. All ethnic issues should be addressed in the light of the Bible principle and blue print of unity in diversity in the Church.
25. Principles of democracy should characterize the election/appointment of Church leaders.
26. Pastors should not be ethnically biased against others but should be spirit- filled and objective in handling issues.
27. Education of members through seminars and workshop on the policies and principles of the Church.
28. Holding annual re-union concerts.
29. Fairness at all levels
30. Control of tongues and utterances by leaders both in the Church and outside.
31. Leaders should carry members along in all things.
32. Leadership should be by example
33. Recognize and respect ethnic differences.¹²⁹

¹²⁹This is a summary of the array of opinions and views expressed. Similar views were harmonized to avoid repetitions.

Analysis of Data from Questionnaires

From the data gathered from the respondents, members believed that the kind of utterances, attitudes and leadership styles attributed to a Pastor lead to ethnic conflict if such is negative, careless, and autocratic. This view is vividly expressed by 83.9 percent who agreed and strongly agreed that some pastors incite ethnic conflict through their utterances, attitudes and leadership styles. Elder David Ajayi Iselowo, in an interview with the researcher corroborates this. In an unsparing way, the Elder said that some pastors are not called by God. But are pastors by mere employment as their utterances and attitudes do not portray them as people who are called by God into the ministry as Pastors and shepherd of God's flock.¹³⁰ In the same vein Elder Peter Ahuruezenma Ohuocha in an interview with the researcher also insisted that some Pastors' utterances fuel ethnic conflict in the Church.¹³¹ The implication of this is that Pastors have a vital role to play in curbing ethnic conflict. In table 12, an overwhelming majority of 90 percent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that Pastors and Church leaders can curb ethnic conflict in the Church through dialogue, sensitization, showing understanding, to the feelings of ethnic groups and providing good leadership. Correspondingly, 98.2 percent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that effective preaching, teaching and nurturing of members by the Pastors can increase members' spirituality. It cannot be gainsaid that increase in member' spirituality is inversely proportional to their involvement in ethnic conflicts.

¹³⁰David Ajayi Iselowo, Elder, Seventh-day Adventist Church, interview by researcher, S.D.A Church Alimosho, 7 May 2013.

¹³¹Peter Ahuruezenma Ohuocha, Elder, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Gowon Estate, interview by researcher, Gowon Estate Ipaja Lagos, 8, May 2013.

On the issue of welfare 65.2 percent respondents agreed and strongly agreed that lack of welfare package in the Church for the needy members may cause ethnic conflict. This is shown in table 16. Akin to this, on burial as shown in table 20 (a) more people disagreed and strongly disagreed (41 respondents) that how the Church handles the burial of late members is satisfactory than those (30 respondents) who agreed and strongly agreed. In table 20 (b) it is seen that among the 28 Yoruba respondents majority. 41 respondents are indecisive. That sizable number of respondents took shade under the umbrella of not sure may suggest that all is not well on this issue.

Mrs. Otuokere, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Alimosho District points out one of the cause of the dissatisfaction among the Ibos. According to her, the amount of money often set aside for the burial of demised members is usually too small to carter for the expenses involved in the rite. She gave two instances where two families left one branch of the Church for another one on ground of insufficient welfare package for families of deceased members. The inadequacy of a welfare plan to carter for all welfare issues surrounding death and burial of members especially of Igbo dissent in the Church has continued to breed conflict in the Church. The Igbo on ground of the twin factors of larger population and distance are more affected by this problem. The fact that the Igbo are more in number in the Church suggests; that more deaths are often recorded form their side. And the fact that traditionally, the Igbos bury their dead in their homes of origin means that more expenses is required to transport and bury an Igbo man's corpse, whose home of origin is at least 500 kilometers from Lagos than a Yoruba counterpart whose home is within the southwest geographical area of which Lagos is part. Besides, the Yorubas don't strictly believe in burying their dead in the compound of their towns and

villages. Mrs. Otuokore also observes that the Igbo Adventist has a background orientation in which the Church takes care of its late members since it is generally assumed that such a member would have had no other social group other than the Church during his/her lifetime. The Yorubas do not seem to share this orientation. Consequently, the Yoruba Adventist may be less demanding on the Church in the event of burial than his Igbo counterpart and may also view the demand of his Igbo counterpart in this context as excessive and insatiable.¹³²

Similarly, in an interview Deacon Uche Ezengwa, expressed displeasure with the Church over what he describe as the indifferent and insensitive attitude of the Church to him in the event and burial of his late wife. He recalled with bitterness that he got no financial support from the Church except a three thousand naira support from the Adventist Women Ministry. To him this situation in the Church has made his attachment to other Welfare Association inevitable.¹³³ This may explain why Akanwana-Jide-Akanwana Welfare Association is growing in influence among the Igbo brethren. Akanwanna- Jide-Akanwanna¹³⁴Welfare Association (A.W.A). Welfare Association is a Welfare Association that is dully registered with the Cooperate Affairs Commission (CAC) of Nigeria. Its “membership is open to all

¹³²Ann Otuokore, Spirit of Prophecy Leader, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Alimosho, Lagos, interview by researcher, S.D.A Church Aboru, Lagos State, 2 May 2013.

¹³³Uche Ezengwa, Church Leader, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dopemu, interview by researcher, Seventh-day Adventist Church Dopemu, Lagos State, 7 May, 2013.

¹³⁴Akanwanna Jide Akanwanna is an Igbo expression which means brother’s hand holds brother’s hand.

Seventh-day Adventist Members from East Nigerian Union Mission and its environs.¹³⁵ In Article 2 under the title Mission of Association, the Constitution states:

Our goal shall be to:

- I.Promote welfare of members
- II.Encourage Humanitarian activities
- III.Enhance capacity-building of our members
- IV.Support Spiritual growth and development of the members
- V.Organize Seminars and Annual Retreats for members
- VI.To make necessary steps for economic empowerment of members¹³⁶

Article 3: Vision further states: “Our Association shall be towards the attainment of maximum welfare empowerment of its members globally”. Article 4 states the objective of the Association thus:

- i.To promote the welfare and well-being of members as the body may approve from time to time
- ii.To support the Spiritual growth Members.
- iii.To engage in Humanitarian activities
- iv.To execute developmental projects
- v.To carry out seminars, workshops, conferences and annual Retreats in other to achieve the aims and objective of the Association.¹³⁷

That the thriving and pervading influence of the Association hold some implication for the Church cannot be gainsaid. AWA organizes and holds a convention for all its members annually. This is well enshrined in the Association' constitution. This has invariably affected interest, support and attendance in the General Camp meetings of the Churches in Lagos. Many members only attend on Sabbath days of the camp meeting for worship and return home after the divine service. In some districts, harnessing money to organize for camp meeting has

¹³⁵The Constitution, Akanwanna Jide Akanwanna Welfare Association (A.W.A).

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid.

become extremely difficult, whereas, the convention of the Association enjoys a swelling support and population of members. That the yearly convention of the Association in Lagos poses a challenge to the yearly camp meeting of the Churches in Lagos is inferable.

Furthermore the appointment and election of people into offices has tendency to cause ethnic conflict in the Church. Majority of the respondents (69.6%) agreed that the appointment and election of leaders in the conference can lead to conflict. Elder Iselowo observes that there is contention among Church members of different ethnic groups over who occupy key positions in the Church.¹³⁸ To a respondent in the questionnaire, the idea of the minority ruling the majority by crooks and hooks means it is a major catalyst of ethnic conflict in the Church- from the local church to the conference level. This statement may not be unconnected to the fact that the Ibos are the majority in the conference yet, the leadership and administration is dominated by the Yorubas who are a fewer in number. The statistics presented above in table III shows clearly that the Igbos enjoyed an overwhelming numerical majority over their Yoruba counterpart. In spite of their dominance in population, it does appear that the Ibos still continue to harbour feelings of marginalization and dissatisfaction. Whichever way one looks at it, what appears undeniably obvious is that there is a continuous lingering of these feelings which have found various forms of expression such as withholding/diversion of tithes, apportionment of tithe and offerings, nonchalant attitude toward the programmes of the Church, an intentional or deliberate reduction of financial support towards Church projects; suspicion and distrust of fellow Church members and leaders; and a formation of Akanwana-Jide-Akanwana. In 2006, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ojokoro was rocked with a problem that

¹³⁸Iselowo.

threatened its unity and existence. Members of Akanwana-Jide-Akanwana were prevented from using the Church premises for their meeting by the Church leadership. The controversy that ensued as a result finally concluded with the establishment of a mono-ethnic Church by the aggrieved Ibo brethren in another location called Meiran, about a kilometer from the main Church. Elder Onyenma, who is a staunch member of Akanwana-Jide-Akanwana and part of the groups that left the Ojokoro Church to form the mono-ethnic Church, in an interview with the researcher explained their action thus: the Ibos moved to another place for worship to avoid a repetition of the Rwanda Genocide.¹³⁹ According to him, the conflict and disagreement between the Yoruba Elders and the Ibo Elders was so intense and deep that only a separation could have averted a full blown violent clash between the two ethnic groups.¹⁴⁰ He however blamed the Church leadership for the ugly incidence because it is the failure of the Church to take adequate care of the welfare needs of its members that led to the formation of Akanwana-Jide-Akanwana.¹⁴¹

Similarly, 62.5 percent of the respondents want the population of all ethnic groups in the Church to be reflected in all the leadership levels of the Church including the Conference.

Programme Preparation

The major preparation is to pray and ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in preparing a programme that will curb ethnic conflict or that will reduce it to a negligible level.

¹³⁹Onyenma,Chinyere Leader , Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ibo Chapel, interview by researcher, Lagos, 6 May 2013.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

Objectives

- i. The main objective here is to develop a programme that will suit to a greater extent all the ethnic groups in Lagos Mainland Conference.
- ii. To design a programme that will be able to reduce ethnic friction in the Church.
- iii. To design a programme that can be applied in multi-ethnic Churches faced with the challenge of ethnic conflicts

Programme Design

In the light of the findings in this research work that socio-economic factors especially as it concerns the welfare of the members play a significant role in ethnic conflicts in the Church, the following Programme is designed.

The Pastor of District and/or the Local Church should draw up a welfare plan as follows:

- I. The members are encouraged to contribute a minimum amount of two hundred naira (N200.00) only each month. This fund shall be tagged Emergency Trust Fund (ETF) which is meant for addressing emergencies and unforeseen incidences such as death and disasters among members. The members are educated and encouraged to take the initiative seriously.
- II. Every member is expected to contribute a minimum of five hundred naira each time a member dies.
- III. The Church welfare department is authorized to collect this offering in order to raise money for the department.
- IV. Members are encouraged to make concerted effort to give or donate huge sums of money to the welfare department.

- V. This money when contributed are kept in a separate bank so as to be sure the Church does not spend in the day to day administration of the Church.
- VI. This money is to be used to assist members who fall into the following categories- sickness and hospitalization that require huge sum of money, fire incidents that incapacitates members, support for Church weddings of members, death and burial of members and other natural disasters that the Church deems fit to intervene in with the fund.
- VII. The income of the fund can be reviewed every quarter so that members know the performance of the fund.
- VIII. A committee of kind-hearted and spirit-filled men and women is set up to manage and administer the fund in collaboration with the Board. All ethnic groups as much as possible are to be represented.
- IX. The fund is to be administered equally in terms of death and burial of the dead and weddings.
- X. Seminars and symposia are conducted regularly in order to educate the members on the need to give systematically for the rainy day.
- XI. A minimum of one hundred thousand Naira only, (N100,000.) is spent each time a member dies. This is enough to take care of the transportation of the Corpse to the place of burial, the expense of service of songs, delegates for the burial. The church pays for the expense of the Pastor.
- XII. If the fund grows without these problems coming up, it will be used to buy a bus.

The above proposal by the Pastor was presented to the Church board and it was adopted. The Church at Business meeting was convened and proposal was made and explained. The Church at Business also voted unanimously in favour of the welfare package proposal and it became a programme of the Church.

Barely two months after this meeting in which the programme was voted and adopted by the Church, a woman died after a brief illness. The Church was able to carry out her responsibility to her deceased member without any problem. Both the Ibos and the Yorubas in the Church were happy. The family of the deceased was pleased with the Church.

The consequence of the members' satisfaction with the welfare package of the Church was a drastic drop in their involvement and interest in ethnic or tribal Associations.

Prior to my arrival in this Church as the Pastor, the Church was bi-polarized along the lines of Yoruba and Ibo ethnic groups. The Yoruba Elders felt side-tracked and frustrated as they were not elected into any key office. On the other hand, the Igbos said it was their turn to rule since they had been marginalized long before now by some of the Pastors who led the Church in the past.

The researcher designed a form to help him know what individuals could do in the Church. At election of officers, all qualified hands – both Yorubas and Ibos were allowed to be elected as Elders and Church officers into other Church offices. The resultant effect of this was peace. Members once again felt assured of their acceptance and recognition in the Church irrespective of their ethnic identities.

Programme Evaluation

The ethnic conflict in the Church which was the result of a feeling of alienation and marginalization of ethnic group by other ethnic groups has disappeared in Alimosho Church. Moreover, ill-feelings and animosity between the Pastors, the Yorubas and the Igbos in the Church have disappeared. A member confessed that he never knew he could be allowed to officiate in the divine service. Few others who were interviewed said things are now going well and the Church is positioned to conquer the world for Jesus.

The Adventist Women Ministries (AWM) Leader of the Church when asked how she feels at the end of the burial of one deceased member said she was happy that the Church is now living up to its expectation. She also said that the late woman's children who were not coming to Church and have gone to other Churches started coming to Church. They have promised to remain in the faith for what they describe as "the love" that the Church showed them.

Observation and Conclusion

Since the implantation of these programmes, the following have been observed in Alimosho Church:

1. Peaceful cohabitation among the Ibos and the Yorubas as well as other ethnic groups
2. Full participation in all programmes of the Church is clearly observable contrary to what it used to be prior to the introduction of this programme.
3. An increment in Tithes and offerings
4. Projects of the Church are executed with joy and happiness and in good time.
5. Increased participation in evangelism by all ethnic groups without rancour, and a spirit of joy and happiness as souls are harvested for Christ.

The Church in Lagos Mainland Conference can reduce ethnic conflict to the barest minimum. The leaders should lead by example; avoid tribalism, nepotism, cheating, stealing, all forms of inequalities. They should study and preach the word in and out of season without fear or favour, guard the Church doctrines and policies and maintain equity and justice in the discharge of their duties. With this, the Church will be a little heaven here on earth. The Church should adopt Apostle Paul's model in Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things" (NIV).

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of this work and the conclusion made from them. Conflict is an outstanding motif in the Bible. The Bible evolved against a backdrop of conflict. Conflict started between God and Lucifer, who is now known as Satan or the Devil, in heaven both of whom are supernatural beings. What started as a conflict of values and insubordination of Lucifer to God, escalated into a fierce battle between Christ and His angels on one side and Lucifer and his loyalist angels on the other side. The war led to the expulsion of Lucifer and his loyalists from their abode heaven.

They found in planet earth a safe haven. Satan discovered in man the ability to work as a team. Thus this romance of Satan with humanity created the grounds for conflict in the world today: conflict between man and his creator God, conflict between man and Satan, and between man and his fellow man, thus everywhere in the world today. This conflict is occurs repeatedly in the Bible. In the New Testament, in Acts 6: 1-6, the Apostles dealt with an issue of ethnic conflict between the Hellenist Jews widows and the Hebrew Jews widows.

On the global scene, ethnic conflict has been aptly described as a global phenomenon. Everywhere one turns, you see the ugly scars and impressions of

Brutally devastating and catastrophic wars fought on the heels of ethnicity. The 1994 Rwanda Genocide, the ethnic wars in Bosnia, the war in Darfur are good cases to point. Although, ethnicity is not necessarily evil, it is a form of diversity that if not handled carefully and sensitively has an overwhelmingly strong tendency to cause havoc and pain among people in a multi-ethnic context.

In the African context, the ugly incidence of ethnicity is generally blamed on the colonial masters as the root cause. The Colonial policy of “divide and rule” which yielded the division of most African states along ethnic lines has been pointed out by many scholars as the foundation and root of ethnic conflicts in Africa. The end of colonialism however did not bring ethnic conflict to an end in Africa. Subsequent leaders, as it appears, did not depart from the pathway of the colonial Masters. In the light of this reality of poor leadership, people resort to ethnicity for solidarity, support and survival. Ethnicity thus became the identity and tool in the fight and struggle for representation in leadership, power, and attention of the government and resource control.

Nigeria has been shown to be one of the worst hit of all African States by the menace of ethnic violence and wars. The marriage of ethnicity and religion appears to have done more harm than good to the Nigerian society. Ethno-religious conflicts account for more wars and violent clashes in Nigeria than any other factors of diversity. The Nigerian blood-spattered and upsetting civil of 1967- 1970 was fought along ethnic lines- the Ibos on one side versus the Nigerian Federal forces. The scars and memories of the war are still present in the country and minds of people. The allegation of Chinua Achebe in his recent book, *There Was a Country: My Personal History of Biafra* drives this point home.

The Christian Churches have not been able to absorb themselves of ethnic conflicts. Churches in Rwanda have been found culpable in the Rwanda Genocide. It has been alleged that Churches in some western countries are homes of racism. Mono ethnic Churches are growing like wild fire on account of racism and ethnic conflict. The Churches in Africa also has its own lion share of ethnic conflict. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not spared also as incidents of ethnic conflict are abound albeit little or weak efforts on the part of leaders to curb this growing monster.

Although non-violent, the kind of ethnic conflict in the Lagos Mainland Conference obviously constitutes a threat to the unity of the Church and the actualization of its unique and Christ-given mission of reaching the nooks and crannies of the world with the everlasting gospel. The 5, 685 membership of the Lagos Mainland Conference where more than 80 percent of which are Igbos is far from an evidence of growth and impact on the Yoruba community of Lagos.

Results from field survey indicate that Pastors and Church leaders have a vital role to play in curbing the menace of ethnic conflict in the Church. More also, the welfare of members if neglected or given insufficient consideration is contributory to the occurrence of ethnic conflict in the church. Church members also believe that fairness to all, sincerity of leaders, elimination of ethnic prejudice, and balanced representation in the Conference administration and leadership are antidotes of ethnic driven conflicts.

Conclusion

Having examined the relationship between selected socio-economic factors and ethnic conflicts in the Lagos Mainland Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church and in the light of the findings made in this work, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. It is not an overstatement that ethnic conflict exists in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Lagos Mainland Conference and that if not checked could lead to anarchy.
2. There is a strong relationship between socio-economic factors and ethnic conflict.
3. Based on the findings of this research, Pastors as Church leaders play a very significant role in inciting ethnic conflicts through their utterances, attitudes and leadership styles. It has been established in this work that there is an undeniable connect between how the church handles the burial of late members, members' welfare and ethnic conflict. Many are dissatisfied and unhappy over this issue. This has led many members in the Church to join other Associations where their yearning and welfare interests are satisfied. This explains the formation, formidability, and growing influence of Akanwana-Jide-Akanwana Welfare Association.
4. That the membership of members in this Welfare Association weakens their loyalty to the Church and its programmes and activities is evident. Membership of Association carries with it some financial obligation. This, its members can only fulfill absolutely at the reduction of their financial commitment to the Church which, in their view has failed to live up to its expectation in this area.

5. Again, seemingly failure of the Church leadership to reflect the multiplicity of the ethnic groups in the Conference has created a noticeable dissatisfaction especially among the groups which feels inadequately and disproportionately represented. This issue should be addressed properly and corrected. This will lead to satisfaction of all parties and ethnic conflict will be highly reduced if not eradicated. This is not to be done at the sacrifice of merit and other criteria for appointment and election into leadership positions in the Church.
6. In addition, it is natural to think that if all the ethnic groups are not considered to be at the helm of affairs, those who are there will marginalize the ethnic groups that are not duly represented. Therefore the leadership of the conference should be fair and accountable to the people. Equity, fair play, and transparency should characterize the use and administration of resources as well as the hiring of man power.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are presented in order to have an ethnic conflict-free conference:

1. The Conference should as a matter of urgency ensures that all Churches within the Lagos Mainland Conference establish welfare package designed in this project.
2. The leadership of the conference should therefore educate themselves and the field Pastors to be cautious and tactful in their deeds and utterances so as to prevent ethnic conflicts.
3. The clergy should be sensitive to the plight of the laity in order to win their confidence and support. The Clergy should learn from the pen of the Preacher which says

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.¹

They should concentrate on speaking the word, nurturing and feeding of their flock and empathize with them.

4. All pastors must not only be de-tribalized but must be seen to be so.
5. All Pastors are to be advised to make sure that qualified hands from all ethnic groups are elected into offices during nomination exercise.
6. All ethnic groups' interest in the Church should be represented equitably as long as they are qualified in the election/ selection of officers and leaders from the Local Church level to the Conference level to avoid ethnic conflicts.
7. The Conference and Pastors should make sure each Church updates its membership record in their membership record book so as to ensure that the situation of a member having dual membership in two Churches is ended.
8. Church leaders at all levels from local Church to the Conference should not only be fair but seen to be fair in their dealings with members. Tribalism and ethnocentric sentiments should be abhorred like leprosy in the Church of God.
9. The Yoruba ethnic group in Lagos Mainland Conference does not accept the Adventist faith easily. Therefore, a programme should be developed on how to consciously make them accept the faith.
10. The Church in Lagos is not actually growing. The increases in baptism are either/both biological and/or as a result of the Ibos who migrate from the East. The few converts observed are also those the Ibos interact with. The Conference should look into this as a matter of urgency.

¹Ecclesiastes 5: 1,2.

11. Prayer conferences, seminars on issues bordering on ethnicity, church doctrines and policies as well as music concerts should be organized to foster unity in diversity.
12. Pastors at all levels should be sincere, converted, and forthright and be very cautious in their speech so as not to incite ethnic conflict.
13. Since ethnic conflict abound in the society, the Christian church and even in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, due to so many factors including the ones highlighted above, the church should not do anything to aggravate the already heated situation. But the Church through its leadership should do everything within her powers to prevent and curb ethnic conflict. If we must go to heaven, if we must preach Christ and Him crucified, then let the Church leadership be open, carrying all members along and recognizing each member's socio-economic needs, ethnic identities and differences without making meaningless the "faith of our fathers."

APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is being administered by a Masters Student of Adventist University of Africa, Kenya, Pastor U.O Uchegbue. Data gathered from this questionnaire will be used only for research purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Please do not write your name.

SECTION A

Tick inside box to indicate appropriate or correct option

1. Age: 18-25 26- 35 36- 50 51 and above
2. Sex : Male Female
3. Denomination : SDA others
4. Years of membership in the church: 1- 5yrs 6- 10 yrs 11-15yrs
16 yrs above
5. Educational qualification. SSCE DND ND/BSc/BA Msc/MA
others
6. Marital Status: Single Married divorced widowed
7. Employment: Employed Unemployed Student
8. Ethnic group Yoruba Ibo Hausa Others specify
9. Type of employment : Civil Servant Private employ self
employed
10. District: (Specify) _____

SECTION B

Please tick the option that best express your opinion on following statements.

SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, NS= Not Sure, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree.

	A	SA	NS	D	SD
1. Some Pastors incite ethnic conflict through their utterances, attitudes and leadership styles.					
2 Pastors and Church leaders can curb ethnic conflict in the Church through dialogue, sensitization, showing understanding to the feelings of ethnic groups and providing good leadership					
3 Members who are well grounded in the doctrines, policies and administration of the Church are more likely to handle issues in a better way without getting involved in conflict					
4 Illiteracy and low education play a major role in ethnic conflict in the Church					
5 Wealthy members don't care about some of the welfare and ethnic related issues in the Church					
6. Lack of welfare package in the Church for the needy members may cause ethnic conflict					
7 Participation of Members in the activities and programmes of different Church departments will strengthen their faith.					
8 Lack of adequate understanding of Church doctrines, policies and activities lead to poor handling of issues by members.					
9 Effective preaching, teaching and nurturing of members by the Pastors can increase members' spirituality					
10 How the church handles the burial of late members is satisfactory.					
11 The kind of associations and friends members keep play a role in their involvement in ethnic conflict					
12 The appointment and election of leaders in the conference can lead to conflict.					
13 The population of all ethnic groups in the Church should be reflected in all the leadership levels of the Church including the conference					

SECTION C

1. Kindly list causes of ethnic conflict you know in the Lagos Mainland Conference of S.D.A Church, Lagos, Nigeria

2. Suggest possible ways you believe the issue of ethnic conflict in the Church can be addressed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Akinbobola, Ayo. *Regionalism and Regional Influentials: the Post Cold- War Role of Nigeria in African Affairs*. Palmgrove-Shomolu: Lagos Concept Publications, 2001.
- Alao, Dayo (ed.). "90 Years of Adventism in Nigeria, 1914-2004—A Compendium." Unpublished manuscript.
- Angaye, Gesiye. "Causes and Cures of Conflicts in Nigeria," 2003. Accessed 27 February 2013 www.nigerdeltacongress.com.
- Anugwon, Edlyne E. "Ethnic Conflict and Democracy in Nigeria: the Marginalization Question," *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 15 (2000): 61-78.
- Blagojevic, Bojana. "Causes of Ethnic Conflict: a Conceptual Framework." *Journal of Global Change and Governance III* (2009). Accessed February 14 2013 <http://www.globalaffairsjournal.org>.
- Boer, Jan H. *Nigeria: Decades of Blood 1980-2002*. Belleville, Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2004.
- Caselli, Francesco and Wilbur J. Coleman II. "On the Theory of Ethnic Conflict." Accessed February 4, 2013, www.faculty.fuqua.duke.edu/~ethnic.pdf.
- Chukwuemeka, Emma and V. Aghara. "Niger Delta Youth Restiveness and Socio-economic Development of Nigeria." *Educational Research and Review*, 7 (2010):400-407.
- Edersheim, Alfred. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1883. Accessed February 4, 2013, http://www.levendwater.org/books/life_times_egersheim_appendix.pdf.
- Elmer, Duane. *Cross-Cultural Conflicts: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.
- Guthrie, Donald. *The Apostles*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974.
- Holy Trinity African Church "Report of the Annual General Conference of the African Church." Ijebu-Ode Diocese, May 5-8, 2011.
- Irobi, Emmy. *Ethnic Conflict Management in Africa: A Comparative Case Study of Nigeria and South Africa*. Parker, Colorado: Outskirts Press, 2005.

- Jackson, Dave and Neta. *Christian Heroes*. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 2005.
- Jacob, Donald R. "The Gospel and Ethnicity" in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- James Fearon and David Laitin. "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity." *International Organization* 54 (2000) 845-877.
- Jowondu, Ibrahim A. "Peace Process in Africa: An Examination of third party intervention in Religious Conflicts in Nigeria" in Adams K. Arap-Chepkwony and Peter M. J. Hess (eds.), *Human View on God: Variety not Monotony*, Eldoret: Moi University Press, 2010.
- Kinbal, Charles. *When Religion Becomes Evil*. San Francisco: Harper, 2002.
- Lagos Mainland Inaugural Constituency Session. Jan.10th- 12th, 2013.
- Lester, Stan "An Introduction to Phenomenological Research." Accessed 25 February 2013 www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf.
- Kroll, Paul. "Exploring the Book of Acts 6," 1995. Accessed February 14 2013. <http://www.gci/bible/acts6>.
- Longman, Timothy. "Christian Churches and Genocide in Rwanda: Revision Paper Originally prepared for Conference on Genocide, Religion and Modernity" United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, May, 1997.
- Nnoli, O. *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978. Cited in Anugwon, Edlyne E. "Ethnic Conflict and Democracy in Nigeria: the Marginalization Question" *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 15 (2000): 61-78.
- Nwosu, I. "Nigeria in the Management of Sub-Regional Conflicts" *Selected themes in Nigeria Foreign Policy and International Relations*. Ilorin: Sally and Associates, 1999.
- Osinubi, Sunday. "Ethnic Conflicts in Contemporary Africa: The Nigerian Experience." *Journal of Social Science*, 12 (2006): 102.
- Onimajesin, Isiaka S. "Ethnic Militias and Criminality in Nigeria," 2013. Accessed, 28 April 2013, www.unilorin.edu.ng/unilorin/index.
- Pascal, Blaise in Dave and Neta Jackson, *Christian Heroes*. Illinois: Tyndale House, 2005.
- Rhianoon, Lloyd and Joseph Nyamutera. *Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict*. Geneva: Mercy Ministries International, 2010.
- Robbert, Edgar V and Henry E. Jacob. *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*, Online Edition: Prentice-Hall, 2011.

- Satalkar, Bhakti. "Difference Between Race and Ethnicity," 2010. Accessed 14 February 2013, <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/difference-between-race-and-ethnicity.html>.
- Sinbowale, Tokunbo and Sunday Oladipipo. "Ethnic Conflicts in Contemporary Africa: The Nigerian Experience." *Journal of Social Science*, 12 (2006): 101-114.
- Sivasundaram, Sujit "Unity and Diversity: the Church, Race and Ethnicity," 2008. Accessed 14 February 2013, <http://www.jubileecentre.org>.
- Smith, David. *The Life and Letters of Saint Paul*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919.
- St. John African Church Cathedral. "Minutes of the General Committee Meeting of the African Church, Nigeria." Utu-Abak, Annag Diocese, November 20, 2008.
- The African Church General Committee Report for the period of May 5, 2008 to May 6, 2009 submitted to the 108th annual General Conference, 7th-10th May 2009.
- White Ellen G. *Testimonies for Church*, vol. 9. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1948.
- White, Ellen. G. *Selected Messages* vol. 1. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2006.

VITAE

UCHEGBUE, UMEZURUIKE ONYEOKERIGA

Date of Birth: 12th, February 1973 **Marital Status:** Married
Sex: Male
Nationality: Nigerian
State of origin: Abia
L.G.A: Isiala-Ngwa South
Address: 11, Shotunde Street, Alimosho, Lagos State.
Postal Address: P.O Box 207, Maryland Lagos, State, Nigeria
Email: umezo4u@yahoo.com
GSM: +2348033613999

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Institution	Certificate obtained	Year
• Andrews University, Berrien Spring, Michigan U.S.A	BA (Hons) Theology/History	1999
• Nvosi High School, Umunkpeyi Abia State,	Senior Secondary School (SSCE)	1990

LEADERSHIP AND PASTORAL EXPERIENCE

- President, History Club, Andrews University, ASWA Campus ...1997-1998
- Secretary, 1999 Graduating Class, Andrews University, ASWA Campus 1999
- Student Pastor, S.D.A Church Iperu, Ogun State 1997-1999
- Seventh-day Adventist Pastor 2000- to date

REFREES

Elder Luke Onoha

Bursar, Babcock University Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State
E-mail: ikonu@yahoo.com G.S.M: +2348034023357

Elder Paul Ananaba (SAN)

G.S.M: +234703090986