

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A STRATEGY TO MODERATE THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY
OF THE SOUL IN APU-NA-EKPU DISTRICT

Name of Researcher: Anucha, Josiah Enyereibe

Faculty adviser: Sampson Nwaomah, PhD

Date completed: June 2014

The state of the dead and human perception and relationship with the dead has been subjects of study among many biblical scholars within certain societies. The position one takes largely depends on one's persuasion. Among the Seventh-day Adventists, it is believed that the dead are unconscious and incapable of relating with humans for whatever purpose. However, certain cultural practices among the Seventh-day Adventists in Apu-Na-Ekpu seem not to conform with biblical belief as understood and taught by the Adventist Church. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to form a plan (strategy) involving a designed programme that will be used to moderate the spiritual problem prevailing among church members in Apu-Na-Ekpu District as a result of their traditional belief in immortality of the soul. Traditional belief in this sense implies the natural teaching they have understood and accepted as truth based on culture. This is how many of them saw things from birth. And immortality in our study implies that those who died are not really dead. To them the principal aspect of life- *mkpuru-obi* (the soul) - does not actually die but lives on after death.

The Apu-Na-Ekpu District of Seventh-day Adventists has a baptized membership of 524. However, a sample population of 150, to whom questionnaires were distributed, were used for this study. A total of 147 questionnaires were properly completed and returned. The survey indicated that there are divergent views among the members on the state of the dead. Further, it was also revealed by the study that some of the members in the District are involved in one way or the other and it is affecting their spirituality and witnessing in the locality.

In conclusion the study the designed a programme which was implemented and the result shows significant changes in the members ' understanding of the state of the dead and how they may relate to them. Further the programme designed enhanced the spiritual life of many and they have abandoned the practices inherent in that belief especially as it concerns burial of the dead. Therefore, this researcher recommends that pastors should train lay people to be giving doctrinal enlightenment to the members through Bible studies and thereby curtail their inclination to that tradition and pastors themselves should regularly the fundamental belief on the state of the dead enabling the members to know that the dead knows nothing. Further, members found guilty of involvement in the traditional belief and its practices should be disciplined. Finally, further studies on this research should be done by the Aba North Conference (ANC) in order to expose and curtail the diabolical dangers that our members involve themselves through that belief and its practices.

Adventist University of Africa

A STRATEGY TO MODERATE THE BELIEF OF
IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL IN APU-NA-EKPU DISTRICT

A project
presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by
Anucha, Josiah Enyereibe


June 2014

A STRATEGY TO MODERATE THE BELIEF OF
IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL IN APU-NA-EKPU DISTRICT


A project
presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by
Anucha, Josiah Enyereibe

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:



Advisor: Sampson M. Nwaomah, PhD



Dean, Theological Seminary
Sampson M. Nwaomah, PhD



Reader: George Razmerita, PhD

Extension Centre Babcock University

Date: June 2014

Dedicated to my wife and children: Juliana, Daniel,
Michael, Deborah, Joseph, and Joshua

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	x
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem and the Purpose of the Study	5
Significance of the Study	6
Delimitation of the Study	7
Methodology of the Study	7
2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONFOR THE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL	9
History of the Belief in Immortality of the Soul	9
What the Bible Says about the Soul.....	15
Old Testament (OT)	15
New Testament (NT)	16
Ellen G. White Comments on the Concept of Immortality of the Soul	18
Literature Review of Other Authors on the Concept	19
African Writers’ View on Immortality of the Soul.....	19
Comments from Microsoft Encarta and Sundry Writers.....	20
Non-Adventist Theologians and Immortality of the Soul	23
The Adventist View on the Concept of Immortality of the Soul.....	26
3. DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING	32
The Administrative Map of Nigeria	32
General Profile of Nigeria.....	32
The Setting of Apu-Na-Ekpu District	35
General Profile of the People	35
Political	36
Economic	36
Social.....	36

Cultural/Religious	36
Qualitative Research	42
Personal Observation	43
Interviews	43
Church Board Minute Books	43
Quantitative Research.....	44
Survey.....	44
Demographic Information Analysis.....	44
Analysis of Respondents' Information	
from Questionnaires.....	47
Summary	55
Conclusion	56
4. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION	58
Setting of Goals	58
Abiding in Christ	58
Studying His Word	59
Having Love for the Truth	59
Serving Him Diligently	59
Calling Sin by its Right Name	59
Preparation of Programme	60
Obtaining permission from Aba North Conference Administration	60
Choosing and Training Leaders	60
Young People's Involvement in Revivals	61
Brotherly Love more Important	62
Giving Bible Study Series.....	63
Gathering of Resource	64
Visit to Members in the District.....	64
Implementation.....	64
Programme Content and Design.....	64
Let the Bible Speak Revival/Seminar Timetable.....	65
Strengthening Small Group Fellowship.....	65
Team Work on Visitation to the Bereaved	67
Conducting Revivals/Seminar	68
Counselling/Prayer.....	69
Partial Conclusion.....	69
Evaluation	70
Restoring the Forgotten Treasure	71
Small Group Fellowship and Visitation.....	72
Take Him at His Word	74
Conclusion	75
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS	76
Introduction	76
Summary	76

Conclusion	79
Recommendations	80
APPENDICES	
A. PROGRAMME DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION SEMINAR /WORKSHOP MATERIALS.....	82
B. LETTERS	94
C. QUESTIONNAIRES	97
BIBLIOGRAPHY	101

LIST OF TABLES

1. Respondent's Demographic Information	44
2. Analysis of Respondents' Information from Questionnaires	47

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament
ANC	Aba North Conference
AEC	Aba East Conference
NIV	New International Version

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am full of gratitude to our Great God for the way He led and helped me to write and conclude this project for my MA Pastoral Theology. May His Name be praised.

I am highly indebted to the numerous authors that I consulted their books and articles on the controversial issue of the immortality of the soul. If not for those materials, writing the project would have been impossible. I sincerely appreciate Elders D.C.I. Nwosu and Nwazue Ogugbuaja, and Chief Isaac R. Nwosu for granting me the audience for interview despite their tight schedules. Elder Timothy I. Nnaohia must be appreciated for his assistance and goodwill. Elder V. O. Nwogwugwu has been wonderful in his financial support. May God richly bless him. I immensely thank the Aba East Conference (AEC) Administration and the Executive Committee for sponsoring me. I am thankful to Apu-Na-Ekpu District Committee for granting me the privilege to carry out the study in their district; and the Aba North Conference (ANC) Administration for approving my request to that effect.

I am grateful to my Adviser Professor Sampson.Madubochi.Nwaomah for patiently guiding me to the end of this write-up. I also thank my Editor Gheorghe Razmerita for leading me through the technicalities that helped me produce an accepted project at last. My appreciation also goes for all the approval committee members for approving my project.

I highly appreciate my dear wife Shepherdess J.C. Anucha who painstakingly typed the project. Without that humble but serious effort it would not have been possible to realize the project at the required time. May God richly bless you.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The traditional African belief in the immortality of the human soul (that is, though the body may die, the soul does not and continues to live on) is increasingly being accepted among Seventh-day Adventists in Apu-Na-Ekpu District in Eastern Nigeria. Such belief leads many of them into idolatry in various ways and therefore undermines their faith in the Almighty God and in His infallible Word. There are proven cases of those involved in it. There was a particular man sacrificing and pouring libation upon his late wife's grave to invoke her spirit against the children when they quarrelled. It must be observed that he did it with evil intention of harming his own children.

However, some do it out of ignorance and as customary way of doing things. A good example of this is that of a young Adventist woman who married long after the mother had died; some elderly people told her she must give her late mother her marital rite or she will torment her during childbirth. Fearfully she conceded and burnt a yard of new wrapper sprinkled with the blood of a cock on the mother's grave, though a Seventh-day Adventist. Some others do the practices thinking that they do not matter. Generally, many of these people are deceived or influenced by unbelieving family members, friends, and false prophets; even some of them so-called Seventh-day Adventists. Such hypocritical living retards both personal and corporate spiritual growth. The underlying principle of this belief is

the division of human life into three entities of body, soul, and spirit. The soul is seen as the essence of man which simply is clothed by the human flesh. In fact, some call the flesh the prison house of the soul and death is seen as its release for continued self existence. It is said that the soul is “the spiritual part of a person, regarded as the centre of personality, intellect, will, and emotions: believed by many to survive the body after death”¹ G.O. Ozumba in his article, *African Traditional Metaphysics* writes that, “in Igbo (the ethnic group in south-eastern Nigeria) metaphysics, we have three component parts of human person, namely *Ahu* (body), *Mkpuruobi* (soul), and *Mmuo* (spirit). For the Igbos, a man is simultaneously a physical and a spiritual entity. However, it is his spirited dimension that is eternal.”² He said the Akan in Ghana has three variants of the conception of human personality-dualistic, trichotomist, and pentachotomist. For instance, “Wiredu holds a pentachotomist view instantiated by five parts of the human personality. We have the *Nipadua* (body), the *Okra* (soul), *Sunsum* (spirit), *Ntoro* (character from father), *Mogya*(character from mother). *Kwame Gyekye* has dualistic view-soul and body (*Okra* and *Nipapadua* respectively).”³

He says the three views being, Wiredu’s pentachotomistic view, Igbo trichotomistic view, and Gyekye’s dualistic view are collectively correct and what is needed is further clarification and explanation. He goes ahead to say that “tripartite conception stresses the need to demarcate the spiritual elements into their functional cleavages.”⁴ For a typical African, “man has a continuing self-identity, this the Igbos

¹ Sandra Anderson, et al. *Collins Concise Dictionary and Thesaurus* (Glasgow, Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, Westerhill Road, Bishopbriggs, 2006), 820.

² G. O. Ozumba: *African Traditional Metaphysics*, Accessed 26th August, 2013, www.quodlibet.net/article/ozumba-africa.shtml.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

call *mmuo* which is spirit.”⁵ The spirits are said to have direct contact with the physical earth. “This is why ancestral spirits are sacrificed to in the understanding that they come to eat of the sacrifices.”⁶ It is equally believed that the soul can enter the womb of any woman it chooses and be born as a human again in the process of re-incarnation. This a known and generally accepted concept among the Igbos and it manifests in names like Nnanna and Nnenna being given to babies meaning my father or mother has come; Babatunde and Iyabo for a boy and a girl respectively among the Yorubas are the same. But the Bible makes no such division of human existence; neither does it inform us that there is a living entity inside man capable of self-existence outside him or that can re-incarnate into another human being. Rather it states that man became a “living soul” that is “living being” as the New International Version (NIV) puts it, when God breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of the dust He had moulded (Genesis 2:7). This means that every human being alive is a living being, made up of dust and the breath of God. The breath of God is not a living entity of its own which flies away when one dies. It is air because the Hebrew word for breathed means to “blow (air) or sniff at”.⁷ William G. Johnsson wrote, “The concept of souls is a deception. It has no Biblical basis. Scriptures teach that we are whole beings with body, mind, and breath inseparably linked. Adam does not receive a soul; he becomes a soul, as he receives life breath from God. And when that life breath ceases-when he dies- his existence ceases.”⁸

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Word Analysis, Bible Works

⁸ William G. Johnsson, “Soul Truth,” in *fitforever*, compiled by Kay Kuzma, ed. Ray Woolsey(Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005), 214.

This belief which negates the Word of God engenders fear in the people as they have accepted that the souls of their departed loved ones are alive in the spirit world and that they could protect or harm them, curse or bless them, and give good or bad luck, as the case may be. As a result they want to do just anything to appease them and to attract their blessings, good luck, and protection. The practice of this belief-system manifest in consulting oracles under various circumstances, like when things are not going as expected. And such consultations can lead into offering sacrifices for favour or appeasement. The practice also include performing basic traditional rites during or after the burial of the elderly, father or mother, and giving marriage rites to deceased parent(s) when the daughter marries. While doing any of these things, many readily quote Matthew 22:21 that Jesus said “---give Caesar what is Caesar’s, and God what is God’s,” attributing Caesar to be Satan. But contextually the passage makes us to know that Jesus Christ was supporting the payment of taxes to Caesar the Emperor of Rome whose inscription was on the coin in circulation then.

Generally, this belief with the practices inherent in it was handed down to traditional Africans by their forefathers, and one would have thought that with the advent and spreading of Christianity even in this area under study it would have gradually died down with time. However, the reverse is the case. It is even being modernized particularly in the aspect of burial. Incidentally, the younger generation is reviving it and many among this group may not know the reason(s) for some of the customs they are seeing today. Today’s generation has made the burial of the dead competitive to the extent that when someone dies his relatives who may not be financially buoyant will rather cry for money instead of crying for the irreparable loss of life. This normally creates tension and unnecessary hardship.

Statement of the Problem

The situation described above raises several problems and questions. First, what are the possible causes that could have led the members of the Seventh-day Adventist church into that belief and its practices? Secondly, what has the Church in that District been doing to, at least, moderate this situation? Actually, it has been observed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church there has not even reacted to this problem. Then, what could be done to solve this serious spiritual problem and to help members to know and live for the truth? Revival is the answer and this study is a step in that direction.

Purpose of the Study

This study constituted a strategy to spiritually moderate the African traditional belief of the immortality of the human soul and the practices that go along with it among Seventh-day Adventist Christians in Apu-Na-Ekpu District in Eastern Nigeria. This research has developed a programme which has helped to re-direct the attention of the Adventist members from the faith they have in African tradition to a living faith in the biblical God. Also, this study is aimed at decreasing the trend as it has identified the factors that lead people into it. They have been made to know that such belief is idolatry and is not compatible with the word of God.

Significance of the Study

This study has been significant for the following reasons:

1. Apart from the normal Church preaching or Sabbath School lessons' study, no other programme of doctrinal enlightenment has ever been organized in the District to address this issue. This programme will give them that needed doctrinal enlightenment. It will also help them to know what the Bible teaches about man and his condition at death.

2. It has helped to reduce the growing confusion in the minds of greater number of Seventh-day Adventists in that District about the Bible teaching that the dead do not know anything and do not exist in any other conscious state anywhere, and the traditional one which says he/she lives on, even in a more intelligent and powerful state.
3. This study has relieved many Seventh-day Adventists from unnecessary fear of the dead, deception, and burdensome expenses for the burial of the living-dead.

This study has helped to revive the spiritual life of our members in *Apu-Na-Ekpu* District and through faith they have brighter hope for the second coming of Jesus Christ when those dead in Christ will be resurrected into immortal life. A recommendation has been made to the Aba North Conference in whose territory is *Apu-Na-Ekpu* to use this study to revive other districts with similar spiritual problem. If it succeeds the project can also be recommended to other Conferences in our Union and to others still.

Delimitations of the Study

The belief that the human soul does not die but gets liberated and empowered at death is common among the *Ngwas* in *Aba East*, *Aba North*, and *Aba South* Conferences being the three Conferences carved out of the former East Nigeria Conference presently; and it goes even beyond. And its practices constituting ancestral worship which eclipses Bible truth is also widespread. But this study concentrated on *Apu- Na-Ekpu* District as a case study.

Methodology of the Research

In achieving the purpose of this research, in chapter 2 of this study the Bible has been extensively used to investigate what the term “soul” means, and to know what God says in the condition thereof at death both in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. The writings of E. G. White have been explored to know what she said about the topic. The history of the concept of the immortality of the soul has been unearthed, thereby we have known the proponents of this deceptive teaching which started as a theory in the ancient time, their reason, and how long it has been. The literature of other authors on this subject was reviewed also.

In chapter 3, a brief but general profile of Nigeria has been given and the local setting of *Apu-Na-Ekpu* was described by examining the history of the community, its political, economic, social, cultural, and religious inclinations. This enabled the researcher to discover why this belief is so strong here.

Quantitative research involving questionnaires came into play from those 20 years and above to know the percentage of those who really believe that the dead can have influence over the living because they are still living and active in the spirit world, and why. Participatory observation in burials, and interviews have also been used; while with permission, the Church Board minutes books were examined to know the Church’s stand and actions regarding the issue of immortality of the soul among her members.

Chapter 4 describes the development and implementation of a programme. The evaluation of the programme was done using set goals. The system applied depended on a particular revival strategy and its design. Some of the methods used included question and answer, personal observation, and interviews. But everything

was based on the Word of God and revival of Christian love among the members.

Chapter 5 presented the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of the Belief in Immortality of the Soul

The system of belief that the souls of the dead are still living is an old one which could be traced back to the lies of serpent that “you will not surely die,” (Genesis 3: 4) to Eve. “Satan told falsehood in Eden,”¹ E. G. White aptly wrote.

Although the use of the phrase “immortal soul” is widespread today, that terminology is found nowhere in the Bible. According to an internet article from the publisher of the Good News magazine,

“The concept of the soul’s supposed immortality was first taught in ancient Egypt and Babylon.”²

And the belief that the soul continues in existence after the dissolution of the body is ... speculation ... nowhere expressly taught in the Bible. The belief in the immortality of the soul came to the Jews from ... Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato, its principal exponent, who was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended³
In Greek philosophy, Plato (428-348 BC), the Greek philosopher and student of Socrates, “taught that the body and the immortal soul separate at death.”⁴

¹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, (Pacific Press Publishing Association Boise, Oshawa’, Ontario, Canada; 1958), 478-9.

² What Happens After Death?, accessed 15th August, 2013. www.ucg.org/booklet/what-happens-after-death/mystery-death/history-immortal-soul-teaching/

³ Kaufmann Kohler, “IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL,” *Jewish Encyclopedid.com*, accessed 15th August, 2013. [http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8092-immortality-of-the-soul/\(15/82013\)](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8092-immortality-of-the-soul/(15/82013))

⁴ What Happens After Death?, accessed 15th August, 2013 www.ucg.org/booklet/what-happens-after-death/mystery-death/history-immortal-soul-teaching- - -

Linnane, while talking about Plato and the separation of body and soul at death said, “Plato believes that after the death of the body the soul will continue to exist on its own, and that this existence is a better and preferable one, because, he says, the soul is no longer hindered by the imperfection of the body and the mind is left to contemplate and exist amongst the forms¹. Plato is also quoted thus, “Is death anything more than this, the separate condition of the body by itself when it is released from the soul, and the separate condition by itself of the soul when released from the body? Is death anything else than this?”² Through his teachings Plato tried to prove that the body and the soul are two separate entities. This idea has influenced the world greatly, yet it is “utterly contrary to the Israelite consciousness and is nowhere found in the Old Testament.”³ It is stated that the early Christianity was influenced by Greek philosophies even as the gospel of Christ was preached to the Greek and Roman world. “By AD 200 the doctrine of the immortality of the soul became a controversy among those holding the Christian belief,”⁴ the article asserts.

The “Pagan Immortal Soul and Double Doctrine” is the title of an internet article by David Sielaff in January 2006. This was based on Ernest Martin’s article of 1963. According to him,

The concept of the immortality of the soul is based on a lie. Modern believers in the immortality of the soul would be laughed to scorn by the philosophers of antiquity for believing that lie. Yet most theologians who claim to believe in the biblical revelation unknowingly derive many of their doctrinal beliefs from pagan philosophers of old

¹ Noel Linnane, “Plato on the Soul” in *Soul/Mind and Body Separation-A Look at Dualism*, accessed 11th March, 2014. <http://homepage.eircom.net/~no31/bphil.pdf>

² Harold Tarrant and Hugh Tredennick, *Plato: Last Days of Socrates* (London, Penguin Books Ltd. 1993 Reprint), 117.

³ “Death.” The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol. 2,Page 812; 1960

⁴ What Happens After Death? www.ucg.org/ - - -

who purposely lied in the name of religion and not from Holy Scripture. Those same lies continue to be taught in Christianity today.⁵

The false doctrine of the immortal soul and its accompanying doctrine about an ever burning hell were lies originating from pagan teaching. Dr. Martin said that “there is clear testimony even from the originators themselves that the doctrines were all lies.”⁶ It is observed by Sielaff that most Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical Christian churches today derive their teaching of immortality and hell from these original lies. Some pagans told the truth about the origin of these lies, and Martin called the method of teaching lies to one group while teaching the truth to another “Double Doctrine.”⁷

Polybius the Greek Historian (203-120 BC) wrote that the “Roman Republic deliberately lied to the common people to keep them from being unruly and difficult to manage. They lied to control the people under their rule. They saw it as necessary for the state- it was clever and admirable for the ruler to lie to their own people.”⁸ The method the rulers preferred to attain and maintain control without the use of direct force was by means of religious teaching. He stated further that:

Religion was used to terrify the common people by threatened punishments, and to soothe them with the prospect of a future reward in an afterlife beginning immediately after death... ‘The quality in which the Roman Commonwealth is most distinctly superior is in ... their religious convictions ...’ they have adopted this course for the sake of the common people. It is a course which perhaps would not have been necessary had it been possible to form a state composed of wise men, but as every multitude is fickle, full of lawless desires, unreasoned

⁵ David Sielaff, “The Pagan Immortal Soul and Double Doctrine,” accessed 15th August, 2013 www.askelm.com/doctrine/do60101.htm

⁶ Ernest L. Martin, “Pagan Doctrine of the Soul, Deliberate Deception, accessed 15th August, 2013 www.heraldofgodsgoace.org/Martin/PaganDoctrineOfTheSoul.htm

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Polybius, *Histories*, Shuckburgh 1889 translation (London, New York., Macmillan. 1889. Reprint Bloomington, 1962), accessed September 30th, 2013. www.persues.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Persues%3Atext%3A1999.01.0234&layout=loc=6.56

passion, and violent anger, the multitude must be held in by invisible terrors and such like pageantry. For this reason I think, not that the ancients acted rashly and at haphazard in introducing among the people notions concerning the gods and beliefs in the terror of hell, but that the modern are most rash and foolish in banishing such beliefs.⁹

Sielaff also said that Politicians used tales of

“Fearful divine punishment for evils or sins to keep the society stable and, masses under control. The people were told that the gods were both judges and witnesses to their actions. By manipulating these beliefs the leaders could rule the unruly and control the uncontrollable. The people were told wild and fabulous tales about the gods to deliberately confuse them and keep them in ignorance of the truth. However, the initiated were told the truth in degrees or at least some of the truth.”¹⁰

Then Hastings said that “there was one truth for the intellectual classes and one for the common people ... ‘it is expedient for the state (the people) to be deceived in religion.’”¹¹

It is said that “they all (the pagan philosophers and theologians) adhered to the ‘double doctrine’ method of teaching. Pythagoras of the sixth century B. C., (and later) Plato, Aristotle, and even those of the first century always had two doctrines”¹²

And continuing, Hastings said that

the lie about an immortal soul in each person was one story told to the common people, while the truth that everyone who died had ceased to exist was made clear to those who understand. This perpetuated and strengthened the control of those in power because only they had the real truth in many areas of life.¹³

According to the evidence gathered by Bishop Warburton of Anglican Church

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Sielaff, - - -www.askelm, accessed 15th August, 2013.

¹¹ James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics*, Vol.7 (New York: C. Scribner’s & Sons,1908) PP.61,63.

¹² Ernest L. Martin, “Pagan Doctrine of the Soul” in *The Good News*, vol.12, no. 3, March 1963 (Pasadena), pp.5-6,12, accessed 12th August, 2013 www.godstruthfortoday.org/Library/martin/PaganDoctrineOfTheSoul.htm.

¹³ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of religion & Ethics*, Vol. 7, p. 63.

ancient philosophers and rulers taught double doctrine as a method to coerce control over and provide meaning in lives of their people (and) promised future rewards to promote social behaviour so that soldiers, citizens and even slaves would willingly sacrifice themselves for the state. This method of gaining obedience was much cheaper than using force.¹⁴

Josephus the Jewish historian captured some of the words of Titus the Roman General with which he inspired his soldiers to fight during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.,

...what man of virtue is there who does not know, that those souls which are severed from their fleshly bodies in battles by the sword, are received by the ether, that purest of elements, and joined to that company which are placed among the stars; that they become good genius, and propitious heroes, and show themselves as such to their posterity afterward?...¹⁵

The concept of immortal soul is interwoven with Double Doctrine, Plato generally “taught that all animals (including humans) have an immortal soul which serves to animate their bodies; but as for stones, wood ... inanimate part of creation (They) are quite destitute of souls.”¹⁶ But he later taught his friends and disciples that, “a soul diffused through the universe, which is to actuate and pervade every part of it.”¹⁷

Heroclotus tells us that it was the Egyptians that first taught that the human soul is immortal, and at the death of the body (it) enters into some other living thing, then coming to birth; and after passing through all creatures of the land, sea, and air, it enters once more into a human body at birth. A cycle which it completes in three

¹⁴William Warburton, *Divine Legation of Moses*, 3 volumes, 10th edition (London: Tomas Tegg, 1846) .

¹⁵ Flavius Josephus, *The War of the Jews* , Book 6 Chapter 1:5; accessed September 3rd, 2013 www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/war-6.htm.

¹⁶ Martin, “Pagan Doctrine of the Soul,” p.6. accessed 12th August, 2013 Plato in *Timaeus*....

¹⁷ Ibid.

thousand years; but there are Greeks who have used this doctrine, some earlier and some later, as if it were their own.¹⁸

The concept of immortality of the soul originated from the Egyptians, but it appears the Greeks popularized it through their philosophical schemes in which they used double doctrine to confuse the masses and made them to be obedient, hopeful of future rewards, while they told the elites the truth. That concept entered Christianity as it was already part of other religions. Today it is universal. But it is falsehood. Bishop William Warburton of the Anglican Church in the late 1700s wrote a 3-volume book called *Divine Legation of Moses*. His purpose was to “prove the divine nature of the Old Testament by its omission of any discussion of the future state of the dead, even though the rest of the world’s religions all had such beliefs--- that lack of information about the future state of the dead proved the divine origin of the Old Testament.”¹⁹ Yet, some of the early church fathers believed and taught immortality of the soul. Gary Petty in an article titled *History of a Controversial Teaching* said that “Origen (185-254 ca) was the first person to attempt to organize Christian doctrine into a systematic theology. He was an admirer of Plato and believed in the immortality of the soul and that it would depart to an everlasting reward or everlasting punishment at death.”²⁰ Also the same author said that,

For Augustine (354-430) death meant the destruction of the body, but the conscious soul would continue to live in either a blissful state with God or an agonizing state of separation from God...the Protestant Reformation leaders generally accepted these traditional views and entrenched them in traditional Protestant teachings.²¹

¹⁸ Herodotus, *The Histories*, A. D. Godley, ed., Book 2, Chapter 123, accessed September 2, 2013. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Hdt.+2.123.1>.

¹⁹ William Warburton, *Divine Legation of Moses*...

²⁰ Gary Petty, What Does the Bible Say About the “Immortal Soul”? *The Good News* (A Magazine of Understanding), accessed 13th September, 2013. www.ucg.org/death/what-does-bible-say-about-immortal-soul/.

²¹ *Ibid.*

The theory of the immortality of the soul is of pagan origin. It is a continuation of the lie Satan told Eve in Eden that man shall not surely die (Gen 3:4). Anybody still believing it is rather accepting the devil's deceit and falsehood. Man is an entity of body, mind, and God's breath of life.

What the Bible Says About the Soul

Old Testament (OT)

As discussed in chapter one, at created God did not make man divisible but a whole. God made Adam (man) as an indivisible entity of body, mind, and neshamah²² (breath of life). Therefore man became a living soul/being (nephesh hayyah)²³ (Gen. 2:7). That act of God did set in motion the mechanism of breathing in every living being. And when the body system can no longer receive that life-giving power (neshamah) from the air and one exhales the last air (carbon dioxide) in him, he is dead. Psalm 146:3, 4 tells us what we should not do regarding man whether he is dead or alive because of his nature. It says, "Do not put trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish." It is obvious that if there is anything still animate in man after death his plans will still be carried on, they will not perish. But they surely perish because when one dies everything personal to him dies with him, even his plans. The Hebrew words *ruach* translated into the English word "spirit" in the above passage actually means breath, spirit or wind and none of these words is a living thing. It therefore means that that last air a dying person breathes out is not living in any form.

²² Brempong Owusu- Antwi and Gerhard Pfandl. SPIRITUALISTIC MANIFESTATIONS:- ISSUES IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST THEOLOGY(Maryland, Silver Spring, Bible Research Institute, , USA; 2010), p.21,

²³ Ibid, 22.

Does the dead actually know anything since his plans have perished?

Ecclesiastes 9:5,6 has the answer, “For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun.” Since the dead do not know anything and no longer shares in any form of human emotion or activity it really means they are not living in any other form because even living animals know something by instinct. Furthermore, Job adds: “If his sons are honoured, he does not know it; if they are brought low; he does not see it.” (Job 14:21). Man is totally unconscious and ignorant at death.

New Testament (NT)

The New Testament (NT) has much to say about the condition of man at death. Just like the OT, the NT does not teach that man has a separate soul that can live without the body immortally. Jesus says, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.” (John 5:28, 29). Jesus implies that no one has immortality now, but God shall give it in the future on condition. A Bible Commentator on Romans 2:7 states that “immortality is not the condition of man presently but it will be bestowed on those who patiently seek for it. Those who will receive immortality will live eternally. Seeking for it with other boons of heaven should be a must for every child of God.”²⁴ According to that Bible text itself immortality will be given “to those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for

²⁴ J.D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney. New International Bible Dictionary (Michigan, Grand Rapids, 3 Zondervan Corporation, USA; 1987) pg. 323.

glory and honour, and immortality, and eternal life.” In 1 Corinthians 15:52-54, Paul maintained that immortality will be given to man at an appointed time. He stated, “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying.... “Death is swallowed up in victory.” The Bible is very plain here that man is mortal in his present life. “But that he will receive immortality, that is, unending life during the resurrection at the second coming of Jesus Christ.”²⁵ 1 Timothy 6: 16 makes it clear that only God has immortality implying that he is the only source of it too. Jesus Christ our Saviour has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10). This immortality comes to the saints “in the sense of receiving and enjoying God’s life.”²⁶

Since Jesus Christ is the one who has brought immortality/eternal life to us, knowing and accepting him and remaining in him, experiencing the new birth through the Holy Spirit and by water baptism constitute a major step in anticipating it. For the Bible says, “And this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.... If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation.... All things have become new.” (John 17:3; 2 Corinthian 5:17).

²⁵ Finis Jennings Dake. Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible (Georgia, Lawrenceville, DAKE’S BIBLE SALES, Inc,30246), pg. 235.

²⁶ J.D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney, 323.

Ellen G. White Teachings

Ellen G. White in all her long ministry never at anytime accepted the teaching of immortality of the soul. In many portions of her various books she expressed her views. She said that “the soul had not natural immortality,”²⁷ as some ministers try to prove. She re-iterated that “immortality (is) promised to man on condition,”²⁸ and that it is the “sacrifice of His (God’s) son that brought immortality within their (men’s) reach.”²⁹ Therefore it is “only through Christ can immortality be obtained....”³⁰ Why will God give humans eternal life and immortality? She answers, “The souls of men and women are of infinite value in God’s sight, not because they have natural immortality, but because it is possible through faith in Christ to gain immortality...”³¹ Throwing more light on the issue she says,

In order to possess an endless existence man must continue to partake of the tree of life. Deprived of this, his vitality would gradually diminish until life should become extinct...None of the family of Adam were allowed to pass that barrier (angel guard to Eden, Gen.3:24) to partake of the life-giving fruit; hence there is not an immortal sinner.³²

Writing about the origin of the concept of immortality of the soul she says, “Modern spiritualism and the forms of ancient witchcraft and idol worship-all having communion with the dead as their vital principle- are founded upon that first lie by which Satan beguiled Eve in Eden: Ye shall not surely die ... ye shall be gods.”³³ She

²⁷ White Ellen G., *Life Sketches*, Review and Herald Publishing Association Hagerstown, MD 21740; 1915, pg. 49.

²⁸ White, E.G. *Review and Herald* July 10, 1900 The Lord’s Vineyard.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² White, E.G., *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Review and Herald Publishing Association Hagerstown, MD 21740, 1890; pg. 60.

³³ White, E.G. *The Great Controversy*; Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown MD 21740, 1888; 545.

maintains that that was “seed sowing that will develop into falsehood,”³⁴ which indeed has happened. She says that those who worship the dead are actually worshipping demons. Here is her statement: “In their supposed worship of dead men they were in reality worshipping demons.”³⁵ E.G. White observed that the erroneous concept of natural immortality has some other false teachings in its train. “Upon the fundamental error of natural immortality rests the doctrine of consciousness in death—a doctrine, like eternal torment, opposed to the teachings of scriptures, to the dictates of reason, and to our feelings of humanity.”³⁶

Literature Review of Other Authors

African Writers’ View of Immortality of the Soul

The worship of the dead is an integral part of African Traditional Religion (ATR) which has been an ongoing process even before the advent of Christianity. In West Africa in which Nigeria belongs the concept of the immortality of the soul is natural to many. They see the existence of the soul apart from the human body after death as the next and most important level of life for human beings.

An African writer, Abakare O. Christopher of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka in Anambara State of Nigeria in a comparative analysis of Platonic and Isoko metaphysics sees,

Death as a continuum, (that) ‘Plato sees the soul as the life force of man...the principle of life in living things.’ The Isoko (people group from Edo state in Nigeria also) see the soul as the moving force in

³⁴ Ibid, 150.

³⁵ White, E. G., *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Review and Herald Publishing Association Hagerstown MD 21740, 1890; 685.

³⁶ White, E.G. *The Great Controversy*; 545.

man. For them the soul gives life to man and animates the body which continues its existence after the death of the body.³⁷

He is proving that the Africans in Isoko have the same understanding of the soul being immortal as Plato had many centuries ago.

Also G. O. Ozumba, writing on the level of the whole Africa on the same issue from University of Calabar in Nigeria said, “The question of immortality of the soul is not a controversial issue in African reality scheme. It is taken as truism. The soul of a man is immortal. It continues to exist after the dissolution of the body.”³⁸ This is the belief of a traditional African.

Microsoft Encarta and Others Authors on Immortality of the Soul

According to an article in Microsoft Encarta, “immortality is an unending existence of the soul after death.”³⁹ It proves that the doctrine of immortality is common to many religions but that in different cultures it takes various forms ranging from “ultimate extinction to its final survival and the resurrection of the body.”⁴⁰ In Hinduism for instance, the ultimate goal is considered as absorption into the “universal spirit.”⁴¹ Buddhist doctrine of nirvana is a complete bliss achieved through total extinction of the personality. In the religion of ancient Egypt, it is shown that entrance into immortality was

³⁷ Abakare O. Christopher, *Death as a Continuum: a Comparative Analysis of Platonic and Isoko Metaphysics*, accessed 26th August, 2013. naudigitallibrary.wordpress.com/tag/immortality-of-the-soul-in-platos-philosophy/; June 26, 2012.

³⁸ G. O. Ozumba: African Traditional Metaphysics, accessed 26th August, 2013. <http://www.quodlibet.net/articles/ozumba-africa.shtml>.

³⁹ “Immortality,” Microsoft Encarta 2009 (DVD), Redmond Wa: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

“Dependent on the results of divine examination of the merits of an individual’s life.”⁴² Furthermore, early Greek religion promised a “shadowy continuation of life on earth in an underground region known as “Hades.”⁴³ In the author’s view, immortality promised in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism is “primarily of the spirit.”⁴⁴ And not including the body. That is his understanding.

The author observes that some Christian denominations teach that it will be after resurrection of the general judgment of the entire human race, “the body will be united with the spirit to experience either reward or punishment.”⁴⁵ However, “Catholics believe they can help by their prayers and good works those who have died without being fully purified of their sins,”⁴⁶ he says. This belief, according to him is closely associated with the doctrines of purgatory and penance. He defined purgatory as the

state of purgation in which, according to Roman Catholic and Eastern Churches, souls after death either are purified from venial sins or undergo the temporal punishment that after the guilt of mortal sin has been remitted, still remains to be endured by the Sinner. Ultimate happiness of their souls is supposed to be thus secured.⁴⁷

In another Encarta article written by John A. Saliba it is said that, “early Judaism considered the human personality as a whole without making a sharp

⁴² Immortality, “Microsoft Encarta 2009 (Dvd), Redmond Wa: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

distinction between body and soul.”⁴⁸ But by Middle Ages the “soul was defined in Judaism as the principle of life and was considered capable of surviving bodily decay.”⁴⁹ He emphatically said that the Christian doctrine of the soul has been strongly influenced by the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Furthermore, he says that “most Christians believe that each individual has an immortal soul and that the human personality as a whole, composed of soul and resurrected body, may through faith, be granted God’s presence in the afterlife.”⁵⁰ Continuing he said that, “The Neoplatonic theory of the soul as prisoner of a material body prevailed in Christian thought until the advent of the 13th century theologian Thomas Aquinas, who accepted Aristotle’s analysis of the soul and body as two conceptually distinguishable elements of a single substance.”⁵¹ Some people believe that the immortal soul is the image of God in man; therefore his living forever is not conditional.

Here is Herbert Wolf, “Whether man believes or disbelieves, he possesses a spirit that will live forever. This is another aspect of the image of God.”⁵² But as has already been shown, only God has immortality and he will give it to man on condition. That is, to those who have done well (John (5:29). It could be argued that the image of God in man is not an immortal soul but his attributes. It may not have been bodily form because God has no physical body, although he has the power and ability to manifest himself in bodily form if he so desires; for example, the incarnation

⁴⁸ John A. Saliba, “Soul.” Microsoft Encarta (DVD) REDMOND wa: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Herbert Wolf. PENTATEUCH(Chicago, Moody Publishers 1991), 35.

of Jesus Christ in human form. Stories abound in the Bible of how our Lord appeared to Abraham in human form a long time before his incarnation (Genesis 18) and an angel appeared to Jacob and Joshua respectively in human form (Genesis 32: 24 30; Joshua 5:14). It is said that God did not create man exactly like himself because we are humans and he is God who is a spirit (John 4:24) and a spirit has no physical body. Life Application Study Bible (NIV) explains what it means for man to be created in God's image, it says:

Instead man is a reflection of God's glory..... Our reason, creativity, speech, or self-determination is the image of God... it is our entire self that reflects the image of God. We still never are totally like God because he is our supreme Creator. But we do have the ability to reflect his character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness... sharing many of his characteristics provide solid basis for self-worth.⁵³

Non-Adventist Theologians and Immortality of the Soul

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is being questioned or rejected by a growing number of non-Adventist theologians and writers. One of them is the famous Roman Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner; some others are J.D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney in their commentary, William Temple, Oscar Cullmann, and Clark Pinnock, etc. Karl Rahner, a leading Roman Catholic theologian, notes:

Death is something that we cannot comprehend in our thoughts, bring under our power, and so manipulate, and hence one who in his thinking seeks always to bring that which he is thinking about under this control will be thwarted in the case of death. It is, and remains, a fact that ... death is the absurd arch-contradiction of existence. If the Christian does not experience it to that degree how could he assert and recognize that death is the manifestation of sin.⁵⁴

⁵³ *Life Application Study Bible (NIV)*, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc Wheaton, Illinois, 1991, 7.

⁵⁴ Rahner, Karl, *Theological Investigation, Vo1, XIII Theology, Anthropology, Christology*, London; Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975; pg. 211.

As can be seen above, Rahner says death is arch-contradiction (principal contradiction) of life or opposite of life. He does not believe that man can be half dead (in body) and half alive in the soul. To him, this implies that when a person dies he is dead in totality. Nothing of him remains alive in any other form. Rahner, though a Catholic theologian, really rejects dualism.

He further stated “we should not allow our thoughts to be conditioned by the assumption that man is divided into body and soul, each part having its own absolutely disparate destiny. If this was to be so how can the saints be raised from the dead in the end?”⁵⁵ We will not realize the reality of death if we continue to divide human life into mortal and immortal parts. Continuing, he said:

From the point of view of Christian theology it would be a failure to recognize the reality of anthropological dichotomy by supposing that death affects only the so-called body of man, while the so-called soul, at least if it boldly resolves upon an attitude of stoic transcendence, will be able to view the fate of its former partner called the body unaffected and undismayed as from above... Man is one in being and act, and death is something that affects the whole man.⁵⁶

Rahner rounds up his point about death when he says that at the point of death,

Man in all he is has arrived at a conclusion. It may be questioned whether this conclusion constitutes the consummation or the termination of him, but in any case in death he arrives at a radical conclusion, one which, on any showing, he cannot bring under his own power... Death as a conclusion is the absolute powerlessness of man, in which we certainly also become too powerless to conceive of death or of God.⁵⁷

He believes that there is no entity in man that survives death in the present time.

Also on the question of immortality, Douglas and Tenney commenting on 1 Timothy 6:16 make clear differentiation between God and man. They agree that it is

⁵⁵ Ibid, 179.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 211.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 180.

only God who possesses *aphtharsia* (immortality) “for he is the eternal source of life. Human beings were created for immortality rather than with immortal souls.”⁵⁸ They, “believe this immortality is in the sense of receiving and enjoying God’ life.”⁵⁹ This will happen at the resurrection of the righteous when they will be given imperishable immortal bodies (1 Corinthians 15:53-55). These commentators point out that “careless talk about the immortality of the soul can eclipse the biblical emphasis that immortality belongs to God alone and is given to believing human beings in and through a body (2 Corinthian 5:1-4).”⁶⁰ The New Testament’s use of immortality, they observe, “denotes immunity from death and decay that results from sharing in the divine life”⁶¹

On his own part, William Temple, the late Archbishop of Canterbury said, “Man is not immortal by nature or of right; but he is capable of immortality and there is offered to him resurrection from the dead and life eternal if he will receive it from God and on God’s own terms.”⁶² Oscar Cullmann equally made a very cogent expression concerning the teaching of the immortality of the soul as he said, “If one recognizes that death and eternal life in the New Testament are always bound up with the Christ-event, then it becomes clear that for the first Christians the soul is not intrinsically immortal, but rather became so only through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and through faith in him.”⁶³ Then Clark Pinnock categorically stated that, “the

⁵⁸ Douglas, J.D. and Tenney Merrill C. *New International Bible Dictionary*, Zondervan Corporation, Grand RAPIDS, Michigan, USA; 1987. 323.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Temple, William, *Nature, Man, and God*, Macmillan, London, 1939; p. 472.

⁶³ “Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?” in Krister Stendahl, ed., *Immortality and Resurrection*, Macmillan, New York, 1965; p. 11.

Bible does not teach the natural immortality of the soul; it points instead to the resurrection of the body as God's gift to the believers. God alone has immortality (1 Tim. 6:16)."⁶⁴

The Adventist View on Immortality of the Soul

According to Aecio E. Cairus, early Millerite Adventists gradually acquired the truth of the mortality of all men from the Scriptures. Francisco Ramos Mexia, a Sabbatharian and an Adventist noted that "Man, together with his soul or what you may call it, will dissolve: To dust thou shall return; But he will later rise from it."⁶⁵ People "do not receive the final reward at death whether they are saints or sinners. Salvation or damnation awaits resurrection."⁶⁶ The Adventists accept the words of Jesus that "the hour is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgement" (John 5:28-29). Obviously, "death does seal everyone's fate according to what was done in life, but the dead themselves are ... naked and unclothed, meaning unconscious of any human activities, as in sleep, awaiting the resurrection, judgment, and their respective rewards."⁶⁷ Seventh-day Adventists believe that "all matters associated with eternal life or death must therefore follow the resurrection ... leading to imperishable body (and) immortality ... for God's saints, or ... bringing destruction and eternal obliteration for those who have

⁶⁴"The Conditional View," in William Crockett, ed., *Four Views on Hell*, MI: Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1992; p. 148.

⁶⁵ Aecio E. Cairus, "The Doctrine of Man," *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, Review and Herald Publishing Association Hagerstown, MD 21740, 225.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 318.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*.

rejected the salvation of God.”⁶⁸ Nobody can have immortality or “lay claim to it as long as death reigns in the world,”⁶⁹ except it is given to him by God. The death of Jesus has made life and immortality available to man through the gospel, and it will be “bestowed upon the saints.”⁷⁰

John Brunt notes in his comments that, in his letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 4:13-18) Paul addressed the issue of resurrection. He brought the matter up because of confusion among the Thessalonians, who were grieving about those who have died. “They seemed to be ignorant of the fate of their deceased loved ones.”⁷¹ Paul wrote to stress that they should not grieve as those who have no hope, but should rather turn their attention to the hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the dead that will occur at the right time. It is noteworthy that Paul did not say the “deceased loved ones were alive or conscious, but spoke of their current state as sleep and focused attention on the time when Jesus will return.”⁷² Christ’s return to take his people should be our concern as well.

Brunt highlights that the meaning of the phrase “God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep,” (v. 14) has been disputed. It is said that “some have seen in it support for the immortality of the soul, assuming God is bringing soul with him from heaven to be reunited with bodies at the resurrection.”⁷³ Brunt however,

⁶⁸ NIELS-Erik A. Andreasen, “Death: Origin, Nature, and Final Eradication,” *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist THEOLOGY*, Review and Herald Publishing Association Hagerstown, MD 21740, 318.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ John C. Brunt. *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association 21740) pg. 349.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 350.

brought some important considerations which speak against such understanding. First, the context of the passage in which the phrase is found does not mention the word “soul.” Brunt goes ahead to show that the entire passage focuses on the resurrection and the call to those who have “fallen asleep” to rise at the resurrection. “No mention of body reuniting with soul is seen.”⁷⁴

Second, there is a parallelism in the passage itself. According to them in literal translation the passage reads: “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way, through Jesus, God will also bring with him those who have fallen asleep.”⁷⁵ It has been observed that the phrase “through Jesus” should go with “those who have fallen asleep.” But wherever one places this difficult phrase “the parallelism with the first part of the sentence suggests that bringing with him refers to bringing believers to life through resurrection in the same way that Jesus Himself died and rose again.”⁷⁶ This is the plain sense of “in the same way” which links the two parts of the sentence. “Thus both context and syntax support the idea that the phrase, ‘God will bring with him’ in verse 14 means that God will bring them to life with Jesus as he brought Jesus to life at the resurrection.”⁷⁷

Third, the book of 2 Corinthians 4:14 urges the Christians to “Know that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus.” The preposition *syn* (with) used in both passages supports the argument from both context and syntax that bringing those who had fallen asleep with Jesus refers to bringing them to life with Jesus.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵ John C. Brunt. *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association 21740) pg. 350.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Brunt observes: “This passage therefore, teaches that the Christian hope is based on the resurrection of Christ. As he rose again, so God will raise those who have faith in Christ, at the second coming at the same time as those living in Christ meet with them in the air to be with the Lord forever⁷⁸”.

He also highlights that in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul responds both to misunderstanding and false teaching on the part of those who deny the resurrection. But it is clear that Paul “bases the believers hope firmly on the foundation of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection.”⁷⁹ He emphasized that Christ’s death and resurrection is of “first importance” (v. 3, 4). In verses 12-19 Paul refuted those who denied resurrection since Christ was indeed resurrected. “These verses make it clear that for Paul an integral package includes Christ’s resurrection, the believer’s resurrection, and meaningful Christian faith. If any part of the package is removed, all is lost,”⁸⁰ they submitted. If there is “no resurrection, preaching is in vain, faith is futile. Paul is misrepresenting God and believers are still in their sins and are of all people most to be pitied.”⁸¹

In countering possible objections from his readers, Paul took up the questions of how the dead are raised and the kind of body they will have.

For Paul, the resurrection is much more than the resuscitation of corpses. It involves transformation into a new body no longer subject to death ... spiritual body, as he calls it. To Paul transformation will be instantaneous. It is then mortality will give way to immortality. The Adventists have seen a close relation in subject matter

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

between 1 Corinthian 15 and 2 Corinthian 5:1-5. They agree that Paul talked about the resurrection in the later although the word “resurrection” is not mentioned in it when he contrasted the “earthly tent” not made with hands, which is our future hope.⁸²

It has been observed that “some have held that here Paul supports the idea of immortality of the soul by referring to the body as an earthly tent, a temporary vessel filled by the eternal soul.”⁸³ We see that this is not so when one takes a closer look at the passage. Paul does not speak of “a soul or of any existence apart from the body ... no hint of division of humans into two parts.”⁸⁴ It is said that Paul speaks of the earthly tent being destroyed, not being separated from soul. Metaphorically he talks of being “naked or unclothed, for what would occur without the earthly tent.”⁸⁵ Paul does not want that. We can agree that “if for Paul an intermediate state were one of conscious existence of the soul with Christ, one would (not) expect him to reject it.”⁸⁶ Paul does not want to be naked but to “be further clothed, which is identified as occurring when what is mortal is swallowed up by life.”⁸⁷ This obviously tallies with what he presented at the last part of 1 Corinthian 15, “where mortality will give way to immortality at the sound of the trumpet when Christ returns.”⁸⁸

From all that have been said so far in this chapter we can see that both the world and the church are divided on the issue of immortality of the soul. There are some

⁸² John C. Brunt. *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist THEOLOGY* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association), 351.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

voices even within the Seventh-day Adventist Church that would promote the concept of the immortality of the soul. In *Adventist World* magazine of August 2010 people were greatly offended by Roy Adams' article on this issue. The reactions of two people out of three that responded are worthy of note. One was quoted as saying, "When you love someone, you desire only their good, and to hear that your friend the SDA believe that there is no soul that God care for, no place of happiness that they can envision their loved one in can be hurtful and offensive."⁸⁹ And the second one who claimed to be a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist and a descendant of a Union Conference President was even more furious and abusive, "It troubles me to see the narrow-mindedness displayed in Roy Adams article ... I believe that Bible teaches that the soul is immortal."⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Roy Adams, *Adventist World*. General Conference, North-Asia-Pacific Division, August, 2011, pg. 25.

⁹⁰Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING

This chapter is going to examine the local setting of *Apu-Na-Ekpu* District which includes its geographical location and the general profile of the people covering their local political set-up; their economic status, social, and cultural/religious organization in which the traditional belief of the immortality of the soul thrives. Also a brief but general profile of Nigeria is given. This equally informs us of Nigeria's geographical location, her political system, socio-economic organization, and religious affiliations.

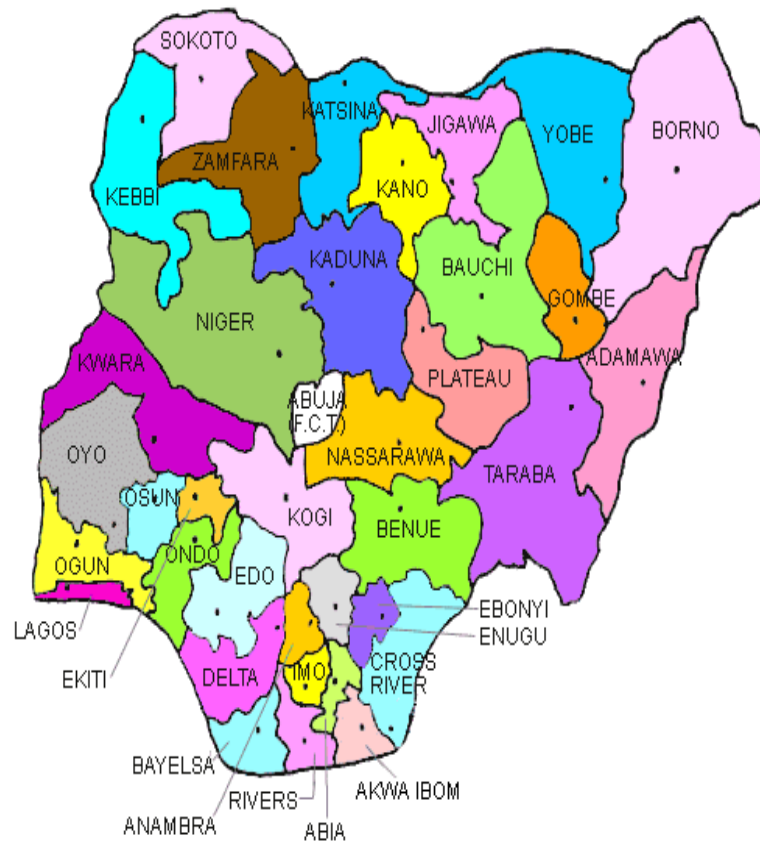


Figure 1. The Administrative Map of Nigeria showing the 36 States and Abuja

General Profile of Nigeria

Figure 1 above is the only figure in this write-up. It is “the administrative map of Nigeria showing the 36 states and Abuja,”¹ the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Nigeria is located in Western Africa bordering the gulf of Guinea, and between Benin Republic and Cameroun. “It lies on the geographical coordinates of 10 00N 8 00 E.”² Politically, Southern and Northern Nigeria was united into one nation in 1914 by Frederick Lord Lugard. Nigeria gained Independence from the United Kingdom on October 1, 1960 and it became a republic on October 1, 1963. Today Nigeria is a “Federal Presidential Republic, using a constitution under a democratically elected government.”³ Nigeria has 36 states grouped into six geopolitical zones plus Abuja the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Being a Federal Republic, “states retain a degree of self-government (while some of) the powers of the central Government are restricted. Ultimate sovereign power rests with the voters who choose their governmental representatives.”⁴

It has upper and lower legislative chambers-the Senate and the Federal House of Representatives- at the Federal level, while State legislatures operate in the states. Nigeria is the most populous black nation in the world. According to CIA World Factbook 2012 Nigeria’s “Population estimate (was) 170,123,740 with a density of 184.2/km²”⁵

¹ The Administrative Map of Nigeria showing the 36 states and Abuja, accessed October 1,2013. www.ilo.org/public/english/religion/afpro/abuja/download/nigeriamap.pdf.

² News Track India: what is latitude and longitude of Nigeria?, accessed August 26th,2013 www.newstrackindia.com/information/worldinfo/latitudelongitude/Country/WhatIsLatitudeLongitudeOfNigeria.htm.

³ Nigeria – Country Profile – 2013: CIA World Factbook, Feb., 21, 2013, accessed August 23rd, 2013 www.indexmundi.com/nigeria.

⁴ Ibid.,

⁵ Ibid.,

Socially, Nigeria is highly blessed with abundant natural and human resources. There are talents in every area of human endeavour. Many Nigerians have exemplified themselves in their fields of specialization, for example, sports.

Economically, Nigeria's number one foreign exchange earner is crude oil. "But oil-rich Nigeria has been hobbled by political instability, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and poor macroeconomic management,"⁶ but the government started pursuing economic reforms in 2008. It is still in progress now. An economic team established by President Goodluck Jonathan promised to "increase transparency, diversify the economy for growth, and improve fiscal management. But for growth, lack of infrastructure, and slow implementation of reforms are key impediments."⁷ However, "the government is working toward developing stronger public-private partnerships for roads, agriculture, and power."⁸

Religious affiliation in Nigeria is strongly related to ethnicity, with other distant regional divisions between ethnic groups. The northern states, dominated by the Hausa and Fulani groups are predominantly Muslims while the southern ethnic groups have a large number of Christians.

"The Yoruba tribe (in particular) practices Christianity, Islam, and/or the traditional Yoruba religion which centres on the belief in one supreme god and several lesser deities. Religious Affiliation of Survey Respondents in Nigeria shows

⁶ Nigeria-Country Profile-2013, accessed August 23rd, 2013. www.indexmundi.com/nigeria/economy.overview.html.

⁷ Nigeria-Country Profile-2013, accessed 23rd August, 2013. www.indexmundi.com/Nigeria/economy.overview.html.

⁸ Ibid.,

that Christians constitute 46% of the populace, Muslim 52%, and Traditional African Religions 1%.⁹

It must be noted that the syncretic elements seen among the Yorubas do exist among other ethnic groups, for instance, among the *Apu-na-Ekpu* people that we are studying who are Igbos. There are also some non-religious people, though they are very minute in number. Leo Igwe in his article *Leaving Religion and Living Without Religion in Nigeria* on July 26, 2011 wrote: “A very important and largely ignored aspect of Nigeria’s religious demography is the non-believing folk. These are the ones who renounce their family religion or those who see no evidence for the existence of God. They see no existential value of meaning in the religion which they were born into... They exist in Nigeria. They live in Nigeria.”¹⁰

The Setting of Apu-Na-Ekpu District

Apu-Na-Ekpu District is in *Isialangwa* North Local Government Area of Abia State of Nigeria. It is located about 5 kilometres after the popular Umuikea junction (leading to Owerri the capital of Imo State) along Enugu- Port Harcourt expressway. It is now in Aba North Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (ANC) due the recent reorganization of the former East Nigeria Conference (ENC).

General Profile of the People

Generally, *Apu-Na-Ekpu* people are of *Umuoha* Clan who like other *Ngwa* people are traditionally very religious. The traditional religious belief of many colour their Christian belief. They hardly see the difference between Christianity and the

⁹ Nations Encyclopaedia, accessed August 16th, 2013 www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Nigeria-Religions.html.

¹⁰ Leo Igwe, *Leaving Region and Living Without Region in Nigeria*, in *Butterflies and Wheels*, accessed 26th August, 2013. www.butterfliesandwheels.org/2011/leaving-religion-and-living-without-regilion-in-nigeria/.

traditional belief. They are Christians when things are going smoothly but during problems or emergencies some of them will readily fall back to the traditional belief. There are some however, who are truly converted among whom are some Seventh-day Adventists.

Political. The *Apu-Na-Ekpu* society is well-organized politically into two Autonomous Communities each headed by an *Eze* who rules with his Council of Chiefs. “They are the custodians of the culture of the people.”¹¹

Economic. *Apu-Na-Ekpu* is a rural community whose people live by farming. They produce crops like yam, cassava, maize, garden egg, and plenty of green vegetables. Particularly, one gets green vegetables all the year round there. There are also those with large palm plantations. Some are petty traders. Some others are teachers and government workers. This is based on demographic information gathered from the questionnaires.

Social. The people live in communities having strong social organizations. There are strong village meetings of men and women respectively. There are various age-grade meetings and clubs for the youths. These meetings and clubs exist for developmental purposes of the community like embarking on electricity project, building of markets, civic halls, etc; and for assisting one another. The assistance to individuals come in the form of moral and financial support when their members are bereaved or die, want to marry, or for personal development. There are laws to govern and protect the communities enacted by the Ezes-in-Council and various village councils. And offenders are punished by payment of fines or ostracized for a specific period of time

¹¹ Interview: Chief Isaac R. Nwosu, one of the members of Eze’s Council, and a member of S. D. A. Church Apu-Na-Ekpu, October 12th,2012; 73 years of age.

Cultural/Religious. Culturally the *Apu-Na-Ekpu* people just like all other *Ngwa* people are interesting. They have a deep-rooted culture that permeates every aspect of their life as it manifests in burial ceremonies and traditional religious worship which involves sacrifices at junctions, cross-roads, and main roads at times. It also involves consultation with native/witchdoctors who stipulate what to use for and how to do the sacrifices which are usually to the ancestors. While the Bible teaches the resurrection of the dead, the traditional *Ngwa* people believe in re-incarnation of the same. The Bible teaches us that there is a God in heaven who is the Creator of heaven and earth. He is a Great God. The *Apu-Na-Ekpu* people typical of all *Ngwa* people traditionally believe the same but with a nourished idea that Earth (Ala) is a lesser god, hence, the popular statement “IGWE KA ALA,”¹² (Heaven is greater than the earth). This belief is understandable in some *Ngwa (Igbo)* names, examples are: Nwaigwe (Son of Heaven); Nwala (Son of Earth); *Nwaeze* (Son of the King of Heaven). These names articulate the height of traditional *Ngwa* man’s belief, honour, and respect for their objects of worship (God and the Earth).

Therefore if Nwaigwe dies his burial will be spectacular and there will be much weeping. The corpse will be dressed in white lace material. His offspring, relations, and lovers are duty-bound to clothe him with at least two yards of wrapper made of material called “George” in the local setting to be enclosed in the casket. Of course, the wrappers and other valuables that might be included serve as provisions made for him for successful sojourning in the spirit world. Special perfume would be provided to diffuse odour. But when *Nwala* dies the burial will be less spectacular because of that notion that *Igwe Ka Ala*. “This statement stems from the belief that

¹² Interview: Elder D.C.I. Nwosu, One of the oldest men in SDA Church *Apu-Na-Ekpu* District, October 10th,2012; 75years of age./Elder Nwazue Ogugbuaja, another old man from the same Church, October 16th,2012; 82years.

God is of heaven and immortal; man, however, is of the earth with mortal flesh and but immortal soul.”¹³ Therefore, when man dies his soul goes to the spirit world but later it re-incarnates into another human being. This concept is in great contrast to what the Bible teaches in Hebrews 9:27 which says, “- -it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement.” This implies that if man is to die only once it means he has only one time of life to live in the present world.

According to one of those interviewed by the researcher, the *Ngwa* and general Igbo culture is somewhat comparable to the Jewish culture. The Jews have it that God created heaven and earth in six days and rested on the seventh day and also blessed and made it holy(Genesis 3:1-3). These days were not named after each other but were numbered one to seven. According to him “the *Ngwa* culture adopted names for the days of the week that signify different qualities of God as the Almighty Creator,”¹⁴ example:- *NKWO* (Greatness of God); *EKE*(Power of God); *ORIE*(Glory of God); *AFOR*(Love of God). It must be observed that the *Ngwa*(*Igbo*) week is eight days. And the days that make it up are: *Nkwo-Ukwu* (Major *Nkwo*)

Eke-Ukwu (Major *Eke*)

Orie-Ukwu (Major *Orie*)

Afor-Ukwu (Major *Afor*)

Nkwo-Nta(Minor *Nkwo*)

Eke-Nta (Minor *Eke*)

Orie-Nta (Minor *Orie*)

Afor-Nta (Minor *Afor*).

¹³ Ibid, D.C.I. Nwosu / Nwazue Ogugbuaja.

¹⁴ Ibid,D.C.I.Nwosu.

The names of the days are also the names of the markets on each day. To instil the significance of those names in the minds of the people, the *Ngwas* and the *Igbos* generally do give the names of the days to their children, examples are: *Nwankwo*, *Nwaeke*, *Nwaorie*, etc, etc.

It was then on the Major/Great *Orie* (*Orie Ukwu*) day that *Ngwa* culture worshipped their gods with special ceremonies and incantations; young men paid homage to their elders with gifts and also helped them in their farm works. In the evening the eldest of the firstborns (*Ndi Isiopara*) from various compounds gathered for their meeting which is rotated to individual members' houses in every hamlet and village. These meetings still hold till today.

The *Orie* day was also slated for the burial of noble men and traditional rulers. During such burials the funeral oration/biography of the deceased was heralded with traditional music called "*Ese*" for men and "*Ukom*" music for women of honour. The first son of the deceased would be ushered into the arena with twenty-one gun shots. The biography of the deceased which he would give will be punctuated intermittently by gun-shots. During this time every other activity, meeting, or discussion must stop to accord the great man/woman respect.

On the other hand the "*Eke*" day which signifies the power of God is accorded an awful regard. If anyone dies on "*Eke*" day it is superstitiously believed that he/she was kidnapped by the power of God for a hidden crime (witchcraft) committed. Such a person will not have a befitting burial ceremony. The family of one retired SDA Pastor who died last year nearly suffered an ignominy from unbelieving kinsmen because he died on an "*Eke*" day. The term unbelieving does not mean that they do not belong to any Church rather they are so-called Christians, and there could be Seventh-day Adventists among them. That is to tell us how strong that culture is in the

mind of many people till today. And in such a situation since it is traditionally believed that the Earth goddess (*Ala Ngwa*) does not condone such crime the grave of the deceased will be watched with suspicion for at least one year to see if it will crack deeply or sink. If the grave eventually sinks or cracks with a deep hole within that period, oracles will be consulted to ascertain the exact crime he committed. If his crime was witchcraft, serious rituals sacrifices will be performed to appease the deity-Earth goddess (*Ala Ngwa*). Then the skull must be exhumed and deposited at a particular shrine.

This implied that the ancestors do not accept such a person for his heinous crime. Even while alive any one proved to be a witch/wizard is a social outcast. Hence the “*Utu*” saga of the 1990’s. “*Utu-Agbaghi-Igwe*” (Iron-is-not-eaten-by-worms) was the nickname of a popular witchdoctor who popularized himself by identifying other witches/wizards and excommunicating them during the 1990’s.

Ancestrally, *Apu-Na-Ekpu* culture which is the *Ngwa* culture believes that since we cannot *see God physically nor be able to go to heaven presently, we should have symbols (images) that will* represent him and have places we should go to look for him or worship him(shrines). They have the Earth Shrine (*Ihu-Ala*) for the Earth goddess (*Ala-Ngwa*); the shrine for the god of thunder (*Ihu-Kamanu*); and for the god of Errand(*Agwu*), the shrine is *Ihu-Agwu*. And “*Ofor*” and “*Ogu*” as instruments of peace, justice, unity, and fair play among the people. *Ofor* is a short piece of stick from a climbing stem that breaks from its joints into almost equal sizes as it dries and falls to the ground. Because of that particular characteristic people revere it traditionally and regard it as something supernatural or mystical. “*Ogu*” also is a leaf of tender palm fronds that naturally broke off on its own. When *Ezes* and Chiefs are

being installed they take their oaths with *Ofor* and *Ogu*. However, some communities have started to use the Bible now to take oaths during installation.

Since the Earth-goddess of *Ngwaland* (*Ala-Ngwa*) does not condone crimes, neither does she hide criminals, she sends *Kamanu* (*god of Thunder*) to electrocute some, while *Agwu* (the goddess of errand) confuses others. *Ngwa* culture holds it that nature is the arbiter of justice. By traditional ethics, rogues, witches/wizards, and liars are deemed as criminals. If anyone is caught red-handed stealing he/she must be stripped naked in public and the pubic hairs shaved, then are carried shoulder-high round the community and afterwards are banished for a specific time. But if the person claims innocence he/she must swear by the consecrated *ofo* stick. If the person dies within one year he/she will be buried in shame and the *Ala-Ngwa* goddess must be appeased. Likewise is the case of a liar.

But the skull of a witch/wizard who took the oath and died thereafter must be exhumed and be deposited in the *Ihu-Kamanu* (thunder shrine) and *Ala-Ngwa* goddess must be appeased or else his/her belongings will be carried and deposited in the shrine. Traditionally, it is believed that if none of these is done there will be sudden and untimely death of the members of that family (a sort of epidemic brought by the gods/ancestors) and in most cases it do happen. The burial of such a criminal is always low-keyed and very shameful to the family.

Similarly, but for a different reason the skull of every man bearing the name *Osuagwu* and *Njoku* must be exhumed and installed into *Ahia-njoku* shrine while the skull of every woman called *Nwanyi-Agwu* (wife/daughter of *Agwu*) or *Nmaji* must likewise be exhumed and installed into *Inyama* shrine. Those names were given by worshippers of those gods who initiated their children to the gods right from birth. Thus, they become kings and queens for the gods and when dead they are installed as

gods. “Sacrifices are offered at the shrines at the beginning of the dry season.”¹⁵

Culturally, as determined by the climate the fixed period for this in *Ngwaland* is October. The burial of such people is always dreadful and directed by seasoned native/witchdoctors who would ensure that the gods/ancestors are not offended. It must be observed that these names are no more common in the modern generation of Ngwa people. But many of those given the names in the yesteryears are still living today and any of them who did not believe in Jesus Christ and renounce the name and the covenant thereof while alive will still undergo that process when he/she dies. When this researcher was newly employed as a pastor he conducted the funeral service for a headless body of an *Nmaji* unknowingly, having been deceived by dubious elders.

During the *Ahianjoku* festival traditional priests assemble at *Okpunmuo* which is the central shrine for all gods. The various images and emblems of different gods being worshipped are displayed there. The priests perform rituals and offer sacrifices to their gods/ancestors. They also pour libation to them. In this their worship it is observed that they first mention “The God of Heaven,” then, the “Earth” (goddess). Then the names of their ancestors (fathers and grandfathers, etc.) will follow. Animals and birds like fowls, goats, sheep, tortoise, etc. are slaughtered and their blood ceremonially sprinkled over the *Ahianjoku* and *Inyama* shrines and on the *ofor* stick respectively. Pounded yam which is *Ngwa* traditional food dipped in delicious soup is thrown in lumps around the shrine in “feeding” the *Ala* goddess as to attract bountiful harvest the next planting season. All these go along with libation as stated earlier.

¹⁵ D.C.I.Nwosu.

This is the cultural setting which strengthens the traditional belief in the immortality of human soul. It is this belief that produces practices people perform during burials.

Qualitative Research

Three things were involved in this: Personal observation, interviews, and inspection of Church Board Minute Books.

Personal Observation

The tradition demands that the children of a deceased person in particular will cloth their dead father or mother. In that regard, each of them will buy wrapper (plain George) and put two yards of it in the coffin. This must be done before the corpse is laid in state for public inspection. This is easily observed during burials.

Interviews

As already said this researcher had interviews with some Chiefs and other experienced men who gave the details of the aspects of the traditions that are not easily observable as contained in certain parts of this chapter.

Church Board Minute Books

The researcher also examined Church Board Minute Books to see what actions have been taken against the offenders in the practices of the belief in immortality of the soul. No action was seen. This is because many people today just saw the practices as they were born and have taken them as normal way of doing things. Almost everybody is involved.

Survey

In order to ascertain the position of the Church members regarding the false traditional belief of immortality of the soul, a questionnaire was administered using the stratified sampling technique. Having administered a total of 150 questionnaires, respondents were: youths(20-29 years) 35.34%, adults(30-39 years) 16%, middle age(40-49 years) 14.66%, and old age(50 years and above) 24%. Those who did not indicate their age constituted 8%, while 2% of the questionnaires got missing. Out of the District's baptized membership of 524, questionnaires were given to 150 and 147 of them faithfully filled and returned them within two weeks.

Analysis of Demographic Information

From the respondents' demographic information it is observed that the participation of males in the questionnaires was lower than that of the females. While males constituted 36%, the percentage of female respondents was 64%. As the questionnaires were given to the more responsible members of the District, their responses are most reliable.

Looking at the age bracket of the participants, we see that youths [20-29years] constituted 35.34%; adults [30-39]16%; middle age [40-49]14.66%, and old age [50years and above] 24%. In educational qualification it was administered to 147 people as follows FSLC 12.92%, Post Primary 48.98%, Bachelors 17.69% , Masters 4.08% ,Doctorate 2.72% , and educational qualification was not indicated in 12.93% of the questionnaires returned .

Occupationally, farmers were 35.37% ,teachers 8.16% , Business people (petit traders)23.13% , civil servants 5.44%,and the unemployed self –employed were 23.21%. On checking the baptismal status of respondents, baptized members made 87.76% while Sabbath school members participation was only 6.80%.But some

4.08% did not indicate their status. Most of the respondents were more knowledgeable members.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Information

Demographic Variables			
	No	%	
Gender	Male	54	36
	Female	96	64
Marital Status	Married	67	45.6
	Single	55	37.4
	Widowed	12	8.2
	Divorced	5	3.4
	Not Indicated	8	5.4
Age	20-29 yrs	53	34.3
	30-39 yrs	24	16
	40-49 yrs	22	14.7
	50& above	36	24
	Not Indicated	12	8
Educational Qualification	FSLC	19	12.9
	Post Pry	72	49
	Bachelors	26	17.7
	Masters	6	4.1
	Doctorate	4	2.7
	Not Indicated	19	12.9
Occupation	Farmer	52	35.4
	Teacher	12	8.2
	Business	34	23.1
	Civil servant	8	5.4
	Unemployed	40	27.2
Baptismal Status	Baptized	129	87.8
	Not baptized	10	6.8
	Not Indicated	6	4.1
Length of Membership	1-3 yrs	7	4.8
	6-10yrs	8	6.1
	11-15yrs	16	10.9
	16-20yrs	26	17.7
	21-25yrs	8	5.4
	26+yrs	74	50.3
	Not Indicated	6	4.1
Church Office	Officer	37	25.2
	Board member	31	21.1
	Head of department	21	14.3
	Not in office	57	38.9
Local S.D.A. Church	Anu-na-ekpu	55	37.4
	Amaekpu	28	19.1
	Uratta	59	40.1
	Not Indicated	6	4.1

By length of membership, those between 1-5 years were 4.76%, 6-10 years range 6.12%, 11-15 years 10.88%, those within 16-20 years 17.69%, 21-25 years 5.44%, and 26 and above was 50.34%. Those who did not indicate were 4.08%. Also by church offices were 25.17%, board members 21.09%, departmental heads 14.29%, and all other members 38.78%.

Judging from the foregoing the greater percentage of respondents are church leaders who know the problem of the church and those could give unbiased result.

Table 2: Analysis of Respondents' Information from Questionnaires

Items	SA		A		D		SD		NO	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
1.Bible the Standard of Truth and Doctrine	141	95.5	5	3.4	-	-	-	-	1	0.68
2.Bible Teaches That Man Is A Living Soul.	139	94.56	7	4.76	-	-	-	-	1	0.68
3.There is a living soul in man	114	77.55	23	15.65	4	2.72	1	0.68	8	5.44
4.Man's Soul does not Die when the Body Dies	69	46.94	12	8.16	19	12.93	23	15.65	24	16.33
5.When One Dies His Soul Goes To either Heaven or Hell	36	20.49	9	6.12	26	17.69	35	23.8	40	27.21
6.The Soul of the Dead Can Re-incarnate	6	4.08	6	4.08	40	27.21	80	54.42	13	8.84
7. Befitting Burial Appeases the Soul of a Dead Parent.	7	4.76	4	2.72	40	27.21	78	53.06	17	11.56
8.The Dead Can Harm the Living	5	3.4	5	3.4	39	26.53	84	57.14	13	8.84
9.The Dead Can Curse the Living	8	5.44	3	2.04	40	27.21	90	62.22	10	6.8
10.The Dead Can Protect the Living	4	2.72	5	3.4	30	20.41	92	62.59	16	10.88
11.The Dead Can Bless the Living	3	2.04	3	2.04	41	27.89	82	55.78	18	12.24

Table 2 Continued

12.The Dead Will Remain in the Grave till the Resurrection	111	75.51	11	7.48	5	3.4	13	8.84	7	4.76
13.Oracles and Prayer Houses Can Reveal What the Bible Does Not	6	4.08	6	4.08	37	25.17	82	55.78	16	10.88
14. Ancestors in the Spirit World can Help in Emergencies	4	2.72	6	4.08	40	27.21	87	59.18	10	6.8
15.Amount of Money Spent on Burial Determines Soul's Destiny.	3	2.04	2	1.36	47	31.97	83	56.46	10	6.84
16.Christian Widow Following Traditional Mourning Rites	6	4.08	7	4.76	41	27.89	79	53.74	14	9.52
17. Christian Widow to Follow Traditional Mourning Rites	9	6.12	6	4.08	40	27.21	80	54.42	11	7.48
18. It is proper to Accord Marital Rites to Dead Parent(s).	11	7.48	7	4.76	45	30.61	74	50.34	10	6.84
19. Genuine Repentance among Church Members.	24	16.33	46	31.29	40	27.21	29	19.73	8	5.44
20 Adventists Spend Quality Time in Bible Study	33	22.45	36	24.49	50	34.4	22	14.97	6	4.08
21. Most Adventists are guided by Biblical Teachings.	46	31.29	60	40.82	28	19.05	8	5.44	5	3.4
22. Bible Guides Funeral Rites Performed by Adventists.	23	15.65	28	19.05	50	34.01	40	27.21	6	4.08
23. Repented or Not God will Accept Members through Grace.	5	3.4	11	7.48	45	30.61	77	52.38	9	6.12
24. Fear of Danger Responsible for Compromise in Funeral Rites.	54	36.73	49	33.33	24	16.33	6	4.08	14	9.52
25. A Life of Prayer and Bible Study can Defeat the Devil.	92	62.59	47	31.97	3	2.04	1	0.68	4	2.72
26. God's Omnipotence can Overcome Our Fears of the Dead.	93	63.27	48	32.65	-	-	1	0.68	4	2.72

From item 1 we can see that 141 of the 147 respondents being 95.91% strongly agreed that the Bible is the standard of truth and doctrine, 5(3.40%) agreed and only 1(0.68%) had no opinion. This item 1 seemingly indicates that the members in the District are faithful to the Bible.

From item 2 we see that 139 of the 147 respondents being 94.56% strongly agreed with the Bible teaching that man is a living soul. 7 people (4.76%) agreed also, while 1(0.68%) had no opinion. This shows that the members in the District have no problem with immortality of the soul.

From item 3, we can see that majority of the members 64.63% (95) are confused between man being a living soul and man having a living soul in him. 16(10.88% agreed there is a living soul in man, only 1(0.68%) strongly disagreed, 4(2.72%) disagreed and 8(5.44%) had no opinion. To them man being a living soul is the same as man having a living soul. Therefore this study is necessary in order to clarify this issue.

From item 4 we see that more than 50% of the respondents comprising those who strongly agreed and those that agreed (54.39%) believe that the living soul in man does not die when the body dies. Join to this group the 16.33% of those without any opinion who are confused we see that this study is necessary in order to teach them what the Bible really said about man's condition at death.

From item 5 we can see that there is a slight difference between the number of those who strongly agreed (36) that the soul of the dead goes either to heaven or hell at death and that of those who strongly disagreed (35). Those who agreed have the smallest number 9(6.12%) and 26(17.69%) disagreed. However, 40 (27.21%) had no opinion. Although the number-61(41.49%) of those who strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively is higher than that of those who strongly agreed and agreed

respectively, there is need for enlightenment on this issue because of those who are totally confused and could not give any opinion.

From item 6 we can that 54.42% of the respondents strongly disagreed with re-incarnate and another 27.21% disagreed with the issue. Therefore, the district does not necessarily need much enlightenment in this regards.

From item 7 it is obvious that the percentage (53.06) of respondents who strongly disagreed that dead parent(s) can be appeased by a befitting burial is very high and that of those who disagreed (27.21) is also much higher than that of those who had no opinion (11.56), strongly agreed or agreed respectively. This might indicate they have no problem with burial practices. But there is an apparent contradiction and confusion in this matter. In tables 4 and 5 above a higher percentage strongly agreed that man has a living soul that does not die with the body and does not re-incarnate. One wonders what the living soul does as a separate entity outside the human body. They therefore need serious enlightenment to put them through.

From item 8 we can see that the greater percentage (59.14) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the dead can do the living any harm. This was followed by 26.53% that disagreed with the same fact. The percentages of those who strongly agreed or agreed are insignificant as can be seen and also that of those that have no opinion. Therefore they do not need much orientation as regards this.

From item 9 we can that 61.22% (90) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the notion that the dead can curse the living. This was followed by 27.21% (40) that disagreed with the notion. The percentage of those who strongly agreed that the dead can harm the living is 5.44 (8), that of those who agreed with the notion is 2.04

(3) while 6.8 (10 respondents) had no opinion. Therefore one can conclude that they have no problem with this notion and they do not need any enlightenment.

From item 10 we can see that 60.59% (92) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the living can be protected by the dead. 20.41% (30) disagreed also. 10.88% (16) had no opinion to give. The low percentages of those who strongly agreed or simply agreed are 2.72 (for 4) and 3.4 (for 5) respectively. And as above the members in the District seem to have no problem with that notion.

From item 11 we can see that 55.78% (82) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the dead can bless the living. This was followed by 27.89% (4) being those who disagreed 12.24% had no opinion to give while the same percentage of 2.04 (3) strongly agreed and agreed respectively. They seem not to have much need for enlightenment in this regard.

From item 12 we can see that 75.51% (111) of the respondents strongly agreed that the dead will remain in the grave till the resurrection. This is a serious contradiction to information given by tables 4 and 5 above. In table 4, 75.55% (114) of respondents strongly agreed that there is a living soul in man; and in table 5 showed us that the living soul does not die when the body dies. If man has an undying soul outside the body how will the body really resurrect? This study is necessary in order, to bring out what the Bible teaches about man's nature in life, and his condition at death to clear this confusion.

From item 13 we can see that 55.78% (82) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the issue that oracles and prayer houses can reveal what the Bible does not reveal about the dead; 25.17% (37) disagreed, 10.88% (16) had no opinion to give, and 4.08% (6) each strongly agreed or agreed. From the foregoing it might appear there is no patronage of oracles and prayer houses regarding the issue being

discussed. But the members need to be encouraged through the study not to backslide.

From what we can observe from item 14, a high percentage (84.18) of the respondents strongly disagreed that help can come from ancestors. If we add the percentage (27.21) of those who disagreed to this we can see that those who had no opinion, or strongly agreed or simply agreed that help can come from ancestors are very much in minority – 13.6%. Therefore members do not have much problem with seeking help from ancestors.

From item 15 we can see that the members in this district seem to have no problem with the opinion that the amount of money spent on burial determines the destination of the soul of the deceased, 56.46% strongly disagreed to this while 31.97% also disagreed. Those who had no opinion, either strongly agreed or agreed are in the minority.

From item 16 we can observe that members in *Apu-Na-Ekpu* District seem to have no problem with the opinion that a Christian widow should follow traditional mourning rites for the dead husband to do her favour. A high percentage (53.74) of the respondents strongly disagreed with this while another 27.89% disagreed also. Those two added together gives an overwhelming majority while those who have no opinion (9.52%), those that strongly agreed (4.08%), and those agreed (4.76%) are in the minority.

From item 17 we can observe that members in the district seem to have no problem with the opinion that a Christian widow should follow traditional mourning rites so that her dead husband will not harm her. High percentage of the respondents (54.42) strongly disagreed with this while another 27.21% disagreed also. If we add these two together we have an overwhelming majority disagreeing. Those without any

opinion (7.48%) or strongly agreed (6.12%), or agreed with it (4.08%) are in the minority.

From item 18 we can see that 50.34% (74) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the opinion that it is proper to accord marital rites to dead parent and another 30.61% (45) also disagreed with it. Those who strongly agreed with the opinion constituted only 7.48% (11), those who agreed 4.76% (7), those without opinion 6.84% (10). Therefore members seem not to have any problem with this notion.

From item 19 we can observe that this point was highly contested. The percentage of respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed that there is genuine repentance among our church members (46.94) was just a little lower than that of those who strongly agreed and agreed which was 47.62. There is need to encourage more spiritual growth. Hence, the need for this study.

From item 20 we can see that 34.40% (50) of the respondents disagreed with the opinion that most Seventh-day Adventists spend quality time in bible study. But 24.49% (36) agreed with the opinion while 22.45% (33) of them strongly agreed with it also. However, 14.97% (22) strongly disagreed and 4.08% (6) had no opinion at all. This is another point that was highly contested between those who strongly agreed and simply agreed (46.94%) versus those of disagreed and strongly disagreed (49.37%)

From item 21 we can see that 40.82% agreed with the opinion that most Adventists are guided by Bible teachings in their daily lives while another 31.29% strongly agreed with the same opinion. But 19.05% disagreed, 5.44% strongly disagreed, and 3.40% had no opinion whatsoever. From the analysis it seems the members are faithful.

Based on item 22 we can observe that greater percentage (61.22) of the respondents both disagreed and strongly disagreed that most funeral rites performed by Seventh-day Adventists are guided by the Bible while 34.70% agreed and strongly agreed with the notion respectively; 4.08% having no opinion. Comparing items 22 and 21 above we discover that the high percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed and disagreed that most funeral rites performed by Seventh-day Adventists are guided by the Bible raises a big question about the honesty of the majority in item 21 who agreed and strongly agreed that daily practices of most Adventists are guided by the teachings of Bible. This study is therefore, necessary to bring out the real stand of members about the state of the dead.

From item 23 we can observe that more than half of the respondents being 52.38% (77) strongly disagreed that God will accept sinners whether they repent or not and another 30.61% (45) also disagreed with the notion. It is clear from this analysis that an overwhelming majority of the respondents know that they must repent from sin if God will accept them by his grace. Those who strongly agreed with the notion or simply agreed or without opinion are in the minority.

From item 24 we can observe that the percentages of those who strongly agreed (36.73) and those who agreed (33.33) that it is the fear of perceived danger that as mainly responsible for compromise in funeral rites by Seventh-day Adventists jointly constitute majority (70.06) among the respondents. But the percentage of those who disagreed (16.33), those who strongly disagreed (4.08), and those without opinion (9.52) all constitute minority among the respondents. This study is necessary in order to possibly unravel the cause of such fear among majority of respondents.

From item 25 we can observe that 62.59% (97) of the respondents strongly agreed that a life of prayer and Bible study is potent enough to defeat the power of the

devil. Another 31.97% also agreed with the opinion. Those who disagreed or strongly disagreed or had no opinion whatsoever made up only 5.44%.

If a life of prayer and Bible study is truly believed to be so powerful in defeating the devil why are so many people very much afraid of perceived danger that they compromise Bible principles in funerals rites?

From item 26 we can see that overwhelming majority of the respondents comprising of 63.27% (93) being those who strongly agreed and 32.65% (48) those who agreed, accepted that God is powerful enough to overcome our fear about the dead. Nobody disagreed, only one person (0.68 %) strongly disagreed, and four people (2.72%) had no opinion. May God help them to truly hide themselves in Him.

Summary

The respondents' results clearly indicate positive responses in some items on Table 2. These are in items 1 and 2 which tell us that the Bible is the standard of truth, and teaches that man is a living soul. The respondents gave an affirmation that the dead will remain in the grave till the resurrection in item 12. And majority agreed that the daily practices of Seventh-day Adventists are guided by biblical teachings in item 21. Almost unanimously, the respondents in item 23 agreed that God will not accept anyone without repentance. They also accepted that a life of prayer and Bible study is powerful enough to defeat devil's power in item 25. And in item 26 majority of them believed that God's omnipotence will overcome our fears about the dead.

In items 5-11 and 13-18 of the same table 2, the respondents gave positive responses which, however, are negated by items 19, 20 and 21 where about half of them accepted that there is no genuine repentance among our church members (19). Also in item 20 about half of them accepted that most Seventh-day Adventists do not spend quality time in Bible study. With all these, it is doubtful how the daily practices

of most Seventh-day Adventists in the District could be guided by biblical teachings when there is no genuine repentance among many, and most of them do not study the Bible.

In item 3 almost 100 percent of the respondents believe that there is a living soul in man. And in item 4 they believe that the soul does not die when the body dies. Also there is a clear negative response in item 22 that most funeral rites performed by Seventh-day Adventists are inconsistent with the Bible.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, therefore, *Apu-Na-Ekpu* District is in deep spiritual stupor regarding man's condition at death. This made them to believe there is a living soul inside man which does not die when the body dies. This understanding makes them to fear the dead and the perceived danger of what they may do. Therefore they succumb to funeral rites contrary to biblical teachings, although they also believe the dead cannot guide, bless, curse, or harm the livings etc. The three churches in the District seem to have compromised the truth as regarding members' involvement in spiritualism. Going through the church board minute books there was no single record of any member disciplined for idol worship which includes conjuring the spirit of the dead and communicating with it, even though the SDA Church Manual on page 62 stipulates that as one of the reasons for church discipline. The absence of such record does not mean nobody does it but a sure sign of spiritual lethargy. Due to cultural involvement, association with unbelievers, and patronage of false prophets and witch-doctors such sins are no longer regarded as evil because even the leaders could be involved. Such have lost their spiritual sensitivity. Really, many a confused regarding this issue.

Interestingly, among others the results have highlighted six most important aspects of Christian teaching that call for immediate action to enable the members to know the truth and stand for it.

They are: - accepting the Bible as the only standard of the truth and doctrine.

- Accept the Bible the teaching that man as a living soul or being is a whole entity
- That the dead will remain in the grave till the resurrection at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ
- God will not accept anyone without repentance
- A life of prayer and Bible study is potent to defeat the power of the devil
- God is powerful enough to overcome our fears about the dead

The results have shown that the Church in that District can overcome the traditional belief of the immortality of the soul and live for traditional the truth through intensive Bible study prayer and trust in the power of God.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAMME DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter is concerned with the design and implementation of a programme suitable for moderating the members' problem with the belief of immortality of the soul, since their problems have been identified. In order to achieve this effectively the following sub-headings will be followed: Setting of goals, Preparation, Programme design and implementation, Evaluation, and Conclusion.

Setting of Goals

Abiding in Christ

For a Church to grow spiritually and live according to the truth, members must be and remain in Jesus Christ by faith. Jesus advises us to abide in Him for without Him we can do nothing (John 15:4, 5). One cannot abide in Christ without believing in him. He who loves and believes in Christ will accept his word that the dead knows nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5), and will keep his commandments (John 14:15, 15:14).

That person will have no other gods, neither will he make graven images nor serve them (Exodus 20:3,4)**Studying His Word**

In order for one to know the truth he must study the Word (2 Timothy 2:15) of truth which is the Bible. Studying the Word of God for maximum benefit must follow a systematic order (Isaiah 28:9, 10).

Having Love for the Truth

A Church that is missing her bearing on the important doctrine of the state of the dead should develop an ardent love for the Truth who is Christ himself. When the church and its members love the truth made flesh they will also have love for every other aspect of the truth he teaches including the condition of man at death.

Serving Him Diligently

One other important goal of this study is to encourage members to serve the Master diligently and willingly. Anyone who serves and worships God diligently will not serve the dead or demons impersonating them simultaneously. Such a person will not spend immense resources to be employed in the services of Jehovah on “befitting burials.”

Calling Sin by Its Right Name

Based on the Word of Life, consultation with the dead should be called its right name-idolatry. Those engaging in it should be made to understand that it is not really their dead loved ones that appear to speak to them but demons. Therefore, they should be discouraged from doing that.

Preparation of Programme

It is necessary that adequate preparation is made to effectively design and implement a programme that will help church members in *Apu-Na-Ekpu* district to understand that the dead do not live in any other form beyond the grave; neither do they know any other thing nor do anything whatsoever (Eccl 9:5,6). This is because the success of any programme depends on its planning.

Steps to be taken for adequate preparations include obtaining permission from the Aba North Conference (ANC) Administration where *Apu-Na-Ekpu* district is now; organize a revival, pre- implementation seminars and workshops, etc.

Obtaining Permission from Aba North Conference (ANC) Administration

It is necessary to obtain the consent and approval of the *Aba* North Conference Administration. This has to follow due process of applying through my own conference which is *Aba* East Conference (AEC). If the ANC understands the details of the information, aims and objectives, even the spiritual benefits of this programme, the entire *Apu-Na-Ekpu* district membership will easily be encouraged to accept it too.

Choosing and Training Leaders

Instructing and training leaders in the district to know the truth for themselves is very important because it is what one has and knows he will give or teach others. Leaders who know and live the truth will be of great influence in helping others know and accept the same truth, which in this case, is the condition of man at death. Church leaders should “obey and preserve everything (truth) the Father reveals to them of his will.”¹ For the church to grow spiritually in the truth is to grow spiritual leaders whose lives exemplify the truth. The Blackabys further stated, “Leadership development is synonymous with personal development. As leaders grow personally, they increase their capacity to lead.”²

“Let Isaiah speak” was the theme of the training. Although many of the OT prophets/writers spoke against spiritism, that of Prophet Isaiah is unequivocal. He

¹ Henry and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2001), 29.

² *Ibid*, 31.

said God's children should not consult mediums and spiritists who mutter. We should not consult the dead on behalf of the living. We have to weigh everything they tell us with the WORD of God (Isaiah 8:1, 20).

Young People's Involvement in Revival

Based on the responses received from the questionnaires, the youth and middle age groups (ages 20-29, 30-39, 40-49) accounted for 66.2% of the responses. This indicates that there is greater number of this age bracket in the church in the District and they have great interest in this study. It is obvious that the revival will not succeed without the young people. Reading the Bible and Church history we will discover that the young people were mightily used by God to bring revivals.

In the Old Testament revivals (a) Joshua held revival at Gilgal through circumcision and celebration of the Passover with the young generation born on the way to Canaan (Joshua 5:4-5, 10). (b) Young David revived the faith and hope of Israel in God in his victory over Goliath (I Samuel 17:33-51). (c) Josiah who started his reign at the age of 8 years but commenced revival on his eight year of reign (2 Chronicles 34: 3-33). (d) Jeremiah was called when he was young (Jeremiah 1: 6, 7); Hezekiah, too. All these were used by God. Also in the New Testament revivals were brought by John the Baptist (the greatest prophet) and Jesus of Nazareth at the age of 30 years. The disciples of Jesus were not old men but young people as well.³

Church history helps us to know that many of the reformers were also young people. Ulric Zwingli started his information as a young man, "a few weeks after the birth of Luther ... Ulric Zwingli was born ..."⁴

"God started using Philip Melanchthon as an instrument at the age of

21. George Whitefield also started preaching at 21."⁵ John Knox and John

³ Charles Goodhead," Strategy to Restore Spiritual Vibrancy in Seventh-day Adventist Church, Odiokwu District Rivers State, Nigeria,"(M.A. Project, Adventist University of Africa, 20080, 56.

⁴ Ellen G. White," The Great Controversy (Remnant Publications Inc, 2001), 105.

⁵ Charles Goodhead ," Strategy to Restore Spiritual Vibrancy in Seventh-day Adventist Church Odiokwu, Odiokwu District. 56.

Wesley were all young when they joined the reformation. And our own Ellen Gould White was called at the age of 17. Her write-ups are a good proof of the extend God used her. All this could be part fulfilment of Joel 2:28.

Unity and Brotherly Love More Important than Programme

Designing a programme for church revival is very necessary but it may not achieve much without unity and brotherly love resulting from good relationship among members. When members quarrel and have a lot of differences it makes them go to wrong places where they are taught the wrong things and false teachings, to seek for help. It leads them to consult witchdoctors, false prophets, and mediums. It leads to destructive criticism.

Unity and brotherly love ensures spiritual growth and imbibing of sound doctrines because people will be guided in love. There will be changed lives. Members will learn to look for the good in others, and learn to forgive others. They will always come to take solace in the church.

Mark Finley said, “When we have to face pain and anxiety alone, we can easily become overwhelmed. Satan knows this. That’s why he’s working hard to make people feel alienated from (Church) family and friends... True rest for God’s children is found in a loving, trust relationship with their Creator. Snuggled safe in the arms of Jesus we can withstand whatever shocks, this world may inflict upon us.”⁶

The small group fellowship should be strengthened because it encourages relationship with God and man. See appendix A.5.

Giving Bible Study Series

Only the Bible can bring revival, there can be no revival without it. Zwingli said, “The Word of God cannot fail. It is bright, it teaches itself, discloses itself, it

⁶ Mark Finley, “Surviving Shocks of Pain and Stress,” fitforever, pg. 156.

illuminates the soul with all salvation and grace, comforts it in God, humbles it so that it loses and even forfeits itself, and embraces God,”⁷ (as quoted by Mrs. White). We have seen that Josiah carried out his revival in Judah with the Book of Law found in the Temple (2 Chronicles 34:3-33; 2 Kings 22:8-23:3). Revival is about repentance and conversion. And to effect this change the people should study the Word of God. It is the Word of God that will open the eyes of the people and make them see the danger in the false belief of immortality of the soul (see Appendix A.2).

The study of the Word will be done in an attractive and innovative way that will interest the people especially the youth. Some aspects of the programme include in-depth Bible study, individuals sharing favourite Bible passages with the congregation and explaining the reason for favouring them, Bible quiz competition, Bible reading competition, Bible Sword drill. The seven pillars of Adventism among which is the state of the dead will be studied in-depth; and Bible prophecies, too (see Appendix H).

The programme will greatly include seasons of prayer. These studies will be on week days and others at the weekend. The benefits of Small Group meetings that already exist in the District will be intensively harnessed for the spiritual up-liftment of all.

Gathering of Resource Materials

As at November 30, 2012 enough materials for the Bible study series has been gathered (see the appendices).

Visit to Members in the District

⁷ Ellen G. White. The Great Controversy (Review and Herald, 1888), 174.

The best way to solidify relationship with people is to visit them, pray with and for them, sympathize with and empathize for them; also encourage them, on their spiritual journey with the word of God; lend a listening ear and be understanding. Show interest in them. Telephone, visitation is being done. All these have been established in the district and would continue beyond this study. There is team work with District Burial Committee in Visitation. This team visits and works with bereaved families

Programme Design and Implementation

Programme Content and Design

A. Studying the oldest enduring book – The Bible – for revival

- (i) Advantages of studying the Bible
 - (a) Restoring the Forgotten Treasure (Bible) – Seminar
 - (b) Food for Everlasting Life -Sermon
 - (c) The usefulness of the Bible –Sermon
- (ii) Principles of Bible Study
 - (a) How do we study the Bible? – Seminar
 - (b) Precept upon Precept – Seminar
 - (c) Daily Bible Reading

B. Strengthening Small Group Fellowship

- (i) Doing things in common
- (ii) Unity is Power – Seminar
- (iii) Being my brother's Keeper – Sermon
- (iv) Knowing My Neighbour – Seminar
- (v) Building Bridges for interpersonal relationships – Community Guest day, Potluck, and Community Service

C. Praying Without Ceasing

- (i) Daily Morning and Evening Devotions
- (ii) Fasting and Prayer Programmes

Programme Implementation

Let the Bible Speak

Sun 7/4/2013 Evening – 6.30 – 8.30 Let's Ask the Bible about Man - Seminar

Morning – 6.00 – 7.00 am Sermon

Monday 8/4/2013 Morning – 6.30 – 7.30 pm Bible & Traditional Belief

Evening – 6.30 – 7.30 am Sermon

Tuesday 9/4/2013 Morning – 6.30 – 7.30 Joshua's Call Josh. 24

Evening – 6.30 – 7.30 pm Christianity the Only Tradition for the Believer

Wednesday 10/4/2013 Morning – 6.00 – 12.00 pm Fasting & Prayer

Evening – 6.30 – 7.30 pm. Is It Really of Dead That Medium Consult?

Thursday 11/4/2013 Morning 6.30 – 7.30 am Ye Will be Like God. Sermon

Evening: -6.30-7.30 Fear Not Sermon

Weekend Programme

(Let the Bible Speak Continued)

Day 1: Friday: Devotion – Who is on the Lord's side? –Sermon – 1 hour

Activity – Singspiration and season of prayer – 30 minutes

Sermon – Spiritual refreshing and its blessings – 30 minutes

Seminar – Benefits of unity among the brethren – 1 hour 30 minutes

Activity – Singspiration and daily Bible reading – 45 minutes

Welcoming the Sabbath: Resurrection is our only hope – 40 minutes

Day 2: Saturday: Morning – Singspiration and season of prayer – 10 minutes

Sabbath School Lesson study – LOVE AND JUDGEMENT: GOD’S

DILEMMA

Activity: Singspiration 5 minutes

Sermon: “When God Makes Men Fear” 45 minutes

Afternoon: Workshop: Principles of Bible study – “Precept upon precept” 1 hour

Seminar: The Forgotten Treasure 30 minutes

Activity: Singspiration and season of prayer 30 minutes

Workshop: Building Bridges for Interpersonal Relationships –

Community Guest Day/

Potluck, Community Service 1 hour

Activity: Special Song and Prayer

Evening: Seminar – Unity is Power 1 hour

Day 3: Sunday: Devotion – Being My Brother’s Keeper 30 minutes

Activity: Singspiration/ Season of Prayer 10 minutes

Seminar: Take Him at His Word 45 minutes

Activity: Closing Exercise/ Departure.

Strengthening Small Group Fellowship

The purpose of this is for the group members to work together to strengthen each other’s faith. It is also to shield each other from corrupting and deceptive influences that lead to the idolatrous practices. The groups meet every Tuesday for Bible study and prayer. They fast on every last Wednesday of the month. They are

encouraged to follow the daily Bible reading plan of the G.C., and also to study their Sabbath School quarterlies on daily basis.

Team Work on Visitation to the Bereaved

There is a team work between the Pastor and the District burial committee members comprised of some elders, deacons, Deaconesses, and other officers. As information that a member has died comes in, usually members generally troop to the house to console with the family. The Pastor, of course, will be among and also the members of the burial committee. In planning for the funeral the family works with the burial committee and the Pastor following a guideline:

- (i) No Live Band, only the choir
- (ii) No putting of wrappers, cloths, or other valuables in the casket except the one worn by the corpse
- (ii) No wake-keeping
- (iv) No alcoholic drinks
- (V) Planning done moderately to avoid huge debt and excessive suffering after
- (vi) The church stopped cooking food for entertainment but gives substantial sum of money to the bereaved family
- (vi) If the bereaved is a widow she is no more subjected to abject and inhuman treatment like forcing her to sit on bare floor (even when not cemented), and not allowing her to go out except for easing herself, tying pieces of rags or mat on her wrists, forcing her to wail excessively, shaving her hair (including pubic) to disfigure her so that her dead husband will no longer recognize her, etc, etc.

The level of compliance with these guidelines is gradually increasing and after this study it is evident that the level will increase more.

After the funeral it is necessary the pastor visits the family again. This should be the time to encourage them to have faith and hope in God as challenges come. John Rhodes says, "Usually the Pastor can better help them readjust to Life's problems,"⁸ as their spiritual guardian.

Members generally are also visited to encourage them to stand for the Lord; they are counselled and prayed for.

Conducting Revivals/Seminars

Revivals/Seminars were conducted as scheduled in the implementation stage. Some of the materials used are those in the appendices.

Counselling/Prayer

There were also times for counselling and prayer for individuals within the revival time.

Partial Conclusion

In the planning and implementation of the programme all families in the District were reached. The membership is not very large. This has been to enable as many people as possible to be benefited by this study since the traditional issue concerns almost everybody, and secondly death can come any time to anybody in any family. As such, people can have the courage to stand for the truth.

Studying the Oldest Enduring book (Bible) with the topic: *Restoring the forgotten treasure*; marked the beginning of the revival. This was to evoke the love

⁸ John Rhodes. Success Secrets for Pastors Silver Spring Ministerial Association of G.C), 107.

and desire for Bible study and reading. It also demonstrated the best method of Bible study (Precept upon Precept). This aspect of the programme was made up of sermons and seminars on the above topics and others like *Food for Everlasting Life*, and *the Usefulness of the Scripture*. It especially encouraged daily Bible reading following the GC plan.

The next strategy was to re-invigorate the Small Group Fellowships/Constant Visitation especially to the bereaved and needy. This aspect incorporated seminars like, *Take Him at His Word* in which they were encouraged to develop an undaunted faith and have no thoroughfare on Satan's Corridor. Another Seminar was *Unity is Power* (doing things in Common). Also *Being My Brother's Keeper, Knowing My Neighbour*. Yet another interesting one was *Building Bridges for Interpersonal Relationships* in which members were encouraged to hold Community Guest Day, Potluck, and Community Service to reach the outside community. All these were meant to remind the members that we are all one and belong to each other. See the appendices for details.

Praying without Ceasing was designed to encourage lively prayer and devotional life in every member of the church. Secondly this was also to help them see their need of dependence upon God. It was also to help them stand on the Winning Side in the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan, good and evil. A time for fasting and prayer was scheduled and also specific intervals for prayer mapped out. The Small Groups were encouraged to be fasting on the last Wednesday of every month from 6.00am – 12.00 noon. Members were reminded of the necessity of morning and evening devotions in their families. The children of God were encouraged to read the spirit of Prophecy book: *The Great Controversy*. This programme was implemented as contained in the implementation chart.

Evaluation

This section deals with the evaluation of the programme. As a programme was being designed and implemented to moderate the traditional belief of immortality of the soul for a period of three months, it is necessary to evaluate it, to ascertain the level of success for future reference and probably more research. The evaluation came after three months of conducting the programme.

The evaluation of the programme was based on set goals. System applied depended on a particular revival strategy and its design. For *Restoring the Forgotten Treasure* passages from SDA Fundamental Belief dealing with the Scripture as truth, faith in God, state of the dead, and resurrection, etc., were assigned to the people to be read at home. Seminars were based on them. Later questions drawn from them were asked the people to test their level of understanding and assimilation. Then daily Sabbath School Lessons were not neglected. Personal observations and interviews as to how people regard the Bible and its usefulness were used. The revival was well attended and people were happy in the Lord for the spiritual upliftment.

The Small Group Fellowship and Visitation reports showed better interpersonal relationship, greater sense of belonging, and more eagerness to join others. More of the bereaved families were willing to denounce traditional mourning rites and burial practices according to the burial committee guidelines. Some have showed greater zeal for the truth.

Continuous prayer and fasting in which people's problems were presented to the Lord have drawn those unwilling to come before to join. Many have experienced God's love, care, mercy, and grace anew and have decided to serve Him diligently. This could be observed in the people coupled with responses received from interviews.

Various methods were used which included interviews and personal observations. Interview was conducted with selected church and board members, in addition to those selected by random sampling as to have unbiased report. Personal observations were used for each goal that was set following a strategy employed.

In the implementation, three strategies were used – Restoring the Forgotten Treasure; strengthening the existing small groups with general and target visitation; and, Take Him at His Word. Praying without ceasing (Praying and Fasting) empowered the programme.

Restoring the Forgotten Treasure

As we have already seen there can be no revival, which is living a spirit-filled life in true repentance and conversion without the Bible. The Bible is the greatest treasure which we should search and dig for, but it is forgotten by even the members of the church. Restoring the Forgotten Treasure was a Seminar that emphasized usefulness of Bible study and daily Bible reading. The Bible is the food for everlasting life which we should eat daily for spiritual strength. It stressed the principles of Bible study, one of which is *Precept upon precept* – a systematic study of the Word of God. See appendix A.1 for some of the materials.

To evaluate Bible reading and their understanding of the seminar lectures, questions were asked on passages read and on the lectures on a Sabbath afternoon. This was to find out their level of reading and understanding. Some of the passages assigned dealt with faith, trust, and acceptance of God's Word. Some others were on state of the dead, resurrecting, and salvation. See appendix A.4 for sample questions.

How essential do members take Bible reading and study to be? How serious are they about it? Answers to these questions were found through interviews

conducted and people's performance in a Bible quiz competition. See appendix A.4, also. Almost 92% of all attendees to the revival consistently read Bible passages assigned for each day. And 77.5% of participants in the quiz competition scored 80%-100%. These showed improvement in the willingness of many people to read and study the Bible. It also indicated that many people understood the lectures very well. And their spiritual life is being impacted positively. See appendix A.3.

Small Group Fellowship and Visitation

As already stated the small group fellowships were strengthened through meetings for Bible study and prayer and constant visitation. The routine visits by these groups and that of the burial committee during bereavement help to draw members close to each other, to the church and to Christ. Really it has become obvious that constant visitation is basic to ministry. Without visitation the real spiritual and temporal problems of the people will never be known especially as pertains to the issue of this project. A onetime deaconess who was bereaved told us when my wife and I visited her family that her dead husband is not resting yet because he knows he is in mortuary; that he will rest only after the burial.

It is through visitation that the spiritual state of some members and even of congregations could be observed and some hidden realities may be known. Some members may receive their visitors gracefully and others not so happy and even try to hide when met unexpectedly doing the wrong thing like quarrelling, fighting, wife bartering, immorality, idolatry, and some other un-Christ-like practises.

It must be observed that many of those who receive their visitors gracefully are active church members in good and regular standing. The key church officers belong to this group. They are highly interested in the spiritual growth of the church. They also, so much desire the repentance and steadfastness of some of their

neighbours who are nominal members. At times they tell the Pastor the spiritual condition of such people so they can be helped.

The nominal members show indifference. They stand astride between the world and the church. They prefer worldliness in the church, like to bury their dead more in the traditional way. They take it for granted that the dead just transits and not actually dead. They hardly believe in heaven or hell. Some in this group believe that the dead could have positive or negative influence over the living. Therefore, they could do anything to attract their blessing or avoid their curse.

Reports from visitation indicated that much more members are now turning up in small group fellowships for Bible study and prayer. Also it was observed by the researcher and from reports from some members following this programme, that among the Seventh-day Adventists in the population of study some inhuman treatments being given to widows such as forcing them to sit on bare floor, tying pieces of rags or mat on their wrists, restriction of their movement and bathing alone lest she sees her dead husband, and, shaving their hairs to disguise them from their departed husbands have been minimized.

Take Him at His Word

As we have seen, reading and studying the Bible is the basis of revival. But accepting the Word generally, appreciating it personally, claiming by faith God's promises of strengthening us spiritually, his protection and victory, and other heavenly boons to us as individuals is what actualizes our revival. The seminar *Take Him at His Word* encouraged believers to develop undaunted faith in God and his promises of making a way of escape even in temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13) so that we will be able to bear it. Therefore, they should not because of fear compromise their faith in matters relating to the dead and worship demons.

Secondly, it was emphasized that God's children should avoid a thoroughfare along Satan's corridor. This entails not involving themselves in any activity, meeting or association that will lead them into the temptation of compromising their faith, incite fear in them, or endanger their life. They should at no time disregard the word of God; that will be courting trouble.

The necessity of being strong in the Lord and in the power of his might as Paul said (Ephesians 6:10) was stressed. They were encouraged to put on the whole armour of God in order to be able to stand (Ephesians 6: 11-18).

Conclusion

From the foregoing this programme implementation is successful. Although, it cannot be said that revival from the age – long belief of immortality of the soul has been achieved 100%. This is because that belief is so deep –rooted in people that it will take a gradual but continuous process of studying, believing, and accepting the Word of God as the only rule of life while dropping that other belief at the same time for the number of its adherents to reduce more. Secondly, the Pastor carrying out this project is no more resident in *Apu-Na-Ekpu* District as to see, to the minutest details of the implementation.

However, it has been observed that the four goals set were moderately achieved. For example, many have understood that the dead are powerless and cannot influence the living positively or negatively because they are no more conscious. It has become clear that consulting juju priests or false prophets for messages from the dead is both deceit and apostasy, and those materials like cloths and other valuables put in the coffin before burial is gross wastage of resources because the dead goes nowhere but to the dust where termites will devour those things. There has been

increased love for the truth which is a direct result of studying the Bible and abiding in Christ

Also within this time of the implementation of this project, many of the members have given more commitment to the Lord and become more diligent in his service. And as mentioned earlier on many people have also experienced a deeper sense of belonging as a result of small group fellowship and constant visitation.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter we will take an overview of the entire project so that reasonable summary and conclusions can be drawn. Necessary recommendations and suggestions that could facilitate further research into this topic will also be made. The foregoing, could also lead to future implementations that will benefit other SDA churches and Districts just like Apu-Na-Ekpu District that was used as a case study.

Summary

The aim of this project has been to research into strategies that would moderate the African traditional belief in the immortality of the human soul among Seventh-day Adventist Christians in *Apu-Na-Ekpu* District. To accomplish that task, a detailed study of the culture and religion of the people that make that traditional belief so easily mixed with the religion of the Bible among them was done. That study delved into the reason why they perform certain traditional rites especially during burials, during the time of mourning, or when in need even as Seventh-day Adventist Christians. It was also required that a programme be designed and implemented that would bring members in the District rightly to the path of truth as regards the condition of man at death.

This research was carefully done using the principles of the Word of God. People were called to dig deep into the Bible which has been a forgotten treasure, eat it on daily basis as food for everlasting life, and get the advantages of studying it. And as they studied in Small Group Fellowships they were called upon to take God at His Word, have undaunted faith and avoid thoroughfare on Satan's corridor.

They were encouraged to be their brother's keepers and to build bridges for interpersonal relationships. All these were supported by praying without ceasing.

It was discovered that revivals in the Bible times were carried out by young people. Some of these biblical young people were cited as example and encouragement to our own young people today who accounted for 66.2% of the total respondents. We took the following people as examples: Joshua and the young generation born during their forty – year wandering in the wilderness held revival at *Gilgal*; David at a young age revived the faith and hope of Israel in God by killing Goliath; Hezekiah, Josiah, Jeremiah were all young.

Many of the reformers of the 1500s, 1700s, and 1800s all were young, e.g. Ulric Zwingli who was born few weeks after Martin Luther and Luther himself, Philip Melancthon at 21, John Knox, John Wesley, George Whitefield. Even Ellen G. White was called at the age of 17. Our young people are being encouraged to reject the age – long belief in soul immortality and be revived by accepting what the Bible reveals that man is yet mortal and does not have eternal life now; neither does he know anything at death(Eccl 9:5,6).

A brief but general profile of Nigeria covering her political system, type of government, socio-economic issues, and religions, etc., was presented. The local setting of *Apu-Na-Ekpu* District was also examined and documented in order to discover her peculiarities and environmental issues that affect the spirituality of the

people. This included the people's social life and culture, traditional religion, the history of the Church in the District, geographical location, and age distribution of the membership. The major problem was determined and other information about the church in the District were gathered through survey and questionnaires administered. This was to help the researcher to determine revival strategy to use and also to design suitable programme to moderate their spiritual problem with man's condition at death.

The aforementioned investigations revealed that majority of the members believe that there is a living soul in man which does not die when the body dies. Also that fear of the unknown makes them to compromise their faith. This makes them show lack of trust in what the Bible teaches about the dead because they are ignorant of it as many were not studying the Bible. Because many had not much loved the truth they preferred speculations about what the dead did or can do.

Due to the evident lack of interest in Bible study, waning faith, dying love for the truth, and weakened interpersonal relationship, certain goals were set for waking them up. Some of these goals were: abiding in Christ, studying his Word, having love for the truth. Others include unity is power, being my brother's keeper, doing things in common, involvement in church programmes.

To achieve these goals adequate arrangements and preparations were made in terms of announcements and promotions, resource persons and materials. In the first place awareness was created among church leaders and a formal and official permission of the Aba North Conference was obtained. Group leaders were identified, selected, and trained. Existing Small Group Fellowships were strengthened. Appropriate resource materials were gathered from books, internet, etc. All these helped in the design and implementation of the programme.

In a determined attempt to design and develop appropriate programme for this project strategies were adopted. All these were to address their peculiar spiritual problem and to realize the set goals within the time for the implementation of the programme. Those strategies are Bible Study, strengthening Small Group Fellowship/Visitation, Praying without ceasing. The designed programme content has been shown.

Conclusions

Judging from the outcome of the research study, one can see that many of the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in *Apu-Na-Ekpu* have backslidden into the traditional belief of the immortality of the human soul and followed its practices especially while mourning the dead and during burials. This has necessitated revival which has brought great renewal. Others will learn from that District's experience because that spiritual problem is not limited to them, it is a general problem.

It must be observed that their interest, willingness and co-operation have yielded much benefit to them in the programme implementation. The training of church leaders greatly enhanced the success of the project because they fulfilled Robert Clinton's assertion that "The central task of leadership is influencing God's people toward God's purposes"¹ as quoted by Blackaby. The laity participated actively in the implementation of the programme in areas of visitation, Bible Study, in Burial Committee, in daily Bible Reading, etc. In all these they were able to touch each other for revival. Really "Iron sharpens iron" (Proverbs 27:17).

¹ Henry and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville, Tennessee, 2001), 17.

“Prayer ... the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse, where are boundless resources of Omnipotence,”² played a prominent role in the success of this project. This is clear from the series of prayers involved in visitation, fellowship time, fasting and prayer days, etc. Through prayers families and friends were united and interpersonal relationship thrived. Through prayers the members opened their heart to God and the darkness of ignorance and unbelief was dispelled. Thus the attitudes of many towards the truth have changed. They have accepted that there is no living soul in man that survives the grave. People have become more committed to Bible study and to the Lord.

Recommendations

This last section of chapter 5 brings out recommendations to the Aba North Conference (ANC) of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church on how this research conducted in Apu-Na-Ekpu could be more useful to local churches and districts which have similar spiritual problems arising from the age-long traditional belief of immortality of the soul in their area and elsewhere. The following are the recommendations:

1. That Pastors should train lay people to hold regular Bible studies in their churches to give doctrinal enlightenment to members to curtail their inclination to that bad tradition.
2. That Pastors of SDA Church should regularly teach the fundamental belief of the state of the dead so that they can convincingly teach it to the members and others, too.
3. That further studies based on this research should be made by the ANC to discover and curtail diabolical dangers inherent in that belief and its

² E.G. White. *Connecting with Jesus* (Everlasting Gospel Pub. Association), 787.

practices that members put themselves. Our churches will reap more spiritual benefits if that will is done.

4. Finally, that the churches in Apu-Na-Ekpu District and other areas should learn to apply redemptive disciplinary measures as stipulated in the SDA Church Manual on page 62 against erring members in this regard.

APPENDIX A
PROGRAMME DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION
SEMINAR/WORKSHOP MATERIAL

APPENDIX A.1

STUDYING THE OLDEST ENDURING BOOK – THE BIBLE FOR REVIVAL

Restoring the Forgotten Treasure – Seminar

One lesson in “What the Bible says” Correspondence Course published by UPM is titled: About **Forgotten** Riches. The story is told in it about a Wealthy Englishman who fell sick and died. On the day his will was read his favourite daughter was bitterly disappointed because her father designated in the will that she should be given “My Bible and all that it contains.” Knowing that her father was an ardent student of the Bible and that this Book was near and dear to his heart, she hid it away in an old trunk and went on living as before.

But as time passed, adversity seemed to dog her steps. Ill health and difficulty brought her to poverty. Broken in health and spirit and in serious desperation she sought solution to her problems. After she had tried all means available to her she one day turned to her father’s Bible seeking answer to her difficulties. Imagine her surprise as she leafed through that long – Forgotten Book to find between many of the pages of the Bible her father had hidden large Bank of England notes. She had been rich all of the time and had been unaware of her good fortune because she had failed to realize what her father meant when he had given her “My Bible and all that it contains.”

Our heavenly father has left us a great treasure in the pages of this wonderful Book. Truly we may not find bank notes between the pages of the Bible, but we can find priceless treasure like peace, joy, hope, faith, love, and eternal life by studying it. These are all forgotten riches in the world today.

These are the greatest riches one can hope for. We should join in an exciting search for truth and hidden treasures as we seek to discover what the Bible says about itself and about the state of those that are dead.

APPENDIX A.2
PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY

1. The Bible must be studied with humble and teachable spirit like that of a child (Isaiah 28:9).
2. The Bible must be searched with willingness to know and follow the truth (John 17:7). If any man will search the Word of God for light, with a heart fully submitted to do the will of God as it is revealed to him that man will receive light The seed that falls into honest heart... Brings forth fruit unto everlasting life. Bible Readings for the Home (Review and Herald Pub. Association, U.S.), 28.
3. We must study with prayer. David said, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Psalm 119:18.
4. We have to accept the Bible as truth and the Word so accepted and practiced sanctifies the reader. Jesus said, "Sanctify them through truth; thy Word is truth." John 17:17.
5. The Bible should be its own interpreter as the Holy Spirit leads – Isaiah 28:10; 2 Peter 1:20.
6. We should not add anything to, neither should we subtract from the Word of God – Deut 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:5, 6; Revelation 22:18, 19.

Conclus

Peter said that there are certain things that are difficult to understand in the Bible (2 Peter 3:16, 17). We must agree to that too. But God has revealed enough understandable issues in His Word which will give us salvation if we follow them in faith. Let us live by the truth we have understood and leave the rest to God (Deut 29:29).

APPENDIX A.3

HOW DO WE READ THE BIBLE?

“A Bible reading is a topical study of the Bible by means of questions and answers, “according to Bible Readings for the Home, page 20. Asking questions and receiving answers have been discovered to be the easiest way to receive or impart knowledge. It quickens thoughts and awakens interest” as a question is asked. According to the above source.” Children would learn little if they asked no questions, and he would indeed be a poor teacher who asked and answered none,” page 21.

Knowing the usefulness of this method of teaching, God inspired Bible writers to ask many questions that make us think and then study to find answers. God Himself asked many questions and also answered them. For example, in Psalm 34:12-14:” What man is he that desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.”

This method was also applied in some of our studies.

Other methods could be to read the Bible book by book starting from the simplest books such as the book of St. Mark. Then go to other gospels subsequently. He can read continue by reading stories about particular Bible characters etc.

APPENDIX A.4

DAILY BIBLE READING QUIZ

1. Psalm 119:105 says, Thy Word is _____ and _____
2. Bread alone is sufficient to sustain is as Christian (Matt 4:4) T/F
3. In Psalm 119:11 David said hiding God's Word in our heart will prevent us from (Sinning, Faithfulness)
4. Daniel 10:21 cans the Bible the Book of _____ (falsehood, truth, magic)
5. We can interpret the Bible with our imagination. T/F
6. In 2 Timothy 3:16 the Bible is useful for doctrine, for reprovng, for _____ and _____
7. Only the New Testament of the Bible testifies about Jesus according to John 5:39. T/F
8. By studying and following the Word of Word we can be prepared for good works 2 Tim. 3:17. T/F
9. According to 1 Corinthians 10:11 the Bible was written for _____ (Admonition, confusion).

10. When we refuse to know God through the Bible, what will happen to us?
Hosea 4:6.
11. By the time we study the Bible with humility and receive it willingly it gives us _____ (sadness, joy) Jeremiah 15:16.
12. The Bible gives us two attributes in Romans 15: 4 through which we have hope. They are (Patience and Comfort; Peace and Perseverance).
13. According to 2 Peter 1:21 the Holy Spirit dictated the Words of the Bible to the Prophets. T/F
14. What did Peter say was used to redeem us in 1 Peter 1:18, 19 (Precious blood of Christ; gold, silver)
15. I can be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11 by doing what? (Searching the Scriptures; having a new Bible).
16. God made man with _____ (Dust, His Word)
17. Before God gave man the breathe of life in Genesis 2:7 Adam could be likened to _____ (a corpse, a human being)
18. A living soul is only the spirit without the body, T/F
19. A dead person does not know his family or anything any longer T/F
20. Samuel really appeared to the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28:7; 14-15). T/F
21. Because saints go to heaven at death resurrection is no more important to them. T/F
22. Since God is a Spirit the dead can praise Him (Psalm 6:5; 115:17)

23. When man ceases to breathe the soul _____ (Disappear, Dies).
24. Immortality of the soul originated in _____ Egypt, Canaan).
25. _____ only has immortality (Pope, the soul, God).
26. The only tradition for a believer is (Prayer house, Christianity)
27. If a woman did not shave her hair after her husband's death, she will die (Yes, No)
28. Putting on sack clothes to mourn our dead ones can make them happy (Yes, No)
29. Your dead one will not be happy with you if you did not put additional cloth for him/her in the casket (Yes, No)
30. To drive away the spirit of the dead, we should go to divines to require of what to do (Yes, No)
31. To go to mediums to divine about our dead ones whom we suspect their death is (god, idol worship, for us to be sure).
32. A girl whose parent (s) has died before her marriage will have miscarriage or die during childbirth if – she did not accord him/her marital rites (true, False).
33. We should behead a dead loved one who was identified as a witch/wizard and hand the head in a shrine (Exactly, No).
34. Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar is to make sacrifice to the dead for the life of the living (true, False).

35. Which of these word show that the dead is still living somewhere (obituary, transition).
36. During the Israelite era anyone who worshipped was (praised, stoned).
37. Since we are Christians we cannot go to witchdoctors for divination, but we can send someone else on our behalf (Yes, No).
38. That the dead appeared to you in your and told you something that happened or will happen is a true evidence that they are alive somewhere (True, False).
39. As children of God we should _____ (Fear little, Fear not).
40. Can the idol worship of a parent affect the children (Yes, No).
41. The only hope for the dead in Christ as recorded in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is (re-incarnation, resurrection).
42. What does prayer do for the believer?

APPENDIX A.5

UNITY IS POWER (Discussion Questions)

What factors will help us to be united and strengthened in our faith? How do we improve our interpersonal relationships?

Show True Love to One another John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 13

Be a Barnabas – Encourage One Another

Acts 15:37

Comfort One Another

1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; 4 ; Colossians 2:2; Romans 12:15

Be Your Brother's Keeper, Watch over Him in Spiritual Things

Jeremiah 31:28; 51:12; Mark 13:33, 35; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 13:17

Help Each Other

Philippians 4:3; Isaiah 41:6; Acts 18:27; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Acts 20:35

Study Bible Together In Small Group Fellowship

2 Timothy 2:15; Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:105, 103

In Addition To Personal and Family Prayers, Pray In Your Congregations and

Small Group Fellowship

Also Form Prayer Bands

Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 26:41; Luke 21:36; 1 Peter 4:7; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Maintain Your Peculiarity and Identity

2 Corinthians 6:14 -18; Exodus 23:2; Isaiah 8:12

When Bereaved Work With the Burial Committee

Work With the Marriage Committee during Marriages

Dissociate From Clubs, Age Grades, and Other Meetings Which Do Mismatch Into Idol Worship

Socialize Among Yourselves

According To A Lecture Delivered By Elder N.O Idiodi During Pastors' And Elders' Retreat At ASTEC Owerrinta, Titled "Elder/Community Relationship As It Affects the Remnant Church," We, individually and collectively should Beware of Nine Directions from Which Satan May Attack Our Faith:

1. Worldliness
2. Indulgence of appetite and passion
3. Love of money
4. Selfishness and neglect of God's cause
5. A mere profession of the faith
6. Pleasure marts and fun places
7. Pulling down the standards of the church
8. Questioning, doubting, and undermining the Basics of the message
9. Create disunity, criticism, and judging

APPENDIX B

LETTERS

Agburuike Isiugwu District
C/o. AbaEast Conference (AEC)
S.D.A. Church
Aba

01-02-2013

Thru:
The Executive Secretary
To The Administration
Aba East Conference (AEC)
S.D.A. Church
Aba.

Sir,

Request for Permission to Hold One Week Seminar/Revival in Apu-Na-Ekpu District, Aba North Conference (ANC).

I hereby request for a permission to organize a One – Week Seminar/Revival in Apu-Na-Ekpu District in Aba North Conference (ANC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is part of my Academic Requirements for the Course Project/Thesis for my M.A. Pastoral Theology Degree of AUA Babcock University Extension Campus.

I started my M.A. Degree Programme in 2010 while I was there as a District Pastor, and AUA required that each student should use his home Church or District as a case study for the academic course which required programme design and implementation. I distributed and retrieved my questionnaires in that District after they had filled them.

Now that the course is in the final year it is required that a Seminar/Revival be organized to round it up. Hence this request.

May you also know that although the study is an academic exercise, it is aimed at the spiritual re – direction and up-liftment of church members in the District. It has an immense spiritual benefit.

Thanks for co – operation.

Yours in His vineyard,



PASTOR J. E. ANUCHA



**SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH**

Aba North Conference

Uhun, Isiala Ngwa South
Local Government Area,
P.M.B. 9006, Owerri, Abia State.
E-mail: ancsda@yahoo.com
website: www.ncsda.org
(click new conferences)

Feb. 7th 2013

**Pastor J.E Anucha
SDA church
Agburuiké
Agburuiké District**

Dear Sir,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ONE WEEK SEMINAR AND
REVIVAL IN APU-NA-EKPU DISTRICT IN ABA NORTH CONFERENCE**

Sequel to your letter dated February 7th 2013 requesting for permission to hold one week seminar and revival in Apu-na-ekpu District Aba North conference. I am directed by the administration of Aba North conference to inform you that your request has been granted.

Thank you and God bless you real good in Jesus Name.

Yours in God's vineyard

**Pastor U.C. Iheanacho
Executive Secretary**

APPENDIX C
QUESTIONNAIRES

Adventist University of Africa

Babcock University Extension Campus

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MODERATING THE TRADITIONAL BELIEF OF IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

Research Topic: A Strategy to Moderate the African Traditional Belief of Immortality of the Soul in
Apu-Na-Ekpu District, Abia State, Nigeria.

Dear Respondent, this questionnaire is designed to collect data for the above-mentioned project topic. I am a Master's Degree student in the department of Pastoral Theology Studies, Theological Seminary of the above University and its extension campus. Your kind co-operation is highly solicited. Be assured that all your responses and information kindly given in this questionnaire will be confidentially treated.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Sex: Male () Female ().
2. Marital Status: Married () Single () Widowed () Divorce ().
3. Age: 20-29 () 30-39 () 40-49 () 50-above ().
4. Educational Qualification: FSLC () Post Primary () Bachelors () Masters () Doctorate ()
5. Occupation: Farmer () Teacher () Business () Civil Servant () Unemployed ().
6. Baptismal Status: Baptized () Not Baptized ().
7. Length of Membership: 1-5 years (); 6-10 years (); 11-15 years (); 16-20 years ()
21-25 years (); 26 + years ()
8. Church Office: Officer () Board Member () Departmental Head ().
9. Local SDA Church: _____

INSTRUCTION: Please kindly complete this questionnaire by reading the items in the following sections carefully and ticking appropriately in the columns for the correct answers, using: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), No Opinion (NO).

	SECTION B: Acceptance of Bible Teaching About Man's Nature	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	No opinion (No)
1	The Bible is the standard of truth and doctrines					
2	The Bible teaches that man is a living soul					
3	There teaches that there is a living soul in man					
4	According to the Bible man's soul does not die when the body dies					
5	When someone dies the soul goes to heaven or hell					
6	The soul of a dead person can re-incarnate into life and be born by a woman					
7	One can appease the soul of a dead parent by giving it a befitting burial					
8	The dead can harm the living					
9	The dead can curse the living					
10	The dead can protect the living					
11	The dead can bless the living					
12	The dead will remain in the grave till the resurrection					
1	Oracles and prayer houses can reveal to us what the Bible does not reveal about the dead					
14	In emergencies we can obtain help from ancestors in the spirit world					
15	The amount of money spent on burial determines where the soul of the deceased will go					
16	It is necessary for a Christian widow to follow the traditional mourning rites so that her dead husband will do her favour					
17	It is necessary for a Christian widow to follow the traditional mourning rites so that her dead husband will not harm her					
18	It is proper to accord dead parent(s) marital rites when the daughter is marrying					

Section C: Growing In Christ	
1	There is genuine repentance among our church members
2	Most Adventist spend quality time in Bible study
3	Most Adventist are guided by the biblical teachings in the daily practices
4	Most of the funeral rites performed by most Adventist are guided by the Bible
5	Whether members of the church repent or not God will accept them through His grace
6	Fear of perceived danger is a major factor responsible for the compromise in funeral rites by Adventists
7	A life of prayer and bible study is potent to defeat the power of the devil
8	God is powerful enough to overcome all our fears about the dead if we trust him

Interview Guide (Make this an interview and not part of the questionnaire.)

1. What do you think may happen to those who refuse to bury their dead ones as culture demands?
2. What do you think could happen to those who do not appease their dead loved ones?
3. What could happen to a bride who did not traditionally accord marital rites to her dead parents?
4. Is God capable of defending believers?

Thank You for your honest answers. May the Almighty God richly bless you.

Pastor J.E. Anucha.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abakare O. Christopher, "Death as a Continuum: A Comparative Analysis of Platonic and Isoko Metaphysics" in *Immortality of the Soul in Plato's Philosophy* June 26, 2012. Accessed 26th August, 2013.
[naudigitallibrary.wordpress.com/tag/immortality-of-the-soul-in-platos-philosophy/..](http://naudigitallibrary.wordpress.com/tag/immortality-of-the-soul-in-platos-philosophy/)
- Adams, Roy. "Spiritual Perils" Revisited – Response to Letters. *Adventist World*, August 2010, 24-25.
- Andreasen, Niels – Erik A. "Death: Origin Nature, and Final Eradication." In *The Handbook Seventh-day Adventist Theology: Commentary Reference Series*, ed. Raoul Dederen, 12:315-345. Hagerstown, Review and Herald, 2000.
- Blackaby, Henry and Richard. *Spiritual Leadership: Leading People On to God's Agenda*. Nashville, Tennessee, USA: B&H Publishing Group, 2001.
- Brunt, John C. "Resurrection and Glorification." In *The Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology: Commentary Series*, ed. Raoul Dederen 12:347-373. Hagerstown, Review and Herald, 2000.
- Cairus, Aecio E. "The Doctrine of Man." In *The Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology Commentary Reference Series*, ed. Raoul Dederen, Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2000.
- Chief Isaac R. Nwosu, one of the members of the Eze's Council and a member of SDA Church Apu-Na-Ekpu. Interview by the researcher, October 12th, 2012.
- David Sielaff from an article by Ernest L. Martin PhD., "The Pagan Immortal Soul and 'Double Doctrine.'" Accessed 15th August, 2013
<http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/do60101.ht>
- Douglas, J. D. and Tenney, Merrill C. *New International Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1991. 323.
- "Death." *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol.2; 1960.
- Elder D. C. I. Nwosu, one of the oldest men in SDA Church Apu-Na-Ekpu District. Interview by the researcher, October 10th, 2012.
- Elder Nwazue Ogugbuaja, another old man from the same District. Interview by the researcher, October 16th, 2012.s

- Ernest L. Martin, "Pagan Doctrine of the Soul," in *The Goodnews*, vol.12, no. 3. March 1963(Pasadena), pp.5-6, 12. Accessed 12th August, 2013. www.godstrthfortoday.org/library/martin/PaganDoctrineOfTheSoul. P; Pg.6
- Ernest L. Martin, "Pagan Doctrine of the Soul: Deliberate Deception." Accessed 15th August, 2013. <http://www.theheraldsofgodsgrace.org/Martin/PaganDoctrineOfTheSoul.htm>.
- Finis Jennings Dake. *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible*. Georgia, Lawrenceville: DAKE'S BIBLE SALES, Inc, 1991.
- Finley Mark. "Surviving Shocks of Pain and Stress." In *fitforever* (Daily Devotional); 156.
- G. O. Ozumba, "African Traditional Metaphysics," in *Africa*. Accessed 26th August, 2013. <http://www.quodlibet.net/articles/ozumba-africa.shtml> .
- Gary Petty, "What Does the Bible Say About the 'Immortal Soul'?" Accessed 13th August, 2013. *The Good News* (A Magazine of Understanding) <http://www.ucg.org/death/what-does-bible-say-about-immortal-soul/>
- Goodhead, Charles: "Strategy to Restore Spiritual Vibrancy in Seventh-day Adventist Church Odiokwu, Odiokwu District Rivers State, Nigeria." M.A. Project, Adventist University of Africa, 2008.
- Herodotus, *The Histories*, A. D. Godley, ed., Book 2 Chapter 123. Accessed September 2, 2013. <http://www.persues.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Hdt.+2.123.1>
- "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?" in Krister Stendhal, ed., *Immortality and Resurrection* (New York, Macmillan: 1965); Pg.11.
- "Immortality." Microsoft Encarta 2009 (DVD) Redmond Wa: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.
- Jackson, Edgar N. *The Christian Funeral: Its Meaning, Its Purpose and Its Modern Practice*. New York. Channel Press, 1966.
- James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion Ethics*, Vol. 7 (New York; C. Scribner's & Sons, 1908); pp.61, 63.
- Jemison, T.H. *Christian Beliefs: Fundamental Biblical Teachings for Seventh-day Adventist College Classes*. Boise,, Idaho, Oshawa, Ontario. Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1959.
- John Rhodes. *Success Secrets for Pastors*. Silver Spring, MD 20904: Ministerial Association of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Graphics, 1984; Pg. 107.
- Johnsson, William G. "Soul Truth." In *fitforever* (Daily devotional), ed. Ray Woolsey; Hagerstown, MD 217407: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005.

- Josephus, Flavius. *The Wars of The Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 1:5. Accessed September 3rd, 2013. www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/wars-6.htm
- Kaufmann Kohler, "IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL." Accessed 15th August, 2013. [JewishEncyclopedia.com http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8092-immortality-of-the-soul/](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8092-immortality-of-the-soul/)
- Leo Igwe, "Boko Haram and Religious Minorities in Northern Nigeria." *Butterflies and Wheels* July 2012. Accessed 26th August, 2013. <http://www.butterfliesandwheels.org/2012/boko-haram-and-religious-minorities-in-northern-nigeria/>.
- Leo Igwe, "Leaving Religion and Living without Religion in Nigeria." *Butterflies and Wheels* July 26, 2011. Accessed 26th August, 2013. <http://www.butterfliesandwheels.org/2011/leaving-religion-and-living-without-religion-in-nigeria/>.
- Life Application Study Bible (NIV). Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1991.
- Mbiti, John S. (PhD). *African Religions Philosophy*. New Hampshire, Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books Inc, 70 Court Streets, 1969.
- Nations Encyclopedia. Accessed 16th August, 2013. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Nigeria-Religions.html>
- Nigeria-Country Profile-2013. Accessed 23rd August, 2013. <http://www.indexmundi.com/nigeria/>.
- Noel Linnane, "Plato on the Soul," in *Soul/Mind and Body Separation-A Look at Dualism*. Accessed 11th March, 2014. <http://homepage.eircom.net/~no31/bphil.pdf>
- Owusu-Antwi, Brempong and Pfandl, Gerhard. Class notes for THST 660 *Spiritualistic Manifestations: Issues In Seventh-day Adventist Theology*. Maryland: Silver Spring,: Bible Research Institute, 2010.
- Polybius, *Histories*, Shuckburgh 1889 translation (London, New York; Macmillan, 1889 .Reprint Bloomington, 1962). Accessed August 30th, 2013. [www.persues.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/p/text?doc=persues % 3Atext%3A1999.01.0234 & layout =loc=6.4=6.56 .](http://www.persues.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/p/text?doc=persues%3Atext%3A1999.01.0234&layout=loc=6.4=6.56)
- Rahner, Karl *Theological Investigations* Vol. xiii: *Theology, Anthropology, Christology*. London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975.
- Saliba, John A. "Soul." Microsoft Encarta (DVD) Redmond Wa: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.
- Tarrant Harold and Hugh Tredennick. *Plato: The Last Days of Socrates*. London: Pengium Books Ltd., 1993, 80 Strand, WC 2R ORL, England, .117.

- “The Conditional View,” in William Crockett, ed., *Four Views on Hell* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992); Pg.148.
- “The History of the Immortal-Soul Teaching,” in *What Happens After Death?* Accessed 15th August,2013. <http://www.ucg.org/booklet/what-happens-after-death/mystery-death/history-immortal-soul-teaching/> (15/8/2013).
- “The Pagan Myth of the Immortal Soul,” *The Observer* Monday May 11, 2009. Accessed 15th August, 2013. observanda.blogspot.com/2009/05/pagan-myth-of-immortal-soul.html.
- The Administrative Map of Nigeria showing the 36 states and Abuja. Accessed October 1, 2013. www.ilo.org/public/english/religion/afpro/abuja/download/nigeriamap.pdf.
- “Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa,” in PewResearch Religion and Public Life Project. Accessed August 23rd, 2013. features.pewforum.org/Africa/country.php?c=160.
- “What is Latitude and Longitude of Nigeria?” *News Track India* Monday August 26, 2013. Accessed August 26, 2013. <http://www.newstrackindia.com/information/worldinfo/latitudelongitude/Country/WhatIsLatitudeLongitudeOfNigeria.htm>.
- White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Remnant Publications Inc; 2001.
- _____. *Connecting With Jesus*. Soul, Korea: Everlasting Gospel Publishing Association.
- _____. “The Lord’s Vineyard, 1990.” *Review and Herald*, July 10.
- _____. *Life Sketches*. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1915.
- _____. *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1890.
- _____. *The Great Controversy*. Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1888.
- William Temple, *Nature, Man, and God* (London, Macmillan: 1939); Pg. 472.
- William Warburton, *Divine Legation of Moses*, 3 Volumes, 10th edition (London: Tomas Tegg, 1846).
- Wolf, Herbert . *Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1991.