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Abstract

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria is very particular in its missionary focus; it strives towards preparing people for the Second Advent of Christ through preaching its unique set of doctrines. The denomination as an organization and its people believe that this task must be done with a sense of urgency. To this end, apart from having a network of congregations and places of worship, it has set up schools (from primary to tertiary levels), medical care facilities and a relief agency, and it gets involved in various forms of community services. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a world-wide Christian organization whose missionary orientation necessitated its establishment in Nigeria.

Nigeria, as a country, is a British colonial arrangement established through Lord Frederick Lugard's amalgamation of different regions in 1914. The country has continued ever since to struggle with the issue of identity, political leadership and development. Although its people struggled and got independence on October 1, 1960, the different ethnic groups' perception of the political leadership and resource control ever since is that of injustice and marginalization. This perception has led to many coup d'états and even a civil war. Bad leadership, corruption, maladministration, election rigging and other forms of immoral behaviours have continued to hamper the movement towards prosperity and peace.

In what appears to be a cycle of underdevelopment and political injustice has led to chronic bad governance, which has precipitated ethnic and religious violence. Such a series of events have consequentially neutralized all opportunities necessary for growth and development. Corruption and other unethical practices are the bane of development and prosperity. This is the milieu in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria carries out its missionary activities. Incidentally, the denomination's first missionary, Elder David C. Babcock, arrived in Nigeria the same year as the country's amalgamation (1914). The Seventh-day Adventist Church has therefore continued to grow within the context of Nigeria's socio-economic and political turmoil.

The issue of development and national prosperity has always been central to successive administrations in Nigeria. To this end, various developmental policies were put in place. This thesis examines these policies and reflects on the levels of their successes and failures. Most of the time, the nagging issues of corruption and lack of discipline are seen to have constituted

major obstacles toward achieving their set objectives. This study therefore proposes a different outlook and approach to the issue of national development. Its thesis is that the traditional micro-economic approach, which measures national development only by indices such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), per capita income and other physical indicators, would always leave the developmental aspirations frustrated, if not unmet. This study therefore proceeds to propose the transformational development approach, which underscores the critical roles that faith-based organizations (FBOs) need to play to support sustainable development.

This thesis challenges the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria to see itself as a critical agency for transformational development of the country. This should be a major part of its missionary activities. This study examined literatures that have demonstrated how theological discourse can be redirected toward broader social concerns, such as transforming a community. Furthermore, an empirical exploration of the Seventh-day Adventist community that formed part of the study showed that its members are focused and consistent in their understanding of the denomination's task of preparing the world for the Second Advent. But these SDA members also want the denomination to be more socially engaged. They want their church to make more comments on issues of development and governance.

This thesis concludes that the Seventh-day Adventist Church could use its influence to promote good governance, advocacy and social justice. It urges the denomination to expand the applications of its unique doctrines to include pragmatic transformational development concerns. Accordingly it is argued that the Seventh-day Adventist Church could collaborate with other denominations and religions, solely for the purpose of transformational development and without compromising its own beliefs. Hence, it is postulated that this church would still be loyal and true to its mission by recognizing that making a structural difference in the lives of Nigerians is an authentic and integral part of the restoration of the image of God (*imago Dei*) in people.

<u>Key terms:</u>

Seventh-day Adventist Church; democratic Nigeria; mission; transformational development; advocacy; social justice; ecumenism; eschatology; corruption; evangelism; church and state.

Dedications

This work is dedicated first and foremost to the prime missionary, God, who left the realm of glory and became incarnate to remove humanity from eternal suffering.

This work is secondly dedicated to my wife, Gbonjubola, and my two sons, Oluwagbayi and Oluwagbotemi, who were denied a great deal of family time and resources so that I could complete this study successfully.

I thirdly dedicate this work to the loving memory of my late parents, Elder and Mrs. Olu Efuntade, who would have loved to see me earn a doctoral degree, having laid the foundation of good education for me.

Finally, this project is dedicated to the suffering masses of Nigeria and all those who have sacrificially laboured to give the poor, marginalized and suffering Nigerians not just the good news of the future kingdom of God, but also the *incarnational* ministry of Christ in the present.

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations and acronyms

ADRA	Adventist Relief and Development Agency
AMO	Adventist Men's Organization
AWM	Adventist Women's Ministry
AYM	Adventist Youth Ministry
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CPFN	Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
DFID	Department For International Development
ECWA / TEKAN	Evangelical Church of West Africa / Tarrarya Ekkelisiyar Kristi a Nigeria
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
GCSDAC	General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PFN	Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WCC	World Council of Churches
WNUC	Western Nigeria Union Conference

Chapter 1

Introduction to the study

1.1 Background and rationale

My experience as a cleric in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, an experience which started in a congregation in Lagos, Nigeria, has had a profound impact on my thoughts as to the scope of and what constitutes Christian ministry. What should our mission to people, a community, or more specifically, our country Nigeria be? People's spiritual needs seem not to be unconnected with various aspects of their lives, such as their economic situation, their physical environment, and even their political experience. I began to perceive some inadequacy in the roles churches play in the community. In due course I enrolled for my master's degree in one of my denomination's universities in the United States, where for the first time I was introduced to the concept of the social dimension of the gospel by theologians such as Maury Jackson, Kendra Haloviak and Charles Teel. The new understanding about the prophetic ministry[1] of the church was an illumination for me and a beginning of deeper inquiry into what roles churches should play in people's lives. This is in terms of the proclamation of the gospel and mission, especially in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereafter SDA Church) context, which goes beyond the traditional ministry[2] paradigm in a nation like Nigeria.

Nigeria as a country is currently going through difficult times: social stress, uncertainties in politics after protracted military juntas. Economic crises and endemic poverty are at the order of the day. Large-scale unemployment and underemployment feature prominently in the most populous African country. There is a huge lack of adequate infrastructure, poor electricity supply, grossly inadequate transportation and deficient health facilities, whilst educational and other institutions are also dangerously neglected. People are really desperate for adequate and meaningful living conditions, which have eluded them despite the fact that many are hard-working. Whilst the majority are poor, there are a few who are extremely wealthy; some of the

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[1] I use this term to describe the work of the church in addressing the moral consciousness of the society, challenging unjust systems and structures limiting development.

[2] This is used to describe the work of the church in the proclamation of personal gospel and personal faith in God.

richest people in the world are Nigerians whose net worth is in billions of dollars. The disparity between the rich and the poor is a source of concern for right-thinking people. Corruption is so ingrained into the Nigerian society and every attempt to curb it has proved abortive; it is the primary cause of the untold levels of poverty and a threat to development in Nigeria (Oladunjoye 2007:1).

In this same context, people have a very strong sense of religious identity and commitment, basically as Muslims or Christians, whilst fewer openly proclaim to be practitioners of African Traditional Religion. Strong religious sentimentalism has often led to acts of intolerance and violence, leading to loss of properties, displacements of people from their communities, maiming, and even to the death of thousands.

The phenomenon of proliferation of churches among other religious agencies cannot be reconciled with the level of poverty and corruption in the country. As a clergyman, I therefore continue to reflect on the role my faith community, the Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereafter SDA Church), among other denominations and other religions, have played and should play in ensuring sustainable socio-economic and political development in the country.

The country is also divided along the main religions: the northern region is mainly Islamic, the eastern region is mainly Christian, whilst the western part has almost an equal presence of Muslims and Christians. It is important to point out that all the religions have followers across the country. Also worthy to note is the similarity of the socio-economic landscape of Nigeria, regardless of the region; the poverty and economic difficulties are felt the same way everywhere, regardless of the religion dominant in such area.

Christianity and Islam, the main religions in the country, have contributed to the social, political and economic life of the country. The focus however of this research is on Christian mission, especially that of the SDA Church, in the transformational development of Nigeria. Churches spend a lot of resources, financial and human, on evangelization and recruiting people into their denominations and congregations. Churches are grouped into broad categories: Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals, Pentecostals (including "home-grown" Pentecostal/charismatic churches) and other groups that may not exactly fit into these categories, such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Jehovah's Witness. Of these categories, the Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Seventh-day Adventists (hereafter SDAs) commit much of their resources to

the proclamation of the (personal) gospel, salvation through Christ and the assurance in the *Parousia* which climaxes in the *eschaton*. Evangelism is considered the nerve of the church, and to fulfil this important task it is given all the attention; success is usually defined by the number of people who join the church through the rite of baptism and the expansion of the church's presence into what is described as the "un-entered" areas – having new and increasing members, and new congregations in places that did not have them prior to that time is how these churches generally describe success.

The SDA Church arrived in Nigeria in February 14, 1914 through the first set of missionaries led by a man called D. C. Babcock. Others that made the missionary journey into Lagos from Freetown, Sierra Leone, were R. P. Dauphin, a Ghanaian, and S. Morgue, a Sierra Leonean (Babalola 2002:3). This church has since then grown from Erunmu, a suburb community of Ibadan, South-West Nigeria, where Babcock and his team eventually chose to have their station, to a nation-wide church with a membership population of about 160 000 (baptized[3]) people.[4] According to a compendium published by the SDA Church to celebrate 90 years of work in Nigeria (Alao 2004:54), SDAs presently operate 70 primary schools, 7 secondary schools and a university in Nigeria.[5] However, since then the SDA Church not only added a few more secondary schools, but it more recently also got a licence to operate another university in the eastern part of Nigeria.[6] In addition the SDA Church today also runs three hospitals, a few small clinics and a humanitarian organization, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

In the very early period of its mission in Nigeria when the Western missionaries first got to Erunmu, the cooperation and collaboration of the SDA missionaries with other denominations' missionaries for the purpose of fulfilling their goals was legendary, as they saw themselves as

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[3] The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes only those who have gone through the ritual of water baptism. Other people not baptized who attend are called Sabbath school members and do not have the right to vote in any decision-making process, nor are they allowed to lead in any capacity.

[4] The General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists (2017:490-508) puts the membership at 229 370 comprising of all the Conferences in Nigeria as at 2016.

[5] This is an old statistic as more of these institutions have since then been added. The SDA Church operates and runs Babcock University, located in Ilishan Remo, Ogun State in the south-west of Nigeria (Alao 2004).

[6] It is Clifford University named after the denomination's missionary who took the SDA message to the eastern part of Nigeria.

"brothers" (Babalola 2002:21). However, somewhere along the line, Adventists in Nigeria have adopted attitudes that tend towards non-collaboration and non-ecumenism. The need to revert to this early approach towards brotherhood and collaboration with other religious agencies will therefore be discussed in this study.

Adventists' philosophy of mission is partly based on scriptural texts urging Christians to share the good news. One such text is Mark 16:15 which instructs the early church, "[G]o ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (KJV). According to Babalola (2002:12), the church feels compelled to propagate its special message to the entire world: to every country, every tribe and all the communities around the world, and this defines the mission message and the scope of the SDA Church.

Another scriptural basis for Adventists' mission is the apocalyptic writings of Revelation 14:6-12 where three angels proclaim an "everlasting gospel" to be preached all over the world, and a series of warnings from God to the world. The mission paradigm of Adventists is also shaped by their interpretation of the biblical term "remnant", to which they give a very important theological meaning (Alao 2004:157). Adventists regard themselves as the "remnant church";[7] the Adventists' understanding of this identity therefore shapes both their sense of mission and the church's relationship with other churches. In other words, since SDAs teach that they are the only group of believers who remain faithful to holistic biblical teaching, they have the duty or mission to call others into complete obedience to God. Thus, being in association with other churches makes the Adventist church vulnerable to compromising their spiritual standards. The central theme that drives the mission of the SDA Church is summarized by what the church fondly calls "the three angels' message". Here follows a summary of the three messages the Adventists believe God has for the world. The first is found in Revelation 14:7, which Adventists interpret as a call to humans to worship the only true and Creator God because of the impending final judgment. The second message is found in Revelation 14:8 that announces the fall of Babylon, which Adventists interpret as the false church and religion. The third message is found in Revelation 14:9, which warns of severe punishment for those who receive some mark of an apocalyptic beast. "On these messages hinge the SDA theology of mission"

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[7]   The term describes the church as a group of people who still remain faithful to the complete teachings of the Bible, including the keeping of the Ten Commandments, particularly the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, unlike other churches who are thought of as not completely obedient to God.

(Alalade 2008:91); the Church emphasizes a sense of urgency found in the text and is driven by it.

The historical background of world mission, especially in Europe and America, shaped what eventually would be the SDA mission in Nigeria. Adventists' mission was also born within the larger context of a "great Second Advent awakening". During this period many Christian organizations proclaimed their prophetic interpretations of scriptures related to the second and imminent coming of Christ (Alalade 2008:9). This theological orientation not only influences the mission of the SDA Church, but in fact all its other activities and policies. In the pursuit of this task, SDAs use their educational institutions to serve God and humanity, and urge people to do the same. Adventist education aims to help humans become open to the invisible but all powerful God; spiritual awareness, personal salvation and connection with God are central to the purpose of the SDA educational system. This form of education should make people responsible and impactful in their communities. "Just as other Christian missions in Yorubaland, the major objectives of the Adventist school system are to bring about salvation to young people by accepting Jesus as their personal saviour; to help them achieve growth in character so that they will become responsible citizens and God fearing, honest, stable and productive members of the society" (Babalola 2002:102). They also use education as an instrument of partnership with the local authorities to ensure proper education for the citizens, even supporting public schools financially to this end (Babalola 2002:104). But behind these social and humanitarian activities is the evangelization of communities to ensure people are connected back to God and experience a spiritual rebirth: "[T]he major objectives of Adventist … system are about the salvation of young people by accepting Jesus Christ as their personal savior" (Babalola 2002:102).

Recently, the SDA Church commemorated its 100th year of presence in Nigeria; the organization celebrated the increase in membership and organization but did not say anything about confronting the economic, political and social challenges the country currently faces. It appears that this church does not feel the responsibility or need to structurally address the social, economic or unfavourable political conditions of the country; this is an underutilization of the potentials in the proclamation of the gospel.

1.2   Research problem and objectives

According to Godwin Okaneme (2017:122-124), the level of poverty and other social challenges in Nigeria are essentially a leadership challenge; the political class has not been accountable for their leadership and their activities in power. The nation is blessed with abundant human and natural resources, to such an extent that the welfare of citizens should be easily guaranteed. Instead, the plundering of the nation's wealth and the bad management of human resources have led to the current situation. It can be safely deduced that the problem of the nation is fundamentally a moral question.

The problem, however, is that the agency that voluntarily and consciously assumes the responsibility of promoting morality in Nigerian society appears to be unwilling to confront the moral challenge of corruption and bad governance. This inability and unwillingness on the part of the religious sector – not the least the Christian churches, and amongst them noticeably the SDA Church – to go beyond the individual level and take up the challenge of addressing the moral question at the national level, poses a real challenge. The task of teaching morals and values through pulpits should be stretched to advocate the accountability of leadership and good governance. Nigeria is a very religious society; hence the voice and opinion of religious leaders would make an impact in shaping Nigerian society's course.

Against the background of such a problem statement, this study examined the apparent disconnect between religion and transformational development in present-day, democratic Nigeria by specifically focusing on the case of the SDA Church and its missionary outlook and activity. In pursuing this aim, the study investigated the beliefs, doctrines and worldviews of the SDA Church in connection to the challenges of social engagement and transformational development. This included an exploration of the question of what informs the SDA Church's non-ecumenical stance, given its refusal to become a full member of ecumenical organizations such as the Christian Association of Nigeria, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and others who at times try to engage social and public issues.

This research critically examined the effect of the interpretations of certain texts by the SDA Church that promote lack of engagement with government on poverty and developmental issues in Nigeria. It also investigated the attitudes, beliefs and practices in the SDA Church in relation to advocacy for good governance and whistle blowing, especially against corruption and financial crime in the public sector as a legitimate task and mission of the church.

The objectives of this study were more specifically:

(a) To explore who the SDA Church is, its mission as a world church and its operations in Nigeria;

(b) To explore the SDA Church in Nigeria's beliefs, especially the messages it seeks to transmit, how it does so and the theological basis for its work;

(c) To explore the SDA Church in Nigeria's relationship with other Christian organizations/churches;

(d) To explore the theological basis for the SDA Church in Nigeria's relationship with the state and this church's contribution/lack of contribution to transformational development in Nigerian society;

(e) To reflect on the possibility of the SDA Church in Nigeria evolving theologically, similar to how this occurred during its historical development (Knight 2000: 17-28), such that it will help this church to find a theological basis for social engagement;

(f) To develop a contextual understanding of the notion of "transformational development" through an exploration of existing literature, and the agency role of the SDA and other churches as a catalyst of such development;

(g) To develop a perspective on how the SDA Church in Nigeria can act as an effective catalyst for transformational development.

The general objective of the research was to propose changes in the missiological orientation of the SDA Church in present-day democratic Nigeria to become an effective catalyst for transformational development. Within the framework of this general objective, the study aimed to address the following questions:

(a) Who are the Seventh-day Adventists, both in the international and Nigerian context?

(b) What is the theological undercurrent of the SDA Church's missiological orientation?

(c) What are the main features of the SDA's missiological orientation?

(d) What is the SDA theology on ecumenism and political engagement, and why is this church a-political and non-ecumenical?

(e) How and to what extent does this church collaborate with other religious organizations on social issues?

(f) How is the SDA Church in Nigeria currently socially engaged in addressing the poverty situation?

(g) What theological content would promote an orientation towards development?

(h)   How does the Church think and act about transformational development, and what would that mean in the current Nigeria democratic dispensation?

(i)   How does the SDA missiological orientation lead to a-political and limited social involvement of the SDA?

(j)   How can this church overcome these deficiencies and be more socially engaged and fulfil its role in transformational development?

(k)   What environmental or societal paradigm exists in Nigeria about the role of religious organizations in national development, and how has such a paradigm compromised the SDA Church's potentials for social change?

1.3   Research design and methodology

This study adopted the qualitative approach for its research. I studied the role of religious organizations in transformational development by especially focusing on the SDA Church; this led me to utilize the case study approach. The case study in this work takes the social sciences route involving "the study of the background, current status and environmental interaction of a given social unit" (Vyhmeister 2001:143). The qualitative method has variants such as the ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism (Eneanya 2012:18-19). The significant traditions here include phenomenology, which meant that this study was to be guided by the empirical, particularly the ethnographic approach to research. This is an approach that is suitable for obtaining information from a community or a group of people (Mouton 2003:148). in this case from the SDA community of faith. The ethnographic approach involves collecting data by direct inquiry and observation; it includes the description of the culture or society being researched through the process of participation-observation (Saliba 1974:145). Through this method, I developed deeper insight into the perspectives, attitudes and paradigmatic orientations of members, leaders and administrators of the SDA faith community on mission and transformational development. This led me in discovering the acceptable practice and beliefs of the community regarding mission, ecumenism and social engagement. I was able to get more insight into the understanding, concerns and prospects of the SDA Church's approach to, and philosophy of mission.

Being a member of the SDA Church myself, this work was carefully done, as much as possible like an "insider" who has an appreciation for the perspectives of the SDA sub-culture. By doing so the pitfalls often associated with ethnographic studies – an 'outsider' trying to see things

from the perspective of an 'insider' was eliminated. As a member of the SDA Church, I leveraged on being an 'insider' to assimilate feelings expressed through cognitive and mental attitudes of the respondents. Accordingly, I listened to the people interviewed, and noted the values, terminologies and understandings of the people. This is the opposite of imposing values and understandings on them (Saliba 1974:148). That is, to understand SDA's orientation towards transformational development from Adventists themselves, not from outsiders.

To this end, I conducted semi-structured interviews with some SDA Church institutional leaders, local church leaders, ordinary members (who do not hold any administrative positions), pastors, sub-groups such as men's groups (Adventist Men's Organization – AMO), women's groups (Adventist Women's Ministry – AWM) and the youth ministry (Adventist Youth Ministry - AYM) on their understanding of mission, social engagement and ecumenism.

This study highlighted the missiological approach of the SDAs and why they have chosen that route. An alternative missiological approach with the view of national transformational development was also proffered. This thesis proposes how the SDA as a faith community can think about its theology regarding social engagement and collaboration with other religious agencies. This is done in order to bring about transformational development in Nigeria. In a nutshell, the concept of transformational development was critical to this study, which as a starting point demanded that existing literature on the subject would be explored and studied, especially those highlighting the holistic approach to development.

1.4   Relevance of the study

It was determined from the outset that this study could assist in giving a theoretical roadmap as to how Nigeria could emerge out of poverty and other sociological challenges it currently faces through relying on the dynamics of faith-based agency as one vehicle for social change. A nation of about 170 million people is significant not only to itself but to the entire political region of Africa and the rest of the world. The problem of poverty on the scale that exists in Nigeria can be associated with the quality of available leadership. At the same time, I am of the opinion that communities of faith, such as the SDA Church, hold an important key to unlocking transformational leadership needed to lift the country out of its socio-economic problems.

However, I also believe that the SDA Church itself needs to rediscover its mission and relevance. This study should, as it were, open the eyes of the church to its unfulfilled God-given task, a unique mission to its community, and how theology, interpretation and understanding of what constitutes mission could affect the political, economic and social structures of a nation; such a study is non-existent in Nigeria at present.

The SDA Church in Nigeria is one such an organization with similar potential for community leadership; it has branches nationwide with a membership of almost two hundred thousand faithful members who contribute not only their time, energy and personal influence in society, but also their financial resources to support the activities of the church. Moreover, the Bible, being the source of faith and practice, is the basis for this church to think and act in certain (moral) ways. It is these thoughts and actions based on the Bible that have the potential capabilities for transformational development.

This thesis investigated the level or mode of social engagement and contribution by the SDA Church to Nigerian national development. Some scholarly work has been done in the area of religion and social engagement, and transformational development in Nigeria (Agbiji & Swart 2013:244; Agbiji 2012:238; Rapheal 2014:165-184) but very limited publication, if any, exists on the role of the SDA Church and how its theology affects the level of social engagement in Nigeria.

The SDA Church is an international organization which spread out from the United States in the mid-20th century due to its missional orientation. According to this orientation, the Church felt compelled to take its specific gospel messages to other world cultures. Missionaries were sent from the United States to other parts of the world, including Nigeria. It was the task of the earliest missionaries who came to Erunmu in the south-west of Nigeria to develop strategies on how the specific messages could be taken to other cultures within the country. This propagation of the gospel message, from the United States to different cultures in Nigeria, makes this study to clearly fall within the field of missiology. In particular, it involves the development of an understanding of how SDAs share their thoughts and convictions with other cultures and how the "Adventist culture"[8] and faith is transmitted all over the world.

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[8]   This term is intended to describe the totality of the lifestyle of Adventists that may be based on theology or tradition within this subculture.

More importantly, this study provides a contextual framework for making the Adventists' mission in Nigeria contemporary, relevant and applicable to the specific Nigerian situation. It provides a basis for developing a guiding framework for how to inculturate the Adventist world church in new environments that makes it living, relevant and meeting the distinctive needs of the area where mission is being done. Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony (2102:236) explains inculturation as the incarnation of Christianity's ideals or concepts in certain cultural settings in ways that are fitting and acceptable to that particular culture. There is uniqueness in the form of Christianity in this specific culture, which does not compromise the principles of the religion but in a beautiful way is influenced by the culture. Without this type of dynamic evolution and contextualization, a faith community might not be able to create meaning in a given society.

Finally, it is postulated that the result of this work, which highlights the role of religious and faith-based organizations in national transformational development, may be adopted by communities facing similar situations as Nigeria. The transformational development agenda being proposed provides a broader structure and approach than typical national development programmes being pursued so far in Nigeria. Previous government developmental agendas focused on the material and economic improvement and often neglected the role of faith communities, or conceived a narrow perspective on their roles. In addition, faith communities such as the SDAs have themselves also a narrow conception of their roles in national development. This research is aimed at opening a conversation on extending their mission to social engagement and transformational development. As such it envisions sustainable growth in the total well-being of Nigerians in every sphere of their lives, such as the infrastructural, social, economic, material, psychological and spiritual dimensions. It proposes the involvement of every social institution, including faith-based organizations. It also challenges faith-based organizations such as the SDA Church to see being a change agent for transformational development as part of its mission.

Every community and organization usually has different subgroups, agencies, formal or informal, that can be utilized in pursuing transformational development. Nigeria, as a community, has a huge diversity of such groups – such as religious organizations, pressure groups, political parties, other associations, governmental agencies, and so on – but they have not been maximized as agents of change and development. The challenges are deep and intertwined, and are present within the very fabric of the nation, down to its grassroots. It will

therefore take social machinery with the potential of engaging on grassroots level to facilitate the desired transformational development. The top-bottom model of change may not be adequate because the people at grassroots level may not take ownership of such drives towards change. In contrast, the nature of churches is such that they connect with people of all categories: the rich, poor, elites and ordinary people all converge and interact at various levels every week. Such national contexts, most pertinently in Africa, facing similar social and developmental challenges, might be able to utilize the model and strategies being proposed in this study to address their own situations. Faith-based communities can act therefore as leaders and transformational development agencies because of their strong potential of influencing people in achieving set goals.

1.5 State of research and literature review

In Nigeria the study of mission from the angle of social justice and social engagement is relatively new; most of what we know in mission is in the area of methodology and approach to mission. From a broad perspective, Andrew A. Moemeka (1984:45) described how pervasive and influential religion has traditionally and historically being in African society. Religion shapes the moral atmosphere of the society. Unfortunately, the religious community has not leveraged this influence enough in addressing the contemporary developmental aspirations of Nigerians. However, due to the growing socio-economic challenges in Nigeria, more voices are being heard about the need for social engagement by the Christian churches. For example, Agbiji (2012: 238) made a case for churches to engage more in advocacy and pursuit of social justice, in addition to charity and other self-help projects they already engage in. Rapheal (2014:178-182) also emphasizes the potential roles religion can play, if well harnessed, in Nigeria's national development. Such roles include modelling upright leadership and being a voice of conscience to political leaders.

Christian O. Uchegbue (2013:141, 148, 149) argues that although Christianity should not be a political organization, it should play the role of counsellor, guide and conscience to Nigeria as a nation. Christianity should also realize its social establishment potentials. Christianity as religion should play the prophetic role of denouncing injustice and other practices that have worked against the development of Nigeria.

Citing historical antecedence of Christianity as a major contributor to the development of the Roman Empire, Solomon O. Akanbi and Jaco Beyers (2017:3-6) posit that religion has the ability to sustain a society when it is under some kind of strain or tension, particularly socio-economic in nature. Christianity has the potential of transforming society positively. It should bring transparency to economic, political and social policies aimed at developing a community. It is therefore lamentable that in spite of the teeming population of Christians in Nigeria, particularly in the southwest, all manner of anti-development vices are established in the country. Although Christian groups, especially the Pentecostals, have contributed to the development of Nigeria through the establishment of rehabilitation centres, educational institutions and welfare programmes, churches have failed to address structural injustice in society, which has made development of the country very difficult. Pentecostalism in Nigeria should seek to address the scourge of bad leadership, rather than focussing merely on the conversion of persons into its faith.

The importance of seeing social engagement as a necessary component of mission proved critical to this study; therefore, part of my exploration laid a foundation for understanding how mission has been defined or explained and how the definitions and explanations help to shift social engagement to the centre of mission and missiology.

Many authors have given perspectives about what mission is about; in very basic and general terms, the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (2002:1976) defines mission as a demanding assignment or task. The *New Encyclopedia Britannica* (2010:187) says Christian mission is "an organized effort for the propagation of the Christian faith". It involves the activities through which other world cultures are influenced by the Christian thought. Christians feel compelled by the mandate given by Jesus to his followers to take a certain message considered as good news to all world cultures (John 14:16; 20:21-22). Reflective activities on biblical mission thus identify God as the initiator of mission. The hermeneutical reflection on the aforementioned texts shows series of sending: God sends Jesus and the Spirit to humans, and Jesus sends humans as agents to fellow humans. Mission then should really be understood as God's, hence the phrase *missio Dei* (Langmead 2013:67-79). Christians wish, as they should, to take the sending task seriously; the introductory statements at the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne express regrets for perceived short-comings in the task of reaching out and it encourages Christians to be actively involved in witnessing for God on earth (Lausanne Covenant 1974).

The understanding of what mission is has grown over time: from a period in the history when mission was thought to be done abroad and being cross-cultural or outside the group of those "giving" to the contemporary period where missional activities are subjected to more critical analysis. These days, people's groups are seen as mutual partners, to that extent that they have something unique to offer besides receiving (Presler 2010:195-196).

Titus Presler (2010:195) describes mission as "the ministry in the dimension of the difference". He explains that the identification of the difference between at least two parties, that is the "giver" and the "receiver", is the basis of mission; such difference, Presler notes, could be theological, cultural, economical, political, developmental or in any other sphere of the life of communities.

John Savage (1963:70-73) posited that mission has to do with the response to the dilemma of humanity. It points to activities of organizations that are dependent on people's enterprise and their passion to provide both physical and spiritual services with the view of solving or ameliorating the troubles of the world. These activities are based on the understanding of Christians' response to God's will. Christians engage in resolving contemporary challenges faced by humans because they see doing so as part of their duty in preparing the world for the eschatological end of time.

Stefan Paas (2016:44-46) argues that mission has to do with being involved in the work of the Trinity (*imago Dei*). It is based on the declaration of the kingdom of God and the pronouncement of the salvific work of Jesus. It is the establishment of God's agenda in the world as modelled and exemplified by Jesus. He further states that Christian mission has its boundaries; its work is not without boundaries. It must be done in alignment with how Jesus did his work on earth. For example, it must be devoid of violence. It strictly has to do with reflecting the kingdom of God, healing the sick, caring for the materially deprived, empowering those on the fringe of the society, promoting healthy communities, good governance and a decent lifestyle in the name of Jesus. Christian mission is necessarily evangelistic.

In the Nigerian experience, an authentic mission will therefore have to address the difference between what ought to be (the ideal case) and what actually is (the reality); the gap between the ideal minimum wage, medical care, infrastructures, etc., and what actually is obtainable should be part of what Christian mission should address. I therefore think that by implication,

one can extend Presler's definition to include social engagement for the purpose of transformational development. The understanding of mission as emanating from God serves as the basis for Christians or church organizations' mandate for mission, and it demands that the difference highlighted by Presler be addressed through all available opportunities; such opportunities include what Mae E. Canon (2009:31-32) describes as seeking biblical justice. Christian mission may be motivated by compassion in order to address the perceived difference. And in this regard Canon points out that "compassion means to suffer with or to walk alongside someone by empathizing with their needs and experience" (Canon 2009:32). Canon's argument is that the difference is often caused by injustice, to which mission is required to respond; compassion responds to the difference, but justice responds to the cause of the difference.

Gwamma Dogara Je'adyigbe (2012:286-287) notes the developments in the field of religious studies from the abstractive level of discourse to pragmatic relevance. This represents a shift in African scholarship to theological discourses that are relevant for current social realities, as reflected by scholarly work in the areas of political theology, theology of development, contextual theology and so on that are geared towards social transformation. Work in these and other areas lays a foundation for the thesis regarding Adventists' theological re-orientation towards social engagement. Religious agencies (such as the SDA Church) take the Bible as their source of authority and guidance for practice and mission; this faith resource is the rock and the ultimate authority for social change (Je'adyibe 2012:287).

According to Je'adyibe (2012:297), "[T]he penetrating influence of Jesus to transform lives, culture and nations is still a continuing human experience in the 21st century world of digital and information technology that has transformed our world." Therefore the religion of Christ should be capable of making a difference in Nigeria through transforming society.

Onongha (2014:11-12) emphasizes the fact that Christianity has a role in shaping the society, especially in the area of combating the scourge of corruption globally. It names the duty of disciplining, espousing the virtue of sacrifice, contentment and true conversion. The body of Christ is expected to champion the campaign and movement against corruption. He posits that true conversion has the potential of societal transformation. He argues that the mission of the Christian body is essentially calling people to repentance. He opines that repentance has greater

potential for societal transformation than revolutions. The former engenders sustainability while the latter, wears out quickly.

Onongha (2014:13-14) further laments the moving to the fringe of some denominations, particularly the Seventh-day Adventists in the advocacy against corruption. He argues that a very important reason for this minimal involvement in advocacy is that the theology of advocacy is not yet well developed. He wishes that the Seventh-day Adventist Church would be more influential in shaping the moral life of the society. Churches should employ biblical teachings in mitigating the effect of covetousness, consumerism, greed and other behaviours that promote corruption. Christian organizations should espouse biblical principles in shaping cultures. Through this, debilitating and corruption promoting cultural practices will be corrected by positive Christian culture. Furthermore, churches should not tacitly endorse corruption by their silence. Rather, they should be vocal against corrupt practices.

Awuah (2016:1-3) notes the tension that exists between religion and politics, particularly between the SDAs in Ghana and political development. The limited interaction of SDAs with politics and other religious groups negatively impacts the influence of the SDA Church in Ghana. SDA's theology and eschatology makes the denomination exclusive in behaviour. Awuah (2016:17-20) reflects on the attitudes of SDAs in Ghana as purportedly influenced by the writings of one of the co-founders of the SDA Church who was also considered a prophetess, Mrs. Ellen G. White. Her writings are interpreted by members as discouraging SDA pastors and Bible teachers, even members from political discourse in church, voting and affiliation to political agendas. This stance, however, is a limitation to the mission of the Christian church which should also transform the unjust structures in the society or structures that promote injustice within the society.

The hardliner position against SDAs' involvement in politics, voting and discourse however became more relaxed over time as the denomination's leadership over time indicated that voting was permissible if it will uphold high moral standard in the society. The conservative stance against politics has however continued to influence SDAs political engagement in Ghana (Awuah 2016:52-53). SDA members are sometimes encouraged to engage in activism because speaking the truth and standing up for the oppressed are inherently Christian duties. They should however shun any form of violence in their activism. Over time, SDAs have shown more interest in social engagement although members differ in opinion on the level of

such engagements based on their understanding of scripture and E. G. White's writings (Awuah 2016:81-82, 124, 125).

The potential role of the clergy in the drive towards transformational development in Nigeria is highlighted in the work of Toryough (2012:237-255). He has developed the thesis that if the biblical character and prophet, John the Baptist, could speak in the name of God to address economic and social injustice, then contemporary clergy can and should do the same to reform those societies and socio-economic structures that have made its people poor. This work places the work of religious leaders (including those in Nigeria) and of the role of those who speak in the name of the Lord in its historical context even up to this present time (Toryough 2012:249).

Agbiji and Swart (2013:244) identify the ecclesiological order as having both the potential and the responsibility of providing leadership for transformational development in Nigeria. They argue that religious agencies and their leadership should inculcate a new leadership paradigm that goes beyond a strictly spiritual emphasis and sees itself as an agent for social change. Odumosu and Simbine (2011:4), in their research,[9] revealed that although most faith-based organizations in the Nigerian context provide social services, fewer engage in community development activities or advocacy. As such, they have not been able to take advantage of the opportunities available to reduce the poverty level in Nigeria. The reason for this inability is their lack of understanding of the concept of the gospel of the kingdom of God (Efuntade 2012:29-33). According to Efuntade in the afore-cited research, the attitudes towards social justice as part of Christian mission was that of apathy; members and ministers alike understood the work of the church more as evangelizing and charity. Although Efuntade used a local church in Lagos as a case study, the research might be indicative of the general perspective of church mission among the network of Adventist congregations nationwide. Rowland Nwosu (2014:25-34) proclaims that the SDA Church is geared towards wholeness in its mission; Nwosu, in this work, identifies the connectivity and interdependence in all spheres of existence: spiritual or temporal, terrestrial or celestial. He argues that a robust mission, such as that of the SDAs, should address all these aspects of life. This argument serves as a platform for the thesis in the proposed study that the church should also engage socially to enhance the transformational development drive of Nigeria.

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[9] The essence of the research was not to canvass for greater or lesser roles in national development; rather it wanted to explore the role religion plays in the developmental processes.

In spite of the underutilization of their potential, the capability of religious organizations in national development continues to be identified by prominent scholars such as Carole Rakodi (2007:17-22). She highlights some of the obstructions in appreciating the possible roles of religion in development and how this limits the potential of religion as agent of transformational development. Rakodi, in her work, affirms that religious beliefs and worldview affect individual attitudes, values and actions towards society, organizations as well as the nation (2007:23-24). Therefore a proper orientation that links spirituality to social responsibility will also affect the people's attitude towards the social and economic condition of Nigeria.

Bryant Myers (2011:3-4) gives a holistic perspective on the discourse on development, stressing the importance of going beyond the acquisition of material prosperity as evidence of development. Myers extends the spheres of life that need development to social, psychological and spiritual dimensions, hence his preference for the use of the term "transformational development". The inclusion of spiritual well-being by Myers as part of the components that should be included in development validates the role of churches in development.

The transformational development agenda should also address the issues of ecology, population explosion, and other issues that transcend philosophical or political postures of nations (David Korten 1981). Korten argues that the transformation agenda should seek ways of engaging societies' institutions in addressing the problem of inequality in resource allocation for sustaining "real growth". This publication by Korten therefore gives legitimacy to the need for religious groups to act as agencies and be societal institutions for transformational development.

1.6   Limitations of the study

This research was limited to attitudes, beliefs and practices of SDAs pertaining to social engagement and ecumenical association for the purpose of national development. A period of about one hundred years (1914-2014) was in view, although the focus was really from 1999 to 2014 when democratic governance became more stable and uninterrupted by any military incursion in contemporary Nigeria.

1.7 Ethical considerations

This work abides strictly by the ethical standards of the University of South Africa for conduct of research. The policy guiding the university requires the submission of an ethical clearance form at the appropriate time. To this end, I worked fully with my supervisor and also did this research in alignment with the University's policies on ethics provided on relevant websites to ensure the integrity of this research. My sources are well documented. Furthermore I avoided plagiarism and made sure that all data provided here are authentic.

The participants in my research groups were properly informed of their rights, especially their right to privacy, and of my intention to make the publication ensuing from this research available to them upon demand. All the people who participated in my interviews were fully aware that their voices would be recorded and they all voluntarily shared their perspectives with me on the issues discussed. They were duly informed that the interview was to be used for this doctoral thesis. The true identity of the persons interviewed was also not revealed. The names of interviewees that were used in this thesis were therefore pseudonyms.

1.8 Chapter outline

This study is divided into six chapters. The following outline represents a brief summary of each chapter.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

Chapter 1 constitutes the general background to this study, and here the parameters by which the work is measured are set out. This entails a description of the problem the project addresses, the aim and objectives of the study, and the methodology and research design. Furthermore, it highlights existing literature upon which the thesis is based.

Chapter 2: A brief history of Nigeria's political and democratic development

This chapter presents an overview of the emergence of Nigeria as a country, its struggle for identity as a nation and how it struggled to develop as a democracy. The historical narrative gives perspective to the country's contemporary socio-economic status. The chapter reveals how the European intrusion into the region's socio-economic life laid a bad foundation for what the country has continued to suffer until today. This chapter also offers a perspective on the fact that Nigeria does not constitute a nation *per se*, but an arrangement where multiple

ethnic groups and cultures with varying metaphysical worldviews were forced together to become a nation, an arrangement that has posed a challenge to the development aspirations of the country. Chapter 2 offers a panorama of the political evolution of Nigeria: from colonialism to independence, ensuing coup d'états and eventually a budding democracy. It reveals how these series of events have aided or challenged national development.

Chapter 3: The Seventh-Day Adventist Church and Christian mission in democratic Nigeria

Chapter 3 provides historical insight into the development of the SDA Church in Nigeria with its roots in the international missionary work of this global denomination. The discussion highlights how the denomination's missiological orientation and theology of mission provided the impetus to take its unique message to the whole world, which necessitated its spread also among the Nigerian population. The chapter provides names of missionaries and earliest indigenes who embraced the SDA Church, dates, and important places where the church was established and grew. Chapter 3 also offers perspectives on the manner and extent to which the denomination has contributed to the development of the country and the theological basis for its approach. This chapter also shows how the evolving political structure of Nigeria and the restructuring of the regions through state creation also shaped SDA mission in Nigeria. The contributions of the denomination to the socio-economic development of Nigeria were also highlighted.

Chapter 4: Transformational development as mission: Challenge to the Nigerian church

This chapter offers a Christian perspective on the Nigerian national development discourse. The discussion begins by first highlighting the various efforts made by the country to develop. It is pointed out in greater detail how the attempts to develop Nigeria have been built on a narrow understanding of development that is measured by the degree of physical and material acquisition. This understanding was entrenched by Western development agencies such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations (UN) development agencies and similar organizations. These use indices like the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), per capita income, and physical infrastructures as the main indicators of development. These Western development agencies basically use production, loans, grants, democracy and similar instruments as tools for development. This chapter notes that all the development plans of the nation, from independence to the democratic era, have not yielded desired results. This chapter therefore argues that the concept of transformational development is the appropriate Christian

approach, especially to sustainable development. It is a response to the deprivation in Nigeria through social and pragmatic actions in the name of Christ. It is evangelism, the proclamation of the good news to the underdeveloped state of Nigeria through social engagement. It entails establishing the kingdom of God in the human community. The restoration of image of God in humans brings justice and equity into relationships, between humans and between humans and their environment. Chapter 4 posits that justice and equity in society lift people out of their deprivation. The physical and material deprivation in Nigeria is a symptom of spiritual deprivation. This chapter argues that development must be holistic. It is not only material, it is also spiritual. A spiritual organization therefore cannot be indifferent to the social and economic needs of its community. This chapter also urges the SDA Church to see transformational development as mission and also to see mission as transformation. It encourages the denomination to embrace ecumenical relationships in order to make the transformational development drive in Nigeria more effective.

Chapter 5: Case study: The Seventh-day Adventist Church – an empirical perspective

This chapter discusses the results of the empirical research conducted as part of the study, in view of gaining first-hand insight into how SDAs perceive themselves in terms of their mission in Nigeria. The chapter discusses the opinions of key church officials, lay members, youths and ministry groups within the denomination on what they perceive is the mission of the SDA Church, as well as the church's approach to mission in relation to issues such as ecumenism, the social gospel, inter-faith relations and advocacy. The chapter reveals SDAs are focused and take the proclamation of the Second Advent of Christ as priority of their mission. It reveals the desire of SDA Church members for their denomination to wield more influence in the political development of Nigeria. It shows that members want the denomination to make official comments on governance and the state of the nation. The chapter also reveals that members expect more SDA Church members to actively participate in the political process in Nigeria, that is voting and being voted for. The chapter also shows that members are open to collaboration with other denominations and other religions although doing so without compromising SDA beliefs. The chapter also discusses the perceptions of non-SDA Nigerians on the SDA Church's contribution to national development. The non-SDA Nigerians opined that although the SDA Church has impacted in the area of education and health service delivery, not much is heard of it in the political development of Nigeria.

Chapter 6: Becoming a catalyst for transformational development: Concluding perspectives on the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and its mission in democratic Nigeria

In this last chapter of the study strategies are proposed through which the SDA Church could become a better agent of transformational development as part of its legitimate mission in Nigeria. The chapter recommends an expansion of its theological understanding of key elements of its doctrine such as on eschatology, Sabbath doctrine, ecumenism, evangelism and advocacy (for religious liberty). The chapter acknowledges the contributions of the SDA Church, especially in charitable mission, education and health, whilst at the same time it urges the denomination to approach issues of development in a more structural and holistic manner. This chapter therefore urges the denomination not to focus on mere conversion to the denomination or personal spiritual conversion, but rather to pursue the redemption of Nigeria from the current condition of underdevelopment and poverty.

<center>**Chapter 2**</center>

<center>**A brief history of Nigeria's political and democratic development**</center>

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the emergence of Nigeria as a nation and the historical narrative of its development from the pre-colonial period to the current democratic experience. It highlights the political evolution of the nation. The chapter is intended to connect the historical background of its political, social and religious experience to contemporary challenges faced in the developmental aspirations of the country. This portion of the thesis is meant to give a context to the conversation about transformational development in Nigeria and what has hindered its appreciable and sustainable growth. The foundation of an unjust power structure among the ethnic groups, laid by the colonial authorities for the emerging country, Nigeria, continues to haunt it till date. It also highlights how the interests of the ethnic groups that now share one country have differed. This has built animosity among the ethnic groups in such ways that co-operation has been limited, to the detriment of the drive towards development. In addition to the negative impact of ethnic diversity and their interests, this chapter investigates the religious heritage of the people of Nigeria and how the diversity affects their developmental aspirations. It notes that the perennial religious conflicts may not be unconnected to the feeling of marginalization and inequitable structures in the society. This chapter aims to highlight the cause of conflicts and how it has impacted on development in Nigeria. The chapter also briefly introduces the efforts being made to overcome the difficulties of the past to establish a sustainable democracy and socio-economic development. The chapter should impact on Christian mission and Christianity's approach to development.

2.2 Nigeria's political and democratic development

Nigeria's struggle towards development has gone through different phases. There are significant phenomena that have shaped and may continue to determine how well the country will fare in its developmental aspirations. This part of the chapter examines different phases in the life of the country, the efforts towards development and the challenges experienced during those phases. The phases include the period before colonization, the period of colonization, the struggle for independence and the coup d'état that followed. Against this backdrop the

discussion also pays attention to the movements towards the reestablishment of civil governance that emerged, the series of military interference in governance and the eventual restoration of democratic governance.

2.2.1 *The pre-colonial era*

This section is critical to this study because it provides the historical context to the issue of development in Nigeria. Some of the challenges currently faced in the national developmental aspirations can be better addressed when the nature of the ethnic groups, their socio-economic and political structures (before the interruption of European colonialists) is understood. The legacy of distrust created by British colonialists among the ethnic groups endures in the current milieu.

Geographically, the area that is now known as Nigeria lies between latitudes 4 and 14 degrees north and longitudes 2 and 15 degrees east. In its north, it is bordered by the Sahara deserts, Niger Republic, a part of the Chad. To the south of Nigeria lies the Gulf of Guinea, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean. To the east and west of Nigeria are large plain land areas, except for the Adamawa-Cameroon Mountain ranges in the north-eastern part of the country (Udo 2004:7-8). It shares borders with Cameroon in the east and with Republic of Benin in the west. Prior to the advent of the European colonists, this above described land area may have had up to 250 ethnic groups with 3 dominant or major ones, that is, Ibo, Yoruba and Hausa (Deji 2013:84; Abe 2010:21-24). Kehinde Abe in the cited work mentions the existence of about 133 ethnic groups in the country speaking various languages and dialects. This kind of social and demographic complexity has some impact on the development of the nation state as expected. The attendant adverse phenomena will be highlighted later on in this study.

The political, economic, judicial, military and other spheres of lives of these ethnic groups were well defined before Europeans came and eventually subjugated the people (Deji 2013:84-87). The economic interest of Europeans in West Africa which was seen as the region that could supply the raw materials needed to sustain the industrial revolution in Europe was a major motivation for invading of the continent including the people that will eventually constitute Nigeria. In addition to economic interest, Europeans Christian missionaries made it a duty to convert people who lived in this region to Christianity (Deji 2013:87; Ajayi & Akintoye

2012:280). It can therefore be safely deduced that development was never the objective of the Europeans.

According to Udo (2004:8-9), the development of the socio-economic life of the pre-colonial Nigerian people had always been affected either negatively or positively by certain events and circumstances. On one hand difficult, harsh terrain, migration, intra- or inter-tribal military conflict, and natural disasters such as droughts impacted the region negatively. For example, the people of Egba in Yorubaland in the south-west of the country were attacked by intruders from Dahomey (modern-day Benin Republic) in the mid-nineteenth century. The Sahara desert encroachment in the countries north of Nigeria led to people migrating into Nigerian territory. Such events led to the economic strength of these ethnic groups being put under strain, even in the pre-colonial milieu (Udo 2004:8) On the other hand, Nigerians also benefited from neighbouring communities and the natural environment. There was trading happening between people, for example, kola-nut was traded between northern Nigerians and the people beyond the Sahara. The people on the coast in the south had interactions with Europeans trading human cargo, oil palm products and other merchandise (Ayandele 2004:367). In addition, the social and economic lives of the communities were affected by the natural geographical environment. In the Niger Delta for example, rivers, streams and tributaries constitute a large part of the physical environment, which resulted in commerce, transportation and social life being built around water. Fishing is a major occupation while transportation is mostly done by boats. The northern Nigerian farmers grow grain crops and in the south-west of the country tubers and stem crops are grown. Apart from the effect of topography on commerce, these topographies also determined where they lived. For example, landforms and natural geographical features such as mountains and valleys became places of refuge and subsequently their abode in times of war and beyond (Faseke 2002:1-2; Udo 2004:12-13).

Walter Rodney wrote extensively on the impact of the European colonial activities on Africa generally, especially on the region's development. Nigerian people were noted for well established empires and governance such as the powerful Oyo and Benin kingdoms. The hide and leather tanning industry in northern Nigeria as well as the glass and bead industry Nupe people (Rodney 1973:11, 16, 18). In spite of the challenges the region encountered regarding security, physical environment and terrain, people living in this region now known as Nigeria were in the direction of development. They were familiar with their socio-economic and

geographic realities and they were accustomed to their different, heterogeneous worldviews on metaphysical realities, governance, agriculture, trade and how they generally lived.

Umejesi (2012:51-52) highlights the pre-colonial socio-economic development of the south-eastern region of Nigeria and that of the Niger Delta area. He notes their uniquely well defined economy, land ownership governance and sovereignty. The colonization of the people was an intrusion and disturbance to their process and journey towards their unique development. This is unlike the European narrative of Africans in a precarious position needing intervention of the white people.

2.2.2   The colonial era and the movement toward independence

The relationship between native Nigerians and white Europeans is known to have been as early as the 16th century. The relationship grew over time. Whilst the Europeans entered Nigeria as explorers, missionaries and traders, the relationship eventually took another dimension when these Europeans enforced their rule on Nigerians (Ayandele 2004:367-368). Nigerians were forced into treaties and became unwilling subjects of the British Empire. The European explorers had subtly introduced European products such as iron tools, guns and textile to the people of Nigeria and this became a trap for the unsuspecting people. The prospect of superior weaponry and access to European luxury goods were the reasons to be in alliance with Europeans rather than the Islamic forces of the Arabs in northern Nigeria. This way of thinking prepared the way for European and American missionaries to begin operations in Nigeria. Between 1842 and 1892, about eight missionary groups, such as the Wesleyan Methodist, the Church Missionary Society (Anglican), the Southern Baptist, the Qua Iboe and the Catholic Church, had made inroads into southern Nigeria. The local authority and populace assumed that alliances with missionaries would give them access to European leadership, such as the British monarch, in order to fight off their enemies. This course of action, of romance with missionaries, was later regretted, not because the political alliances did not yield any good, but because of ridicule the missionaries poured on their traditional religion; this was considered a betrayal of their trust (Ayandele 2004:369-376).

It is important to highlight the role of Christian missionary groups at this point in the development of Nigeria. As noted earlier, missionaries were more loyal to the colonial and imperial business empires of Britain. The Royal Niger Company was a major business arm of

Britain in Nigeria. The companies eliminated the Nigerian middle-men and moved towards a monopoly of trade and commerce. The missionaries paid little or no attention to sidelined locals who groaned under the exploitative agencies of Britain. This attitude of indifference was exhibited in the Western, Eastern and Niger Delta Regions of the country (Ayandele 2004:371-388). The economic crises among the Brass people of Niger Delta would be a case in point. The Brass people embraced Christianity due to the strong trust the Brass people had in the British people. Missionaries in Nigeria considered the people of Brass to be exemplary Christians. More than other tribal groups in Nigeria, the Brass people abandoned their idols in order to be faithful Christians. According to Umejesi (2012:48) the Europeans capitalized on the limited understanding of several treaty documents (on security, friendship and business) signed by various ethnic kingdom chiefs who had little interest in religion, but security and trade. The indigenous people did not plan to "sell out" their freedom and that of their territories to Britain but that was the outcome. European authorities fraudulently established themselves through a corporate entity, the Royal Niger Company (RNC), which they used as a vehicle to drive these treaties. The RNC was a real British business giant. By the time the RNC became a quasi-governmental agency, the Brass people were edged out of the trade matrix of the Niger Delta. The missionaries did not do anything to rescue the Brass people out of their economic predicament. The Brass people therefore felt betrayed by the missionaries. The Brass people lost their commercial power and economic relevance (Ayandele 2004:371-388).

In most cases, the Nigerian indigenous leadership was not really interested in the religion of the white people; they sought alliance with them to defeat their internal or external aggressors. Initially it seemed that this was achieved, but in the long run, the locals soon found out that there was little help coming from the missionaries (Ayandele 2004: 368, 369, 388, 389). But on a positive note, certain practices prevalent among Nigerian people in the religious sphere such as human sacrifices and the killing of twins were ended by the missionaries like Mary Slessor (twins were perceived as a strange and bad omen in parts of the country such as among Calabar people). The missionaries also began educating Nigerians as they built mission schools (Umoren 2018:4)

Growing trade interests in Nigeria motivated Europeans to meddle with local politics. With the collaboration of the missionaries, the way of life, culture and religion of the Nigerians were being influenced and altered by Europeans in favour of the latter's religion, culture and

economy. What appeared to be the development of Nigerians began to turn very sour. The relationship between the Europeans and Nigerians turned increasingly tense. The European authorities often resorted to force, bullying and manipulation to achieve their political control over the region (Ayandele 2004:368-369).

Through a long process of quelling all local opposition to the British administration, the colonial government was officially established in Nigeria. By 1914, the British colonial system was firmly established after a long process of amalgamating various administrative units. The process of amalgamating the northern and southern regions of Nigeria, which began in 1898, was completed in 1914 by Sir Frederick Lugard (Tamuno 2004:393-394). The result of lack of depth in the amalgamation planning was immediate. For example, there was confusion in administration of land. Tribal land fell under different territories, some border towns found that part of their territory fell under different administrations. Families living in the same town found out they now belonged to different administrative authorities. Some found out that they now belonged to administration other than their own tribes (Umejesi 2012:55). This is foundation for the perception of marginalization and alienation.

Nigeria achieved its independence from the British colonial administrators on October 1, 1960. This was achieved through the nationalist movement which had its root in the 1800s. According to Gabriel Olakunle Olusanya (2004:545-546), the nationalist movement was nurtured by various factors, such as the resentment from the people due to racism, segregation and constant oppression of the locals by the foreigners. There were also various groups that had existed prior to British rule; the Sokoto caliphate through *jihad* (Islamic Holy War) had been in control of almost all the northern region and had been accepted by the locals before the advent of the Europeans. In addition, the Nigerian locals felt discriminated against, denied of opportunities and sidelined by the Europeans, in spite of the Western education some of them had received from missionary institutions. This added to the growing agitations for freedom (Olusanya 2004: 545-546; Abe 2010:51-70).

The activities of these various agitating groups who felt politically and economically sidelined lead to the formation of political groups and coalitions. This was early in the 20th century when the spirit of nationalism reached its peak in Nigeria. Some of the political organizations were the People's Union and the Lagos Ancillary of the Aborigine Rights Protection Society (LAARPS). In addition, more organizations agitating initially for increased participation in

governing processes were established. As time went on, groups that fought for equal rights alongside the whites, self-determination and self-government were likewise formed. The groups became trade unions, youth organizations and cultural and ethnic movements. Some of these groups were the Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM), Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), Igbo Federal Union and the Egbe Omo Oduduwa.

In addition to the above, Christian missionary activities, especially in the education sector, could be seen as contributing factors towards emancipation; education became the tool for engineering intellectual capacity to initiate dialogue towards self-determination. The constitutional reforms initiated by Hugh Clifford (the successor of Lord Frederick Lugard) in 1922 gave Nigerians the opportunity to be appointed to political offices as representatives of the general population through the process of election. The agitation for self-determination hence became more focused and achievable (Abe 2010:51- 60).

Edewor, Aluko & Folarin (2014:72-73) pointed out the fact that the colonial administration had underestimated the highly diversified nature of Nigeria in terms of culture, language and religion in the amalgamation of the South and North in 1914. The Northern Protectorate was basically Islamic due to the long-standing influence of the Jihadists who had inculcated Islamic values and education into the people. This had limited the influence of the Christian missionaries in northern Nigeria. The Islamic influence in the north also meant very limited opportunities for Western education amongst northern Nigerians, unlike in the south where missionaries were able to establish schools (Omoyeni & Omoyeni 2014:268). There were pre-colonial tension and rivalry among ethnic groups that were never taken into consideration before the amalgamation. These differences should have been taken account of for the peaceful co-existence of the country going forward. A peaceful co-existence would be a critical factor for national development.

Due to the complexities stated above, the agitation for independence and self-rule was being built on ethnic and religious sentimentalism rather than on a corporate and national paradigm (Abe 2010:59). This phenomenon of ethnic and religious sentimentalism became the foundation for some of the developmental problems of Nigeria until the present. The political parties that participated in the first democratic elections of the Federal Republic of Nigeria were basically formed on the basis of ethnic affiliations. The first of the three main parties was the Action Group (AG) which was more of a Yoruba party in the south-west of Nigeria. The

second party was the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) that was a party dominated by the Igbo in the south-east of Nigeria. The third major party was the Northern People Congress (NPC), a party predominantly supported by the northern Nigerians. It is important to note, however, that all the parties had supporters from all the regions in the country in spite of the heavy regional and ethnic sentiments that controlled their formation (Ademoyega 1981:6-8, 18).

In the federal elections of December 1959, the results showed the political strength of the parties. The NPC won 148 seats, while NCNC and its political ally, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), won 89 seats. The AG and its ally, the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), won 75 seats (Ademoyega 1981:8).[10] This political formation eventually led to a series of meetings and political negotiations that prepared the way for Nigeria's independence. Nigeria finally got its long-awaited independence from the British colonial administration on October 1, 1960. Unfortunately the independence was not adequate to address the developmental issues of Nigeria; the crevices in the Nigerian polity increased progressively (Ademoyega 1981:15-30).

2.2.3   *The post-colonial era*

After democratic rule and Nigeria's independence was obtained on October 1, 1960, the challenges of integrating peoples with distinctive cultural, political, educational and religious paradigms became more obvious. According to Ademoyega (1981:11-15) the agenda of the leadership from northern Nigeria was to maintain the integrity of the religious, cultural and political structures of their region, whilst the political leadership from the western and eastern Regions wanted to pursue national goals. With the system the British left behind, the largest region, i.e. the Northern Region, controlled the power of the central government. This began to undermine the unity of the country. Ademoyega (1981:4, 9, 10) in this regard criticizes the British for deliberately creating an unjust and inequitable political structure that favoured the north. According to him, the NPC-led government led by Balewa also attempted to make laws

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[10]   Ademoyega (1981:6) states that opposition parties originated from the Northern Region of the country and in the Middle Belt area. The parties (NEPU and UMBC) formed a coalition with the NCNC and the AG respectively.

that would undermine the structure of the financial institutions in the south of the country, such as banks, before a legal challenge brought the process to an end.

Achike Udenwa (2013:155-157) points out factors that were prominent in the administration of the first democracy; one such factor was that the politicians from the northern part of the country dominated the political landscape. Nigerians from other regions of the country felt marginalized and sidelined in the power structure of the country. The leaders corrupted the polity and politicized the military. The leaders inherited from the British colonial administration the systematic entrenchment of injustice and the inequitable distribution of national wealth and resources. Nigeria continued the quota system (that had been in operation before independence in 1960) in giving opportunities and distributing national wealth among the citizens of the country based on ethnic identity.[11] For example in military recruitment, a 50% quota was given to the Nothern Region while 25% each was given to the Eastern and the Western Regions of the country. This gave an undue advantage to the Northern Region.

2.2.3.1 *Period of tension after achieving independence*

Ademoyega (1981:45-66) reports that within four to five years of independence there were major political clashes and tensions, raising the political climate of the nation. There were riots in the western part of Nigeria that led to the declaration of a state of emergency. By January 15, 1966 there was a military coup that meant the end of the first democracy. The coup was planned by soldiers (led by the late Major Chukwuemeka Kaduna Nzeogwu, Major Adewale Ademoyega, Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna and a few other officers) who had a nationalistic ideology that was non-religious and non-ethnic. They claimed that they wanted to bring equity and justice to the polity, especially in the interest of the citizenry. This plan was described as revolutionary. A crucial look at their ideology shows that it was close to a socialist-welfare ideology which was intended to bridge the gap between the extremely rich and the very poor.

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[11] The quota system is the attempt to make the distribution of national wealth, resources and opportunities equitable. The 1999 Constitution, Section 14 (3&4) further entrenched the quota system. It makes provision that each region in the country is given a certain number of slots, seats or positions that can be filled using a certain formula. The provision in Sub-section 3 extends the quota system to all the tiers of government. Widespread and common criticism of this system holds that the formula is arbitrary and is many times used to favour the northern part of the country and sideline others. Others feel the quota system breeds mediocrity because merit is often set aside.

Part of their strategies towards national development was to create more states with the view of ensuring easier and faster ways of allocating national resources to the grassroots of the population.

2.2.3.2   The Biafran war

According to Ademoyega (1981:137-148) the January 1966 coup was not successful but ended the first attempt to democracy and the socio-economic development process. A top military officer, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi, who was from the eastern part of the country, took over the leadership of the country. There were complaints from certain quarters, especially from the north, that Ironsi was using his power to the advantage of the easterners at the expense of the northerners, although in actual fact Ironsi tried to secure the favour of the Northern Region by promoting military officers and civil servants of northern descent (Ademoyega 1981:157-158). The people of the Northern Region of Nigeria responded by killing the Igbos (from the Eastern Region of Nigeria). His government was short-lived as a counter-coup in July 1966 brought in Major General Yakubu Gowon, who was from the Northern Region. The political unrest in the nation, especially in the western part of the country, did not abate. In the northern part of the country, there was the killing of the Yorubas from the Western Region and the Igbos from the Eastern Region. This did not go down well with the Igbos. As a result of this and general instability in the country, the Igbos led by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu announced their rejection of the northern oligarchy, and the secession of the Eastern Region from Nigeria. The new "country" was named the Federal Republic of Biafra. The secession led to the historical *Biafran* war. The war lasted around three years before the Gowon-led Federal Government's military quashed the seceding army of Biafra in January, 1970.

2.2.3.3   Post-civil war and development failure

Before the Civil War, General Yakubu Gowon created more states in the attempt to stabilize the country. Twelve states were created to replace the previously operated three-region structure. The new states created were North-Western State, North-Central State, Kano State, North-Eastern State, Kwara State, Western state, Benue-Plateau State, Lagos State, Midwest State, East-Central State, Rivers State and South-East State (Ashiru 2013:126).

During the regime of General Yakubu Gowon from 1966 to 1975, exploration of crude oil began to assume a greater commercial dimension; it was the period of the oil boom which

resulted in a large income for the Nigerian government (Offu 2013:241). The military leader was known to have declared that Nigeria did not have financial problems and that the only challenge was what to do with the money. Such an attitude reflected in relatively low investments in public infrastructures such as housing, road networks, medical facilities and education. General Yakubu Gowon increased the salaries of the civil servants and made little or no attempt to diversify the economy. The agricultural sector that had been the major earner for the economy was neglected due to the huge income from oil; this lack of planning and foresight in the area of development set the stage for an infrastructural deficit that the nation would eventually face (Akpan 2012:100).

Dele Ashiru (2013:126-127) highlights the fact that the instability that characterized the Nigerian political landscape since independence impacted negatively on national development. It might be safe to say that Nigeria has not recovered from the marginalizing and inequitable social and economic structures and attitudes the pioneer leaders adopted. The country has grappled with essentially the same challenges over the years leading to frequent military interruption of the struggle for sustainable democracy.

In 1975 General Gowan's administration was brought to an end through a coup d'état led by Major-General Muritala Muhammed, who was of the Northern Region.

2.2.3.4 *Efforts towards restoration of a short-lived democracy*

General Muritala Muhammed's administration gave a detailed plan towards democracy. The plan was to culminate in the elections and the handing over to democratically elected leaders by 1979. He also created additional states, bringing the total number of states in the federation to nineteen. Nigeria now had the following states after the old structure was changed: Sokoto, Kaduna, Bornu, Bauchi, Niger, Gongola, Oyo, Ondo, Ogun, Bendel, Cross-River and Imo. Others were Kano, Plateau, Anambra, Kwara, Lagos, Benue and Rivers (Ashiru 2013:127). Unfortunately, Muritala Muhammed was brutally killed in an unsuccessful coup. After the quashed coup, General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was of the Yoruba race in western Nigeria, succeeded Muhammed. Obasanjo proceeded with Muritala Muhammed's plans to hand over the country to democratically elected leadership (Adeniyi 2010:417-418).

Adeniyi (2010:417-418) notes that Obasanjo made efforts to complete the transition back to democratic rule and handover to the next elected president on October 1, 1979, a date that

coincided with independence anniversary. To ensure full military disengagement, he instructed all military personnel in federal or state administrative offices to disengage their services by July 24, 1978 so that they could be re-integrated into the Nigerian military. Anyone who would choose to serve in their administrative capacities till October 1, 1979 would have to retire from the army. Some of those who served in administrative capacities in government went back to the military services while a few chose to end their military careers by staying on till October 1, 1979 when the new president was sworn in. After the federal election, a civilian regime headed by Alhaji Shehu Shagari from Sokoto State in the northern part of the country took over the reign. This was the beginning of the Second Republic (when the country was in a democratic dispensation after an interruption by a coup d'état).

Helen C. Metz (1991:73-75) notes that the Second Republic was also fraught with challenges of mismanagement of the national resources. Government officials were alleged to have siphoned and misappropriated several millions of U.S. dollars. Alhaji Shehu Shagari completed his first term in office and won his bid for re-election for the second term in office by defeating his opponent, Chief Obafemi Awolowo in an election widely believed to have been rigged in favour of the incumbent president. Just as during the First Republic, the parties that ran during the Second Republic for the next two national elections also had ethnic platforms. The ruling party, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), was widely regarded as a northern party; it rode on the history of the defunct Northern People's Congress (NPC) of the First Republic. In fact, Alhaji Shehu Shagari who emerged the winner of the election was a leader in the proscribed NPC; he founded the Sokoto branch of the NPC and was the party's secretary at some point (Adeniyi 2010:474).

The opposition party, the United Party of Nigeria (UPN) led by Chief Awolowo, was seen as the party of the Yoruba West. UPN was the successor of the Action Group (AG) of the First Republic. The party of the Easterners was the Nigerian People's Party (NPP), which was the successor of the NCNC of the First Republic. The NPP was led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe who was also a prominent leader of the NCNC. The Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP) was the residue of the Northern Progressives of the First Republic. The People's Redemption Party (PRP) was a radical and progressive party, also in northern Nigeria. This underlining ethnicity factor, along with other factors such as religious and linguistic differences, continued to be a huge challenge for meaningful development of the country. For the purpose of peace and

stability, a provision was made for a consensual government system where all parties would have to give consent on certain national issues. Unfortunately, the consensual system which stemmed from the Electoral Law (which is a creation of the parliament as empowered by the constitution) did not work and hence the factors that caused tension still held sway. The competitive orientation would rather feature more, especially among the political parties that contested the election. The same competitiveness was noticeable among the legislators and between the governors of the states serving on the tickets of the opposition party and the federal administration. The spirit of political, ethnic and religious rivalry once again prevailed (Adeniyi 2010:480-499).

According to Helen C. Metz (1991:75) the features of the Shagari regime included a sharp rise in external debt, rising from about three billion dollars in 1978 to about fourteen billion dollars in 1982, political tension due to perceived manipulated elections, teachers' industrial action and riots led by the Maitatsine Islamic fundamentalist group which claimed many lives and properties worth millions of Naira. The economic fortune and boom inherited from the military regime dwindled quickly with questionable government spending. Economic recession hit the country and capital flight was rife, about fourteen billion dollars between 1979 and 1982. This implies that Nigeria failed to use the gains of the oil boom to develop the nation socio-economically. The economic slump of the early eighties therefore made the effect very obvious. The opposition party led by Obafemi Awolowo raised alarm over the importation of goods that could be produced locally, an action which depleted foreign reserves; Obafemi Awolowo considered this an abuse of macro-economic policies. The Nigerian economy was sliding consistently downwards; the polity was drained by moral decadence and managerial inefficiencies (Adeniyi 2010:505).

Unfortunately for Nigeria, a coup d'état was announced in December 1983, which brought Major General Muhammadu Buhari into power as the military head of state. Once again, democracy was interrupted and the country soon faced many years of military rule.

2.2.3.5 *Military rule and the struggle for a return to democracy*

Buhari blamed widespread corruption in the government of Shehu Shagari as reason for the interference. Buhari referred to the mismanagement of the Nigerian economy, national insecurity, the high unemployment rate, high inflation, food insecurity and so forth as issues to

be addressed (Adeniyi 2010:507). According to Buhari in his address to the nation after the coup, to put Nigeria back onto the path of national development, he would provide exemplary leadership and the efficient management of the economy, and he would practise the principle of accountability and probity. He would also provide a platform for strong national networking, internal vigilance and unity (Adeniyi 2010:512).

The new military leader promptly dismantled all the democratic structures, banned political parties, suspended the 1979 constitution and appointed military administrators for the states in the federation and the ministries. He attempted to fight corruption and government inefficiencies; he tried to inaugurate a social objective embodied in the "War Against Indiscipline" (WAI) programme. Through this scheme, Buhari intended to inculcate a patriotic, nationalistic and disciplined culture in the Nigerians. The WAI scheme which was managed by Buhari's second-in-command, Major General Tunde Idiagbon, was executed through extrajudicial means and was manipulated to suit the government's political agenda (LeVan 2015:79). Buhari's regime was known for gross violation of human rights. There was also a ban on freedom of expression; decrees were promulgated to limit the freedom of the press. He used Decrees 4 and 13 as a tool of repression (Adeniyi 2010:515).

Buhari's brutal and rigid approach to governance was his undoing. In an attempt to be prudent in public spending, over 250,000 public sector employees also lost their jobs (Adeniyi 2010:531). Other social structures such as the traditional rulers, professional associations such as the National Medical Association (NMA) and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) came into conflict with the administration (Adeniyi 2010:532). Buhari's government was overthrown in another (palace) military coup d'état by Major General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida.

Ibrahim Babangida came into power on August 27, 1985 as the first military dictator with the title of "President" as against the usual military title "Head of State" adopted by previous military leaders (Danmole & Aghalino 1995:21). Babangida blamed the administration of Buhari as too rigid and uncompromising. He tried to carry the citizens along in the decision-making process of the nation. For example, he initiated and encouraged public debates on national issues on socio-economic development such as Nigeria's joining the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), accessing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank loans (Ojo 1998:137). He adopted the pro-democracy title, President, and immediately

initiated plans to hand over power to a democratically elected administration. His schedule included a phased and gradual process of conducting elections at local government and state level. Therefore under his reign, even as a military president, he had democratically elected governors at state level. Babangida, over time, shunned the wearing of the military uniform and rather wore mufti like the civilians. His leadership tried to douse the tension inherited from the previous administration.

Early in Babangida's regime, there were failed attempts to stage coup d'états. The military president noted the difficulty that another coup would put the nation through; foreign and local investors would not find the environment safe for their investments, which would spell doom for Nigeria. To reverse the tense atmosphere which the previous administration created, Babangida promised to uphold the various laws that guaranteed human rights, such as freedom of movement and freedom of speech. He commuted the death sentence on drug peddling to imprisonment and lifted the ban on various pressure groups (Adeniyi 2010:540). With these actions, Babangida began to gain wider acceptance of his administration.

Babangida had announced his transitional programme and promised to hand over government to democratically elected leaders, but he began to shift dates; from 1990, a later date of 1992 was fixed. He further changed the handover dates to January 1993. But once again, elections were postponed and a new date, August 1993, was announced. Nigerians were very concerned about Babangida's inconsistencies regarding his promises to return the nation to democracy. His reasons for these shifts in dates were not popular and many Nigerians did not accept this; people felt it was a deliberate attempt to keep himself in power.

Apart from political uncertainty, there were also allegations of financial improprieties against Babangida's junta. There was an increase in illicit drug trade, advance fee fraud and other social vices. Bribery and corruption were rampant in the civil service and government agencies. These took place at the same time as his government executed the unpopular economic policies of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), an alternative to taking an IMF loan.

Some political science scholars, however, tried to defend Babangida's approach to transition, especially regarding the extensions of the handover deadlines. For example, Tunji Olagunju, Adele Jinadu and Sam Oyobaire (1993:242-244) point out in this publication that Babangida initially planned to hand over power by 1990, but concerns and pressures coming from among

Nigerian minority groups indicated that these minority groups may be sidelined if elections were held that early. The minorities needed more time to be assimilated into the new political groups and structures gearing up to take over from the military government through the scheduled electoral process. A new date in 1992 was generally agreed upon. By 1992, the administration announced that the 1992 date was not realistic, and therefore a new date of January 1993 was announced. As the last quarter of 1992 approached, Babangida announced another extension; the new date was August 27, 1993. Babangida blamed the extensions on the inability of the politicians to produce credible candidates to contest the elections.

The administration of Major General Ibrahim Babangida established various machineries of government to address the political and socio-economic challenges of the nation during his regime. Some of them were the SAP, the Political Bureau, the Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM) which was to eliminate the problematic system of import licence, substituting it with the SFEM programme. The Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) was the agency set up to accelerate development of infrastructures in the rural areas of the nation through road constructions, agro-allied industry establishments, electricity supply and water provision through bore holes. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was to tackle the problem of unemployment and underemployment. The Directorate for Social Mobilization and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) was a reawakening project of the government to engender political awareness, and the promotion of nationalism and national rebirth. It was meant to create a social movement mobilized from the grassroots to encourage a recovery of economic and social pride in the country (Agbese 2012:229-240).

Babangida's administration spent time formulating policies on the economy, especially when the public debate was not favourable in taking an IMF loan. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was inaugurated which inadvertently led to the devaluation of the naira, the local currency, at the international market. The effect of the SAP was devastating to Nigerians, especially during the period that was characterized by Oil Gloom and Oil Doom[12]; it was a difficult time for Nigerians and the administration of Babangida (Adeniyi 2010:550). Unfortunately, according to Adeniyi (2010:550), SAP did not provide the solution promised; external debt was still high, unemployment continued to rise and local manufacturing industries

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[12] This was a period of poor performance by the oil sector. The effect was particularly damaging to Nigeria's economy due to its reliance on oil as the foreign exchange earner.

continued to close down. Other social amenities like hospitals and educational institutions were not able to provide good quality services. The Babangida tenure was also known for an increase in advance fee fraud crimes (popularly called 419 because such financial crimes were to be addressed by Decree 419).

The transition programme of Babangida's administration reached its climax in 1993 when the federal election was judged free, fair and the most credible one held in Nigeria. However, Babangida, still a military dictator at heart, annulled the elections and declared them inconclusive. After pressures, political upheaval and political manoeuvring, Babangida announced his "stepping aside" from being leader of the nation. He spent seven years as president. In August 1993, he appointed an industrialist, Chief Earnest Shonekan, a Yoruba man from the West, as the head of an interim national government. Shonekan was to proceed and ensure that a democratically elected government was put in place (Agbese 2012:392-402).

According to LeVan (2015:88) Shonekan's short-lived administration barely achieved anything developmental because he had to battle the challenges left behind by his predecessor. He, however, made some social changes such as releasing all political prisoners and lifting the ban on the press. The economy greatly suffered high inflation rates, low growth rates and an increased unemployment rate (Adeniyi 2010:613-614). Adeniyi and LeVan in the publications cited already note how the top military officers called Shonekan to a meeting (in what appears to be a coup d'état) and expressed concerns about the instability in the nation and the agitations of the people for Chief M.K.O. Abiola, the winner of the annulled election. It seems a coup d'état took place and Shonekan thus resigned his position as the head of interim government. Military rulership was established once again as General Sanni Abacha assumed the leadership of Nigeria. The country therefore had to face another period of undemocratic governance, a setback for the efforts for sustainable development of the nation.

General Sanni Abacha came into power in November 1993 when the morale of Nigerians was low (Omotoso 2007:125) due to the political impasse created by the Babangida annulment of the June 12, 1993 elections and the handing over of power to Shonekan who did not meet the political or economic aspirations of the people. Abacha promptly disbanded the political parties established under Ibrahim Babangida. He removed the elected officials at state and local government levels and appointed military administrators for the states. General Abacha announced plans to hand over government to democratically elected leaders barely seventy-

two hours of taking over as the commander-in-chief of the nation. General Sanni Abacha had been part of the coup that brought Buhari into power. He was also prominent in out staging Buhari and bringing Babangida to power. His coming to power was the beginning of a deceptive and extremely corrupt government.

Abacha clamped down on every form of opposition. He did not fulfil his promise to hand over, but made every effort to keep himself in office. Dagne (2005:4-5) further notes that those who objected to Abacha's plan to remain in office were ruthlessly dealt with. He imprisoned hundreds of Nigerians and was accused of assassinating one of the wives of the acclaimed winner of Babangida's June 12, 1993 elections, Kudirat Abiola - she had continued to fight for the actualization of her husband's mandate. The sad event happened in June 1996. M.K.O Abiola himself had been arrested and detained for announcing himself winner of the said election. Abacha jailed the former military dictator, Obasanjo, and General Oladipupo Diya who at that time was Abacha's second-in-command, for allegedly planning a coup. He had planned to execute the people believed to have been involved in the said coup, but there were numerous pleas both locally and internationally; those found guilty were hence held in prison. Apart from internal problems, the international community's opinions about Nigeria and its government were grossly ignored. International agencies like the World Bank objected to how Abacha relegated and undermined the autonomy, authority and the influence of lower tiers of government like the state and local government (LeVan 2015:94).

General Sanni Abacha eventually lifted the ban on political activities; new parties contested and filled the State Houses of Assembly and the Federal House of Assembly. Parties held conventions to choose their flag bearers in the presidential elections; all the parties except one chose General Abacha as their presidential candidate. Tension filled the entire country during Abacha's regime; he died mysteriously in June 1998, which was officially ascribed to as a heart attack. In order to fill the vacuum, the highest administrative body, the Provisional Ruling Council, nominated General Abdulsalami Abubakar, an Hausa man from northern Nigeria, to assume the role of the president and commander-in-chief of the federation (Dagne 2005:5). Unfortunately, the acclaimed winner of the June 12, 1993 elections, Chief M.K.O Abiola, died a few days after the death of Abacha in prison; a lot of people suspected murder, but the autopsy conducted and monitored by international experts from the West confirmed natural causes due

to a long-standing and untreated heart condition. Riots and civil unrest broke out and continued for many days.

Civil society groups like the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) and individuals made brave efforts to ensure the return of credible democracy to Nigeria (Iliffe 2011:147). Many of them paid the ultimate price for these objectives. Environmental activist, Ken Saro Wiwa, was sent to the gallows for his protests against the oil companies' pollution of the environment in the Niger Delta. Saro Wiwa was accused of inciting people to murder some traditional rulers (Enwefah 2012:278-279; Adeniyi 2005:220). Others were detained without trial. There were accusations of state-sponsored assassinations under the regime of Abacha (Adeniyi 2005:104). The economy of Nigeria slid steadily in the face of international sanctions and frightened investors. National developmental ideals were relegated to nothingness while personal political agendas took priority in national polity (Olukoshi 2000:7; Adeniyi 2005:233).

2.2.3.6 *Democracy reintroduced*

General Abdulsalami Abubakar who was Abacha's Army Chief of Staff took over the administration in June 1998 (Enwafah 2012:291). The democratic traditions and government structures had been badly damaged by prolonged military rule, especially during the tyrannical government of Abacha. Members of the political class had either been exiled or coerced to support Abacha's self-succession plans (Magbadelo 2006:1-2). Abubakar immediately began to execute plans to hand over power to a democratically elected government as scheduled by Abacha. He released Generals Obasanjo and Diya from prison. He also released other political detainees from detention (Enwafah 2012:295-301). Politicians immediately formed coalitions and political parties geared up for the scheduled elections. Abubakar disbanded the political parties organized and sponsored by Abacha. He also ended the treason trial of the Nobel Laurel winner, Professor Wole Soyinka, who was in exile at that time, and fourteen others.

Elections at various levels of government were conducted between December 1998 and February of 1999. The retired army general and former head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo contested and won the presidential race on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). He ran against Chief Olu Falae of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), and the All Progressive People's Party (APP). These parties were hurriedly formed. Politicians joined these parties even when their political and developmental ideologies clashed; they did this to

get the military leaders out. But the clash in ideologies later worked against true nation-building in the reformed government, now named as the Third Republic (Magbadelo 2006:4). Some achievements under the Abubakar regime were successful debt relief talks with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the establishment of greater freedom of press and human rights, and of course the transition to civilian rule, regardless of the imperfections of the process. Others achievements included better-paid jobs for civil servants to combat corruption, the commencement of repairs on refineries and the start of the procedure for a privatization programme.

On May 29, 1999, Nigeria returned to democracy having elected President Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian Yoruba man from western Nigeria, to lead the Third Republic. Some people feel it was an advantage that Obasanjo was in the Nigerian army and therefore would know the strategies to keep the military at bay. When he resumed his duty as president, Obasanjo purged the army of top officers loyal to previous military administrations. He sought to professionalize the armed forces through training and re-orientation courses, especially on the role of the army in a democracy (Magbadelo 2006:21). The road towards democracy brought a new phase to the political and economic life of the nation; Nigeria was readmitted back into the Commonwealth, the visa ban by some Western countries was lifted, sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU) was relaxed and other diplomatic relationships that had gone stale under Abacha were restored (Dagne 2005:7).

Obasanjo began to rebuild the country politically, economically and socially. He launched the war against corruption using legal frameworks and agencies he created through the National Assembly. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was created to combat corruption. He was able to repatriate only a fraction of the Abacha looted funds from Swiss banks, about $200 million. Clashes between political ideologies began to take its toll on the nascent administration. Politicians began to criticize officials who were party members even in their party, thereby exploiting the weaknesses in political party structures (Magbadelo 2006: 18-19). Apart from this, Magbadelo here states that the new democracy which operated on the basis of the 1999 Constitution, bequeathed to the nation by the military, witnessed serious clashes between the legislative and the executive arms of government. The constitution was not so clear about how these arms of government would fulfil their check and balances roles

and how they would relate to each other on certain issues. Obasanjo, however, was able to navigate successfully through these difficult circumstances throughout his first term in office.

Nigeria's democratic experience was further consolidated when Obasanjo's four-year tenure elapsed in 2003 without threats from the military. He sought for re-election in the general elections under the ruling party, the PDP. During the political campaigns, there were alliances between parties to form a formidable opposition with the view of defeating the ruling party. The Alliance for Democracy (AD) went into agreement with the All Progressive People's Party to present a joint presidential candidate. The ex-military dictator, General Muhammadu Buhari, was given the ticket by the APP/AD alliance. Obasanjo, however, was declared the winner in the election, defeating his opponents with a wide margin (Dagne 2005:5).

Tension rose in the national political atmosphere when rumours went round that the president was trying to extend his stay in office through what was popularly called "a third-term agenda" (Momoh 2008:126, 139, 194-197). The third-term agenda was the attempt by Obasanjo to extend his stay in power as president through constitutional amendments. However, President Obasanjo never made any public statement about running for another term and he vehemently denied wanting to extend his tenure on several occasions (Iliffe 2011:291). The Nigerian constitution is, however, very clear about the tenure of public offices: a term of four years and an opportunity to serve for two terms (totalling eight years) is what is provided for. The closest official action taken by Obasanjo was to forward a proposal of constitutional amendments on a number of issues, including widening the tenure window for public office to three terms. The legislative arm of government turned down the proposal and thus ended the possibility of Obasanjo running for a third term (Iliffe 2011:287).

Obasanjo's administration was also criticized for abuse of human rights, arrogance, high-handedness and being authoritarian. This kind of aberrant behaviour in a democracy may be traced back to his military background. Obasanjo's controlling attitude reflected in how he treated appointed administrators to his cabinet: he made them sign resignation letters upon appointment to office; this he did probably to maintain his control over them or to ease them out of office without much trouble (Agbiji 2012:104). But his administrative style could also have helped him in reaching his modest achievements in his drive towards reforms in the public sector. A major boost to infrastructural development, job creation and free market policy was

the licensing of private firms in the telecommunication sector: companies were licensed to operate the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) services.

According to Magbadelo (2006:61-62) the critical achievements of Obasanjo's administration include repairing the foundations of democratic politics and practices that have been damaged by protracted military rule and military culture. Also ensuring that communities, constituencies, voices and all who had previously been oppressed and intimidated were able to exercise freedom of speech and expression, and table their demands before the nation as enshrined in Nigeria's constitution. In addition, he widened the political field to accommodate other interests by allowing more political parties to register and participate in the country's politics. He also pursued reforms in the economy that would engender competitiveness through privatization and deregulation. He also tried to address the problem of unemployment through small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs). Obasanjo also tried to fight corruption and foster the culture of transparency/accountability, especially in the public sector.

At the expiration of Obasanjo's tenure, elections were conducted and the ruling party, the PDP, won the election that brought Alhaji Shehu Musa Yaradua into power on May 29, 2007. Yaradua was a Hausa man from North West Zone, Nigeria (Ilileffe 2011:298-299). By the time Obasanjo was in his second term, there were serious agitations by the minority groups of the Niger Delta in South-South Zone, Nigeria, for more deliberate actions by Nigeria to develop the area politically, as well as its infrastructure. The bulk of Nigeria's oil is mined in South-South, but sadly, there have been long-standing complaints of neglect by the government and environmental degradation due to activities of the oil companies operating in the region. The agitations motivated the zoning[13] of the position of the vice-president to the region. Goodluck Jonathan became the vice-president to Alhaji Yaradua. The election of Yaradua signalled another phase in Nigerian democracy, a smooth transition of a democratically elected president to another.

Yaradua would be remembered for his policy based on his mantra about the rule of law. This appears to be a response to Obasanjo's approach to governance, especially in the fight against

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[13] This is a political arrangement in Nigerian politics where offices are rotated among the geo-political zones of the country namely South West, South East, South-South (Niger Delta), North East, North West and North Central (Middle belt).

corruption. Obasanjo had been accused of using the corruption fighting agency (EFCC) to harass his political opponents who were hurriedly tried and jailed. Yaradua was the governor of Katsina State, North West Zone, Nigeria where he governed for eight years before assuming the position of president; he was not a "newcomer" to the administration. Yaradua had a seven-point agenda for his administration which was aimed at fulfilling his plan which was called Vision 20-20. This was the plan to make Nigeria part of the top twenty world best economies by the year 2020.

Yaradua recognized that without certain things in place, the millennium development goals set by the international community would not be a reality, hence the 7-point agenda. The agenda included: (i) Sustainable Growth in the real sector of the economy; this is the drive to revamp the manufacturing sector of the economy; (ii) Physical Infrastructure: Power, Energy and Transportation; these were precursors to economic growth; (iii) Agriculture; (iv) Human Capital Development, which included the provision of world class education for its citizens and the provision of superior healthcare systems; (v) Security, Law and Order to ensure the safety of lives, properties and investment in the country; (vi) Combating Corruption and (vii) Niger Delta Development: this region had suffered gross neglect and colossal environmental degradation due to the exploration activities of the oil industry (Dode 2010:3-7).

The president noted that to fully develop these areas of the 7-point agenda would require huge capital outlay which was not available to the country at that time. Therefore, his policy would vigorously pursue the free market ideology where the private sector partners with the public sector. The former would be able to raise investment funds while the latter would provide the entire legal and policy framework that would make high productivity possible. This administration was on the path of deepening the democratic experience of the nation and ensuring that the developmental policies of the ruling party, the PDP, was executed.

According to Adeniyi (2011:218-286) President Shehu Musa Yaradua had barely spent two years in his administration when he died. His death before the expiration of his tenure was a test for Nigeria's democracy. But at that time, it seemed the nation had grown in its democratic practices as the provision of the constitution was applied: the vice-president, Goodluck Jonathan was sworn in as the president of Nigeria. The process was fraught with tension, uncertainty and intrigue, but Nigeria managed to make the transition to civil rule. Goodluck Jonathan, from a minority group of the Niger Delta, South-South Zone, had to navigate the

rough political terrain to gain the acceptance of the Hausa in the north and members of the administration who were loyal to the late president. Goodluck Jonathan had been the governor of Bayelsa State before becoming the vice-president to Yaradua. The Northern Region, who had expected a northerner to be in power for at least four years, had their hopes dashed after the death of Yaradua. Obasanjo, a southerner, had been in power for eight years and now power was returning to the south. This period was a trying one for the nation as all the efforts towards development could have been jeopardized if there were political unrest leading to a subversion of democracy. It was an advantage for a minority group of the South-South Zone to have a member of their group as the president. It is important to highlight this point because of the antecedents of Nigerian politics which had been clouded by cries of marginalization of certain geo-political zones by the dominant ethnic groups, especially the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group.

President Goodluck Jonathan pursued the "rule of law" ideology of his predecessor but he also tactically jettisoned the 7-point agenda in an effort to give his administration a needed focus. He made efforts to consolidate the small gains of the two preceding PDP presidents in electric power generation. He also tried to tackle corruption by preventing its occurrence through computerizations of various payment systems. But even with his efforts, his administration has been accused of high profile cases of corruption, especially in the oil sector and the administration of pensions to the nation.

President Jonathan completed the term of Yaradua and contested the election at the expiration of the term. Political manoeuvres went on within the ruling PDP to try to return power to the north. But Jonathan's political machineries ensured his victory and on May 29, 2007 Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was sworn in as the president. He had a northerner, Nnamadi Sambo, as his vice-president. According to Barna (2014:7-9), during President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, the radical Islamic fundamentalist group, Boko Haram, grew to a frightening dimension. More people were massacred, kidnapped and there were more suicide bombings. The North East Zone of Nigeria bore the brunt of this criminal group's activities. Initially, Christian groups, churches and individuals were targeted. But later on in the group's effort to establish a caliphate in Nigeria, both Muslims and Christians were the subjects of vicious attacks. Boko Haram propagated an anti-Western education ideology. The group carried out the abduction of women, children and men, they burnt down schools. Hundreds of school girls were kidnapped, possibly for sex slavery. Boys were captured also to be indoctrinated and used

as agents of violence and carnage (Ebhomele 2015). This religious crisis was (and still is) a threat to the developmental aspirations of Nigeria as public and private utilities were attacked and destroyed by the insurgents. In addition, the terror group targeted education, a critical factor to development, impacting very negatively on it.

President Jonathan appeared to have interpreted the phenomenon as orchestrated by his political opponents who did not want a southerner Christian to be president. Many people, local and international, criticized his government for not doing enough to counter the activities of the fundamentalists. The height of the security challenge was the kidnapping of some high school students in a small town, Chibok, in Borno State, North East Zone, Nigeria. The inability of the Jonathan administration to rescue the school girls drew the anger of civil rights groups within the country and from the international community.

2.2.4   State creation as strategy for development

This section highlights the attempts by various administrations in Nigeria to develop the country through creating more states: It was assumed that creating new states will be solution to ethnic crises in the Nigerian territory and also a means to equitable distribution of national wealth. Some of the reasons for using this approach for development have been adjudged self-serving and inadequate (Adetoye 2016:37).

The British government administered two protectorates, namely the Southern and Northern Protectorates. The colonial government amalgamated the two protectorates in 1914 and Lord Lugard became the Governor-General of the nation. There were talks at that time of dividing the country into smaller administrative units due to Nigeria's highly diversified nature. Lugard did not really see the need for such divisions, preferring to have two regions i.e. the Northern and the Southern Regions. By 1939, the Southern Region was divided into two, namely, the Western and the Eastern Regions (Danmole & Aghalino 1995:17).

The agitation for smaller administrative units among Nigerians was borne out of the effect of inequitable distribution of power and resources. It also has to do with the fear of unfair domination by the major ethnic groups (Danmole & Aghalino 1995; Adeniyi 2014: 68). The national challenges that state creation was supposed to resolve included more equitable distribution of power and financial resources, fair representation of ethnic groups at the federal stratum of governance where power and money were perceived to reside. Other reasons were

the prevention of any secession or break-away by a region from the rest of the country (as in the case of the agitation for Biafra), protection of the minority groups, and promotion of peace and unity throughout the federation (Adeniyi 2014:68-69).

By 1966, after Gowon's counter-coup, the government began to work towards creating a balance in the national political and economic life. This move was to assuage the feelings of marginalization and oppression especially of the Igbo in Eastern Region. Adewale S. Adeniyi, in the cited work, argues that Gowon's creation of twelve states to replace the three regions was more of a political strategy to stabilize the nation in the face of secession threats by the Eastern Region under Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu than for developmental purposes.

By the time General Muritala Muhammed assumed the position of the head of state, the feeling of exclusion and marginalization still persisted in spite of the General Yakubu Gowon's efforts to increase the number of states. Nigerians craved more states because they saw it as the way to ensure more equitable development throughout the country (Danmole & Aghalino 1995: 20). In response to the demand, General Muhammed's administration set up a panel in 1975 led by Justice Ayo Irikefe to find out the desirability and necessity of creating more states. They were also to determine the economic viability of new states, the location of the administrative capitals of such states, and how to ensure that the creation of new states would not destabilize the federation. Citizens and interest groups were expected to propose which states were to be created through memoranda; the panel received over a thousand memoranda, most of which were filled with demands based on jealousy, suspicion and ethnic/tribal sentiments (Danmole & Aghalino 1995:20-21). In response to the demands through these memoranda, the government approved the creation of an additional seven states, and the total number of states in the federation became nineteen.

The issue of state creation did not take place again in Nigeria until the administration of Ibrahim Babangida. It came as the offshoot of the Political Bureau created in 1986 to consider and make recommendations to the government on various issues in Nigerian politics and social development. Part of the findings of the bureau was the need for the creation of additional states as a means of development, and the removal of political and social tensions within the country. Babangida responded to these findings by approving the creation of two additional states in 1987.

Babangida did not want to entertain any debates on additional state creation after this because he assumed that new states would no longer be needed. But by 1991, the clamour for new states had risen so much that his administration created an additional nine states which he saw as legitimate. Babangida claimed that this creation was a measure of growth for the federation and was evidence of Nigerians' ingenuity, resilience and commitment to live peacefully in spite of the apparent divisions in the country (Danmole & Aghalino 1995:21-22).

By the time General Abacha assumed office, there was political and social tension and instability; he thus created the National Constitutional Conference (NCC) as a way of resolving the problems. A major part of the debate was once again the issue of state creation which led to conflicting ideas among representatives at the NCC. The matter was referred back to Abacha who constituted a committee on states and local government creation in December 1995. Although the report on the committee's recommendations was not published or released to the public, Abacha created six new states, bringing the total number of states in the federation to thirty-six. Here follows a table summarizing the creation of states in Nigeria:

Table 2.1 Summary of state creation in Nigeria

Year of state creation	Administration	Number of states created	Total number of states
1967	General Yakubu Gowon	12	12
1976	General Olusegun Obasanjo	7	19
1987	General Ibrahim Babangida	2	21
1991	General Ibrahim Babangida	9	30
1996	General Sanni Ababcha	6	36

The conclusion that can be safely arrived at is that state creation has not duly addressed the challenges of development in Nigeria. This is evidenced by the continuous and growing agitations for new states to be created. Danmole and Aghalino (1995:23) and Adewale Stephen Adeniyi (2014:70-71) are of the opinion that military leaders particularly have attempted to use this strategy (state creation) as a tool for political manipulation in order to stabilize their

unpopular regimes and to gain the acceptance from the people for their illegal administrations, rather than using it as a means of developing the country.

Although it can be argued that states creation brings governance closer to the people, it needs the sincerity and commitment to ideologies of development to make it work as a tool for development. In this respect Danmole and Aghalino (1995:23) and Adeniyi (2014:70-71) rightly hold that better management or governance based on equity, fairness and justice would address the concerns of the people on development, distribution of power and national wealth better, rather than state creation.

States creation had failed as a tool for development in Nigeria because many of the states formed were not economically viable; most states were dependent on the federal allocations to all the states in the federation for survival and development. In addition, the problem of moral failure of leaders in terms of financial recklessness and the mismanagement of the meagre resources of the state lead to the evil cycle of underdevelopment. There were also problems of sharing of assets which often lead to protracted litigation; they tried to resolve the proportion of the assets that would go to a newly-carved state from the old one. Another problem that bedevilled state creation was the problem of drawing the borders; the communities at the fringe became the subject of disputes and sometimes neglect. The crippling overhead expenses and salaries of state officials and the civil service also limited developmental capabilities of the states. Many times the problem of ethnicity and minority groups arose among the newly-grouped communities in the new states. Therefore the cycle of complaints about marginalization never ended (Omotoso 2007:125-133).

Femi Omotoso (2007:117) succinctly summarizes the root cause for agitation for state creation and the underlining factors this way:

> The Nigerian state is beset with a number of problems ranging from corruption, perceived marginalization, and oppression, politicization of ethnicity, pervasive and persistent poverty, inequality between the rich and the poor, haphazard implementation of federalism and the consequent overdependence of states on central funds allocation. And the resultant series of complex and protracted crises are threatening the survival of the country as a geo-political entity. There is thus a continuous centrifugal tendency straining the fabric of the polity. Such a force, fuelled by the disparities of socio-economic underdevelopment and ethnic pluralism has sustained ... the seemingly implacable agitation for the creation of new constituent-units in the federation.

2.3   A brief history of religion in Nigeria

This section of the chapter describes the religious identity and practices of Nigeria starting from the pre-colonial era to the contemporary period. It will also describe the religious attitudes of Nigerians and how that has shaped the socio-economic reality of the country. The effect of these religious attitudes, beliefs and practices on the development of Nigeria will also be mentioned.

As indicated in the narration of the history of Nigeria, it is a highly ethnically diverse country (Udo 2004:14). Religious activities and practices predates the colonial era. People in the country had their religions before Christianity and Islam (Kitause & Achunike 2013:45). The different ethnic groups have their own traditional religions. These religions are broadly categorized under the name African Traditional Religion (ATR) or African Indigenous Religion (AIR). It is difficult to describe the term religion; scholars find it hard to arrive at a consensus definition (Omoregbe 1999:2-4). Scholars have found the study of ATR challenging, hence the difficulty experienced in defining what ATR really is (Idowu 1973:78-80). According to Omoregbe (1999:64-68), ATR is the religion, beliefs and practices of the African people. Certain parts of these practices and beliefs are held in common by these diverse people and their religions. Some of the common beliefs include spirit worship, belief in the Almighty God, belief in and worship of the spirit of the dead, belief in ancestral spirits, sacrifices and so forth. A major feature of ATR is the allegiance to multiple deities.

Historically, the Yoruba people of western Nigeria had their religious practices and beliefs distinct from the beliefs later introduced by Islam and Christianity. They worshipped deities like *Kori, Orisala, Ori, Ogun, Esu, Sopona* and so on (Johnson 2009:32-44). The European missionaries described this kind of multiple deity worship as paganism and polytheism. African Traditional scholars, however, object to these terms. According to Omoregbe (1999:64-66) ATR adherents in the Yoruba region believe that the beings wrongly called gods are actually divinities, mediums through whom the people accessed the Almighty God (*Olorun* or *Eledumare*). The first known contact of European missionaries with the Yorubas was in 1843. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) brought Christianity to Abeokuta through Badagry and later to Ibadan in 1851 and Lagos in 1852. Missionaries such as Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman and Catechist Henry Townsend were the earliest known missionaries among the Yorubas. Later on a Yoruba man, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who returned from slavery to his

hometown Freetown, became a priest and propagator of the European religion (Kituase & Achunike 2013:47). Abeokuta, Lagos and Ibadan became the springboard for missionaries to the hinterland of Ile-Ife, Osogbo, Modakeke, Ogbomoso and other places in Yorubaland, western Nigeria. The violent intertribal wars, however, limited the missionaries' forays into northern Nigeria. The missionary activities brought rapid development of schools and educational institutions to the Western Region (Johnson 2009:47).

Around 1000 and 1100 AD, hundreds of years before Christianity's arrival in Nigeria, Islam made inroads into northern part of Nigeria through Bornu in the north-eastern part of Nigeria (Kituase & Achunike 2013:47). The Hausas had their traditional religious beliefs and practices typical of ATR; they believed in spirits (called *Isoki*) and worshiped them. According to Kituase and Achunike in the cited source, it was from Bornu that Islam spread through the entire Hausa region (the people of northern Nigeria). According to them, Islam was initially accepted among the upper class and the elites of the region for economic and political reasons, that is before the *Jihad* lead by Uthman Dan Fodio took Islam to the nooks and cranny of Hausa land. The Islamic legal system and government was also introduced by the *Jihadists* to strengthen the religion in the region (Kituase & Achunike 2013:47).

Gbadamosi and Ade Ajayi (2004:347) comment that the Islamic *Jihadidts* established a caliphate in Sokoto, in the north-western part of Nigeria, from where Islam also expanded to other areas of the nation. Before the significant development of Islam in the southern part of the country, there was the presence of a few Muslims in the Yoruba region in the early 1800s. The numbers decreased even more when people who learned about the *Jihad* in the North and saw Muslims as a threat attacked the Muslims. Upon the return of some slaves from Sierra Leone and other places, both the internally displaced Muslims and returning Muslim slaves found it safe to settle in Otta, Ibadan, Badagry and Lagos. As they settled down, they began to form more stable communities. Spiritual leaders from the northern part of the country came to nurture and strengthen them in their faith. Islam continued to grow in the south through the migration of Muslims and their mixing with other people of the nation (Gbadamosi & Ade Ajayi 2004:348-349).

Kituase and Achunike (2013:48), and Gbadamosi and Ade Ajayi (2004:350-351) recorded that the efforts of Christian missionaries in northern Nigeria were resisted by a very strong Islamic faith in the 1800s. This was more or less the third attempt to plant Christianity in the North.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the Yoruba freed slave and convert who worked with European missionaries, made attempts to propagate Christianity among the Hausas but with minimal success, even though the Emir of Bida had shown interest and encouraged the Ajayi Crowther-led Niger Expeditions of 1841 and 1854. Other noteworthy missionaries were Dr. William Balfour Baike and Charles Paul. In the 1890s, the success of Christian missionaries had been restricted to a few communities. The Sudan Party was set up by the Christian Mission Society (CMS) to evangelize the Hausa people. The Wesleyan Mission Society also made attempts but with little success due to the stronghold of Islam among the Hausa people. However, some ATR adherents became converts. Some success among Muslims, albeit minimal, was recorded, especially due to the interests of some Emirs in trading with Europeans.

According to Kituase and Achunike (2013:47), the first attempts at Christian missionary work happened in the 15th century in the Niger Delta region of the country. The Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries took the gospel to Benin and Warri, although with minimal success due to the resistance of ATR adherents who held dearly to their traditional beliefs. Later on, other Augustinian monks and Spanish Capuchins also made attempts to establish Christianity in Benin but recorded minimal success. By 1846, missionary activities began to take root in Calabar, in the Niger Delta region through the Scottish Presbyterian Mission. Reverend Hope Waddle and Mary Slessor were some of the missionaries who spread Christianity in Calabar area.

The spread of missionary work to the Igbo people in Eastern Nigeria happened through Lagos and the sea port of Calabar. The CMS, Presbyterian and Qua Iboe churches were the earliest missions to eastern Nigeria. Overall, both Islam and Christianity suppressed indigenous religions and thoughts although the latter has managed to survive. Christianity, for example, berated and attacked practices like polygamy, sacrifices, etcetera. Many professing Christians and Muslims are up to this day, however, still affected by a traditional religious worldview and culture. As a reaction to Christian missionary opposition to the traditional way of life and worldview of the indigenous people, indigenous people who accepted the Christian faith began Afro-centric movements within Christianity, such as the founding of the African Independent Churches (Kituase &Achunike 2013:47-48).

2.4   Conclusion

The political and religious history of Nigeria is a narrative fraught with injustice and inequity. The developmental aspirations of the country are challenged by either perceived or real inequitable distribution of power and resources. On the one hand, there are diverse ethnic considerations and yearnings not met by the political arrangements bequeathed by colonial Britain. On the other hand, complications arose from the differences in the traditional religious worldview of various ethnic groups compounded by the introduction of two foreign faiths, Islam and Christianity.   The amalgamation of the protectorates in 1914 forced people with diverse metaphysical worldviews to be together, without carefully thinking on how the diversity would impact their well-being. In spite of the positive outcomes of introduction of the foreign religions to Nigeria in terms of development, such as educational development in the southern part of Nigeria brought about by Christianity and the trade benefits Islam brought to the north, religion was a form of an albatross to the developmental expectations of Nigeria. Foreign religions berated indigenous ones and to add to that, religion was often transmitted through violence. In addition, religion pitched one tribe against the other, which was the case between the Hausa Muslims and the Yoruba non-Muslims (Gbadamosi & Ade Ajayi 2004:347-348). Also, religion pitched members of the same tribe against each other as in the case among the Yorubas stated earlier in this chapter and also affirmed by Marvalla (2014:5).

Marvalla (2014:5-6) reveals that the history of Nigeria from its inception reflects structural injustice, social and political inequality, and the marginalization of minority groups. These minority groups may be categorized along ethnic, political, economic or religious lines. This flawed structure has been a major causative factor for underdevelopment of the nation. Religious conflicts, especially in the northern part of the country, has claimed tens of thousands of lives and a serious loss of property of which the monetary value of the loss could not be determined by this project. As Collier (2003:ix) points out very clearly, conflicts affect development adversely. It is thus difficult for Nigeria to have sustainable development when there is instability in the religious and political sphere.

Chapter 3

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Christian mission in democratic Nigeria

3.1   Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church is introduced to the readers in this chapter. The focus of this thesis is the mission of this church in Nigeria. In order to understand the response of the SDA Church in Nigeria, it is important to put the Church in its global context starting from its origin. The SDA Church's development in Nigeria has some similarities with Nigeria as a nation. The SDA Church began with missionary work in Nigeria in 1914, the year the Southern Protectorate and the Northern Protectorate were amalgamated under the leadership of the colonial governor, Lord Frederick Lugard. There is, however, no documentary evidence that the SDA Church deliberately planned the start of their missionary work to coincide with amalgamation of the two territories. A major challenge that has plagued Nigeria as a nation, as revealed in the political narratives in Chapter 2, is the challenge of development. All the tribes under the colonial administration struggled to have their own ethnic regions developed.

The aspirations of the people in the post-colonial period have also been linked to development. For example, the agitations by minority groups from independence to the post-democratic period are also rooted in the struggle for development. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, although having a different objective of reaching Nigeria with the Three angels' message,[14] had developmental objectives as an integral part of their operations in the country. Silvanus Chioma (2004:11), who was the General Secretary of the SDA Church in Nigeria (Nigeria Union Mission) in 2004 said, "Seventh-day Adventist missionaries are known for their 'comprehensive package' which, when fully executed, results in the complete transformation and development of the entire person and the community."

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[14]   This term represents the core of the mission and the message of the Seventh-day Adventists. The subject is explained further in this chapter.

It is important to emphasize that the growth of the SDA Church in Nigeria, or in any part of the world, has no direct or intended relationship with national development agendas. SDA missions are focused on how best to reach the world with the gospel while national aspirations are political, economic and social in nature. However, in order to be effective in spreading the Adventist messages, attention has to be paid to social issues. One of the concerns this thesis is expected to raise and comment on is the level at which the SDA Church needs to engage in social concerns in Nigeria. Most of the time, the SDA Church uses or adapts to the political structures set up by the country for administrative convenience of the church.

As the structure of the country changed in terms of regional governments and state creation, SDA churches created administrative structures that enabled it to perform its missionary tasks more efficiently. For example, the SDA mission in Nigeria developed through the regions created by the colonial government, namely the Western, Eastern and Northern Regions. Babcock established his station in Erunmu, close to Ibadan which was in the Western Region and the Church, starting from Erunmu, could reach all the communities in the Western Region. In the Eastern Region, Aba was the launching pad through which all the communities in the Eastern Region were reached over time. Jengre served the same purpose for the SDAs in the Northern Region. Back to the present, I must point out at this point that there is no indication that the administrative structure of the SDA Church and its operational growth pattern is designed to meet the national developmental aspirations. The SDA mission is not primarily to develop Nigeria or any part of the world socially, politically or economically. The mission of the Church, as stated earlier, is to prepare the world, including Nigeria, for the second advent of the Christ. However, in order to be more effective with their mission and be faithful to the message of Christ, SDA churches should utilize avenues for the social and economic development of their communities as essential components of evangelism and mission.

3.2   Genesis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church began in the United States of America in the mid-nineteenth century. Although it has its direct root in the Millerite[15] movement of the 1840s, it

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[15] This term describes those who followed the teaching on the imminent return of Christ as taught by William Miller, the man that was popularly known to have fixed the mid-1840s date for the Second Advent of Christ. Miller had a great influence in the religious atmosphere in North America during this period.

is actually a product of the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century. This was the milieu of religious fervency and an attraction to Bible studies, Bible prophecies and other religious activities in North America and parts of Europe. Some of the features of this period were the founding of some denominations, the spiritualism phenomenon, and the development of the missionary movement. Other developments include the Sunday school movement, Abolition movements, feminist reformers, and so on. Part of the fever that gripped religious communities was the sense of urgency in expecting the second advent of Jesus Christ. This was the milieu that produced the movement that would become the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Schwarz 1979:13-23; Alalade 2008:9).

The birth of the SDA Church through the Millerite Advent movement cannot be divorced from the millennial hope of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The millennial hope was the anticipation of a better life of a thousand years which would commence in the nearby future. The millennial thought influenced the religious realm of society to the end, namely that through faith in God, there is an expectation of a perfect community of people to be ushered in by God. Whilst some of the Protestants were pre-millennialists, others held on to post-millennialism. The pre-millennialists refer to the return of God on earth (either physically or spiritually) to establish a peaceful and prosperous reign that ushers in a thousand years of peace and prosperity. The post-millennialists teach that God will return to the earth after the one thousand prosperous years. William Miller was influenced one way or the other with the millennial paradigm (Thomas 1976:3-6). One could therefore conclude that millennialism, and the urge to inform the world to prepare for it, was a driving force for the missionary paradigm for many Christian groups at that time.

William Miller, at that time from the Baptist denomination, was himself greatly and intensely attracted to the various teachings on eschatology and prophecy (apocalyptic writings of the Bible). There was an increasing interest in the study of biblical apocalyptic books, especially Daniel and Revelation, which Christians who were attracted to eschatological subjects interpreted as containing information that could lead to knowing the exact dates Christ would return to earth. This passion for eschatology became a strong basis for the missionary outlook of Christians both in America and in Europe. Some of those who preached the Second Advent believed that their missionary effort was a fulfilment of the biblical prophecy of Revelation 14:6-7: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to

preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters'" (King James Version 2013:948). Many who found comfort in the belief of the advent of Christ in the near future, believed and taught that the advent of Christ would be in the mid-1800s, based on their interpretation of these apocalyptic portions of the Bible – especially Daniel Chapters 7 and 8 (Schwarz 1979:24- 27).

The task of letting the world know about this imminent advent of Christ formed the basis for the Millerite Adventists in spreading this message to the entire world. Those who believed and taught this imminent return of Christ were generally called Adventists; they were not initially a distinct denomination or sect, rather they were Christians from diverse denominations (such as Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and so forth.) with the common belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Miller himself became a preacher of the Advent after coming to the conviction about Christ's return to earth. Another man who believed and taught the imminent Second Advent was Joshua V. Himes; he was the one who, through his extensive influence among Adventists in various denominations, created a wider platform for William Miller to proclaim the message throughout North America. It was later on that another Advent preacher by the name of Charles Fitch began to preach that those (churches) who rejected the advent message were the apocalyptic Babylon, and true believers should leave those churches as required by the Bible in Revelation 18:2-4. Fitch's interpretations gave the theological basis for forming a new religious group and eventually signalled the beginning of the Millerites who viewed themselves as a distinct group. The expelling of William Miller from the Low Hampton Baptist Church and other Millerites by their various churches for holding the advent view left them with no choice, really, than coming together to form a new group and identity (Knight 2004:16-20).

The SDA philosophy of mission naturally grew upon the foundation of the Advent movement and the Millerites' approach to mission. Adventists found the message of the imminent second coming of Christ compelling, thus sharing it from one church or congregation to the other. They also had meetings in big tents where Advent preachers shared their convictions about the imminent return of Christ. Those who had been in contact with the Advent message invited Advent preachers to their local churches so that those who were not familiar with the Advent

message could hear and understand it. Many Christians embraced the Advent teachings and some became evangelists of the new message. Along the way, as their conviction about the Advent grew, Adventists became more and more convicted that Christ would return in the autumn of 1844 (Knight 2004:21-22).

October 22, 1844 is an important date to the Millerite Adventists. After a long period of Bible studies, especially in their interpretation of prophecies, a leading member of the group, S. S. Snow, convinced fellow Millerite Adventists that Christ's return was not only soon, it would be on October 22, 1844 (Schwarz 1979:49-50). This conclusion about the date by Adventists made other Protestants and Catholics ridicule Adventists. But due to the fervency of the Adventist preachers, many other Protestants and Catholics also got converted to Adventism. When Christ did not come as proclaimed by Adventists, they were disappointed and embarrassed (Schwarz 1979:50-51).

The Millerite Adventists broke up into three major factions. Each group came up with theological explanations why Christ did not return on the set date. One group totally abandoned the Advent teaching, while another group believed that Christ indeed returned on October 22, 1844 as expected. William Miller held on to the Advent belief, but he stopped attaching any dates to the event of Christ's return. In turn, the group that would eventually become the Seventh-day Adventists also came from the disappointed Millerite Adventists, although Miller himself did not belong to this new group (Knight 2004:25-26; Schwarz 1979:53-55).

Those who formed the group that became the SDA Church began to develop their set of beliefs after the October 1844 disappointment. A very central and critical doctrine developed from this disappointment and became the explanation of what happened to those who belonged to the Advent movement in the autumn of 1844. Hiram Edson, a Methodist and a member of the Advent movement, claimed to have received the interpretation in a vision. He said that what they had interpreted as the return of Christ to the earth was actually the entering of Christ into the holy of holies in heaven and part of the judgment (Knight 2004:30-32). This is according to Judaic ritual pertaining to the Day of Atonement (Exodus 29; Leviticus 23:26-32; Hebrews 9:11-12). Following the teachings of Edson, Adventists believed that this entry into the holy of holies in the heavenly sanctuary was part of the important events that prepare Christians for the final judgment during the return of Christ. Still at the centre of their belief was the imminent

return of Christ, although this time no dates were set, but they still believed the coming was really imminent (Knight 2004:39-40).

The set of beliefs or doctrines of this group were arrived at through intensive Bible studies leading to consensus on certain issues. Apart from the imminent return of Christ, this group came to believe that Saturday was the true and Biblical Sabbath and the day of worship which would remain binding on Christians. The early members of the group got introduced to Saturday Sabbath by a Seventh-day Baptist group (Knight 2004:39-40), especially by a lady called Rachael Oaks who introduced the doctrine to Frederick Wheeler, a Methodist farmer who was also involved in Advent preaching. Wheeler believed the Advent message and was also teaching it in churches around New Hampshire. He then began to keep the Saturday Sabbath having been taught by Oaks (Schwarz 1979:58). All these doctrines were so fundamental in the opinion of Adventists that they sensed a need to let the whole world know about it in the preparation for the coming of the Lord.

George Knight (2004:43-44) records that as the small Sabbath-keeping Adventist group began to settle down into their new identity, they studied the Bible intensely and felt compelled to share their beliefs with other people. By 1848 they had five basic beliefs that gave them their identity and separated them from other Millerite Adventists. They expected the personal, visible and premillennial appearing and return of Jesus, and they believed that the heavenly sanctuary was cleansed when Jesus entered it on October 22, 1844. In addition, they held that the gift of prophecy was present with them, especially manifesting in one of them, Ellen White. They taught and believed that Saturday was the Sabbath and binding on Christians and, finally, they believed that humans were not inherently immortal; belief in Christ was the only way of receiving immortality. These sets of beliefs, which distinguished them from other Christians, were held in addition to many doctrines that were believed by other Christians.

The efforts of this small group of Sabbath-keeping Adventist began to yield fruits as their numbers increased. The membership had grown from about 200 people in 1850 to about 2000 two years later (Knight 2004:58). Knight further explains the complexities that the growth brought. These included administrative challenges such as the need to have more structured clergy, and the certification and ordination of clergy in order to identify people who were authorized to preach, lead congregations and perform other duties within the purview of clergy. The certification of clergy would be very important later on in the history of the SDA Church

in their missions, especially as they sent their clergymen to places where they had little or no presence. In addition, they had to develop their financial structures and how to meet their financial obligations. There was also increasing need to legally hold properties as a legal entity; they had to be organized and registered legally to be able to function legally. The SDA Church also began to deal with members who erred doctrinally and got mixed up with practices that were contrary to the Sabbath-keeping Adventists, such as spiritism.[16]

In the year 1863, the SDA Church was formally organized with the same name. John Byington became the first president (the designation of the leader of the Church). This organization came to resolve the challenges they encountered as mentioned in the previous paragraph. The organization was not without major opposition from within the ranks of the Sabbath-keeping Adventists. The opposition arose because of the antecedents of the group: based on the belief that the second coming of Christ was imminent, there were people who believed that there was therefore no need to get organized. Another basis for the opposition was the fear the leaders would imbibe secular and oppressive styles of leadership. The Sabbath-keeping Adventists had in their consciousness the history of persecution in Christian history within the Catholic Church, which the Adventists called Babylon, the apocalyptic nation described in Revelation chapter 18. The fledging group therefore did not want the same oppressive leadership behaviours to creep into their ranks. But the group was able to overcome these challenges through conversations during their conferences (Knight 2004:59-63). As a result the organization of the SDA Church in 1868 and the doctrinal developmental phase prepared the SDA Church for the development of its mission activities. They started with sending "missionaries" to the West Coast in the United States. By the late 1870s the SDA Church began missionary work in Protestant nations especially to Europe (Knight 2004:99).

3.3 Becoming a missionary church

The history of missions in the SDA Church is linked to the history of the Church itself as briefly narrated earlier. Adventists were focused on announcing the imminent return of Christ and preparing people to be ready for it. The extensiveness of the Adventist mission was, and still

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[16] This has to do with communication with the dead or evil spirits. This is a major doctrinal infraction in the SDA Church till date because of their belief that no human possesses immortality and that the dead are not conscious.

is, driven by its theological interpretation of certain Bible texts. Prominent among those texts are Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15, which are seen as the mandate to preach the gospel to the entire world. This is often referred to among Christians as the great "Gospel Commission" (Knight 2005:vi; Babalola 2002:12). However, Adventists have a more specific and unique theological standpoint for their own mission as Christians. Adventists believe that the messages of the three angels described in Revelation 14:6-12 give them the mandate to call all cultures of the world to worship the true God who created the world. The texts also contain warnings to the world on impending judgment of God on those who embrace false religion and worship. In Adventists' thought, false worship includes disregard for the total and absolute keeping of the Decalogue (Alalade 2008:23-25).

Adventists make concerted efforts to make the Bible the basis of their faith and living; they preach against doctrines that exalt culture and tradition above the Bible. They perceive the Catholic Church as guilty of diminishing the influence of the Bible and the Decalogue on the Christian community. Therefore, the education of other Christians and the world at large about biblical doctrines on the Decalogue, the second advent of Christ and other doctrines is of critical importance to Adventist mission. The early Adventist group sought to influence people to abandon teachings of the Catholic Church and align their doctrine with what they considered as consistent with biblical teachings. Adventists do not consider Protestantism as having adequately and faithfully addressed the deviation of the Catholic Church from true biblical traditions (Knight 2004:20).

The SDA Church regards the reappearance of Christ as the climax of the eschatology. The world history of pain and suffering occasioned by sin will come to an end by the *parousia*. The reappearance of Christ in the second coming is the event which ushers in the anticipated new and perfect life devoid of death, sickness and suffering. Adventists therefore work hard to ensure that people are prepared for this great event. The realization of the anticipated millennial bliss depends on ensuring the three angels' messages are preached throughout the earth (Knight 2005:vi). This therefore becomes a driving force for the SDA mission.

For the group in the 1840s, mission was telling people about Jesus' advent. Their approach was basically preaching in different churches and organizing camp or tent meetings about the subject. However, the sense of urgency they had also limited the scope of their missionary work. Their efforts were limited to North America; it was basically an inter-denominational

movement that had a common belief in the imminent return of Christ. Although there were proclamations about this second coming of Christ in Europe, the spreading of their gospel was predominantly intra-regional, and not a deliberate, structured or coordinated missionary effort. Indicative of the missionary paradigm of that era was the decision of the SDA Church at their General Conference Session in the year 1871 to send a certain Matteson as a missionary to the Danes and Norwegians who were resident in the American state of Wisconsin.

The absence of a deliberate and coordinated missionary effort was largely due to a certain resistance in the SDA Church in becoming an organized entity. Furthermore, the "shut door" theology of the church discouraged a missionary outlook among early Adventists. The "shut door" concept came from the early Adventists' interpretation of the parable of the ten virgins in Mathew 25. They believed that Jesus' return would close the door of salvation on people who had not been ready for His appearance. Miller and other Adventists taught that Christ would come in the autumn of 1844, hence that the door of Mercy of God to unbelievers would close in October, 1844. Even when Christ did not return on this date as expected, Miller still believed that Jesus would return any time; the only effort needed was to ensure that those who believed did not lose their faith and salvation (Knight 2005:vii). They did not see the need to preach further to others beyond those who were already followers. This eventually dovetailed into another form of anti-mission based on the thinking that if Christ was returning soon, there was no reason or time to commit resources to a mission project (Knight 2004:49).

The idea of mission began to take on a new dimension over time within the SDA Church. Coming to terms with the realization that Christ did not come at the time they had predicted, and that time was passing without the second coming of Christ happening yet, made the church to redefine their task as a community of faith. What was described as the "shut door" doctrine began to be reviewed by extending the frontiers of the message of Advent. More people joined the group and it began to grow both theologically and administratively. SDA leaders slowly began to explore mission opportunities outside of North America. A broader interpretation of Revelations 14:6-12 provided the global orientation for their message. The reference made to "the earth, and to every nation, and kindred and tongues and people" in Revelation 12:6 gave them the scriptural paradigm of a world-wide assignment (Knight 2004:98-99).

The first SDA missionary to Europe was Michael Czechowski, a former Roman Catholic priest, who went without being officially sent by the church because of his personal enthusiasm for

the message (Schwarz 1979:214). The SDA Church also set up a missionary society with the mandate of sending missionaries, papers, books, tracts and so forth to other parts of America and to foreign lands in order to propagate the three angels' message (Knight 2005:xii). Later on, about twenty-five years after the group began, J. N. Andrews was officially sent by the SDA Church as a missionary to Switzerland. This was ten years after Michael Czechowski began to preach about Seventh-day Adventism there. Andrews and Czechowski's pioneering work also extended to France and Italy. In turn, E. G. White, a leader, co-founder and a prophet of the church, went to Australia, England, Switzerland, Scandinavia and Germany. Other leaders like G. I. Butler also went to Europe (Schwarz 1979:214). As more people left the shores of the United States, the SDA Church considered establishing more foreign missions. It is important to note that the SDA mission orientation is also shaped in the context of the general Protestant thrust towards mission, both in Europe and in America (Knight 2005:xviii-xix). It was therefore not only forces within the SDA Church, but also trends within broader Protestantism that shaped the SDA mission orientation.

The missionary thrust grew unabated from the late 1800s through to the 1900s. The growth was not just in missionary work, but in the SDA Church's numerical strength and other administrative developments. "From a membership of 756,712 in 1950 and 1,245,245 in 1960, the denomination had grown to more than 14,000,000 baptized adult adherents in 2005" (Knight 2005:xxii). By 2016, the population of the Church stood at around 19 million baptized people (The General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists 2017:5). The SDA Church, from the 2017 statistics, has 82, 794 churches, 19, 301 ordained pastors and a total number of 287,121 employees worldwide. According to the denomination's 2017 yearbook (The General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists 2017:5), SDA Church operates 180 hospitals and sanatoriums, over 133 nursing homes and retirement centres, and 441 clinics and dispensaries. Worldwide, SDA members run over 8, 000 schools. Out of these schools, 114 are colleges and universities. Worldwide, according to the 2013 data, SDA members run 36 orphanages/children's homes, they have ten aeroplanes and medical boats. In addition, the SDA Church contributed $2,267,603,977 in tithes and offerings[17] (GC 2013).

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[17] The SDA Church teaches that God demands that Christians remit 10% of their income to church as a tithe and also give an amount voluntarily that they call an offering. These categories of funds are appropriated differently. The appropriation is based on interpretations of scriptures.

According to Adesina (2011:23), the SDA Church has established its presence in over 228 nations of the world.

3.4   The administrative and governing structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

As noted in the brief history of the founding of the SDA Church, it took a while for this community of faith to become organized. Seventh-day Adventists were more a movement of like-minded people from different religious backgrounds. They were distrustful of structured and organized faith communities and they were also convinced about the imminent return of Christ. Furthermore, they were wary of setting up leadership structures because they did not want the occurrence of oppressive leadership that characterized the medieval church; such leadership they found in their theological interpretation of Revelation 18:2 which refers to leadership in the apocalyptic empire of Babylon (Knight 2004:51).

However, Seventh-day Adventists advanced beyond the phase of opposing organization and over time developed administrative structures which literarily evolved out of the necessity of the needs and mission of the church. The following administrative units and nomenclatures were adopted by the SDA Church over time:

1.   *The local church*: This is the smallest official administrative unit of the SDA Church. It is the "united organized body of individuals" (Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria 2000:12). An organized local church is the assembly of members who have undergone the rites of water baptism. The local assembly is administered by the local church board which is chaired by the church pastor. The pastor is the administrative head of the local church (Neufeld 1996:355-357). In the SDA Church, a congregation becomes an organized church when it is considered viable, i.e. having numerical strength and financial capability for self-sustenance. When this is not the case, the congregation is described as a company or a branch Sabbath-school. This kind of unit is a strategic way of converting people into the SDA Church in small group units that do not run like an organized church. The branch Sabbath-school remains under the supervision of an organized church i.e. the church board of the local church that established the Sabbath-school branch (Neufeld 1996:226-227).

2.   *The conference*: This is the administrative unit that manages all the churches in a particular region. An important factor about a conference is its ability to be financially autonomous; it is responsible for all the expenses including salaries of all workers. A conference is not

funded by external church agencies; it actually sends part of its income to the union, a larger administrative unit of the Church (Babalola 2002:2). A conference has the administrative duty of appointing pastors for all the local churches within its jurisdiction. In most cases, a conference organizes its jurisdiction into smaller units called districts for administrative convenience. A district manages a group of churches within a particular area. The conference appoints a district pastor who oversees all the affairs of the churches within that particular district. All the district pastors or leaders in a particular conference report to the conference. It also appoints its executive committee at its constituency meetings with delegates from all the districts in its territory. A conference is administered by a conference executive committee; the leader of a conference is the conference president. He has other executive members such as a secretary, a treasurer and directors who oversee different departments of the ministry of the conference. The departments include evangelism, youth ministry, Sabbath school, education, stewardship and others. All these departments are replicated in all the administrative strata of the Church, up to the world headquarters (Neufeld 1996:404-405).

In addition, a conference is also responsible for all its financial obligations for all the operations within its jurisdiction. When a conference is not financially viable enough to fulfil all its financial obligations, it is called a mission. A higher administrative entity of the SDA Church, the union, will have to be supervising it, electing its executive committee, supporting it financially and in other areas necessary.

3. *The union*: Neufeld (1996:811) explains that the union is an administrative unit that manages all the local conferences or missions within a particular administrative jurisdiction. Multiple conferences report to a union. It is managed by the union executive committee headed by the union president. Other leaders in a union are the secretary, treasurer and departmental secretaries who oversee different arms of the union operations. Also, the presidents of the union's conferences are part of the executive committee. When a particular union is not financially viable enough to administer its work, it depends on a higher administrative institution for support. This type of union is called a union mission. However, if it is financially sufficient and viable, it becomes a type of autonomous administrative unit called a union conference (Neufeld 1996: 811).

4. *The General Conference*: This is the world head-quarters of the SDA Church. It is the highest body and the central global administrative unit of the SDA churches. It manages all the unions in the world. It is headed by the general conference president, the vice-presidents, the secretary and the treasurer. It is generally called the GC among Seventh-day Adventists. The GC has regional offices called divisions. The divisions are GC offices at different regions overseeing the unions within their jurisdictions on behalf of the GC for easy administration. The divisions are the largest administrative units and on the same level as the GC in church ranking (Neufeld 1996:462). The World Church, through delegates sent from its institutions, conferences, unions and divisions, meet in a general session once every five years to review the work globally and make decisions about how the Church will be run for the next five years. The following are the divisions of the GC around the world as reported by the Seventh-day Church (Adventist Yearbook 2017:22-23):

    i.   East-Central Africa Division

    ii.   Euro-Asia Division

    iii.   Inter-American Division

    iv.   Inter-European Division

    v.   North American Division

    vi.   Northern Asia-Pacific Division

    vii.   South American Division

    viii.   South Pacific Division

    ix.   Southern African Indian-Ocean Division

    x.   Southern Asia Division

    xi.   Southern Asian-Pacific Division

    xii.   Trans-European Division

    xiii.   West-Central African Division

The General Conference also has what they refer to as the "attached field" which is not a Division of the General Conference, but rather a structure to take care of areas not under these 13 Divisions. The attached field is called the Middle East and North African Union directly supervised by the General Conference of the denomination.

Nigeria falls under the West-Central Africa Division along with other countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo (SDA Year Book 2012:465).

3.5   Becoming a missionary church in Africa

Relative to other Christian denominations, as stated earlier, the SDA Church embraced overseas mission late. Over time, the Adventists' message began to spread to Europe and other parts of the world. The history of how the Seventh-day Adventists got to Africa can be confusing because of minimal and conflicting reports about the activities of missionaries in the region. Africa does not feature prominently in the history of SDA world mission. Most of the information we know of early SDA missions is on America, South America, Europe and Australia. This may be due to the apparent lack of interest in Africa by early leaders of the new denomination.

3.5.1   West Africa

There are varied accounts of the SDA mission in West Africa. Some historians believed that the first contact with the West African people was on the Gold Coast (now Ghana). They believed that F.I.U Dolphin was the first person in that region to accept the Adventist message (Babalola 2001:10-11). According to this source, it was later on that the General Conference (GC) of Adventists sent missionaries to West Africa who would later on settle down in Sierra Leone. Other sources, however, maintain that the first contact of the SDA Church with the West African region was at Sierra Leone in 1863, the very year the denomination was formalized and organized as a church (Owusu-Mensa 1984:3). The first person to be identified with the SDA Church in Africa is Miss Hannah More, a missionary teacher at the Protestant Episcopal orphanage in Liberia. Miss More was on furlough from Sierra Leone when she came in contact with SDA literature written by J. N. Andrews and titled *History of the Sabbath*. She was visiting Connecticut in the United States when she read this literature. She eventually went back to Liberia and studied the materials, whereby she became converted to the SDA beliefs. She then extended the new message to missionaries of other denominations, such as the Australian Alexandria Dickson.

It follows that More would play the role of a missionary, despite the fact that the SDA Church was indifferent to her enthusiasm. She was not sent or officially commissioned to do so, but her passion drove her missionary endeavour. From her home in Liberia she wrote a letter to the leadership of the SDA Church back in the United States about the little group back in West Africa who had embraced Seventh-day Adventism, whilst she also became very active in distributing tracts and other literature about her new-found faith in other mission stations on the West African coasts. She later went back to the United States where she was baptized into the SDA Church in the city of Lancaster, Massachusetts.[18]

Much later on, the SDA General Conference sent a certain Elder Lawrence Chadwick to survey missionary opportunities on the West African coast. He went to Apam, Ghana (known as Gold Coast at that time) where he met an SDA group of about 48 members. This group was led by a local, a native of the Fanti tribe by the name of Francis Dolphijn[19] (Maxwell 1977:179). Dolphijn was a Methodist converted to the SDA faith through his friend named William Kweku AttaDawson who had just returned from America. Elder Chadwick also found out that there were members in Sierra Leone led by Pastor Coker, and another group in Liberia led by Mr. Gaston.[20] Another important personality was a local from Sekondi, Gold Coast by the name of J. D. Hayford, who also became a member of the SDA Church. These groups had read a literature series that was sent to mission stations on the coast of West Africa by members of the GC's Tract and Missionary Society back in the United States (Maxwell 1977:179; Owusu-Mensa 1984:8-11). The effectiveness of the printed media in facilitating the spreading of the SDA message at that period in time is here noted.

3.5.2   North-East Africa

In the north-eastern part of Africa, we have the record of missionaries such as Romualdo Bartola, an Italian self-supporting missionary, who was able to baptize seven *persons* in Alexandria, Egypt. Those who had been converted earlier in Italy sent SDA tracts to Italian communities in Alexandria to propagate their message. This effort was sustained by a physician, H. P. Ribton, originally from England who got converted by J. N. Andrews while

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[18]   It is a wonder why Michael Czechowski is always referred to as the first unofficial missionary of the SDA while indeed it was Miss Hannah More (Maxwell 1977:177-178).

[19]   Babalola (2001:10) referred to this man as F.I.U. Dolphin.

[20]   These men's first names were not identified in my sources.

living in Italy. Ribton and another Italian convert, Guiseppe Rupp, were killed in an anti-foreigner riot in Egypt in 1882 (Maxwell 1977:178; Neufeld 1996:500). According to Neufeld (1996: 500), Ribton opened a school and translated some of the Adventist tracts into Arabic so that the message would go beyond the Italians resident in Egypt to the Egyptian people. The riot that claimed the lives of these missionaries negatively impacted the growth of the SDA Church in Egypt as the little group there dispersed due to the violence.

Over a decade passed before another ethnic group, the Armenians from Turkey who settled in Cairo and Alexandria, began to form new SDA groups. Other missionaries who contributed to the growth of the SDA group in Egypt include J. Leuzinger (an Italian), Loius F. Passebois and Ida Schelegel among others. In 1901, their efforts of a decade paid off: the first SDA Church was organized in Egypt (Neufeld 1996:500-501). According to Neufeld, Egypt was considered to fall under the Middle-Eastern region during that period. Organizationally, Egypt became the headquarters of the Oriental Union Mission of the SDA Church in 1902 under the leadership of a Canadian-born missionary, W.H Wakeham. After many decades of missionary work, numerical growth and organizational development, Egypt became the launching board for missions to some Arab countries in Africa. The SDA Church reached out to Libya and Northern Sudan through its Egypt office.

3.5.3   Southern Africa

The work of the SDA Church in the southern hemisphere of Africa began in South Africa. It began in the year 1878 by a certain William Hunt, an American miner, and an unofficial missionary to South Africa (Adesina 2011:23). Hunt arrived in Kimberley, South Africa with some literature which he shared with colleagues and friends. Before Hunt arrived in South Africa, some people like Peter Wessels and G. J. Van Druten, who were Afrikaner farmers, had been studying the Sabbath issue on their own. They had become convinced of keeping the Saturday Sabbath, though they belonged to another Sunday-keeping denomination. They met Hunt along the way, joined the SDA Church through him and eventually decided to link up with the SDA Church's General Conference in Battle Creek, Michigan, United States, and formally joined the SDA Church (Maxwell 1977:178).

The SDA group in South Africa did not only ensure the steady growth of the church in their region, but also made an international impact. Peter Wessels sold a farm rich in diamonds and

used the proceeds to finance the work in their region, in Australia and in Chicago in the United States by helping out Adventist business giant, Dr. Kellog, in the outreach to the urban poor (Maxwell 1977:178).

3.6   Seventh-day Adventist mission in Nigeria

Christian missionary activities first took root in Nigeria in the south-western area by European missionaries (Bulus Galadima and Yusufu Turaki 2001:86-88). SDA missionaries would come much later to establish their unique mission among the same people other missionaries had become familiar with. The SDA Church has since then grown and thrived very well in Nigeria. This section of the thesis gives the historical narrative of the establishment and growth of the denomination in all the regions of Nigeria. It gives names and places that are important to establishment and growth of the SDA Church in Nigeria. The narrative of the development started with how the denomination entered Nigeria through the Western Region, then to the Eastern Region and finally to the Northern Region of the country.

3.6.1   Western Nigeria as springboard

Francis Dolphijn, the first Ghanaian national to become a Seventh-day Adventist was also instrumental in establishing the SDA Church's mission in Nigeria. He began to send passionate calls and pleas to the SDA Church to expand its mission to the West African region. His efforts got attention and things began to move gradually in West Africa. The SDA Church responded to the several calls he made by sending its first official missionary, Lawrence Chadwick, to expand the nascent missionary work in West Africa. After the visit of Lawrence Chadwick to West Africa, he returned to the United States with a positive report to the Church. His report motivated the Church to send a number of missionaries to West Africa. In the end Edward L. Sanford and Karl Rudolph were sent (Babalola 2002:16).

These first missionaries could not achieve much due to malaria attacks and other diseases predominant in West Africa, but their arrival was a boost for the Adventists in the region. Another group of missionaries comprising the families of Dudley Hale, George Kerr and G.P. Riggs were also sent to Ghana. Although they too suffered illnesses and the Kerr family even lost their two children, the missionaries worked hard to establish the faith in West Africa. Elder D.C Babcock was sent to Sierra Leone as the appointed supervisor of the SDA mission work in West Africa; he operated from Sierra Leone (Babalola 2002:16).

As the work in West Africa grew, particularly in Ghana and Sierra Leone, the SDA Church decided in 1913 to establish a permanent missionary unit in Nigeria. This was after the SDA missionary, D. C. Babcock, received calls from the Niger Company of northern Nigeria and other people from Lagos whose identity cannot be ascertained (Babalola 2002:22).[21] The missionaries working in the West African region divided West Africa into three missionary units: Ghana constituted one unit while Sierra Leone and Liberia constituted another, and Nigeria became a unit under the leadership of Elder David C. Babcock and a few African ministers. Babcock was accompanied by his wife and other missionaries, such as S. Mogue and R. P. Dulphine (Babalola 2002:28-30).

Adventist historians believe that Babcock and his crew arrived at the Lagos port on March 7, 1914. He then journeyed to the interior and hinterland to a village called Erunmu, about 26 km to the city of Ibadan in the south-west of Nigeria around April or May 1914 (Babalola 2002:xx-bb; Agboola 2001:24). There Babcock and his crew built their mission house. The chief of Erunmu and a few adults there became Seventh-day Adventists. The missionaries also started a school for the young ones; the school had no classrooms and the use of school uniform was not required for the students.

Agboola (2001:25) notes that after Babcock successfully established the mission station in Erunmu, three schools in Erunmu area, a mission house and a budding faith community, he moved further into the hinterland and came to a place called Sao in 1915. This new place of assignment was also a village close to another city called Ilorin, still in the south-west of Nigeria. His work in Sao included constructing a wide road of about 11 km and strong bridges across streams and rivers to Ilorin. This effort made the movement of people and their goods from Sao to Ilorin a lot easier. Babcock's efforts became known to the British colonial administrator and governor of the province. As a result he was requested to assist in the design and construction of a suspension bridge in Ilorin, which until today is popularly known as the *Amilegebe* Bridge (the bridge that swings - because it was a suspension bridge). People also called it the Babcock Bridge.

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[21] The purpose of the calls to the SDA missionaries is not certain. It may be due to developmental projects usually identifiable with missionary activities.

According to SDA historians (Babalola 2001:31; Agboola 2001:25-27), from Sao Babcock began to reach out to other places with the gospel. He travelled to northern Nigeria to a city suspected to be Kano. He spent only a few days in Kano with no record of specific activities. He also got calls from Ipoti-Ekiti, a little town situated about 120 kilometres from (and south west of) Ilorin and about 352 kilometres north-east of Lagos, to preach the message of the Saturday Sabbath to them. This message and that of the second advent of Jesus was central to the SDA missionaries' endeavours. Babcock's effort in Ipoti-Ekiti succeeded and people joined the SDA Church, especially from the Christian Missionary Society (CMS), now known as the Anglican Church. He also built schools in the region. Apart from schools, Babcock established trade and vocation centres where young people came to learn carpentry, masonry, agriculture and furniture making.

Ipoti-Ekiti became the hub for Adventist missionary ventures. From there, the SDA message spread to communities like Odo-Owa Ekiti, Otun-Ekiti, Oke Ila, Omu Aran, and Osi. The missionaries also trained the locals to share the gospel and the SDA message in order to reach more people more effectively. They had interpreters who assisted them to communicate with those who did not understand the English language used by the missionaries. They also had other auxiliary workers supporting their work and they began to raise clergymen among the local people (Agboola 2001:28).

Unfortunately Babcock had to end his missionary assignment in Nigeria due to constant illness which threatened his life. He returned with his family to Lagos for his onward journey to England in 1917. It is important to note that, although the preaching of the gospel was central to the SDA missionary outlook, it went at that time also beyond the preaching of the gospel. Babcock was involved in community development; this is evident in the road and bridge projects, and the skill acquisition and educational projects he executed. His cooperation with the civil colonial administration for the purpose of developing the society is also noted here. An Irish man, W. McClements, was sent from Europe to replace D.C. Babcock in 1919.

McClements noted that the success in the Ilorin area was limited due to the strong Islamic presence there. In addition, the colonial government did not permit the SDA Church to the same extent as other Christian missions to have schools and churches built in the municipality (Alao 2004:23). Much later on, around 1935, the SDA Church under the leadership of McClements established a printing press in Ibadan. The press published gospel messages of

the Seventh-day Adventists and also published books on health. It served the colonial governments in printing their documents and so became a source of employment for many people. In addition, young people in schools sold books published by the press to augment their tuition (Alao 2004:24). This highlights the potential of the SDA mission as a tool for social and economic development.

3.6.2   Seventh-day Adventists in eastern Nigeria

In eastern Nigeria, the SDA Church officially began its missionary work in the year 1923 although one Seventh-day Adventist, a Yoruba man (of western Nigeria), Mr. Bankole Loving-good, was known to have already made contact with people in eastern Nigeria (specifically in the present-day Rivers State and Niger Delta in the South-South Zone of Nigeria) (Babalola 2001:78). The SDA message was brought to eastern Nigeria, also called Ibo or Igboland, by a missionary called Jessie Clifford and his wife. They were under the leadership of McClement as the head of the SDA Church in Nigeria. Jessie Clifford and his wife came from Ivory Coast where they were previously serving as missionaries. Aba town was their first mission station in Nigeria. They connected with a few Seventh-day Adventists who came from Sierra Leone and with whom they formed the nucleus of the SDA Church in Aba. Other communities in eastern Nigeria were reached from Aba. Their activities were basically evangelization of the people, baptizing them in water, and teaching them about the Sabbath and the second coming of Jesus. The earliest indigenous people who joined the SDA Church included Phillip Onwere and Robert Wosu who helped to spread the Adventist message in that region (Babalola 2001:81-83).

Education being an important part of the Adventist mission also began through the efforts of Mrs. Clifford who opened an informal school in Aba. Although the motive was to use it as an avenue for reaching more people, especially children, the school grew to become a formal education centre. The school produced many people who became leaders in the SDA Church later on. The Clifford family worked in eastern Nigeria for seven years and left to go back to the Ivory Coast in 1930.

3.6.3   Seventh-day Adventists in northern Nigeria

David Babalola and Ayuba Mavalla (2001:64-65; 2014:45-46) give insight into the missionary work of the Seventh-day Adventists in northern Nigeria. The SDA Church's missionary work

in this region was pioneered by John Jacob Hyde and his family who had earlier been missionaries in Ghana and Sierra Leone. They left Ghana and went to Ibadan, in the south-west of Nigeria before travelling by train to Kaduna in the north of the country. Hyde eventually arrived in northern Nigeria in the present-day Plateau State in 1931. This was about seventeen years after Babcock started the work in the south-west of Nigeria, eight years after the SDA Church established its work in eastern Nigeria, and many years after the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), another Christian missionary organization, began work in the present-day Plateau State.

Upon arrival in Kaduna, a city in northern Nigeria, Hyde met with some colonial officials whose identity cannot be ascertained in this research. He was made to apply to the secretary of the Northern Region government in order to secure an approval to begin missionary work in northern Nigeria. Upon securing the approval he went to Zangon Kataf to cite a possible location for the mission headquarters. However, the Hyde party could not settle down in Zangon Kataf because there was already a functioning missionary station belonging to another church denomination in the area (Babalola 2001:64-65).

There are two main factors responsible for the difficulties Hyde had settling down in northern Nigeria. Firstly, Islam had been established in the northern area of the country long before Christianity came. The colonial governor of Nigeria, Lord Lugard had promised the emirs in the north that he would not interfere with the religion of the people. If missionaries would come to the northern part of the country, it had to be with the consent of the emirs. Secondly, the Christian Council of Nigeria established in 1930 made an effort to minimize conflicts and rivalry among Christian missionaries. Therefore, member denominations of the council agreed that new entrant missions would not establish any missionary post where another missionary group was already operating. Part of the purpose of establishing the Christian Council of Nigeria was to forge unity among Christians and protect them from the opposing force of Islam. The Sudan Interior Mission was already operating in the Zangon Kataf area before the SDA missionary, Hyde, got there. So he had to relocate to another area (Babalola 2001:65-66).

However, by 1932 the work of the Northern Nigerian Mission of the SDA had already been fully established in Jengre, a town in northern Nigeria. The most prominent of the missionary work was the medical arm of their activities; it grew from being a dispensary to a hospital with the permission and approval of the government. The hospital at Jengre served several communities in the region (Mavalla 2014:46).

The work of the SDA missionaries grew until the headquarters was moved away from Jengre to Bukuru, a town about 76 kilometres from Jengre. Seventh-day Adventists operated two schools, one in Jos and the other in Bukuru, where many children were educated (Mavalla 2014:46). Hyde's success was based on meeting pragmatic needs of the communities, namely medical treatment of ailments, hygiene/sanitation lectures and basic education of children, especially on how to read and write. The treatment of jigger infection was a major relief to the people in the communities. They also preached the gospel of Jesus to the people who were cautious about accepting a new faith in Christianity (Babalola 2001:67-70). It was from Jengre that Seventh-day Adventism spread to other parts of northern Nigeria over time. Now, Seventh-day Adventists have their gospel work and institutions spread all over the northern part of the country.

3.7 The Seventh-day Adventist mission and socio-economic development in Nigeria: a historical review

It is true that the SDA Church does not have social justice and development as its priority, but certain mission activities were actually directed at fulfilling Nigerians' socio-economic and developmental aspirations. This section highlights some of the contributions of the SDA Church to national development. This section also seeks to investigate the rationale behind the church's pragmatic response to the physical needs of Nigerians. Attempts will therefore be made to justify the need for the SDA Church to engage further in social issues on a larger and more dynamic scale as a necessary component of a faithful Christian witness in an environment as Nigeria. Bindas (2004:59-60) notes that the SDA Church-family has changed in Nigeria over time. The Church responds to changes in the country due to factors such as urbanization, educational needs, economy and social ties such as family relationships. Other social factors include single parenting, the growing number of people living as couples when not married, absent fathers and so forth. A response to these social changes is reflected in the administration structures of the SDA Church. According to Bindas in this cited literature, efforts are therefore made to use theology to ground families and the social structure and thus protect them from prevailing adverse social changes. When the political structure of the nation changes, the administration structures of the SDA Church also have to reflect those changes. This is to enable the Church to reach its communities more efficiently and effectively.

This change is noticeable in how the SDA Church has grown over time from the Erunmu mission station in south-west of Nigeria, to a complex nation-wide structure needed for its administration. At the initial stage of the SDA work in Nigeria, its administrative structure was in more expansive regions; they had locations in the three regions of Nigeria, namely the Western Region, the Eastern Region and the Northern Region. The administrative offices were called missions. So there was the West Nigeria Mission of the SDA Church and, likewise, other mission stations for the other regions. As the work of the Church progressed and became more stable financially, numerically and administratively, the missions were reorganized into a conference. The purpose of creating new conferences was to make the fulfilment of the Adventist mission and the spreading of its message more effective.

In the year 2011 the SDA Church in Nigeria began a strategic process of massive reorganization. This led to every state in Nigeria hosting at least one conference. Lagos State in the south-west of Nigeria hosts two conferences because of the numerical and financial size of the Church there. There are a few factors that inform the creation of new conferences/missions or restructuring/re-organization of existing ones. Such factors are based on unwritten rules of the administration based on the leadership's judgement, either at the local conference administration or at the union administrative level. The factors include the size or territory of an existing conference, the financial viability of the proposed conference, the numerical strength of its members, human resources such as pastors available to work, infrastructure, and so forth.

Size of the territory: The primary objective of the SDA Church must be kept in focus i.e. to preach the everlasting gospel to the whole world and get people ready for the imminent return of Christ (Babalola 2002:12; Alalade 2008:23-24). This mission is the overriding factor in the SDA Church's operation. Therefore, the Church wants to reach its membership more easily and more effectively. When the area that a conference administration has to cover and reach gets too large, it makes sense from a managerial point of view to divide the area into more manageable sizes. This makes administration closer to the people and the latter will feel the impact of the SDA Church organization better and the Church can be more accountable for the local churches or branches within its territory.

Financial viability: The conference should be able to support its work and meet its financial obligations such as payment of salaries to current workers and retirement benefits to those who

have retired in the territory. It should also be able to carry out evangelism and other programmes without depending on external sources for funding. Even when a conference gets so large and intends to re-organize into two or more conferences, it must be ensured that both the parent conference and the new conferences would be financially viable after the restructuring.

Numerical strength: The new conference will be expected to have a population or membership that justifies its creation. This goes also beyond numerical strength; it depends on to the financial strength of the membership. In other words, the extent to which the members are able to support the Church financially will affect the decision on the establishment of another conference.

Available human resources: Another factor affecting the creation of a new conference is the number of workers available to the administration in terms of pastors and other administrators. The SDA Church has to determine if it has enough qualified people to perform required tasks in the proposed conference. It will also ensure that the new conference can afford to pay such personnel.

Establishment of the headquarters of a conference: Just like the government of Nigeria has to determine the state capital for newly-created states, the SDA Church also has to decide on the community that will host its headquarters. This is the office where the operations of the conference are planned and monitored. The headquarters is where the offices of the conference executives and leadership such as the president, secretary, treasurer and departmental directors are located. The choice of the headquarters is influenced by factors such as the availability of physical and social infrastructure.

Most of the time, the capital cities of Nigeria meet these requirements. But in certain instances the SDA Church may locate its headquarters in a place other than the state capital city because that is where they have facilities such as buildings. For example in Osun State, the Osun Conference headquarters is not in Osogbo, the state capital, but in Ede, because the Church already had sufficient properties and facilities there and did not have such at Osogbo, the state capital city. In Abia State, eastern Nigeria, there are four conferences and only one of them has its headquarters in Umuahia, the state capital city. Aba is the headquarters of one of the conferences; the obvious reason would be because Aba has always been the headquarters for

the Church in that region, being the first place the missionary, Clifford, established his mission post in the region. The other headquarters are in Isiugwu Aba and Isiala Ngwa. Therefore, for Seventh-day Adventists when establishing its operational headquarters, convenience of operation is more important than alignment with the government headquarters. It should be noted that the world headquarters of the SDA Church, the General Conference, is currently located in Silversprings, Maryland and not in Washington DC.

3.8 The SDA Church and national developmental aspirations

The SDA Church has made an impact on the social and economic development of Nigeria at different levels. This is as a result of its activities primarily directed to the spreading the good news of Jesus' imminent return. As a means of achieving the task, different approaches are being deployed. The Church thus makes significant contributions to the national development aspirations through, among other things, education, health, development and relief missions, and media. This section of the thesis will deal with the topic of the SDA Church and national developmental aspirations according to the above-mentioned categories.

3.8.1 Seventh-day Adventists and education in Nigeria

Education has remained a powerful tool in nations around the world to orientate citizens towards national development. For example, Pavel Zgaga (2011:4-6) notes how higher education was used in the Balkans for their national development. The SDA Church has had a great impact on national life through its educational institutions around the country; many Nigerians have received their education in these schools at various levels, be it in pre-primary school (nursery school), primary education, secondary education (high school), in teachers' training institutes, or at the university level. These Nigerians have also secured their means of livelihood with the various certifications received from these SDA schools. The SDA educational institutions have therefore been contributing to the development of the country. However, Seventh-day Adventists do not consider national development as priority in their missions in Nigeria. Rather, education is a strategy for leading people back to God in order to restore them back to the lost image of God in humanity (Babalola 2002:102). The spread of the Three Angels' Message found in the apocalyptic book of the Bible, in Revelations 14, remains the driving force of SDA mission work.

The history of Seventh-day Adventists' involvement in educating minds dates way back to their formation period in the 1860s in the United States. George Knight (2004:75-78) notes the basis on which the denomination became involved in education: it was to inculcate the end-time messages in the minds of the young ones and to give them wholesome education which will protect them from the corrupting influence of modern societies. Over time the SDA educational system and networks have grown and matured and have provided excellent training and capacity development for thousands of people around the world. Ellen G. White (1952:13) explains the purpose of true education. This is to be the guiding principle of SDA education. Its ultimate goal is not to obtain certain qualifications only. SDA education is to address the multi dimensional area of life of humanity. It is to empower those who go through it to serve humanity here on earth and "in the world to come." The opinion of Ellen G. White therefore positions the SDA church to use their educational institutions as an agency of societal transformation and ultimately make people ready for the eschaton.

In Nigeria, Adekunle Alalade (2008:46-47) notes the establishment of the first school by the SDA missionary at Erunmu, Oyo State, and the second school which was later established in Shao, Kwara State. Both were elementary or primary schools. These schools were also established to facilitate the learning of the Bible and SDA teachings. Over time, the number of schools increased and so was the quality of education they offered. Apart from the primary or elementary schools, SDAs have, according to the Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook of 2012, four secondary/high schools in the country. Apart from the secondary schools, Seventh-day Adventists operate Babcock University where thousands of Nigerians have obtained their tertiary education qualifications.

Ogunji (2008:77-81) explains that the Adventists' philosophy of education is different from that of secular education. This implies that the education provided by the SDA Church will be different from that of the Nigerian state. The SDA Church believes that the image of God in humans has been negatively affected by sin. Therefore, the education of people is hinged on the attempt to restore the image of God back in humans through the grace of God. Through this process, humans are then able to impact their physical environment (nature) positively. The spiritual, mental, physical and social dimensions of human existence are to be affected by Christian education (Ogunji 2008:86). This contrasts with the education offered in the secular state of Nigeria, which is devoid of spiritual considerations.

The contribution of the Seventh-day Adventists to the education sector in Nigeria is complementary to the efforts of the government to educate its citizens. Education is critical for sustainable transformational development (Boyi 2014:66). Despite the fact that Nigeria recognizes the importance of education, the educational sector has not been able to realize its potential in the national aspiration towards development. The goals of the educational sector of the Nigeria, according to the education policy, include the development of the citizenry's personal skills, corporate social development and to be relevant to the needs of the society (NERDC 2013:13).

According to the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), the federal government of Nigeria seeks to develop the moral consciousness of its citizens through the educational sector. It is also through the educational sector that the Nigerian government seeks to integrate the individual into the Nigerian society and that of the world at large. The education provided in the country should facilitate the government's efforts in empowering its citizens and in reducing poverty (NERDC 2013:14-16). The government's intention is to educate both male and female and across all socio-economic strata of the society. The SDA educational drive therefore complements the efforts of the country.

3.8.2   *Adventist Relief and Development Agency operations in Nigeria*

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is a non-sectarian humanitarian organization of the SDA Church. It addresses the needs of people experiencing extreme poverty and deprivation. It was established in Nigeria in 1987 (Alao 2004:62). According ADRA (2017:2) the agency's mission statement emphasizes God's love and compassion as its motivation for the work of relief and development, especially in communities where people suffer deprivation, marginalization and humanitarian crises. This publication also conveys the agency's desires to empower these marginalized and the oppressed. ADRA's operation is not limited to any particular race, ethnicity, gender or culture. As a humanitarian agency affiliated with the SDA Church, it has access to a huge pool of well trained volunteers who are ready to serve in response to emergency situations throughout Nigeria.

The objectives of ADRA in Nigeria are to support local authorities in community-based projects, improving the quality of life of the poor, help them to be self-reliant and respond to emergency and crisis situation. The agency seeks to achieve these objectives through a range

of development and relief activities such as providing child-care and maternity facilities, digging bore-holes, HIV prevention programmes, basic food production, vocational trainings etcetera. ADRA has executed many projects towards achieving these objects. Some of the projects that have been done are provision of potable water in certain communities in Ile-Ife and Ilesha in Osun State. They also provided micro-lending services in Ile-Ife, Kaduna and Benin. ADRA also responded when there were accidental bomb blasts in the military facility in Ikeja, Lagos in 2002 (Alao 2004:62). There are many other projects that are not listed here.

Recently, ADRA has worked extensively in the north-eastern part of Nigeria, particularly in Borno State and Adamawa State, due to the activities of the terror group, *Boko Haram*. The insurgency has led to the death of over 20, 000 people, the displacement of about 1.5 million people including women and children. Homes, schools and other social amenities have been destroyed. ADRA Nigeria has responded to this situation by providing relief materials and food for the internally displaced people (IDP). It has spent more than $1million in providing water, food and education support for the affected (ADRA 2017:3).

In order to fulfil its humanitarian mission, ADRA partners with other institutions, governments, (Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and bodies such as "FAO, UN Women, German Foreign Office (GFO), Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), ADRA International, ADRA Norway, and LDS (Latter Day Saints Charities)" (ADRA 2017:3)

ADRA as an international organization works to protect the vulnerable people around the globe from all forms of exploitation and violence by working with local authorities. ADRA works to protect, especially women and children, from gender based violence, sexual violence, child abuse, other forms of coercion and exploitation. This is in line with its ministry of compassion, love and care for humanity (ADRA 2012:4-8). The efforts of protecting humanity from abuse as expressed in the referenced document guides ADRA's work in Nigeria regarding protecting vulnerable people from the abuses described in this paragraph. ADRA finds a model in Christ and in the prophets of the Bible. Christ modelled concern and care for the poor and the oppressed as recorded in Luke 4:18 and 20:47, among other verses. One of the most prominent biblical prophets gives the mandate for equity and care for the downtrodden in Isaiah 1:16, 17.

Although no studies has been done to evaluate or measure the impact of the humanitarian activities of ADRA in Nigeria, but the fact that victims of violence and disasters are fed,

educated, provided with clean water, etcetera would definitely have impacted on the socio-economic landscape of the region. However, Aluko and Nwogwugwu (2009:230, 232) note that the SDA Church through ADRA has contributed to Nigeria's efforts in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) in the area of poverty eradication and sustaining the environment.

Shurtleff and Aoyaga (2014:1176) note that Adventists through their agency, ADRA, worked in Nigeria in promoting healthy nutrition and also in educating farmers on cultivation of high-yield soybeans. Adventists have done extensive work, probably more than any other agency, on the introduction of soyfoods, vegetarianism, meat alternatives and other health foods from the Western world (William Shurtleff & Akiko Aoyaga 2014:5). This aspect of their mission is also operational in Nigeria, especially to eradicate poverty and promote healthy nutrition.

3.8.3 *Adventist World Radio and social change*

The SDA Church's desire to reach the world with the everlasting gospel motivates it to explore all avenues of achieving this goal. Seventh-day Adventists began broadcasting the gospel on air (radio) in the United States in 1923 through the Voice of Prophecy (VOP) programme led by the late H.M.S Richards (Babafemi 2013:69). Later radio programmes targeted communist Russia in an attempt to bypass the physical prohibition of religious activities. Adventist World Radio (AWR) currently uses AM, FM, shortwave, satellite and webcast in reaching the world with the gospel.

Akintayo Babafemi (2013:75-76) notes that AWR was established in Nigeria in 1999 broadcasting on the Amplitude Modulation (AM) in the three major Nigerian languages, namely Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa. This was designed for maximum reach, even at grassroots level. The radio station is located on the campus of Babcock University in Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, South West Zone, Nigeria. Femi Kuewumi (2002:64) notes that setting it up was challenging for the SDA Church because it needed funding, but because of the importance of the work to the Adventists, an arrangement was made with the Nigerian Union Mission (the national headquarters office as it was then called). One of the wealthy church members, Adedeji Adeleke, provided the funds to erect the building that houses the radio house.

The radio has been noted to be a powerful medium in reaching people because if its portability, low costs, accessibility and affordable energy consumption. In consistency with the church's

goal, the primary aim of setting up the AWR in Nigeria was to reach people with the everlasting gospel. But to achieve this, Adventists had to begin by meeting people's social, economic and health needs. This is achieved through programmes on family life and health. Akintayo Babafemi (2013:75-76) notes the success achieved in impacting the lives and behaviours of listeners in Taraba and Adamawa States in Nigeria. According to him, the change of behaviour is judged by the number of people who responded through letters and GSM telephone text messages (SMSs). Some of the individuals were influenced by the radio messages to the extent that they volunteered to join the SDA Church through the rite of baptism.

The station produces an average of 365 programmes per language and about 1, 095 programmes in a year (Kuewumi 2004:64). These activities support the SDA Church in Nigeria in its efforts to help shape societal values and structures, and people's behaviour and attitudes: among other things positive living, healthy lifestyle and increased agricultural productivity. The church thus contributes directly and indirectly to the developmental aspirations of the nation.

3.8.4   *Adventist health services in Nigeria*

Seventh-day Adventists have developed a world-wide system, through its healthcare institutions, which proffers solutions to the world's health challenges. The healthcare institutions combine orthodox medical practice with healthy lifestyle and sickness preventive measures. Their approach does not only target the physical, but also the social, spiritual and mental wellness of humans. This is based on the model of Jesus' holistic healing ministry (Nyekwere 2004:103-104). The SDA Church sees healthcare as a means of spreading the holistic gospel of Christ.

According to Dayo Alao (2004:63), Seventh-day Adventists were able to set up their first hospital in Nigeria by 1940, twenty-six years after the SDA Church began its ministry in Nigeria. This project lies on a 40-acre piece of land (about 16 ha) at Ile-Ife, in the south-western part of Nigeria. The land was leased very cheaply at the rate of one shilling per year by the community head of the ancient Ile-Ife city, now in Osun State, the *Ooni* of Ife, *Oba* Adesoji Aderemi. The facility was unfortunately taken over by the British army during World War II. The hospital was returned to the SDA Church in 1944 and then officially opened. A missionary, Dr. G.A.S. Madgwick, from the Adventist hospital, Kendu in East Africa, was the first medical

director of the hospital. After the British government returned, Dr. G.W. Allen became the medical officer who headed the facility. It was a 42-bed facility with administrative and residential buildings for European and African medical professionals (Nyekwere 2004:107).The hospital also set up a nursing school and school of midwifery where nurses were trained, both as potential workers at the SDA hospital and as professionals for the healthcare industry. The midwifery school began in 1950 by a missionary, M. M Turtill. The school was serving the dual purpose of training medical care personnel and also fulfilling the missionary assignment of the Church (Nyekwere 2004:109).

The impact of the Seventh-day Adventist hospital in Ile-Ife on the Western Region of Nigeria was significant. It had a sociological, economical, physical and developmental impact on the region (Babalola 2002:166). Part of the impact could be seen in the bringing to an end of the killings of the second baby in a set of twins. This was done through the scientific and spiritual education of the populace. The SDA hospital in Ile-Ife also drastically reduced infant mortality rates and deaths during child-birth in the community. Furthermore, the hospital took care of over 100,000 patients from within the city and outside of it till the 1970s, before the hospital was taken over once again, but this time, by the regional government of Nigeria. In 1973 alone, the hospital had 31,850 outpatients, 4,263 inpatients and 1,273 surgeries were done (Nyekwere 2004:110-112).The hospital also provided chaplaincy services for patients who were distressed, and they always prayed with patients (who desired such) before surgeries. The hospital and the nursing school also provided employment for scores of professionals, either as direct employees or contractors. The institution also produced nurses and midwives who added to the number and quality of medical professionals in Nigeria.

In the roles highlighted above, it can be seen how the SDA Church contributed to the developmental aspirations of Nigeria. Unfortunately, in the year 1975 the nationalization of institutions in Nigeria by the military government affected the hospital; the hospital was taken over as a public facility (Babalola 2002:172). This interruption of the service rendered by the SDA Church in the healthcare sector lasted till 1987 when another military administration under General Ibrahim Babangida returned the hospital to the SDA Church. However, since then the hospital has struggled in providing services to Nigeria, as an economic downturn and other difficulties have challenged the drive.

Another major contribution of the SDA Church can be seen in the spiritual growth of the people who had accepted their gospel and whose lives are now affected by the message. For example, Adventists teach abstinence from use of alcohol, tobacco and other harmful substances. In addition, healthy nutrition especially vegetarian diets are promoted by the church. By this, people are able to save money which would have been spent on medical care. Families also benefit because of the stability their new lifestyles bring about.

The SDA Church has other healthcare facilities in other parts of Nigeria. The SDA hospital in Ile-Ife, being the largest of the denomination's medical facilities, also supervises the operations of other medical facilities by Seventh-day Adventists such as the health centres and dispensaries in Ondo, Omuo, Arandun, Aiyetoro, Ugbo, Igbobini, Inisha, Erunmu and Ilishan Remo (Nyekwere 2004:122; Babalola 2002:166). All these are facilities in south-western area of Nigeria. They all also provide similar services to their environments and bring similar values to them although on a much smaller scale than the Ile-Ife hospital. The clinic in Ilishan was located in the premises of Adventist Seminary of West Africa which later became the Babcock University. This clinic has gone through various developmental stages and, right now, it has become the teaching hospital of the Babcock medical school. At this point, the Babcock University teaching hospital is the largest facility run by the SDA Church in Nigeria.

In northern Nigeria, the SDA mission also made an impact through the medical mission. Since 1931 Seventh-day Adventists had desired that a medical centre be established there. By 1954, through the efforts of a Western missionary couple, Dr J.A. Hyde and Mrs. L. Hyde, a hospital was established in Jengre, close to Jos in the present Plateau State. During the early period, the Hydes provided very basic medical care to people, treating waterborne diseases and infections like jiggers, but the hospital has grown to a more sophisticated facility with highly-trained personnel (Maigadi 2005:62). The medical ministry of the Seventh-day Adventists in the north further expanded its operations by establishing rural clinics in various communities. At first (lay) church members were trained to provide very basic health and lifestyle counselling, to check blood pressure, dispense medicines and so forth. This developed into rural clinics in rural communities such as Maigamo, Ramin Kura, Warsa, Kabene, Talo-Chawai, Babban Fadama, Arum Tumara and Tudai. All these were being supervised by the SDA hospital in Jengre (Maigadi 2005:63-72).

The social and economic impact of these health services in the north of Nigeria was similar to such described in the south-west of Nigeria. The SDA medical missionary had provided employment for hundreds of people since its inception. Maigadi (2005:66-67) notes that over 62 nurses worked at the hospital in northern Nigeria between 1946 and 2001. At least, twenty doctors also worked within the same time frame in the region. This excludes the laboratory and auxiliary personnel who served the system. Apart from this, good community health was in itself some form of capital for the region and the nation. The SDA mission in the north of Nigeria, like the typical SDA missions around the world, was holistic. But the ultimate achievement would be sharing the everlasting gospel with the people. The hospital in Jengre also suffered the fate of the one in Ile-Ife: in October 1976 it was taken over by the Plateau State government but was later restored to the SDA Church (Maigadi 2005:68).

Dave Nyekwere (2004:155-159) gives the background to the medical services of the SDA Church in eastern Nigeria. In places like Ahoada and Elele in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, sickness and diseases ravaged the people and hampered the missionary work. This led to the establishment of a hospital in Ahoada, Rivers State in 1955. It was in partnership with the government of that region. The building was given by the government while the SDA Church operated the 50-bed facility. It was called the Ahoada County Hospital. Nyekwere notes that initially the hospital faced a challenge due to the failure of the government to be faithful to their end of the agreement. Although the hospital was later purchased from government and the SDA Church extended the wards and constructed a worship centre in the facility, the civil war (also called the Biafran War) of 1966-1967 ended the medical missionary. The facility was however reopened after the war in 1970 (Nyekwere 2004:163). Later on, just like the fate of the Ile-Ife and Jengre hospitals, the governor of the state took over the hospital from the SDA Church in June 1, 1972, never to be returned to the Church (Nyekwere 2004:169-170).

The effort of the Seventh-day Adventists on medical missions in Rivers State was later extended to other communities in the east of the country. An agreement was reached between the SDA Church and the Northern Ngwa County, eastern Nigeria to start a new medical project in the county. (It was a similar agreement than one that was reached between the SDA Church and the authorities in Ahaoda, Rivers State.) The county would provide the building and equipment while the SDA Church would provide the personnel. The county would also subsidize the operating costs (Nyekwere 2004:180-181). The property covered 65 acres (26 ha)

of land in Okpuala Ngwa and was about 20 miles (32 km) from Aba where the headquarters of the SDA Church's mission was. The Biafran War also affected their operation, so between 1969 and 1970 the Red Cross took over the administration. The hospital was vandalized during the war and it was never returned to the SDA Church. It only operated for six years, 1963-1969, but served thousands of people in the community (Nyekwere 2004:181-182, 190).

I should now highlight some important issues noted by Dave Nyekwere in the previously cited work. The SDA Church seemed to have worked closely with governments in the eastern part of Nigeria to help fulfil the nation's developmental goals. Although this relationship did not really augur well for the SDA Church's mission due to the loss of projects to the government, it suggests that the Church's theology is not fundamentally opposed to working in partnership with the government for developmental purposes. What the SDA Church can do is to seek new ways of achieving a partnership with government while minimizing or eliminating the possibility of loss of its facilities to the government. Secondly, the SDA Church's efforts during the civil war (the Biafran War) highlight the fact that the SDA Church cares deeply about human suffering, regardless of the nation's political ideology. Nywekwere (2004:188) notes that the SDA Church continued to provide skeletal services to refugees, the Biafran rebels and the people on the side of the Federal Government during the war. This was done under the supervision of the International Red Cross with the help of doctors, nurses and other workers from America, Sweden, Finland, as well as indigenous workers. The area of operations was especially in the eastern part of the country where the effect of the war was mostly felt.

By the 1980s, the GC and ADRA, Sweden office, responded to appeals from eastern Nigeria to set up another hospital in Aba. Resources were sent to the SDA Church in eastern Nigeria so that they could build and run their own medical facility. The SDA hospital was located at Ogbor Hill, Aba, just beside the East Nigeria Conference Office of the SDA Church. It was built as a follow-up on the motherless babies' home started by the church in that area. This home accepts babies that have been abandoned by their parents. It is a humanitarian project to care for and nurture such infants. The home operates side by side the 26-bed hospital where thousands of patients (inpatients and outpatients) have been treated since being fully in operation in 1984. Between 1995 and 2000, the record provided shows that over 70,000 patients enjoyed medical service in that facility (Nyekwere 2004:191-193).

Adventists see themselves as affirming the biblical perspective on the well-being of the total person of the human being (Knight 2004:69). The SDA Church therefore strives to make the preservation of health, the healing of the sick, the education of the mind and the relieving of the oppressed as important parts of a holistic mission (Babalola 2002:149-150). In the process of doing this, its activities, through its hospitals, lifestyle-change messages, educational institutions, and relief and development work, complement the developmental aspirations of the host society. The SDA Church, through its institutions, also serves as employers of labour, thereby reducing the unemployment rate of the country. All the afore-mentioned activities of the SDA Church have a developmental and socio-economic impact on Nigeria. The SDA Church therefore has the potential, even within its theological structure, to make a greater and more sustainable developmental impact in Nigeria.

3.9   Conclusion

This chapter introduced the identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the structure of its operation. The historical narrative of the origin of the SDA Church gives perspective to the SDA Church's theology of mission. Adventists believed that Christ would return on

October 22, 1844 after some interpretations of apocalyptic books of Revelation and Daniel. Although Christ did not return on the set date, Adventists believe that Christ's return is imminent. They feel compelled to let the whole world know about the climax of the world's history. They also believe that improper alliances among religious groups and political institutions are hallmarks of the end of the world. The SDA Church teaches that as a faithful follower of Christ, one should not be in association with any religious or political entity that will compromise the Christian faith. The evidence of such a compromise is not keeping the Ten Commandments. The SDA Church sees itself as the only church that remains completely faithful to Christ. Other Christian groups or denominations that are seen as not obeying God's law completely are seen as the apocalyptic Babylon. The SDA Church believes it has a mandate to call people out of Babylon. Based on this theological position, the SDA Church limits its interaction with governments and religious groups. The SDA Church in Nigeria is an extension of the world-wide SDA Church; it shares the mission of spreading the three angels' message to its own locality. The message of the imminent return of Christ and the call to people to exit the apocalyptic Babylon informs all auxiliary missionary activities of Seventh-day Adventists. In the attempt to share the message of Christ's return, Seventh-day Adventists use various

avenues to communicate the gospel to people. They run educational institutions, healthcare systems, and relief and development agencies to pursue its evangelistic goals. The message of Christ remains in the centre of all the activities in these institutions. In the process of sharing the gospel, the SDA Church meets the pragmatic needs of people and that of local communities. Through this they contribute to the developmental aspirations of Nigeria. Poverty and inadequate social infrastructures characterize Nigeria as a nation and the SDA mission therefore complements the efforts of national authority in bringing development to Nigeria. The SDA Church's primary objective does not include social and economic development, but the social and economic aspirations of the Nigerian people are being met by the missionary activities of the SDA Church. In spite of the SDA Church's discretion about religion and politics, the perspective of the SDA Church on what constitutes mission can be broadened to include social and economic development. The good news about Christ can be demonstrated more clearly by deliberate, planned and sustained developmental activities. Without this, the SDA Church might not have accomplished the commission of preaching the gospel of Christ.

Chapter 4

Transformational development as mission: Challenge to the Nigerian church

4.1   Introduction

This chapter serves as a link or bridge between the previous chapters and the next chapter that will more pertinently deal with the results of the field work done for this thesis. The developmental strategies of the Nigerian government is examined and reviewed in this chapter, especially that of the post-military era. The exploration will include the critical appraisal of the developmental strategies, their success, failures and what factors affected both. It will be argued that the reason for such failures has to do with the missing link of the role of the church in the national developmental aspiration. The chapter also gives background to the need for proposing a crucial role of agency for the church in the efforts towards national development. In order to underscore the need for the SDA Church to act as an agent for national development as part of its legitimate mission, this chapter explores the meaning of transformational development and how it is differentiated from the traditional approach to development. It explains the connection between mission, the theology of the church's relationship with the state and transformational development. It examines a variety of ways to understanding the evangelism concept with the view of adopting a useful approach in fulfilling God's mandate for our world, especially in Nigeria. The discussion will thereupon proceed to examine and consider the role of social institutions, especially churches, in national development.

4.2   Nigeria's developmental strategies: a historical overview

Most of Africa struggle with the phenomenon of poverty and underdevelopment. Collier (2007:20) describes the situation where about a billion people, mainly resident in Africa, constitute the poorest of the world's population of over six billion people. There are fundamental questions as to why Africa as a continent should experience this scale of underdevelopment relative to other continents of the world. For the purpose of focus, this thesis will not be able to look at possible effects of "unjust global economic order" (Agbiji & Swart 2015:4), and how unjust international relationships, unfair international trade policies by other

continents, colonization, the cold war and other factors could have been obstacles to development on the continent.

Nigeria as a country in the West Africa sub-region also battles with poverty and underdevelopment. Nigeria has adopted different policies over time to address the poverty scourge. Although strategies for development have been conceived and pursued before independence and the years after independence, special focus will be on what has been done since the post-military era. Since successive administrations have made steps towards national development, these steps have yielded minimal impacts. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2012:11), about 112.47 million Nigerians were described as poor in the year 2010. That figure constitutes 69% of the entire population. This is a significant rise relative to the previous years: 54% in 2004 and 65 % in 1996. It is also indicative of the failure of the developmental efforts and programmes of the country during these years.

Non-governmental agencies such as the ones belonging to the United Nations (UN) and other organizations also play their part complementing the efforts of national authorities towards fulfilling the developmental aspiration of Nigeria. Although these international development agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Department for International Development (DFID) and so on, may not have succeeded in ending poverty or developing the nation, they have made significant efforts and invested millions of dollars to this cause (Ugwu Joseph 2008:11, 87, 88).The agency of the church in fulfilling its mission also contributes to the development of the country, either knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly. The theological paradigm of each faith tradition also affects how they engage in a country/community in relation to the political, social and economic development of such a country. The missional dynamics of development is especially important as the concept of transformational development is highlighted for the purpose of sustainable development in Nigeria. It is important to emphasize at this point that the church has the potential of doing more in providing the missing link of transformational development for the nation.

The developmental strategies that Nigeria adopted to fight poverty, improve the quality of life of the people and lay the foundations for a prosperous country are discussed briefly in three phases. It covers such attempts from before independence to the current democratic experience. As it will be noted in the narratives of the drive towards development in Nigeria, only the traditional economic indices have been the yardstick for measuring development. This

orientation of development, measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), physical infrastructures and so on, has not helped the nation so far, because of the neglect of other indices of development such as noted by development experts like Sen Armatya.

4.2.1 Pre-independence development plans

In order to understand development in the current post-military era, we need to provide context for the present experience in the struggle for development. This section thus provides the historical context for the current development situation in Nigeria.

Historically, Nigeria as a country did not take planning as a tool for development for the welfare of Nigerians seriously until 1945. The lack of planning towards developing Nigeria for Nigerians has plagued the country well before independence. This is so despite various fairly successful attempts of Third World nations like India and Ghana at planning for development, which could have served as positive reference points (Okigbo 1989:1, 2, 16). The pre-independence records provided by Okigbo shows that all the policies made by the British colonial government in Nigeria were to ultimately benefit Britain. The first intentional planning for development was instituted by the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945, a ten-year development plan to enhance agriculture, mining, veterinary and forestry development. It was aimed at improving the welfare of the people, mentally and health-wise, physical infrastructures and social amenities, for the purpose of the colonial government's smooth operations. The execution made the provision of roads, pipe-borne water, electricity and other infrastructure possible. However, there were no contributions from the indigenous people of Nigeria to the formulation and development of the Act (Okigbo 1989:20; Adeyemi 2001:5-8). This plan was criticized as lacking indigenous contributions and devoid of macroeconomic targets that could be used as yardsticks for measuring performance. It did not indicate how the goals set would be achieved.

4.2.2 The post-independence development plans

According to Adeyemi (2001:8-9), Nigeria adopted a series of National Development Plans as the strategy to fast-track economic development of the fledging country. The development plans were in phases. The first National Development Plan (1962-1968) was designed to serve as a catalyst for sustainable national development through the provision of extensive infrastructure such as electricity, roads, railway lines, as well as focusing on agricultural

industry. The plan was also to boost the private sector initiative. It was a coordinated effort between the federal and regional governments. The plan focused on short-term economic viability. The plan, primarily conceived through foreign consultancy, shunned projects with social/welfarist and long-term considerations. This was so because there were few experienced Nigerians with the capacity for this kind of project. The colonial officials occupied offices where such were plans were drawn up and then executed. The departure of the colonial officials thus left some void. It was criticized for not being based on adequate feasibility studies and being too dependent on foreign funding. Marcellus (2009:200) also faulted the plan for its dependence on foreign consultants' input to formulate plans while very few Nigerian technocrats were involved in the planning stages and were not given the opportunity to gain experience or contribute to the process.

The second National Development Plan (1970-1974) was based on the newly-discovered oil wealth. It was to expand the socio-economic infrastructural facilities and increase government's involvement in agriculture as commenced in the first development plan. It was geared towards reconstruction of the nation after the Civil War. It was also designed to promote domestic industries through the import substitution strategy (Adeyemi 2001:9).

Adeyemi continues to describe the attempts at national development through the third National Development Plan (1975-1980). It basically constituted the continuation of the previous plans. The third plan was to continue to use the income from oil to better the life of citizens by expanding the social infrastructure in the areas of health, education, water and electricity production and distribution. This plan however liberalised import regulations on consumer goods. This would eventually hurt the capacity of local industries and limit earnings on export (Adeyemi 2001:9-10).

The fourth National Development Plan (1981-1985) was designed to achieve essentially the same goals as the previous plans but at expanded and wider scope. The fourth plan was also based on expectations of higher revenues (from oil) to fund the plan. Only the first plan was different from the subsequent three. The last three development plans had a drive towards local ownership. The first plan as stated earlier was based on inputs from foreign consultancy while the last three were planned by Nigerians in the national planning office (Adeyemi 2001:10). The second, third and fourth development plans differed from the first plan in that they

embraced projects with long-term social/welfarist interests with lower commercial value, such as investments in the liquefied natural gas, paper mills etc.

In spite of the successive development plans of different administrations, the economy of Nigeria continued to grow worse. The national development plans in the four phases that have been described drastically fell below expectations. The huge revenues in oil could not produce real growth in the GDP per person, the Nigerian currency (Naira) continued to depreciate against the dollar, the rate of illiteracy grew and other indices of development actually showed that there were no real developments. Poverty continued to linger (Ojo 2012:446-447). Other events in the nation's history such as the civil war, and ethnic and religious crises are indicative of the fact that the country did not experience development. As noted in Chapter 2 on the political development of Nigeria, ethnic tensions arose due to the feeling of lack of access to social and economic power by the people.

The four national development plans (1962-1985) did not yield the desired results. These approaches to development were seen as control policies which were a form of government intervention and regulation of the economy. Uncertainties and unpredictable economic tides lead to short-term plans called rolling plans. Government abandoned the control and regulation approach in favour of the free market and market-oriented approaches to (economic) development. This led to the implementation of the so-called Structural Adjusted Programmes (SAP). The national rolling plans spanned 1990-1998 (Chete & Falokun 2010:33). SAP was actually a deregulation-based policy i.e. where government began to intervene less but served as a guide for the economic development plans while market forces played a bigger role in shaping the economy. The term "guided deregulation" was commonly used to describe government's approach to economic development (Chete & Falokun 2010:33).

SAP failed in addressing the poverty, inflation, unemployment and other developmental challenges of Nigeria. This follows the pattern of the previous strategies for national development. The trend of socio-economic challenges seems to reflect a consistent downward pattern. According to a senior special assistant (to President Olusegun Obasanjo) who was also the national coordinator of the national poverty eradication programme, Dr. Magnus Kpakol, as quoted by Emmanuel Ojo (2012:446-447), the population of the poor continued to rise from 1980 all the way to 1999.

The succeeding military government also brought a programme titled and named *Vision 2010* as the strategy for developing Nigeria socio-economically. The drive was to put Nigeria on a strong path of development with the view of making Nigeria a developed country by the year 2010. This military regime led by the late General Sani Abacha formed a broad-based committee of both representatives of the Nigerian people from different zones and foreign/international stakeholders. They had the mandate to provide a blueprint for transforming Nigeria into a developed country by the year 2010. The committee proposed that Nigeria would be transformed into an industrious, united, God-fearing democracy by the year 2010 (Ojo 2012:448-449). This programme, Vision 2010, also went the way of previous development plans; its failure was facilitated by the sudden death of General Abacha.

4.2.3 *National development strategies in post-military Nigeria*

Nigeria began experiencing uninterrupted democratic governance from the year 1999 after a protracted period of military rule and interruptions of democratic governance. From the chronicle of political leadership which appears in Chapter 3 it can be deduced that most of the previous development plans were either conceived or executed under military rule.

President Olusegun Obasanjo was the first leader in the post-military era. He began a series of reforms aimed at repositioning the country. Part of his reforms was aimed at strengthening the economy through total deregulation of the economy. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS 1 & 2) was adopted as the platform for addressing the socio-economic challenges of the nation, especially within the context of the millennium development goals (MDGs) (Chete & Falokun 2012:34). In Mutasa (2005:2), it is said that the MDGs were borne out of the resolution of world leaders to bring an end to poverty, hunger and other social needs. African leaders also made attempts at following these global set of objectives in order to end poverty. According to Agbiji and Swart (2015:3), NEEDS was conceived locally in Nigeria by Nigerians to facilitate wealth and employment creation. It was meant to reform the way government and its agencies work, to ensure that the private sector develops, and to re-orientate the people's value system towards that of enduring Africa values. NEEDS also required the country to implement the declaration of the rights of the people, especially regarding minimum wage, working hours and so on. Unfortunately, when reviewing the performance of NEEDS in achieving its goals, it is found wanting.

After Obasanjo's tenure as president, the administration of late President Musa Yaradua formulated and developed the 7-point Agenda as his strategy for fulfilling the MDGs (Dode 2010:2). The 7-point developmental programme included ending poverty by providing critical infrastructures, provision of electricity, paying special attention to the Niger Delta region of the country, ensuring food security, developing human capital, embarking on housing programmes, strengthening national security and the creation of wealth (Dode 2010:3-4). In addition, the Yaradua administration also put forward Vision 20:2020, which expressed the desire of the president to make Nigeria the 20th largest economy in the world by the year 2020. Unfortunately, this programme went the way of previous development programmes for similar reasons. The programme was unrealistic, the administration did not display the political will to achieve it, and the budgetary allocations to key and relevant agencies in achieving the goals were grossly inadequate (Dode 2010:4-8). The ailment and eventual demise of the president during his administration put a total end to the vision despite the fact that it was his vice-president, Goodluck Jonathan, who took over the leadership of the country.

According to Gyong (2012:95-96), under the leadership of President Goodluck Jonathan, the successor of President Yaradua, the development policies were very similar to his predecessor. President Jonathan succeeded Yaradua in 2009 when the latter died before completing his term. President Jonathan pursued his predecessor's 7-point agenda until May 29, 2011 when he was sworn in as elected president. He introduced his development strategy named the Transformation Agenda. This also focused on building strong, inclusive and non-inflationary growth, job creation, poverty alleviation and value re-orientation of citizens. Some scholars adjudged the administration to have achieved no significant success in eradicating poverty, insecurity and unemployment (Alao & Alao 2013:53). The argument so far is that Nigeria's drive towards development has followed a certain pattern since independence and did not yield the desired results.

Nigeria has continued to experience poverty, political crises, religious violence, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, violent cultism and other vices. At the last general election of March 2015, the then opposition party, the All Progressive Congress (APC), campaigned and won on the mantra of change against how the then ruling party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), had governed post-military Nigeria. The country has however not experienced any growth, but has been officially declared to be in recession due to a fall in crude oil prices, violent militancy,

sabotage and vandalisation of energy facilities in the oil producing Niger-delta region of the country (*Premium Times*, August 2016).

The President Muhammadu Buhari-led APC government has since assumption of office been fighting corruption, which it sees as the bane of sustainable development of the nation. Although the administration is still very young, less than two years at the writing of this chapter, the level of poverty has grown worse with the depreciating value of the local currency. But the administration has paid substantial attention to bring corruption under control as a strategy to address the challenges of poverty in the country. The administration is also challenged with the highly diversified ethnicity which poses difficulties for the government in terms of power-sharing (Suberu 2015:1).

4.3 The morality challenge in the successful implementation of national development policies

All the development strategies of the country from 1962 till date are similar as noted in the above narrative of Nigeria's policies on development. They are all geared towards eradication or drastic reduction of poverty, diversification of the economy, improvement in productivity and drastic reduction in the rate of unemployment. Other objectives are the reduction of importation relative to domestic production, reducing national dependence on oil and to improve the general well-being of citizens (Chete & Falokun 2012:34). Unfortunately, these objectives have not been realized. The successive plans have failed in spite of the sophistication they display on the surface. As we can deduce from the above, the narrative of failure characterizes the development history of Nigeria. Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011:238) articulate the frustration when they describe the Nigerian development experience as "the myth of growth and development". The country has pursued development like a mirage from colonial period till date. Despite the fact that almost every administration made developing the country their ultimate objective and every possible model for development experimented with, Nigeria has not known socio-economic progress and development as anticipated.

Several factors have been identified as the common reasons for the limited success of the various national development plans that were implemented. Some of the challenges are inadequate financial resources to implement projects that were to stimulate development and alleviate poverty, lack of technical capacity to execute projects, reliance on import at the

expense of capacity for local production, lack of intelligent fiscal strategy, excessive debt caused by loans, and so on. In addition, proper consultations of the general public were not done in the process of formulating the policies (Adeyemi 2001:13-14; Lawal & Oluwatoyin 2011: 238-239).

Emmanuel Ojo (2012:451-454) also adds other factors that have compromised the success of the development plans. The factors include the fact that the plans were often over-ambitious and unrealistic, the non-availability of relevant data-bases for proper planning, as well as the lack of political will by successive leadership to achieve set goals; many of them paid lip service to plans and policies. Moreover, there was also a lack of continuity in governance. Succeeding administrations abandoned policies, projects and development plans initiated by their predecessors. This leads to a roller-coaster effect in the drive towards development.

Aside these very important reasons, the major and consistent factors of bad governance, corruption, financial impropriety, ethnicity, tribalism, nepotism and other moral issues have also contributed to the poor implementation of policies that should have lifted Nigerians out of the quagmire of poverty and underdevelopment (Lawal & Oluwatoyin 2011:239).

Ojo (2012:445-446) notes the increasing level of poverty in Nigeria in spite of billions of dollars in revenue from oil during the period covered by the various stages of national development plans. He compares the level of poverty in Nigeria with nations having relatively lower revenue than Nigeria but still better developed. Corruption and acts of deliberate, intentional dishonesty in the management and utilization of public resources are attitudes also named by Ojo (2012:454) as the cause of underdevelopment in Nigeria. In summary, the national development strategies and plans have all failed. The Nigerian economy is still basically dependent on crude oil, while domestic production and value-added industry is still low, and unemployment and poverty still exceptionally high (Chete & Falokun 2012:53). This sad situation has to do with the moral failure of the society and its leadership.

As already stated, the thesis is that for development to take place in Nigeria the moral question has to be addressed. It proposes that the churches as moral agents have a unique role to play to achieve development. Development is in need of holistic and multi-faceted approaches, beyond the traditional microeconomic perspectives. Nigeria has not lacked brilliant proposals and strategies, but moral challenges have contributed in no small measure to the inability of the

policies in achieving their set objectives. Development has to be conceived beyond physical and economic dimensions to include other intangible spheres of morality. While the previous development policies have tried to address the challenges of the society from only physical perspectives, there should be another approach that works from within (the minds) of people.

4.4   Toward understanding of the concept of development

According to the *World Book Encyclopedia* (Thompson 2006:173), developing nations are described as those that are poor or called the "have-nots". They are characterized by food shortages, energy shortages, a low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) etc. Their per capita income is often less than $3,000 per annum compared to the $20, 000 per annum in advanced countries. Developing countries are characterized by scarcity of resources, an increasing population which puts stress on the scarce resources, inadequate physical and social capital such as in healthcare, the education system and in government which tends to be unstable. The *World Book Encyclopedia* (2012:173), however, notes that the economics of the developing countries are shifting gradually from poverty to prosperity, from agricultural-based economies to industrial-based economies and from controlled markets to free markets. Yet, some people living in these rapidly developing nations still live in severe poverty.

Meier and Baldwin (1962:2-4) noted already in the early sixties the difficulty in defining development. They see development in terms of economic development where over an extended period of time real national income appreciates more than the rate at which the population grows. Apart from increase in the real national income, the real per capita income must also increase. But when the population grows more than the real national income, then the standard of living of the people will not be better.

The countries that have not developed are also referred to as underdeveloped countries. Orji (2008:2) describes national underdevelopment as always relative to other nations. In other words, despite improvement in the quality of life of humans around the world, some countries have improved more than others. Countries that have not improved as much as others are referred to as underdeveloped countries. Orji believes that underdevelopment is caused by other countries; in the case of Nigeria, underdevelopment was caused by colonial Britain. Orji insists Britain underdeveloped Nigeria through unjust relationship structures with the latter.

Marcellus (2009:198-199) acknowledges the difficulty in defining development. He points out that this is due to the heterogeneous and divergent contexts under which the term is often used. Development, according to Marcellus, essentially has to do with improving, becoming more advanced, mature and complete. It has to do with the act of increasing the levels of skill, capacity and freedom. Referring to other scholars' work, such as Michael P. Todaro and W. Rodney, Marcellus sees development as restructuring, redirecting and reshaping the entire economic and social life of a community. The administrative, political and cultural life of such community is to be improved as a goal of development. Marcellus thus sees development as the general improvement of people's lives in all its dimensions. Development is therefore multidimensional, even though it is often based on economic improvement.

Ejumudo (2013:68-69) claims that development is an ever-dynamic movement designed for the purpose of achieving certain goals, especially those geared towards maximizing the well-being of a particular community. The dynamic nature of development often manifests itself when activities considered by a particular community as a drive towards their well-being is considered inimical to another group of people or another society. We can infer that this is what Orji (2008:2) means by saying underdevelopment is as a result of unjust relationship of one county with another, as in the case of Britain and Nigeria. Okadigbo (1989:1, 2, 16) insists that Britain indeed used unjust relationship structures to exploit Nigeria, resulting in its underdevelopment. Furthermore, development should not just be thought of as only about resources but also in terms of how resources are utilized for the benefit of humans and their dignity. Development therefore has to do with the creative procedure of utilizing natural resources for the purpose of transformation of the social system to make the life of the particular people better and more dignifying. Ejumudo (2013:68-69) here affirms that development should address the need for sustainable life, positive self-image and freedom.

Emerging paradigms on development highlight other issues beyond the traditional and narrow perspective which centred around economic growth. Gboyega (2003:6-7) describes development as the holistic improvement of human material conditions in all its dimensions. The said improvement is inclusive, i.e. does not discriminate on the basis of social or economic status. It must be sustainable, ensuring that present gains will not impact negatively on the future.

Naomi (1995:6) states that development should incorporate, along with economic growth, the idea of just and equitable distribution of social goods like healthcare, education, housing and so on. This is geared towards the improvement of the quality of lives of the people as individuals and as a community.

Over time, other factors such as equity in income distribution and opportunities for citizens have also been given much consideration when discussing development. Other non-economic issues that have found entry into the conversations on development include social, political, legal and cultural considerations (Orji 2008:1). Therefore Orji (2008:1) defines development as a constant drive towards better citizens' social and economic welfare. It is a holistic paradigm inclusive of micro- and macroeconomic factors, as well as social, cultural and technological factors geared towards the improvement of the quality of life of the people.

Meier and Baldwin (1962:19) identify other non-traditional indicators such as sociological, political and psychological factors. Other indicators noted in this publication include the type of government, the legal, education and health systems, as well as the role of the family and that of religion. In addition, for Meier and Baldwin, development is a "process". Development is not static; it is dynamic. The process by which the aforementioned factors interact determines how a country will develop. The rate of development in Africa, especially in terms of economic growth, has been difficult to measure. This is mainly due to a lack of well-documented data and information regarding the subject of poverty and development (Enzo Grilli 1984:1-2).

An important perspective on development is seeing development as freedom. This is an understanding developed by Amartya Sen (1999:xi-xiii) who posits that development cannot be seen only in the light of economic indices such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Sen believes that economic indices like GDP are merely a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. He asserts that freedom is both a means to and an end of development. To make a community develop, the factors he describes as "unfreedom" has to be eliminated (Sen 1999: xii). Sen approaches the issue of freedom through three angles, namely social, political and economic freedom. These three aspects have a way of interacting and enhancing each other in guaranteeing the individual's freedom (Sen 1999:xii-xiii).

Myers (2011:154-158) highlights the definition of development by another development expert, David Korten, as necessarily people-centred. This concept of development projects

members of the subject society as the most important factor. Their personal and institutional capacity to improve their lives based on available resources, their internal capacity for equitable and just distribution of resources and a drive to attain a particular quality of life based on their self-defined aspiration are all factors necessary for development. Externally-imposed development programmes are therefore not desirable in seeking sustainable development. The nurturing of the environment and its sustainability, inclusiveness and justice are the principles driving the process of development.

Korten (1984:297-298) contrasts this people-centred development to the industrial era where production is thought to be automatically geared towards the well-being of the society. Unfortunately, the process of production is often exploitative of both the environment and the people because it is profit driven. This is not a helpful concept of development as far as Korten is concerned.

There are other perspectives to development noted by Myers (2011:158-166). They include John Friedmann's notion of development as expanding access to social power. According to the concept, poverty is caused by lack of access to social and political power. Participatory democracy is therefore needed. Myers refers to Prilleltensky and Nelson's development concept as enhancing personal, collective and relational power. Unequal power-sharing structures lead to poverty. Myers notes that Prilleltensky and Nelson emphasise the need for social justice and greater accountability for sustainable development to take place. Robert Chambers' theory of development as responsible well-being is also cited by Myers; development is not about material things and infrastructural development, but rather about developing people's capacities. The common thread in all these perspectives is about the need to move away from measuring development only in terms of material acquisition and to focus on issues of justice, compassion and human-centredness.

This type of development that will be meaningful is being qualified by stakeholders in the development discipline. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stresses the need for sustainability. It defines the concept as follows: "Transformational change is the process whereby positive development results are achieved and sustained over time by institutionalizing policies, programs and projects within national strategies. It should be noted that this embodies the concept of institutionally sustained results – consistency of achievement over time. This is in order to exclude short-term, transitory impact" (UNDP 2011:7).

4.5   Transformational development: a response of faith

This section of the chapter highlights the faith community paradigm on the subject of development (Kuhn 2013:233). It points out the roles of faith communities and their efforts in helping people access a better quality of life, or even better, a wholesome life. Christianity, for example, is a religion that is geared towards the recovery of God's image in humanity. The central figure of Christianity is Jesus Christ who is believed by Christians to have died for humankind in order to give humankind ultimately a wholesome life. This paradigm is central to the activities of Christians. One of the passages in Christian scripture that supports the concept of holistic and transformational development is found in the Gospel of John 10:10: "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it abundantly" (New King James Version Giant Print Reference Bible 2013:1335). Development, according to Jesus Christ in this text, is receiving the abundant life he offers. From a theological angle, Christian organizations derive their mandate to participate in holistic national development from this portion of scripture and others with a similar message.

Christianity intrinsically possesses the ability to encourage such development in individuals and within the society. Leaders in the Christian faith therefore have roles to play in seeing to the establishment of holistic development in the nation. Agbiji and Swart (2015:3-4) point out that an indifferent religious leadership, such that does not engage in the social, political and economic life of a community, is problematic and inimical to sustainable transformational development. Such inaction has contributed to the lack of development in African countries. They insist that spiritual leadership is critical to the social transformation of African nations, and by implication that of Nigeria. Agbiji and Swart (2015:5) use the phrase "sustainable transformational development" as relating to "…the process of profound and durable positive change in the spiritual, psychological, moral, social, economic, political, institutional, environmental and technological spheres of the Nigerian society". It can be seen that this quality of improvement in human life is beyond the traditional offering of the secular and traditional development strategies. It gives consideration to every facet of life that would be necessary for the flourishing of people.

According to Reynolds and Offutt (2014:242-243), there has been a growth in the involvement of Christian organizations in seeking improvement in the lives of the poor. For example, United

States-based Evangelicals' involvement in development and poverty eradication has grown beyond privatized charity acts to institutionalized and systemized ministries.

These faith communities, especially the evangelicals, have moved from the perspective of relief to development (Reynolds & Offutt 2014:244-245). Thus the difference between relief and development is emphasized in the conversation on development. While the former is aimed at short-term alleviation of hardship, the latter has to do with longer term efforts in eradicating poverty. Development has to do with empowering social, political, economic and other structures within communities that make them work more effectively (Reynolds & Offutt 2014: 244-245).

In Nigeria, the Catholic community and its activities underscore the relevance of gospel agencies as necessary partners of the nation for development. Rightly so, the Catholic Church insists that the deliberate disregard of faith-based organizations in the drive towards development is the reason for government's failure in eradicating poverty and enabling development (Casimir, Matthew & Nwankwo 2015:60). The argument here is that Christian churches have the theological and pragmatic basis for addressing the issue of poverty alleviation. A strong basis why the Nigerian government should incorporate churches in its development programmes from conception to implementation is because churches are grass-root organizations that constantly relate to people and are familiar with their challenges.

The Catholic Church in Nigeria especially has planned and implemented several pro-poor projects involving the poor themselves in the planning and implementation process. As the Church showed success with its projects, the Church thought it a good idea to approach the government with suggestions allowing the Church to become involved in government projects such as the national economic empowerment development strategy (NEEDS) 1 & 2. This was under President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration of 1999 – 2007. Unfortunately the government ignored the suggestion of the Church to include it in the planning and execution of NEEDS, which the church claims led to the failure of the programme (Casimir, Matthew & Nwankwo 2015:60-61).

Olarinmoye (2012:1-3) notes that the involvement of faith-based organizations in development, for example in the areas of healthcare and education, though significant, has been treated with caution or suspicion by both governments and international donor agencies. Their

caution stems from their fear that the faith-based organizations may use the funding for promoting sectarian and political purposes. Apart from recognizing the role of faith-based organizations, the need to pay attention to the spiritual dimension of humans needs is also emphasized (Olarinmoye 2012:3).

The focus of this thesis is on the term transformational development. This goes beyond the concept of development as approached by traditional schools of thought. The concept of transformational development forms the framework of this thesis. A major proponent of the concept is Bryant Myers (2011:3) who explains the goal of transformational development as follows: "to reflect concern for seeking positive change in the whole of human life - materially, socially, psychologically and spiritually". Transformational development to him is about enhancing human life, which cannot happen except through actions that are deliberate, holistic and multi-sided.

The concept of development according to this paradigm introduces the spiritual dimension of human life. This aspect of human life is not taken into consideration, or totally ignored by other theories on development that focus on economic indices such as GDP and per capita income. Other definitions that go beyond economic factors extend the considerations to social, political and legal factors; yet, none of them bring spirituality into the development equation. The traditional economic development strategies do not address the "spiritual and social types of impoverishment" (Offutt 2012:40), that which are being addressed by transformational development approach.

According to Myers (2001:3-4) the concept of transformational development is the foundation for enhancing human life. The theology of the origin of humans is the bedrock for holistic development ideals and activities. The theological concept of *imago Dei* (image of God), that is humans being created by God in God's image, is the basis for development. The goal in development is the recovery of the *imago Dei* in humans. Reynolds and Offutt (2014:249) highlight Myers' understanding of transformational development as the "effort to reorient and restore relational structures". Myers believes that poverty and brokenness in humans are the result of damaged relationships among human beings, between humans and God or between humans and their environment. The work of development therefore has to do with mending these broken relationships.

Transformational development rejects the Western orientation (after which many modern and secular development strategies are patterned) that separates the spiritual domain from the material domain (Myers 2001:5); such artificial partitioning is responsible for considering development purely from an economic point of view. Unfortunately, even people of faith have stated this dichotomy to be factual. They therefore categorize their actions related to development as social actions, distinct from evangelism. This has also limited the activities of people of faith in developmental issues; the proclamation of the gospel is seen as a different category as the demonstration of the (deeds) gospel (Myers 2001:7-10).

The authentic transformational development espoused by Christians includes the physical, social, mental and spiritual dimensions (Myers 2001:175). This type of approach situates in the Christian narrative of God's involvement with the world based on divine love for humanity (John 3:16). A major flaw within the traditional policies on development is the absence of a holistic approach to development; these policies are centred only on a fraction of the area that needs to be developed, i.e. the physical/material aspect of human life.

In expounding on the contrast between the secular worldview of human development and that of Christianity, Martin Adhikary (2004:1) highlights the disappointing effect of the 18th century European Industrial Revolution on society. Instead of the anticipated improvement in the socio-cultural life of all the people, exploitation, a more pronounced socio-economic disparity and a class struggle were the reality. Whilst some people benefitted from the revolution, the majority became casualties of it. During the 20th century, the Cold War divided the world into two, between capitalism and communism. In the same vein, the development of science and technology came with the promise of human development, butt humans have become slaves of science and technology due to their greed for political and economic power.

The transformational development approach serves as the foundation for sustainability of the policies geared towards development. A holistic development strategy seeks the flourishing of the total aspects of human life. It seeks a balanced well-being for the whole community, not such that benefits one aspect of life while the other aspects are ignored. It seeks to promote the welfare of all the strata of the community. It seeks a just, equitable, egalitarian and whole community. Policies skewed towards the acquisition of material prosperity measured by the GDP may not be able to deliver the needed development, especially in an environment like Nigeria. National wealth and abundance of resources do not necessarily translate into

prosperity for the people of a country such as Nigeria where it is one of the top exporters of crude oil in the world. On the contrary, Nigerians have continued to experience poverty and economic hardship. This is because Nigeria has continued to be identified as one of the most corrupt countries of the world (Mohammed Salisu 2000:1).

Usman Mohammed (2013:118-119) insists that sustainable development for Nigeria will continue to be a mirage because of corrupt practices. Corruption has continued to be the albatross of sustainable development. Part of the reason why corruption has continued to increase, in spite of the efforts made in the post-military era, is that the unjust structure upon which the country was built at independence has not be addressed. Corruption is both a cultural and an economic phenomenon. Cultural in terms of the cultural diversity of the country, the struggle for resources is often based on ethnic and cultural affiliation. On the other hand, corruption is an economic phenomenon as people seek to meet their needs, and pressure is exerted on state officials to get money at all costs in order to satisfy relatives', friends' and families' economic needs. It is obvious and can be inferred that no amount of microeconomic policies or other conventional development programmes will be able to address the issue of holistic and sustainable development if the morality and ethical challenge of corruption is not addressed.

Corruption further creates more unjust systems that impoverish people more deeply. It widens the gap between the poor and the rich. It entrenches imbalance in the power structure of the country, it aggravates inequality, it increases the cost of governance and so on (Mohammed 2013:133). Unfortunately, Nigeria has continued to ignore the history of injustice and has perpetuated the evil of corruption. It is an unending story of injustice, abuse and distrust. Most of the development policies and strategies have ignored such history and underestimated the need for a broad-based holistic approach. Nigeria, as a political entity, has rather adopted the IMF, World Bank, and other Western economic models which have not yielded the desired results. Myers (2001:173-175) emphasizes the need to listen to the stories of the community in which developmental policies are to be implemented; these are often stories of suffering, expectation and desire. Then the gospel narratives can be applied to meet the peculiar needs of such a community. An integral part of the vision of the gospel is the healing of pain, suffering and brokenness, and the restoration of enduring prosperity and well-being. This is the path to sustainable transformational development.

Wagner Kuhn (2013:27-77) situates the concept of holistic development[22]in the narrative of God's care for humanity in the Bible, i.e. both in the Old and New Testament. For example, in the Old Testament, the major traditions in the Jewish religion include the Sabbath and the Year of Jubilee, among others. These ordinances were instructed by Yahweh to provide structures for socio-economic justice. The concept of *shalom*, which means peace, is also found in the Old Testament. Socio-economic justice ultimately leads to peace. For humans to really experience *shalom*, they have to be connected to God, to their fellow humans and even to the environment (Kuhn 2013:41-48). God and God's care for humankind, often communicated in the Bible, serves as the basis for a Christian perspective on transformational development.

In the New Testament, God's love and compassion is epitomized in the person and life of Jesus Christ. God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ who did all to demonstrate who God is and how God wants humans to act in the world. The statement in John 5:19-20 is instructive. It says, "Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in the like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel'" (New King James Version Giant Print Reference Bible 2013:1325-1326). This text needs to be seen in the context of the healing and relief work of Jesus Christ as recorded in the preceding verses in Chapter 5. It asserts that the loving God has a mission to heal the brokenness in humanity in every dimension. The text also shows that Jesus Christ, while on earth, worked in agreement with the Father in this work of healing. Jesus Christ's thought about the welfare of humans is the same as God the Father's.

Kuhn (2013:52-53) says that the essence of the mission of Jesus Christ is situated in his narrative of the kingdom of God. It is the message of the kingdom that Jesus Christ used when speaking of the healing of humanity. This is the basis for development and transformation of humanity. Christians have the mandate in the New Testament to continue with the proclamation of the kingdom of God in like manner (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Nigerian Christian faith community has the moral duty therefore to bear witness to the power of the gospel of the kingdom of God and to make it a reality in the country for the

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[22] I use the term holistic development interchangeably with the concept of transformational development.

purpose of sustainable transformational development. Agbiji and Swart (2015:5) make the case for Christian religious leadership stepping into the gaping leadership deficiency in Nigeria. They recognize that Nigeria has a leadership challenge, which is the primary reason for lack of development over the years. The huge population of Christians in Nigeria, including Christians occupying political leadership positions, should be an advantage for having a platform from where to address challenges faced in the drive towards sustainable national development.

To buttress the argument for Christian leadership's role in sustainable development in Nigeria, Agbiji and Swart (2015:5-13) elaborately describe success stories of the involvement of the Nigerian faith community with development in post-military Nigeria. Christian faith groups improved in their participation in advocacy, public protests, issuing communiqués, using the pulpits and the media to address issues of poverty and responsible governance. The Save Nigeria Group (SNG) led by the pastor Tunde Bakare of the Latter Rain Assembly is a major point of reference. The group played an important role when the ill-health of late President Yar'dua caused a constitutional crisis in 2010. In addition, the protest led by the SNG precipitated the electoral reforms initiated by the Federal Executive Council and the National Assembly, which lead to changes in the leadership of National Electoral Commission (NEC). These changes in leadership contributed to subsequent elections in the country being more credible. Operating on the platform of ecumenical groups such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) and other similar groups have also increased the influence of the Christian faith on the development of Nigeria. These groups have been able to facilitate dialogues and conversations geared towards peaceful coexistence of Nigerians living daily in the reality of a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multireligious context. This has strengthened peace in the country; peace is a factor necessary for transformational development. In spite of these gains, Christian faith communities can still do a lot more in the area of advocacy, lobbying, protests and so on in order to achieve the desired development in Nigeria.

4.6   Mission and transformational development

This section seeks to connect developmental aspirations to mission. It is aimed at justifying a church's non-evangelization[23] activities of development as a necessary mandate from God to humanity. The essence of this part of the thesis is therefore not the debate as to whether mission should be seen as transformation or transformation as mission. It is rather to point out that the outcome of mission is transformation of the individual (Romans 12: 1-3) and also of communities who come into contact with Christian mission (Matthew 5:13-16). As Bryan Stone (2007:10-11) notes, evangelism and mission are traditionally equated and limited to converting individuals to becoming part of a faith community or denomination. In contemporary times, evangelism is often associated with spiritual, political and intellectual arrogance. It is identified with forced conversion, religious conflict, and even colonization. This image and perception of a concept so beautiful might not be helpful in a world full of pain and suffering. Converting people from one faith (or no faith) to Christianity may not represent the intention of Jesus Christ to the world. He intended that Christianity will bring healing and guidance to our world as indicated in Matthew 5: 13-14 (King James Version of the Holy Bible 2004:735). He used the metaphors of light and salt to describe the mission of his followers to the world. Mission therefore is the opportunity for the body of Christ to interact with the world with the view of making it better.

Martin Adhikary (2004:2) points out that the challenges the world faces has to do with spiritual and moral issues. The displacement of God from God's rightful place in the life of humans is at the heart of our predicament and responsible for the brokenness found in the world. The body of Christ is the agency that can instil holistic human development that will adequately address the crisis the world faces. This scenario depicting pain, brokenness and suffering is what Loren Mead (1994:26-28) refers to as the "bad news" situations of the world. Christian mission has to do with establishing the *euangelion* (gospel) in this world in order to restore it to God's desired state. The bad news in the world is contextual; missional activities therefore need to reflect these contexts. This is in line with the response of Jesus Christ to the various contexts he found himself in and which he addressed through his teaching and miracles when he was on earth.

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[23]   I use this term to mean objectives that are not geared towards conversion of people from one faith to the other or from one denomination to the other. Evangelization is often seen as the sole task of a church.

Louis Ndekha (2016:47-48) links *euvangelion* with the Old Testament *shalom,* which has to do with being able to access optimum level of welfare, well-being, prosperity, health and a holistic sense of satisfaction, not just for an individual but for the whole community. The Christian mission is to be the harbinger of shalom. This is the nature of transformational development. Martin Adhikary (2004:6) also links *shalom* to a state of being, such as experiencing security, wholeness, peace, abundance, prosperity and healing for the community. He contrasts this with the false prophets' declaration of peace when indeed certain factors for peace, such as equity and justice, are being neglected. In the same vein, false political leadership in the world and other agencies only pay lip service to the cause of peace around the world when they do not pursue just and equitable policies. In many places in the Third World, for example, human rights are grossly violated and economic injustice is perpetuated. The Christian mission is the declaration of *shalom,* which is the kingdom of God.

4.6.1 *Mission as transformation*

Many Christian organizations see working towards social justice and development as an integral part of their witness to the world. As far as they are concerned, the Christ-centred mission is not complete without being involved in the task of establishing justice in communities. According to Kuhn (2005:104) social development and welfare are noted to be central to Jesus' ministry on earth. Jesus' ministry on earth was primarily about healing people. He met the needs of hurting, destitute, despondent and marginalized people. Similarly, the Apostle Paul followed in Jesus' footsteps when he mobilized financial resources to cater for the needs of those ravaged by poverty (Acts 11: 29). Therefore mission today necessarily has to address these particular human needs for it to be faithful to the biblical traditions.

Vinay Samuel (2002:244) emphasizes the centrality of seeking justice, fighting corrupt structures and acting against sinful systems to the Christian mission. The activities that seek relief and the well-being of the less privileged are critical to Christian mission. Jacobsen (2001:3-7) notes that Christians have the mandate to live in ways that denounce the evil structures in societies that keep people poor, side-lined and broken. A central part of Christian witness is to side with the marginalized. There is the temptation for Christians to focus on personal piety and forget the mandate to help transform oppressive and marginalizing systems entrenched in the society. Personal success and friendship with political leaders have the

tendency to rob Christians of their prophetic voice, a voice which could have helped the poor and marginalized out of their misery.

Christians must see mission on earth as transformational development. "If the church is seduced by the world as it is into abandoning its vision of the world as it should be, then it has abandoned its calling, its mission and its Lord" (Jacobsen 2001:11). The ultimate goal of the gospel is not limited to the transformation of personal lives. The gospel should also be necessarily aimed at transforming communities. The gospel is always community-centred as against the often-touted individualized relationship with God. Though transformation may begin with individuals, it is intended to build a transformed community. Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer (2010:1) introduce their first chapter by noting that transformation or change is at the very heart of Christian mission. The mission of the faith community is not to build places of worship, but building healthy people and communities. The transformed individuals constitute the church, and these individuals are meant to be agents of the kingdom of God in transforming the larger community.

The Wesleyan faith tradition affirms its commitment to the care of humanity. Field (2015:178) highlights the theology of Wesley, a theology of love that transforms the church and the society. It is a theology which delivers people from sin and transforms their lives. This theology transcends holiness of personal piety. Holiness in Wesleyan thought is love. It makes people care for the needy and the poor. It makes the community of faith engage with the society even through political and social structures to alleviate the suffering of the people. "This new space challenges Methodists to critically rethink the relationship between holiness and social justice, and hence to reconceptualise their understanding of the mission of the Church." (Field 2015:178). The triad of justice, mercy and truth are also central to the Wesley faith. These virtues, according to Field (2015:180-181), spring from internal experience of the grace of God and necessarily lead to the transformation of the society.

The point being made is that most Christian faith traditions see social engagement and social development as part of their mission, even a critical part of Christian mission, but it is not necessarily the only aspect of mission. Traditionally, development is only one part of the obligation of the body of Christ to its milieu.

4.6.2 Transformation as mission

Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (in Willmer 2001:194) note that the dichotomy between evangelism and social action is inconsistent with Christian scriptures. The integration of social action and evangelism is the gospel of Jesus Christ. This position is also based on interpretation of scripture. Padilla (2008:65-83) describes the relationship between the kingdom of God and the Christian church's mission. He establishes how the New Testament church continues to fulfil the messianic hope of ancient Israel. The messianic hope, according to Padilla, is built on the prophecy given by the prophet Nathan to King David, assuring him of the establishment of his dynasty throughout generations. This dynasty will be built on equitable and just leadership. The Jews always hoped for the fulfilment of this prophecy even in adversity. The assurance given to establish a lineage of kingship was not to be to the advantage of the powerful (as the political, economic and military leader), but to ensure the establishment of justice and equity in the society. When established power or authority failed in this duty, God ensured they suffered the consequence.

Padilla (2008:71-75) notes that Jesus Christ lived to fulfil the messianic prophecy; he was the one to propitiate God, according to the theological interpretations of the apostolic era of the New Testament. However, the killing of Jesus Christ also had political nuances. He was seen as undermining the political leadership of his time by claiming to be the Messiah. Jesus Christ proclaimed the advent of the kingdom of God, not as a limited futuristic eschatology and futuristic imagination, but as a current reality. Through him, the kingdom of God was present among the people at the time that coincided with the occupation of the Roman Empire. He had to contend with interest groups such as the Pharisees, the Sadducees and so on. Jesus Christ thus became a common enemy and threat to their political and economic influence.

It can therefore be inferred that Jesus Christ's mission had to do with the alleviation of suffering, meeting the needs of the poor, exorcism of evil and the liberation of the oppressed. His mission on earth was revealed in what he spent his time doing. He was healing and liberating people from social limitations and exploitation, and establishing justice. It was a pragmatic task that was based on meeting the day-to-day needs of people, therefore the needs of society.

Padilla (2008:82-83) believes that the Christian community is to be the incarnate Christ within the society. The Christian community is to follow the order of the Old Testament messianic prophecy expected to be fulfilled in the lineage of King David. It was expected to be a kingdom established on justice and righteousness. It was to be a kingdom where the poor found justice. The Christian mission is to be patterned after that of Jesus Christ. It should fulfil the messianic mandate of Christ. It should be contemporary, grounded, and present in healing the sick, freeing the oppressed, helping the poor, and establishing justice and equity in the society. Mission is not only found in proclamation but in demonstration. Mission changes the paradigm from love of power to the power of love. It is not only eschatological; it is also political.

The implication of this is that these social changes are the core of mission. Any activity of the church that does not transform society is not authentic. There is no differentiation of the gospel into social and spiritual. No separation of the religious and secular. Authentic mission is about establishing the kingdom of God in human society.

Loren Mead (1994:24-32) posits that Christian mission is in crisis, which will become even more obvious in the very near future. The crisis is as a result of loss of relevance of churches in evolving communities. When churches do not take their place in meeting the needs of the society, they lose relevance. Mission is about following the pattern of Jesus Christ in spreading the gospel. He emphasizes the fact that the word/term "gospel" is losing its original meaning in many churches' activities of gathering people into their congregation. Rather, the essence of the gospel is to reach out to the world with good news. The phrase "good news", the literal interpretation of what we now know as "the gospel" is from the Greek *eu angelion*, which means the good message. Christian mission is about giving good news to those suffering bad news in our societies. The good news and the bad news must be seen to be in context. In other words, Christian mission is to counteract specific negative or adverse conditions people are subjected to. Mission is about healing, breaking chains of poverty, undoing or preventing injustice, and so on.

Bad news can be seen as either social bad news or individual bad news. Christian mission must be ready to minister good news to both forms. The former has to do with the community/society, while the latter has to do with people's personal adverse experiences. We must not be confused about different approaches of responding to bad news. Some individuals or faith communities are able to respond to bad news either in religious style or in secular

manner. The religious approach is the terrain most faith communities are used to (through the proclamation of the personal gospel about what Jesus Christ is able to do in reconciling us to God). An equally appropriate response, but not usually recognized as such, is the ability to provide good news without reference to religious terms or to any faith community. Be the approach religious or secular, such actions bring justice, equity, healing and prosperity to either an individual or a community. Every faith community must be able to identify the bad news in their community and respond to it with the gospel, regardless of the style or approach (Mead 1994:32-45).

The implication of Mead's position is that congregations have to be transformed first before they are able to transform the society. Otherwise, they will be irrelevant in the very near future. There needs to be a transformation in how mission is conceived. The position makes congregations see transformation as mission. When communities are not being transformed, when bad news is left unchecked and unaddressed, then there is no mission. It is irrelevant whether mission is done in a religious or secular style; the critical thing is that transformation takes place through an adequate and appropriate response by congregations, and such transformation is what mission is all about. It is imperative for the SDA Church in Nigeria to reflect on its mission from this perspective in order to remain relevant and even achieve its primary hope of redeeming the world in the *eschaton*.

4.7   Ecumenical movement and national development in Nigeria

Vitus Eke (2016:226-227)) notes that there are different churches, church groups and denominations that have come together in ecumenical movements in Nigeria. They include the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), which is the umbrella body mainly for Protestants and Anglicans, the Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (CPFN), the Organization of African Independent Churches (OAIC) and the Evangelical Church of West Africa/Tarayya Ekklesiyayin Kristi A Nigeria (ECWA/TEKAN). All these church groups are constituents of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). According to the official statement of the church on its website, CAN was established providentially when in 1976 the military head of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo, called various leaders of church groups to discuss the introduction to schools nation-wide of the reciting of the national pledge and the salutation of the national flag. The leaders met on that same day at a chosen venue to reflect on what the head of state discussed with them. The group agreed to the necessity of meeting regularly as an association.

By 1977 they were established and had a constitution. Their mission was to attend to issues affecting the Christian faith and the general welfare of the Nigerian people.

According to CAN's official website, part of the set objectives are to facilitate the unity of churches, to promote peace and understanding among various people in Nigeria through the propagation of the gospel, and to act as a guardian of the spiritual and moral welfare of Nigeria. CAN will also be involved in nation building and show interest in politics, but will not be partisan. It will educate members on evolving issues in the political landscape of the country.

Agbiji (2012:141-143) recognizes the roles of ecumenical organizations in building and developing Nigeria. He notes the distinct nature and legitimate differences between church groups and churches within CAN, even as they seek a deep relationship and mutual dependence for the purpose of jointly addressing the challenges facing Nigeria. He argues in support of CAN and ecumenical movements' interest in politics, noting that the separation of the secular and spiritual by some people is not helpful, nor is it natural with the African/Nigerian ontology and cosmology. The paradigm which falsely partitions the sacred and the carnal encourages Christians to view politics as evil and something a follower of Jesus Christ ought not to identify with. Agbiji (2012:145-146) argues that the role of churches is to align with God in order to ensure God's will is established on earth. God's will is that humanity will be saved in a holistic fashion, in all facets of life – professionally, economically, socially, in marriage and so on. God saved the world by being involved in the world through incarnation. The churches ought to follow this by incarnational ministry, being involved in the world in a way that is consistent with Jesus Christ's mandate expressed in the metaphor of salt and light found in Matthew 5:13. Agbiji and Swart (2015:7-9) note that Christian leadership and ecumenical organizations have increased their engagement with political leaders through issuance of communiqués, preaching, advising the government, advocacy, protests and so on with the view of positioning Nigeria for development. They also note that there is still much to be done by churches through various avenues of seeking social justice.

4.8 Exploring potentials in the SDA Church and ecumenism for national transformation

The SDA Church is not a part of CAN or any ecumenical group. I have identified two main factors that pose a challenge to the SDA Church related to ecumenism and the type of

involvement with the state and politics. The first factor is directly related to its theological position derived from its reading of the apocalyptic book of Revelation, specifically Revelation 14:8 and 18:4. From these verses the SDA Church receives its impetus to dissociate from the metaphoric Babylon (Knight 2004:40). The SDA Church sees the Catholic Church as the fulfilment of Babylon, and the Protestant churches are described as the daughters of Babylon. It is therefore limited in its relationship to people and organizations of other faiths. Secondly, the SDA Church is concerned about the rights of minority groups and religious liberty. Like its view on Catholicism and the apocalyptic Babylon, the SDA Church believes in the separation of state and religion. This is more so because of its hermeneutics and historical critical approach to the study of apocalyptic books. Its approach encourages the Church to see the book of Revelation in the New Testament and the book of Daniel in the Old Testament as prophetic (predictive) in nature.

The above-described situation poses a challenge to the SDA Church fulfilling its mandate of establishing (economic, social, political, and so on) salvation for the Nigerian people through the much-needed collaboration with faith groups with similar interests. Nicholas Miller (2013:17), an SDA theologian, however argues that the SDA Church can have a purposeful ecumenical relationship he describes as "positive ecumenism". This term he explains as comprising all those who believe in God, the Universal Church. A publication of the SDA Church called *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (2006:181) affirms the fact that all those who believe in God are part of the Universal Church. Nicholas Miller in this publication also refers to one of the major founders and a prophet of the SDA Church, Ellen White (1946:234), who affirmed that there are Christians in every church, including the Roman Catholic Church. This can be deduced from Ellen White's assertion that the SDA Church can and should collaborate with the "Universal Church" with the view of pursuing a transformational development agenda for Nigeria. There should be a rejection of segregation or discrimination as members of the body of Christ. It is a basis for the SDA Church to be part of an ecumenical movement, especially for the purpose of working for the general welfare of Nigerians. Nicholas Miller in this same publication however distinguishes between a positive ecumenical relationship and what he calls "negative ecumenism" (Miller 2013:18). This is where he warns of a limited ecumenical relationship especially as relating to "formal ideological ecumenism" (Miller 2013:18-19). The SDA Church's unique mission or doctrine may be compromised because of its ecumenical relationships. He does, however, affirm the need for the SDA Church to

collaborate with other denominations for the purpose of seeking social justice for the society. He notes that the Church itself started as an ecumenical movement involving main Protestant churches in America, particularly the Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists and the Christian Connection. Ellen G. White, a pioneer and foremost leader and prophet, preached at non-SDA congregations.

Miller's opinion is in line with George Knight's analysis of Ellen White's attitude to selective collaboration with non-SDA organizations. Knight (2002:5-9) notes the struggle that the denomination had in relating to other denominations especially based on their understanding of Babylon and the call to exit it and its allies. Early in the history of the SDA movement, there was a relationship with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) for the promotion of SDAs' belief in the subject of temperance. But the relationship made some SDA leaders uncomfortable, especially when the Union was also promoting Sunday worship. One of SDA leaders, Alonzo T. Jones, wrote fiercely against the relationship with Babylon's ally. But Ellen G. White thought it was acceptable to collaborate with the WCTU to the extent that they agreed with the SDA church. This attitude towards ecumenism is important for the SDA mission in Nigeria's contemporary development conversation.

The SDA Church should therefore be open to opportunities for ministry in partnership with other denominations. Miller's argument therefore is useful and can serve as framework for using ecumenical platforms for transformational development activities. The Church does not have to collaborate in terms of doctrine or ideology, which may be contradictory to what it believes. It needs to add its voice to the prophetic voice speaking to the political powers in Nigeria to facilitate accountability in governance, and to speak on behalf of the poor and vulnerable. Although the SDA Church has been involved in charitable activities and has contributed to the socio-economic development of Nigeria, it has to extend its social engagement to social justice and advocacy. It can deploy its over 200, 000 (two hundred thousand) members and its financial resources for advocacy. It can use its experience and wide network to create a wider platform and stronger leverage for the ecumenical movement to pursue its common goal of increasing the well-being of the Nigerian people. In doing this, it will be fulfilling the mission of Jesus Christ seen in his mandate to establish the kingdom of God as found in Luke 9:2 and Matthew 10:8.

4.9   The Seventh-day Adventist Church and national transformation

This thesis has provided information in Chapter 3 on the identity of the SDA church, its historical background and its missional activities. In the same chapter, I have also highlighted SDA's missionary work in Nigeria. It is significant to know, however, that the church struggles with the question of how to engage with national issues as it affects developmental aspirations. As noted in Chapter 3 dedicated to the church, the SDA church has invested substantially in the development of resources in the education and health sectors in Nigeria, specifically its educational institutions, its hospitals and the Adventist relief and development agency of the church (ADRA Nigeria).

Omotosho (2016:33-58) highlights the Adventists' response to poverty. The centre of the response is charity based. The church collaborates with governmental agencies and other non-governmental agencies to achieve poverty alleviation through adult literacy programmes, micro-financing, emergency/disaster relief and skills acquisition programmes. But the church has not made significant impact in the area of social justice. Thad Dugan (2015:125-126) shows that social justice is a veritable tool for transformational development. This is seen in his work using a school, the James Jefferson School in the United States, as case study. His research shows that working for social justice was the panacea to racial segregation, exclusion of and limited learning by a minority race. The effort in establishing social justice in this case did not only affect the education of the students in the school, but also the larger community. This example is one of such that shows that social justice is a necessary route to take in seeking transformational development, even in the greater national context.

The SDA Church however lays greater importance on the preaching of personal gospel than attending to the physical needs of people or on social work. This attitude is akin to the position of missionary and author, K. P. Yohannan (2004:80, 111-115) who emphasizes the need for missionaries to discount the "myth" that social work, meeting physical needs and other social concerns are necessary to the gospel work. Yohannan is not against these activities, but objects to making them equal to preaching the gospel (of personal salvation). In his view, physical comfort does not make or unmake people members of God's kingdom. It is their response to the message of Christ that makes the difference. Building hospitals, schools and other social amenities are not the critical activities of mission. It is the proclamation of the gospel of Christ. His point of view is a reaction to schools of thought that suggest engaging in social justice and

socio-economic development of people or a nation is mission work. His view resonates with the attitude of the SDA Church in its missionary activities.

It is believed that attitudes to social justice among Christians are influenced by either a conservative or a liberal theological posture. Conservative Christians are more likely to be literalists laying more importance on evangelization, while liberal Christians tend to see social engagement as the end goal of the gospel (Todd 2010:3)

Whilst we must underscore the fact that the SDA Church invests so much of its resources on social development, it must be clear that it is done as a means of fulfilling its primary assignment which it realizes as mission. In a publication of the SDA Church (Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2005:192) the church's beliefs and its mission is spelt out. Its mission is the declaration of the "three angels' messages" of Revelation 14: 6-12. The SDA Church is to warn the world about Satan's deception in the world and the call of people to the truth before Christ returns to the earth. The SDA Church is faithful by focusing all its efforts onto this mission.

SDA missiologist, Wagner Kuhn (2005:106-107), however argues that transformational development should be the concern of Christian mission. He recognizes the struggles in the understanding of different faith traditions regarding the mandate to preach the gospel. In behaviour, the SDA Church seems to emphasize the need for the proclamation of the personal gospel over social actions. Although the church engages in welfare and charity activities, more importance seems to be given to the personal gospel. Wagner Kuhn, however, claims that transformational development was modelled by Jesus Christ himself, after whom mission should be patterned.

Kwabena Donkor (2010:1-6) notes that the SDA Church worldwide has had difficulties in having a united voice and opinion on the issue of social justice. For example, while the church has been vocal on issues such as HIV/AIDS, religious liberty and eradication of poverty, it has been ambivalent on other issues such as the genocide in Rwanda, the Kosovo war, racial segregation in South Africa and other issues.

It seems like the SDA Church is unwilling to confront government authority on social issues. The denomination's theology on the relationship between church and state/government could

be responsible for the seeming apathy to social challenges. The SDA Church's theology on and interpretation of Daniel 7:7-8 and Revelation 13:11-18 insist on the need to separate ecclesiastical order from civil governance. The SDA Church's operation must therefore be distinct and separate from that of governments (Marcio Costa 2010:50). SDA members generally believe that religious liberty is threatened if the functions of church and state are not well separated. The SDA Church is genuinely concerned about the relationship between religious agencies and government. The church fears that people's freedom and conscience could be inhibited by such alliance such as during the medieval period. This thought is expressed by the SDA Church co-founder, Ellen G. White, who argues that the Catholic Church will always use its power in conjunction with the government (of the United States) to violate the religious rights and consciences of people (Ellen White 1998:67-76; 594-596). The concern for religious liberty is expressed by the SDA Church though its Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL).

In addition, SDA members believe that the priority of the church is to preach the gospel of personal piety in preparation for the physical appearance of Jesus Christ as the climax of the *eschaton.* This is set against becoming engaged in the social justice struggle (G. Victoria Jackson 2000: 183-184). Members also believe that economic and political turmoil are part of the expected eschatological experiences and their occurrences cannot be avoided. This thought pattern and interpretation of the reality of poverty, political unrest and other adverse socio-economic realities may undermine the desire to engage with civil authorities to improve the lives of the suffering masses. The efforts to mitigate poverty are therefore mostly that of charity. Rudi Maier (2007:2-4) highlights some of Ellen G White's comments that have continued to shape the SDA Church mission. He points out that believers need to respond wholeheartedly to the (social) problems of the world by showing empathy and by ministering to people in need. The purpose is to win people's confidence and help them become knowledgeable and followers of Christ. It can be deduced therefore that the ultimate aim of the SDA Church in its response to social issues is to make people believers.

It is, however, important for a faith-based agency such as the SDA Church, if it wants to be faithful to its prophetic task, to speak to power as represented in political authority. Kuhn (2005:102) argues for the need of a biblical theology that would shape our orientation towards mission. He insists that mission should not be one-sided. By one-sidedness he means a mission

that is overly skewed in favour of the proclamation of the personal gospel of repentance, acceptance of Jesus as personal Lord and saviour, along with those doctrines peculiar to the SDA Church such as regarding the observance of the Sabbath day.

4.10 Conclusion

Nigeria is a developing country struggling with poor infrastructure, political and religious conflict, tribalism, and other anti-development social phenomena. Corruption is the bane of the society, fuelled by injustice, even from its inception when created by the British colonial machinery. The country has been unable to achieve its potential of being a world power with prosperous citizenry. In spite of various attempts by successive national administrations using differently crafted development plans for the country, Nigeria continues to struggle with the same infrastructural, political and moral crisis. At the centre of the crisis is the moral and ethical issue of corruption. Christianity is well positioned to serve as instrument for challenging this albatross of corruption. Transformational development has not been given enough attention as the way to follow in Nigeria. The government has continued to ignore the huge potential in engaging the Christian church on issues of development. More critical to this thesis is the fact that it seems that the SDA Church, in particular, is not aware of, or not willing to explore its potential in contributing to the development of Nigeria beyond the proclamation of the personal gospel and executing some charity-based activities. It has continued to shy away from addressing the issue of social and economic development by refusing to advocate for good governance. It is not openly challenging social and political structures that promote corruption, as well as other negative attitudes that have plagued the development aspirations of the country. The SDA Church has not embraced advocacy and the social (justice) gospel as a credible and necessary aspect of its mission. This is in contrast to other Christian faith traditions such as the Catholic Church in Nigeria. There would be greater accountability among political leadership in Nigeria if all faith-based organizations were united in addressing the immoral structures that impoverish the country. The SDA Church would be more balanced, faithful and effective in fulfilling its mission of restoring the image of God in our society if it embraced social justice.

<center>**Chapter 5**</center>

<center>**Case study: The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria – an empirical perspective**</center>

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the empirical research conducted to understand the attitudes of the SDA Church regarding social justice, advocacy and the transformational development of Nigeria.   Chapter 4 of this thesis explained the difference between the traditional approach to development and the transformational development approach. The latter emphasizes the fact that poverty and underdevelopment are not mere absence of material possession, food and housing. It holistically exemplifies the renewal of the spiritual, intellectual and social aspects of life (Wallace 2002:133). Chapter 4 also pointed to the efforts of successive Nigerian administrations to place the country on the path of development and how they failed. This reveals that other factors beyond micro-economic indices may be responsible for the failure.

Poverty is a result of damaged relationships among people, and between God and humans (Myers 2000:64). If Nigeria is to experience holistic development, the transformational development paradigm must be employed. Faith-based organizations, such as the SDA Church, are critical to the recovery of Nigeria and its repositioning for sustainable development. Chapter 4 argued that although the SDA Church invests significantly in charity, it is for the purpose of evangelization. Its understanding of eschatology gives a sense of urgency and focus on the proclamation of the personal gospel and less regard to community development or social justice. In addition to this, the SDA Church does not belong to ecumenical groups because it feels that its missionary objective may be compromised (Dabrowski 2010:225).

The SDA Church's prophetic influence on the socio-economic and political stage in Nigeria is minimal. In addition to this, the SDA Church has very limited relationships with other faith-based organizations. A lacuna is thus created which inhibits the much needed cooperation among religious institutions whose civil rights activities could aid transformational

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development of Nigeria. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2016:1-9) underscores the need for not only incorporating religious organizations into the pursuit of sustainable development drive, but also for promoting cooperation among religions to achieve sustainable transformational development. The non-ecumenical stance of the SDA Church thus limits the role of Christianity in the transformational development of Nigeria. The object of the empirical study undertaken for this thesis was to listen to SDA members and church officials to determine more clearly how they perceive social justice and national development in the light of their understanding of the mission of the Christian church. This included exploring the possible points of convergence and divergence between members' perception of what their church, the SDA Church, stands for regarding its scope of involvement in nation building and its official position regarding issues such as social justice, socio-economic activism, cooperation among religions and ecumenism. The SDA Church's official positions will be deduced from its policies, official publications and the writings of Ellen G. White, who co-founded the SDA Church and whose writings remain highly influential in the church. Ellen White is generally regarded by members as the prophet of the SDA Church and whose writings guide the Church's teaching and practice. With these objectives in mind this chapter seeks to highlight how church members' attitudes have affected the SDA Church's engagement with the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. It also seeks to gain understanding of the way typical Nigerians who are not SDAs think of the SDA Church. As such, the chapter seeks to bring to light how non-SDA Nigerians perceive the role of religion on national development, and specifically what role the SDA Church has played thus far in the development of Nigeria. It is postulated that a better understanding of how the Nigerian public evaluates the impact of the SDA Church on Nigeria can assist the SDA Church to re-strategize for a more impacting mission.

5.2 Methodology and description of sample

A qualitative research approach was adopted to carry out the research. The writer of this thesis conducted semi-structured interviews. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, five categories of interviewees were identified. The first category was the leadership of the SDA Church, specifically the President of the Western Nigeria Union Conference and the respective leadership of the Adventist Women's Ministry (AWM), Adventist Men's Organization (AMO) and Adventist Youth Ministry (AYM) of the Western Nigeria Union Conference of the SDA Church. In this category, only the President of the Western Nigeria

Union Conference and the AYM director were paid employees of the SDA Church. In contrast the leaders of the ministry groups (AWM and AMO) were lay people holding executive positions.

The second category consisted of some 11 pastors from various Conferences within the Union, such as the Osun Conference, Oyo Conference, Lagos Atlantic Conference and the Ogun Conference of the SDA Church. The third category was the youth of the church, 5 of them, from different Conferences within the Union. The youth interviewed were all undergraduates at tertiary institutions. Only one of them recently completed his law degree and at the time of the interviews was studying at the Nigerian Law School for his professional qualification in law. The young people interviewed were from different Conferences within the Union, namely Osun Conference, Kwara Conference, Delta Conference, Lagos Mainland Conference and Lagos Atlantic Conference. The fourth category consisted of 5 lay men and women from various Conferences of the Union. This afforded me the opportunity of knowing the feelings thoughts and perceptions of members on the attitude of the SDA Church as a corporate religious organization to the developmental aspirations of Nigeria. Interviewing individuals on a personal level gave the interviewees the opportunity to express their personal thoughts on the subject, regardless of the behaviour of the Church as a corporate entity on the subject. It also gave the interviewees the opportunity to give their opinions on how the SDA Church should ideally respond to certain social issues.

The fifth and the last category consisted of members of the Nigerian general public. Members of the Nigerian public were interviewed to investigate their perceptions and expectations regarding the role of religion, especially the dominant ones in Nigeria, namely Christianity and Islam, on the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. I, the researcher, also wanted to know what their knowledge of the SDA Church was and their perception of this Church's impact on the development of Nigeria. As researcher I wanted to know from them what they thought about SDAs and their impact on the development of Nigeria. Although I had a list of questions that guided the interview, each interview was a unique experience because I sometimes had to use further questions to clarify the responses of the interviewees. The level of proficiency of each interviewee of English language and the subject also differed, which required elaborating the questions in some cases. In all, 32 people were interviewed.

I used a digital voice recorder to record the interviews, which were later transcribed into text format. The interviews were conducted over a period of about four weeks. Transcribing the interviews into text format took about two weeks.

The research revealed certain factors that may be responsible for the attitude of the SDA Church toward its role in the transformational development of Nigeria. It offers insight into the SDA Church's attitude towards the socio-economic and political transformation of Nigeria. It reveals that SDAs' own sense of peculiar identity and mission shapes their attitude towards national transformation. It highlights how this sense of identity affects the Church's relationship with other religions and denominations. The restrictive, limited worldview and understanding of mission which characterize the SDA Church are borne out of its focused nature on the mission it has to the world.

5.3   SDA members' perception of the church's identity and mission

This part of the research was aimed at developing deeper insight into how Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs), both clergy and laity, understood the identity and the mission of the SDA Church. This included questions about how they see themselves, their unique mission and the SDA's relationship with other denominations. Also included are questions about how SDAs see themselves in relation to other faiths and other denominations. In addition, there were questions to reveal how SDAs think they should relate to government, and how their church's beliefs as well as other features of the church distinguish them from other faiths or denominations. Ultimately the aim included determining whether the perceptions of clergy or laity were different and distinct from the official position of the SDA Church (as contained in its doctrines, policies and other church publications) on its unique mission, relations with other faiths, ecumenism, government, secular associations, practices and beliefs. All interviewee names used in this chapter are pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the interviewees.

The interviews revealed Nigerian Seventh-day Adventists as having a well-defined and well-delineated identity and sense of purpose very consistent with the official position of the SDA Church. All the SDAs, laity or clergy, gave very similar descriptions of who SDAs were and about the mission of the SDA Church in Nigeria. Most of the interviewees referred to the observance of the day of rest, the seventh-day Sabbath being Saturday and the expectation of the second coming of Jesus Christ as central to their faith and identity. For example, a layman

from the Ogun Conference, Mr. Demejo Folio answered as follows: "The mission of the Church is the mission of Christians first of all, to evangelize the world, getting people ready for the second coming of Christ." The Second Advent was thus seen as priority. This was confirmed by the leader of the Adventist Youth Ministry who responded that the mission of the SDA Church was to proclaim the gospel, the Three Angels Message[24] (General Conference of SDA Church: 181) to the whole world, hence "preparing people for the Second Coming of Christ". Pastor Prosper Thank-God of the Ogun Conference said the following:

> SDAs are people that worship on the seventh day and also await the second coming of Christ. And this is our mission here. It is the truth about worshipping God on the right day which is very important. We want to let people know what the Bible says about that. We also have this hope, this assurance, that very soon our Lord Jesus will come to take us away from this sinful world.

SDAs also referred to themselves as a special group of people. For example some of the SDA interviewees used words and phrases like "special," "unique," "our message" or "the truth" to describe Adventism. This is reflected in the responses of the interviewees. For example, one of the interviewees, Mr. Fikao Oyewu, a youth of the SDA Church in Lagos, made the following comments:

> The SDAs are a special set of people. We are special not only because we believe in the word of Christ but also because we believe in the Second Coming (of Christ). We also believe that we are charged with the responsibility of letting others know that Jesus truly is coming. We strongly believe in the Bible, all that it preaches and all that it teaches and we promote a strict adherence to its teachings and a fuller understanding of the Bible. We promote a holistic understanding of the Bible. People are not to take one verse of the Bible as it is as they are to take it in conjunction with other verses.

Pastor Victor Olu of Ekiti Conference said, "The SDA Church has a unique identity." SDAs also claim some kind of ownership of "the truth". Dr. Tunde Aloho, a layman in Lagos Mainland Conference, implied this when he was justifying the need for SDAs to collaborate with other organizations through the statement, "[B]ut it is only when we come close to them

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[24]   The Three Angels Message is the phrase used by the SDA Church to summarize its mission to the world. It is based on the SDA Church's interpretation of Revelation 14:6-12 where a number of apocalyptic angels give a series of messages to the world.

that they really know the truth." Pastor Prosper Thank-God, the pastor introduced earlier from Ogun Conference, also alluded to this when describing the objective of SDA evangelism: "We went out to distribute tracts to tell them about us, that they may know what we stand for, what we preach, the truth that we have in the Bible." Mr. Sam Babs, a lay person and teacher at a university in Osun Conference who emphasized the importance of establishing educational institutions, used similar expressions in the following statement: "They came to know who we are, they came to identify with us, they were able to welcome our message, welcome us." This sense of uniqueness clearly affected SDAs' perception of people of other denominations and it established some kind of boundary, which shaped the kind of relationships SDAs had with people of other denominations.

In addition to their beliefs in the seventh day, the Sabbath being Saturday, the belief in the Second Advent of Jesus Christ was so real to SDAs to the point that the political, socio-economic and natural/environmental phenomena were interpreted within the framework and timeline of the Second Advent. The socio-economic and political landscape of Nigeria was seen as part of the eschatological realities. This clearly had a profound impact on the SDA Church's attitudes and approach to the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria.

With respect to the mission of the SDA Church, all the interviewees, clergy and laity, anchored their understanding of their mission on warning the world about the imminent Second Advent. Part of the preparation required keeping the Ten Commandments, specifically not neglecting adherence to the Sabbath, the seventh day. They also perceived that their sense of mission was rooted in the Bible, specifically Revelation 14:6-12 which they popularly called the Three Angels' Message. SDAs' eschatology therefore relegated social engagement to the fringe. The task of the Church was to prepare the world for the Second Advent. Mr. King Imopikin, a lay man from the Ogun Conference, established this when he commented:

> Adventists are the people that are looking for the Second Coming of Christ. The only difference between them and those who worship on other days is that they observe the Sabbath, the Bible Sabbath as their day of worship. So they are the Seventh-day Adventists ... they worship on the Sabbath, they keep the biblical Sabbath day. Their mission is centred on Revelation 14 with the focus on the Three Angels' message that talks about taking the gospel to the whole world, all languages. So that Revelation establishes the mission of the Church.

An interviewee already introduced, Mr. Babs, made statements similar to that of Mr. Imopikin. He observed:

> The SDA Church is a church that has the mission of preparing the world for the Second Coming of Christ. And we often anchor that mission on the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation that went forth to get people ready for the day of the Lord.

A clergy with the Lagos Atlantic Conference, Pastor Ogungbe, made similar comments about the mission of the SDA Church:

> SDA Church is a group of people who have come together who are proclaiming the soon coming of Jesus and they worship on Saturday, the seventh day of the week. Their mission is to propagate the gospel to reach the nook and cranny of Nigeria with the gospel of Christ Jesus.

These responses are indicative of what the priority is for the SDAs, namely the Second Advent and keeping of the Sabbath. By implication, it can be concluded that social engagement and transformational development are not really of primary concern to them.

The priority of the SDA Church is thus set forth as the proclamation of the Three Angels' Message. It is what the SDA Church sees as its mission. SDA Church members have embraced it as their mission.

5.4   Evaluation of the SDA Church's mission

SDA interviewees gauged this church's level of performance or fulfilment of the mission mandate. As expected, the yardstick for evaluating the performance of the SDA Church in its mission was how well the denomination had done in informing people about the Second Advent and on the importance of observing the Sabbath in Nigeria. Here one could observe how members saw this from diverse perspectives such as organizational development, numerical growth and the Church's capacity to develop human resources for its own mission. To them it was important to note that their evaluation had nothing or little to do with how the denomination had influenced the transformational development of Nigeria. This was consistent with their understanding of mission, that is, preparation of the world for the Second Advent and calling people back to the observance of the biblical seventh day, Sabbath (Saturday), as the day of worship.

The interviewees' (clergy's and laity's) opinion on the level of success differed although almost all interviewees noted that there was still a lot for the church to do. For example, one lay member, Mrs. Debby Wealthwake of Osun Conference, stressed this point as follows:

> I am still believing that we are propagating it. We are to reach the unreachable and to touch the untouched area and we are still on our mission.

Yet another interviewee who had been introduced earlier, Mr. Demejo Folio, gave the impression that the task of the church was overwhelming, especially when considering the small population of the SDA Church relative to the population of the country. To him "the job" was "enormous". And he also felt that the zeal of members in gospel propagation and evangelization had dwindled over time.

Other interviewees, however, felt that the SDA Church had done pretty well. For example, Mr. Imopikin pointed to the organizational development that could be witnessed in the church, namely educational institutions at various levels, branches across the country, the growth of youth groups, and the development of women's and men's ministries all over the country. Interviewees also pointed out that the SDA Church, through its educational institutions, developed human resources that were even exported to other African countries for the development of the SDA Church. Mr. Babs of Osun Conference and Dr. Aloho of Lagos Mainland Conference also alluded to the church's organizational development as a yardstick of measuring its success in mission. Dr. Aloho thought that the SDA Church had done well by pointing to the fact that when he converted to the SDA Church about three decades ago, it only had one Union, which at that time was not a self-sufficient church unit in terms organizational structure. But now there were three stronger, financially self-sufficient Unions in Nigeria. For him this was significant and as a result he also mentioned numerical strength as another indicator of the SDA Church's ongoing progress in its mission. At the same time he acknowledged that the denomination could still do better by stating the following:

> I think we have done well in membership; today we have well over 150 thousand members. At least I know in all our churches all over - those are the ones recorded, some are not recorded. So I know that, by the grace of God, the Church has done well. The Church has done well in terms of evangelism and in terms of reaching people here and there all over the country. But all the same, I still believe there is room for improvement because what we are experiencing today, our strategy of evangelism must change.

Mr. Babs also thought that the SDA Church had done well in its mission. He referred to organizational development, health and educational institutions established as yardsticks for measuring success, although he was also quick to point to the fact that the SDA Church had not kept up with the level of growth, especially in building hospitals and schools as it did earlier. He commented in this regard:

> In my opinion, I think the church has done a whole lot, and we need to be sincere in that regard. The church has done a lot in evangelizing the nation, Nigeria. We have branches scattered all across the nation, all over the states of the Federation. We have our institutions scattered across, health institutions, educational institutions, all over Nigeria. So we have done a whole lot in that regard. But I will also be quick to say that the things that have been done have probably been done over the years, in the past. I am trying to say that maybe we are not making impact as much as we can now [at present].

Out of the eleven pastors from various Conferences in the Union interviewed, ten of them felt that the SDA Church had not done well in fulfilling its mission in Nigeria. Although they all acknowledged that the SDA Church was achieving some success, for most of them it still had a long way to go. For example, Pastor Ajobi from Lagos responded that although the SDA Church was on course, this was at a slow speed. He put it as follows:

> I see the church on the right course but the way at which we are doing it or the speed is what needs to be worked on. The church is trying but … there are more and more to be done; many people are yet to even know [about] the church, and know what the church stands for. That means the work is still enormous and more hands are needed.

Pastor Bella from Oyo Conference opined that the zeal for missionary work was dwindling. He believed that "spiritual laziness" was impacting negatively on the mission of the SDA Church. He blamed the dwindling zeal among members for the slow pace at which this church was growing:

> Actually, [the] zeal of early disciples can never be compared with the zeal that we are having today because factors around us today are not making things working out. Let me call it spiritual laziness that people are not that much having the force, the push like those days. So it is not as expected though little move[s] have been made …

Again another interviewee, Pastor Adey of Osun Conference, observed on his part that the SDA Church's population relative to that of the country was an indicator that it had not done well considering that it had been in Nigeria for over 100 years. Another pastor, Pastor Olade of the Atlantic Conference of SDAs, believed the SDA Church was struggling in Nigeria. In his words, "(W)ell, we are struggling anyway." He felt Islam posed a major challenge to the advancement of the SDA Mission in certain parts of Nigeria. And in this regard he further commented: "Nigeria is dominated by Muslims and in that case, it is not easy to penetrate, most especially certain areas."

However, two of the clergy were of the opinion that the SDA Church had done very well. One of them, Pastor Jacob Agie, who works in Babcock University, judged the SDA Church as the fastest growing mainline church in Nigeria. He held the opinion that despite the fact that most of the mainline churches were losing membership to charismatic and Pentecostal churches, the SDA Church continued to grow. He explained:

> Looking at Nigeria, the Church is really doing it very well because one of the fastest growing churches in the world and in Nigeria here is the SDA Church. Looking at the orthodox [mainline] churches, most of them are going down joining the Pentecostal churches but the SDA Church is still strong and moving. So it has a role that it is playing.

Pastor Agie believed that the SDA Church did not lose members to other churches because it preached the "truth". He insisted that this was "because the message is the truth, the message is impactful and that is why people don't see any reason of leaving the Church and that is why it is still growing".

The other pastor is Pastor Thank-God of Babcock University, Ogun Conference who had been introduced earlier. He maintained a positive outlook to the SDA Church's evangelistic activities such as distribution of gospel tracts, giving verbal witness of the gospel message to neighbours, executing public evangelism programmes and other similar evangelization efforts.

In summary, it appeared from the interviews that SDAs saw their mission as warning the world about the Second Advent and letting people know about the sanctity of the Ten Commandments, which also requires the keeping of the seventh day, the Saturday, the Sabbath, as the day of worship. Most of them felt that the SDA Church has not done enough in fulfilling this task. They acknowledged that this church has grown since its arrival in Nigeria, both

numerically and in terms of its organizational development, but that these dimensions of growth fell short of what was desired.

The implication of the evaluation of church members, both clergy and laity, on the fulfilment of their mission was that neither socio-economic development nor the political development was considered as yardstick of the SDA Church's fulfilment of its mission. This posture, informed by its theology, excused this church from the responsibility of working for the transformational development of the country.

5.5 SDA mission and the Nigerian society

This section focuses on SDAs' understanding of mission and socio-economic development. More specifically, it discusses the findings relevant to SDA members' attitude to social justice, advocacy and social engagement as mission, as well as the SDA Church's theological framework for thinking about economic suffering (of the masses of the country) and the role of the Church in addressing it. This is discussed in two parts, dealing respectively with the socio-economic and the political dimensions.

5.5.1 The SDA Church and socio-economic engagement

The interviews reveal the perspectives of SDAs on the issue of seeing socio-economic development of the country as part of its mission, and furthering it. Firstly, from the responses of the interviewees it became clear that the SDA Church is focused on charity-based activities and empowerment of members as its approach to addressing socio-economic challenges. Secondly, their proposed socio-economic palliative measures were narrow in perspective, mainly directed at its members. Thirdly, their responses made it clear that involvement in charity and economic empowerment is a tool for mission. As far as Adventists are concerned, its mission focus is what has been described before; therefore, impacting the socio-economic life of people is a means to an end, not a main objective. Jesus Christ is the model for SDAs' paradigm on economic development. SDAs believe that before Jesus Christ preached to people, he often met their physical needs including food and healing. To SDAs, he met those needs to facilitate the preaching of the gospel. As Pastor Ogungbe of the Lagos Atlantic Conference for instance noted:

The major mission of the Church, [the] Seventh-day Adventist Church, is to reach the people with [the] gospel that is number one. That is the major reason it exists, to spread the news of Christ's coming, which is going to be very soon.

Mr. Demeje Folio, one of the laymen interviewed, believed that a church needed to meet people's socio-economic needs in order to be able to reach them with the gospel. "In any community, in every gathering, if you don't affect people socio-economically, you might not get to them." Meeting people's basic socio-economic needs was a tool for getting people to come into church. In turn, Mr. Babs, the layman already cited earlier, held a similar opinion when he responded that the health and educational institutions of the Church had to complement the Church's mission. This therefore implied that education and health care were not essential elements of the mission of the church but complementary to it.

The Adventist Women's Ministry (AWM) leader for the Union, Mrs. Vicky Golden, also saw the charity work of her ministry as a means of winning and retaining members. AWM operates at every level of the Church's organization, that is, from the local church level to the Conference and the Union. The ministry assists widows and poor women. It also has outreaches to motherless babies, street children and the destitute. Mrs. Golden explained that AWM gives food and clothing to those in need. She saw AWM as complementing the government's efforts in encouraging the economic development of Nigerians. It is significant to note that its ministry to women and others in need is beyond the material; the AWM leader said that they pray with the people they reach out to and counsel them. This is a holistic outlook that faith-based organizations are uniquely positioned to do. She also said that AWM at the Union level also organizes empowerment programmes for women, teaching them skills like baking, tie-and-dye cloth making, soap making and other skills that can generate income for women. Mrs. Golden commenting on AWM activities said: "In the year 2017, we empowered over 200 people." She added that this figure did not include those programmes done at the local church level throughout the Union.

Mrs. Golden furthermore pointed out that the AWM extended their empowerment programmes to non-SDA members. Yet, at the same time she also highlighted the fact that the AWM discouraged SDA women from participating in empowerment programmes organized by other denominations in order to prevent SDA women from being converted to other denominations. She commented as follows:

There was a time I took my women to a programme; I have forgotten the name of the organizer. After the programme they [gave] … them a washing machine for dry cleaning, and my women came back to tell me. I said that is bait; they are using that as bait to get you. I said don't go there again and they didn't. If the Ansarudeen organize empowerment programmes, personally, when I see that, I will not allow my women to go there. Somebody told me of recent that Catholic women organized something they called breakfast for the women. They took it outside and they were feeding people with breakfast for one month. I said it is a good thing and we can emulate them but not for my members to be going there and be eating. No. So we too organized it and we did it for two weeks. If you see something that is good, you can come and copy it and do it in the church.

This comment made by the AWM leader shows that denominational identity is more important to her than the women's socio-economic well-being. It also reveals that the development objective of the Ansarudeen and Catholic organizations are also a threat to the growth of the SDA Church. This again underscores evangelization as priority for the Church. This will be further highlighted when discussing SDAs' relationship with other denominations below.

The Adventist Men's Organization (AMO) was also involved in charitable activities that were directed at addressing socio-economic difficulties of people, like their AWM counterpart. The charitable activities were likewise essentially a means of reaching people with the SDA message. The leader of AMO at the Union level at the time of the interviews was Elder Musa Sodu, who made it clear that the AMO's primary role was to assist the clergy in evangelism, preaching and teaching the word of God. To this extent he made reference to a convention AMO held where people were invited from all over the country to be part of evangelism. Elder Sodu believed that evangelic programmes of this nature constituted part of the SDA Church's contribution to national development. He posited that moral bankruptcy was the bane of the country and that the gospel was the panacea to it.

Elder Sodu further highlighted the fact that the AMO taught people about healthy lifestyles and simplicity of living. This meant that the SDA Church shunned materialism, hence that it did not preach prosperity and did not advertise miracles like many other churches did. He alluded to the fact that desire for riches and miracles were contributory factors to immorality and corruption in the country. He said:

Many people love our lifestyle, the food we eat, what we drink, the kind of life we live, and the way we spread our messages, not thinking of miracles, not thinking of prosperity, but [having] that

spirit of contentment. It is the spirit of contentment [that makes us] … all worthy of emulation. And for any country to grow, you need people who are morally upright who are spiritually inclined, people who will see a spade and call it a spade.

On his part, the leader of the Adventist Youth Ministry (AYM), Pastor Ishaku Oyewole, believed that the AYM made a huge socio-economic impact through its educational programmes for young people. From the perspective of the AYM this was seen as an investment in the future of Nigeria, the youth being the future leaders of country. According to Pastor Oyewole, the AYM reached young people through different clubs formed along age groupings: the Adventurers (2 to 6 years), the Pathfinders (7 to 14 years), the Senior Youth (14 to 22 years), and the Ambassadors (22 to 30 years). He commented that all these groups were being taught life and survival lessons. They were also given leadership training to equip them for effective leadership in life. Pastor Oyewole believed that all these trainings and lessons provided by the AYM were part of the SDA Church's contribution to the socio-economic development of the country. The challenge, in my estimation, was that these activities were mostly targeted at SDA young people. Also, Pastor Oyewole's understanding of the role of the SDA Church in national development is a narrow and micro-level perspective on transformational development of the country.

What I can deduce from reflecting on the responses of the interviewees is that SDAs, both laity and clergy, have not conceived national development as part of the mission of the SDA Church. Therefore most socio-economic programmes of the SDA Church were targeted at SDA (relatively few) members or targeted at people SDAs desired to convert to Adventism. In addition to that, most members, clergy or laity, did not see socio-economic aspirations as critical. It was seen by interviewees as a way to get people's attention and for people to have enough money to support the church through tithes and offerings. The main focus and mandate of the SDA Church was to evangelize. Pastor Thank-God, who had been earlier introduced as a clergyman from Ogun Conference, insisted that although helping people socio-economically is good, the main objective of the SDA Church should nevertheless be to preach the gospel. "It is not out of place for the Church to empower people, although the mission of the Church is preaching the everlasting gospel." This thought was echoed in one way or the other by the majority of the interviewees. For example, Mrs. Wealthwake, a lay woman from Osun Conference, observed in this regard that "[W]ithout money, without economic stability,

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without social stability, to propagate the gospel will not be easy." Another interviewee, a youth in the Lagos Atlantic Conference, SDA Church, Mr. Oyewu, said in respect of socio-economic empowerment activities of the SDA Church: "I am saying this because if the country is thriving as a whole, then the SDA gospel will definitely go further." Corroborating the idea that socio-economic enhancement activities are a means of advancing the evangelization objectives of the SDA Church, Danny Aju, a youth member in the Delta Conference expressed the following: "Yeah, the church joining the state government to do projects that will benefit the people is allowed because [it] is not only preaching the gospel that is part of having community service. [It is also] helping others so that through you they may say, 'Yes that Jesus Christ is real.'" By this, Danny means that doing charity makes the work of evangelism easier. A clergyman interviewee, Pastor Adey from Osun Conference said, "I am of the opinion that the SDA Church should do that, they should impact the socio-economic landscape of Nigeria and I feel that doing that can also impact the proclamation of the gospel and also encourage more people to embrace the teaching of the church."

Although these statements made by the interviewees in the preceding paragraph sound pious and positive, they reflect a mindset that the ministry of socio-economic empowerment must be a means to an end; if there are no prospects of people's conversion into Adventism, it cannot be done. This mindset poses a limitation on the capacity of the religious sector of Nigeria to contribute effectively to national development.

5.5.2 *The SDA Church and governance*

Generally speaking, SDAs do not anticipate remarkable improvement in the quality of human life, especially in the political, economic and social milieu globally. Based on their Second Advent theology, the only solution to global political and socio-economic challenges is the Second Advent of Jesus. Based on texts that SDAs interpret as predictive of the condition of the world before the Second Advent, which is the core of SDAs' eschatology, the world will deteriorate morally and economically (Matthew 24:6-8). In this respect, Pastor Prosper Thank-God commented as follows:

> Again, as a Church, we believe that Jesus is our hope. There is no impact that anyone can make that can totally change the way things are going because we are people of the Book; the Bible says towards the end at the coming of Jesus, so many things will not be working.

In a more pertinent way, this section of the chapter wants to highlight SDAs' viewpoints regarding issues of governance, political development and political engagement in Nigeria. As such it aims to highlight SDAs' attitudes toward social justice, social gospel and advocacy as a means to address the suffering of the masses in Nigerian society. This section therefore dissects in greater depth the SDA Church's attitude to how it can deal directly with the challenges of underdevelopment in Nigeria in a more structural way, instead of transformational development efforts merely from the fringes of society. The research revealed that SDAs held different views about how the church and its members should engage politically.

On the one hand, there were interviewees, clergy and laity, who appeared open to the SDA Church being the prophetic voice to power. They felt that the church represented the only voice that could be trusted to be courageous and fair in speaking the truth to those in leadership. They looked forward to the church taking that position and lamented the absence of the SDA Church in this critical arena. For example, Pastor Joba Olade from the Lagos Atlantic Conference believed that it was the church's moral duty to speak out against evil done by those in position of power. "If we are keeping quiet when we are supposed to speak, it is dangerous." Pastor Olade observed that it was the orientation of the SDA Church that limited its civil engagement. As such he felt that the SDA Church had not played that role and hoped that the Church would start doing so as soon as possible. Another clergyman from the Lagos Mainland Conference of the SDA Church, Pastor Oye Kola, lamented the docility of the SDA Church with regard to speaking against injustice in society. According to him, this stood in contrast to clergymen like Bishop Matthew Kukah of the Catholic Church who was very vocal on social justice issues. Another interviewee who shared the same thought was Mr. Babs, who felt that the SDA Church had left this task for other denominations.

In confirmation of the fact that the demand for the SDA Church to begin to challenge unfavourable government policies is rising, some of the SDAs interviewed insisted that their church had been side-lined in many areas such as the electioneering process and access to tertiary education, because the denomination had not being publicly vocal on national issues, even those that affected the denomination adversely. These two sectors, politics and education, give citizens access to power. Thus they were critical of the fact that elections for political office at all levels of governance in Nigeria and the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board

(JAMB) examinations, the qualification examination for university and all tertiary education were always held on Saturdays, the Sabbath day without any challenge from the denomination. Holding both the elections and the qualification examinations on Saturday, the Sabbath day, denied Nigerian SDAs access to power.

In addition to elections and the JAMB issue, they felt that their right to worship freely was also infringed upon by the once-a-month environmental sanitation exercises held on a Saturday. Human and vehicular movements are restricted between 7 am and 10 am on the days environmental sanitation exercises take place. This means that SDAs are not be able to go to church services easily on sanitation days. Some members were of the opinion that the SDA Church as a body should be vocal about that or lobby governments to have that law revoked. This clamour to challenge government confirmed the fact that SDAs have become more outspoken about perceived unfavourable government policies. Interviewees supported the idea of SDA members seeking political offices, or seeking redress in courts of law as a means of having a voice in the public space in Nigeria. Pastor Ade Abbey, a clergy at Babcock University under Ogun Conference, believed that members should seek elective positions or support those who desired to so do in order to influence laws that had thitherto affected SDAs adversely. Others opined that Nigeria would continue to suffer bad leadership if the country was run by those who were not morally upright. They claimed that only God-fearing people, of which SDAs were part, could provide good leadership for the country. Pastor Abbey offered his opinion in the statement below:

> There are some people who are interested, but some believe that as a Christian you should stay away [from politics]; they see politics as a dirty game, which is one of the reasons we are backward in Nigeria because politics would have helped us to change some policies that are affecting the [SDA] Church, like writing examinations on the Sabbath, voting on the Sabbath. And if we cannot do that, we can go to court to tell them we have the right to vote, but we cannot vote on this day. We can go to court to settle that. That is my own view. But if we involve more in politics, we will be able to ... [T]here is nothing wrong with politics. Christians need to take over politics because if we are being governed by those who are not God-fearing, they would direct us in the wrong way. But if we are being governed by people who are God-fearing, we will be able to make our decision[s] known.

On the other hand, there were interviewees who strongly discouraged the involvement of SDAs, either as individuals or as a church, in politics. Some were very sceptical regarding the possibility of being involved in politics and still be a good SDA. They argued that the required principles for being ready for the Second Advent would be compromised if one would engage in politics. Even those who thought SDAs could be involved in politics expressed concern about being a faithful SDA and a politician at the same time. This was for instance a position taken by Pastor Ogungbe of Lagos Atlantic Conference. According to him the kingdom [of God] was not of this world and that getting involved in politics was a distraction from the mission of the SDA Church. With respect to the church making public comments on social issues, he believed that it could cause the government in power to misunderstand the church as supporting opposition parties. Instead, he rather wanted to see that SDA Church's leadership met privately with political leaders, but at the same time he commented that it was noteworthy that no SDA Church leader had, to his knowledge, met with government officials over social concerns, either publicly or privately. Pastor Ogungbe advised the SDA Church and its people rather to pray for those in political offices.

In agreement with the school of thought that SDAs' involvement in politics should be limited, Pastor James Omoru of the Lagos Atlantic Conference also expressed extreme caution about an SDA member being in politics. He believed that much of one's value system would be compromised in the process. He held that the church should rather influence politics through the SDA Church's educational institutions. He expressed his thoughts in the following statement:

> You see, if you want to be a politician in this country, you really have to sacrifice so much. In other words, some of your principles as a Christian would be sacrificed, or maybe the best word to use is "will be compromised" and that is why it is difficult for Adventists to be involved in the political development of the nation. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been bad, you know Daniel was ... although he was not involved in contesting for the office, but he was involved in the running of Babylon and all that. So, for political development it is a little bit challenging but as Christians we should do our best, pray for them, and when we have the opportunity make our contributions [through] [news]papers, electronic media and so on and so forth. But for active involvement, it is a little bit difficult.

A lay member already cited, Mr. Imopikin, was very opposed to the idea of the SDA Church making public statements on politics or being critical of government policies. He described it as the church being an opposition party. Mr. Imopikin insisted: "Instead of engaging the government verbally, they [SDAs] should engage the government in practical things and that is practical Christianity." By that he meant the church had to complement the efforts of government by providing health care services, educational services, and more importantly, by living a good and healthy lifestyle. He believed that these activities would influence the government more than engaging the government in the media or playing the opposition party roles.

The a-political stance expressed above is consistent with that of the SDA Church as contained in some of its documents. According to this stance the Church should rather seek ways to alleviate suffering by meeting economic, physiological, social or political challenges through charitable activities planned and executed by various departments of the Church (Communication Department, General Conference of SDA 2010:80). The position is expressed clearly as follows: "The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a worldwide religious community and, as a matter of principle, endeavours not to be involved in political issues" (Communication Department, General Conference of SDA 2010:71).

The SDA Church through its Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (2002:1) affirms the fact that in consistence with biblical personalities, SDA Church members could rise to positions of influence with governments. It would also not discourage them for aspiring to elective civil leadership positions. In addition, the SDA Church acknowledges the increase in the amount of political influence it is able to exert in some parts of the world. It is however conscious of the potential tragedy that can result when civil powers are used to have a religious influence. The SDA Church promotes clear demarcations with respect to the respective authorities of the church and that of the state. The SDA Church is wary of creating situations of discomfort for other religious groups and minorities due to any religious organization(s) taking undue advantage of its relationship with civil authority. The SDA Church canvasses for the protection of the religious rights of all citizens and fairness for all.

Pastor Victor Olu of the Ondo Conference opined that SDAs should not be in partisan politics. Nevertheless, he deemed it to be in order that they could serve government as appointees in cases where they would not need to contest for such positions, but rather rise to senior

government positions as career civil servants. To this extent he upheld the biblical narratives of Joseph and Daniel who were very influential in ancient Egypt and Babylon respectively but not through the electoral process. He observed that many principles upon which a good SDA member should stand were likely to be compromised when contesting a position, especially within the Nigerian political context. An example of a potential point of compromise would be the violation of the biblical Sabbath-keeping injunctions. The majority of those interviewed expressed this or similar concerns regarding SDAs being in politics. Lagos Mainland clergy, Pastor Kola, just like many other Nigerians, was of the opinion that many politicians were in secret cult groups. This implied that SDAs who sought to be elected on the platform of political parties might face pressure to belong to those cult groups, which would also be a point of compromise of the SDA faith.

I observed from the comments of those interviewed as well as current national political affairs that, regardless of the reservations expressed by many SDAs in respect of engagement in governance, the pursuit of social justice and participation in how the country is governed, there seemed to be an increase in the participation of church members, firstly in partisan politics and secondly in social commentary. For example, during the general elections of 2015, about four SDA members contested at the convention of the then ruling party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) the position of the Executive Governor of Abia State. This was unprecedented in the history of the SDA Church in Nigeria. One of them, Mr. Okezie Ikpeazu, eventually emerged as the flag-bearer for the party and eventually won the seat and became the governor of the state. His major opponent, Dr. Alex Otti, who eventually defected to and contested on the platform of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) Party, was also an SDA Church member. There were also some SDAs who were senators and members of the House of Representatives. The support for being involved in partisan politics is reflected in Pastor Jacobs Agy's words below:

> And talking about somebody going for a position, yes, you are allowed as long as you are on a genuine way and you will not put your hands into sources that will not glorify God. The governor of Abia state is an SDA. The person who was contesting with him is also an SDA, so it is allowed, the Church allows that.

Consistent with the support of some SDA members regarding involvement with governance is the opinion of one of the top leadership of the Western Nigerian Union Conference of the SDA

Church, Pastor (Dr) Lamikanra Oluwaseun. His favourable disposition, as a top SDA administrator and pastor is significant because this is a departure from what some SDA Church documents, such as the one cited earlier, proposed. He affirmed the need for the Church to be vocal about the political and socio-economic conditions of Nigeria when I interviewed him for this thesis. He believed that the Church should make official comments about the state of the nation. To this extent he even went so far as to make comments in the printed media on national affairs such as the one on illegal inflation and manipulation of the 2017 appropriation budget, which he levelled against the Senate. (This is in reference to the press conference published by *This Day* newspaper of September 11, 2016). He also commented on the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency. In addition, Pastor Oluwaseun said he was ready to make comments on the forthcoming general elections in 2019. He believed that SDAs had to be interested in how the country is governed and also contest positions. He believed that anyone who wanted to be in politics should be ready to stand firm on their Christian principles, which would be tested in the process.

Pastor Oluwaseun did not suggest that the SDA Church be confrontational towards the government, but believed that SDAs should be known for being involved in the political development of Nigeria. Neither did he suggest any form of merger between SDA Church and government. In a press conference in 2016, he insisted that the role of the Church was to support the government (Ogundele 2016:1). In the press conference with the *This Day* newspaper (2016:1), he requested the government authority to ensure that elections were not held on Saturdays (Sabbath days) any longer to allow SDAs to vote and be voted for. Two significant things are implied in this statement: firstly, SDAs could seek social justice publicly and secondly, SDAs' desire to participate in the political process in Nigeria could be justified.

5.6   SDAs' attitude to interfaith relationships and dialogue

The socio-economic and political challenges of Nigerian society cannot be addressed by a single organization or group of people. This thesis proposes a holistic approach to pursuing development. This approach requires a multi-pronged approach to drive development. The thesis posits that faith-based organizations have a truly important and critical role to play in the drive towards development. Faith-based organizations need to collaborate in their pursuit to realize specific objectives in order to effectively act as catalyst in the transformational development aspirations of Nigeria. The SDA Church is part of the faith-based community in

Nigeria and should seek ways of effectively performing its role in realizing the overall developmental objective. This part of the research examined the belief system of SDAs and what informed their attitudes towards other religions and relating to them. This section also examines SDAs' thought on their relationship with non-Christian faith-based organizations as well as Christian ecumenical groups.

5.6.1   SDA collaborative opportunities with other religions

Through the interviews I could gather information how members of the SDA Church related to people of other faiths, apart from Christianity, for the purpose of national development. The interviews were also intended to gain better understanding of what worldview determined or influenced how SDAs related to people practising other religions. Of the 25 SDAs interviewed for this research, 23 believed that the SDA Church was allowed to collaborate with other religious organizations on projects that would improve the socio-economic and political life of Nigerians. This implied that both laity and clergy predominantly felt that such collaboration was a welcome idea. The concerns varied from theological integrity of the SDA Church to preservation of the moral integrity of its members. SDAs wanted to be sure that the outcome of such projects would be representative of what the SDA Church stands for.

For example, Mrs. Wealthwake held the opinion that the SDA Church would be very happy to work in conjunction with other religious groups if there were "means to collaborate with one another, agree together on the platform of religion and be ready for and allow God to be the centre of action." At the same time, however, many interviewees were quick to point out the need for the church to exercise caution in such collaborative initiatives. Uriah Agbaje, one of the youths interviewed, made the following statement when asked about his thoughts on SDAs collaborating with other religious groups on projects that could advance communities' socio-economic development:

> Well, you see unity is very important and as it concerns worship partnering with other religion I will not totally concur because the fact that we have different doctrines and different views might want to affect the way we see things. So I think we should stand on what we believe because it will go contrary to other religious beliefs.

Another youth, Danny Aju, gave a similar opinion. He desired collaboration with other religions only if it was for evangelization purposes:

Yea, it depends on the motive you are relating to the other faith. If you are relating with them to win them to Christ you can go ahead. But if it's for example the church is relating to a government official based on other criteria and not winning their hearts to Jesus Christ, it's not allowed. But if you're win[ning] them to Christ it's allowed.

A slightly modified position from the previous interviewees on collaboration with other religious groups was offered by Mr. King Imopikin. He is of the opinion that the SDA Church could work along with other religious groups, as long as other faiths will accept SDAs without any form of bias. He felt that SDAs were viewed with suspicion and often isolated by others. His opined the following:

In terms of projects that are developmental, I think it is not a bad thing for the [SDA] Church to go into collaboration or partnership with other faiths, like the Muslims or Catholics or whatever. But the challenge has always been that when it comes to that partnership or such collaboration, they have always seen the Adventists as judgmental, so most of the time they are not free to interact with the Adventist Church. And the [SDA] Church has always seen it as "We are on our own," and that has always been the problem. But if such bias can be removed whereby the Church can collaborate with other sister organizations, it will even give more room for people to see what they have not seen before because most of the problems we are having as a church is because people perceive us from [a] different understanding. For example, some see us as [a] cult group, some see us as [a] Jewish organization, some see us as whatever. But such collaboration will make people closer and see what we do and through that people will be convinced of what we do and see that who we are is not what they thought.

The president of the Western Nigerian Union Conference affirmed the need for the SDA Church to have points of interface with other religious groups for the purpose of developing Nigeria. He made specific reference to the need for nurturing peaceful coexistence as a good reason to have some form of interface. He elaborated:

There are so many points of interface because when you are talking about institutions, [the] religious institution is very powerful to the life of Nigeria as a nation. And if we say because we have different standpoints of biblical understanding we are not going to interface we are just deceiving ourselves. Because Traditionalists, Muslims and Christians and Adventists, there is common denominator, that is God. In every religion bloodshed is forbidden and there is no religion that does not want peace in life, so we have areas of agreement, we have areas of compromise and

we have areas of uniqueness. There must be interface or dialogue which helps the government have perspectives on how to handle religious issues in our nation.

The responses of the interviewees revealed that although SDAs did not mind to work with other faith groups, there were potential obstacles in doing so. Such obstacles included being misunderstood by other faith groups and fear of compromising its mission. In all, only one of the interviewees could give more specific examples of any collaboration with other faith groups. Furthermore, none of the interviewees had any specific collaborative project with other faith groups initiated by the SDA Church. The fact that SDAs did not initiate collaborative projects with other religious groups may be based on the conscious or sub-conscious notion that it is a unique organization that did not want to compromise theological standards or its mission by such association.

5.6.2 SDA collaborative opportunities with ecumenical groups

Although the SDA Church through its General Conference executive committee has not taken a vote[25] on the official statement on its participation in and membership of ecumenical bodies (Communication Department of the General Conference 2010:218), it does not belong to ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and other regional bodies and affiliates. It however does maintain an observer status in ecumenical groups. In Nigeria, the SDA does not belong to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). It has maintained a tradition through generations of no membership in ecumenical groups. This has affected how it collaborates with other denominations.

The research, however, revealed that many SDAs were of the opinion that collaborative relationships with other denominations for humanitarian projects could enhance the development of Nigeria. Out of the 25 SDAs interviewed, 22 indicated that working with other denominations strictly on community development projects could be of value. As in the case of the inquiry on collaboration with other religions discussed in 5.6.1 above, most interviewees responded in the affirmative, that the SDA Church could collaborate with other denominations or ecumenical groups but with much caution. In other words, such collaborations must not compromise what SDAs stand for or believe. This position was identical among clergy and

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[25] A democratic procedure SDAs adopt in making decisions. It indicates what the body considers the position of the Church on issues dealt with by the representatives of the Church in a particular meeting.

laity. Pastor Austin Ajobi of the Western Nigerian Union Conference for example stated emphatically that such collaboration was the ideal but that any SDA pastor proposing such collaborations, being a church employee, had to follow due procedures. This meant that the particular pastor shall seek and obtain approval from the church administration and the superiors in the hierarchy before consenting to such collaboration with other denominations or ecumenical groups. This form of transparency would leave no church member or the public in the dark about the process and expected outcome of such a project.

When asked if their local churches currently or in the past worked in conjunction with other denominations, the overwhelming majority said no. Those who had witnessed any form of collaboration said it happened a long time ago and were not sure of the particular events and why such collaboration has not happened again. Pastor Jacob Agy, who worked at Babcock University at the time of the interviews, affirmed the willingness of SDAs to work with other denominations for community development. He cited the community project that the local SDA Church in Ilishan Remo, Ogun State participated in when the town's *oba*[26] had a particular anniversary. All the churches in the community came together to execute a project and the SDA Church contributed some money for that project. Pastor James Omoru of the Atlantic Conference was not so enthusiastic about ecumenical associations. He was of the opinion that ecumenism was counter-productive to the SDA mission. When I asked him what he thought of collaborating with other denominations, he shared his experience as captured below:

> That is also very challenging. You know there is what is called CAN. We are [only] observers in CAN because of these restrictions. CAN will tell you "Go here, don't go here." We had an evangelism programme recently here in Lagos, that is in Church Street in Shomolu. By the time our pastor was preaching our Adventist beliefs, they[27] sent a message to him that he was creating confusion because he was preaching what we believe. And they said what we want you to do here is to just preach Christ, that's all.   But how are we going to preach Christ without letting them know, just like Jesus says if you love me, keep my commandments? Because of these restrictions and conflicts, it is difficult for us to partner to do anything because we are going to have conflict. To avoid conflict, whatever projects we want to do, we want to do it as a Church, but not partnering with another religious organization to do that.

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[26]   That is the traditional chief, a king or head of community that ascends to the throne not by government democratic structures.

[27]   Referring to CAN officials in that area where the SDA Church public evangelism programme held.

Pastor James Omoru's experience, as stated in the interview reported above on how the CAN tried to control the content of the SDA Church's evangelistic meetings, highlights SDAs' concern, that is, the tendency for other denominations who do not agree with SDA doctrines to want to control or manipulate SDAs if they have to do projects together.

The response of Pastor Oluwaseun, a top administrator at the Western Nigeria Union Conference, to my question on the readiness of the SDA Church to be involved in ecumenism showed that the SDA Church has major reservations about the idea. He expressed the concern of the SDA Church about ecumenism in the following comments:

> The problem is this ecumenism. We are very sceptical because when you bring the baggage, you come as you are. I believe the Bible is the only standard of any human society. As a church, we don't compromise our biblical beliefs and teachings. So we can interface on the area of development but on the area of doctrinal issue, no compromise.

Pastor Oluwaseun emphasized the difficulties SDAs anticipated when it had to relate to ecumenical groups, namely demands that could be made on the SDA Church to abide by decisions that can hinder its mission, the extent to which the Church can be limited to propagate its doctrines, or compromise its doctrines. When I asked him if the SDA Church had ever cooperated with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), he answered in the affirmative. He made reference to when he and other SDA Church officials in Nigeria joined other clergy and CAN officials to pray at the inauguration of the President Goodluck Jonathan's administration in Abuja.

Apart from this empirical research on SDAs' attitudes towards ecumenism, the denomination takes the writings of Ellen White as guide and authority for its belief and practice. Ellen White (1939:482) warns that the spiritual compromises in the Roman Catholic Church system would eventually influence even Protestants. The latter would eventually see less reason to be positively separate from the Catholic Church. She guarded against the possibility that Protestants form alliances with the Catholic Church, which would lead to theological compromises that Protestants once rejected. This alliance would soon degenerate into fierce persecution of people who do not agree with this alliance; religious liberty would be violated. SDAs do not want to be in such alliances and this may have been one of the major reasons for its non-ecumenical stance.

5.6.3 SDA collaborative opportunities with secular non-governmental organizations

The various responses of the interviewees suggested that there are huge untapped potentials in national development collaborative projects for SDAs. With the exception of one interviewee, all other interviewees affirmed the opinion that the SDA Church and its branches or departments could collaborate with secular non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the purpose of community development. They felt that the church should not isolate itself from the general community, since it would be through such continuous interactions that the Church could optimize its witnessing capacity. With regard to SDA collaboration opportunities with other denominations, Dr. Aloho opined, "It is an opportunity for the Church to do more of this, a lot of collaboration, and even do more as a way of getting more people into the Adventist fold." However, there was no evidence of such collaborations on a larger scale by SDA local churches or departments other than the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

The common thread in the conversations was that the SDA Church should not lose its identity or its sense of mission and uniqueness in the proposed partnerships. Instead, the Church had to use the formation of partnerships as an avenue for evangelization. Another interviewee who expressed similar concerns as Dr. Aloho was one of the youths, Uriah Agbaje, who noted, "If we [SDAs] are going to partner with them [non-SDA churches], I think that the essence of the church, what makes the church stand out, should not be nullified." Thus the point was clearly made by the interviewees that every activity SDAs engaged in had to be geared towards fulfilment of its mission, namely evangelization of the world.

Only one of the 25 interviewees, Pastor Joba Olade, objected to partnering with a secular organization for any kind of projects. He was open to collaboration with other religions and denominations but emphasized the need to be cautious in doing so. He strongly disagreed with collaborating with secular NGOs. His major concern was that the source of wealth or income of the potential donor to the project may be illegal or incompatible with the ideals of the SDA Church. This may turn out to be a source of embarrassment to the SDA Church. He felt that if the potential donor or collaborator's wealth proceeded from corruption or crime the Church could be wrongly associated with such crime and the essence of the project thus being jeopardized. Consequently, he warned against any partnership that could damage the reputation of the SDA Church.

5.7 The public's perception of the SDA Church and the relevance of religion in the development of Nigerian society

In this section I now shift the focus to the perception of members of the Nigerian public regarding two related issues: the relevance of religion for the development of Nigerian society and the impact of the SDA Church on this development.

Ten people comprising of women, men and young adults were interviewed at random in Lagos State. They hailed from different parts of Nigeria although they were all residents of Lagos at the time of the interviews. Three persons among them were Muslims and seven Christians. Their level of involvement in their religions varied as revealed in their responses. I did not seek any particular demography and the selection was randomly based on their readiness to be interviewed and have their voices recorded. It was particularly difficult to get volunteers for the interviews as some were afraid of being arrested by secret service agents of government. The choice of the city was based on the fact that the headquarters of the Western Nigeria Union Conference of the SDA Church is in Lagos State. In terms of administrative structure of the SDA Church in Nigeria, the Western Nigerian Union Conference (which is basically covering the SDA mission in the western part of Nigeria) was formed out of the defunct Nigeria Union Mission (NUM). The NUM was the administrative unit that was responsible for the mission of the SDA Church in Nigeria. The establishment of the Western Nigeria Union Conference (WNUC) was due to the perceived growth and organizational development of the SDA mission in Nigeria. The headquarters of the denomination remained in Lagos after the formation of the WNUC. Therefore, Lagos remains an important (host) city when considering the mission of the SDA Church in Nigeria. The fact that the Church's headquarters is established in Lagos should therefore make it visible and accessible to residents of Lagos. The mission of the SDA Church should make greater impact where its headquarter office is located. Lagos itself had been the capital state of Nigeria until 1991 when General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida moved the capital to the current Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Lagos is a city of a high level of diversity and often represents the feelings of Nigerians on issues in the country.

5.7.1 Public opinion on the role of religion in national development

This section of the research is to gain insight into the opinion of members of the public on the role of religion in national development. Understanding the public's thoughts on the role of religion in the development of Nigeria helps to put their evaluation of the SDA mission's

impact on the development of Nigeria in context. It would reveal that their opinion was not biased against the SDA Church, but consistent with how they wished all religious groups should relate to national developmental aspirations. The SDA should be able to gain further insight for strategic mission in Nigeria.

Out of ten people interviewed, only five thought that religion had a role to play in national development. The attitude of the average interviewee suggested frustration, despondency and loss of hope in religion's influence on Nigeria's development. Although the above-mentioned five interviewees regarded religion to have potential and capacity that could be deployed for the development of Nigerian society, they were also adamant that the positive effect was not really seen. They believed that morals, ethics and other values taught by religions could be helpful in creating positive attitudes necessary for the promotion of peaceful and prosperous communities. According to Mr. Emma Emmayang, one of the interviewees, religion in Nigeria had failed to develop the moral capacities of leaders.

Another interviewee, Miss Zenab Moyeen, who has just completed her university education and not yet working, believed that religion theoretically had a role to play in Nigeria's national development, but in practice had failed to make a meaningful impact. She was convinced that political leaders who were often adherents of one religion or the other had not exhibited such positive values as one would have anticipated. She also believed that religious leaders, especially pastors, ran churches like personal business enterprises. She interpreted their activities as profit driven. According to her, even when these religious leaders were setting up schools and hospitals, it was profit driven and many poor people could not afford their services. She noted that many religious leaders lived flamboyantly off the generosity of the poor followers. She believed that religious organizations would have more impact on the country's development if they were compelled to pay taxes.

Mr. Bayo Adefemi, a third interviewee, also believed that the moral element of religion had a potential that could be harnessed for national development. But to him, religion made people apathetic to politics. He asserted that people who were deeply religious did not think the way politics is practised in Nigeria is compatible with religious tenets. He expressed the desire to see people who are faithful to their religious moral tenets become political leaders so that the moral values of their religions could be brought to bear on governance. He yearned for the day when the good people of Nigeria would not leave the governance of Nigeria to people who

have no values and lack commitment to morals. He believed apathy to religion left Nigeria in the hands of those who will continue to set the country backwards. Many other interviewees also shared Mr. Adefemi's thoughts on the involvement of religious people in Nigerian politics.

Three persons interviewed did not see any value religion could add to the development of Nigeria. All three insisted that religion was personal and should not be of public interest. On the extreme side of the spectrum the opinion was expressed that religion was indeed inimical to the development of Nigeria. From this group Mr. Abaah Ribigbe, a business owner and furniture manufacturer in Lagos, even went as far as saying that religion wasted people's time. He elaborated by stating that too much of Nigerians' productive time was spent in houses of worship and on religious activities. He commented that during working hours (therefore excluding days popularly used for religious activities such as Sundays for most Christians and Fridays for Muslims), many Nigerians trooped to houses of worship when they should be pursuing productive activities. He noted that religious leaders promised people supernatural prosperity; therefore people were putting less emphasis on creative work. He considered this dangerous to the economy. Mr. Ribigbe was not a deeply religious person although he believed in God.

Mr. Taofiki Ahkazim, a practicing Muslim, thought that religion was a personal matter. By making it a public issue such as it had been done in Nigeria led to a waste of resources. He pointed to the case of Nigeria where funds that could have been invested in infrastructure was wasted on holy pilgrimages (sponsored by government). Apart from this, Mr. Taofiki Akhazim thought religious consciousness also destroyed the place of merit and competence in the election of political leadership of the country. For example, consideration was usually given to religious identity when electing presidents and vice presidents in Nigeria. If the president was Muslim, a Christian was sought to be the vice president for balance. This meant competence was set aside whilst religious sentiments determined who would govern the country. However, on the more positive side Mr. Akhazim believed that religion could be indirectly helpful for national development if individuals would live up to the teachings of their faith. Another interviewer, Mr. Osundiya Opinaye, saw the followers of religion characteristically and historically as fearless. Religion should therefore be able to serve as the conscience of the society, although he emphasised that this had not generally been the case in Nigeria.

In summary, according to the majority of interviewees the potential of religion as a catalyst for national development had not been realized in Nigeria. There was a general sense of disappointment in religious leaders. People who expected a positive influence of religious ethics and morals on governance did not witness this. The interviewees mostly had a narrow view of how religion helps development. They saw religion helping through charitable projects and through pious living. (As important as these aspects are, I would think that the potential of religion contributing to the country's development is far wider than these.) The essential argument expressed by most of the interviewees was that Nigerians expected more from the religious class. This posed a challenge to the religious class to make religion more relevant to the development narrative of Nigeria.

5.7.2   The perception of the Nigerian public about SDA mission and national development

It is necessary to give some background to this sub-section of the chapter by providing the historical context of the SDA mission in Lagos. Chapter 3 dealt with history of SDA Church development and growth but it did not give information about the Church's mission in Lagos. It is important to do so because the research on public perception of the Church was done in Lagos. The SDA Church has been in Nigeria since 1914 (Babalola 2002:3) but the missionaries did not establish their mission in Lagos immediately but rather chose to retreat to the hinterland in Erunmu, Ibadan. The reason for this is not readily known. Much later on, the SDA Church in Lagos, according to Adejoke Oyewunmi (n.d.), started in Yaba, Lagos metropolis in 1932. The Church acquired a landed property at 37 Queens Street which served as parsonage for its pastors, and part of it was used as its Adventist Book Centre (ABC) where evangelistic literature was sold. The Church purchased another landed property at 7 Faneye Street, not too far from the first property, in the same year. The newly-established church used the new property as the place of worship for Wednesday and Sabbath day services. It also used the same property as an elementary school for social development of the community, and of course as a platform for evangelism. The elementary school eventually moved to another property the fledging SDA Church acquired at Abule Oja in 1957, a suburb of the metropolis close to Akoka. Pioneering the work in Lagos were Pastor J. A. Adeoye, Pastor Caleb Adeogun, Pastor Henry, whose surname is unknown, and an elderly pastor, Pastor E. O Joseph. By 1956, a new SDA Church branch was established in Apapa, a wharf community. In addition, Pastor Henry was instrumental in establishing another SDA branch in Odunlami Street in Lagos in 1957 before

finally moving to a permanent church building in 5B Beecroft Street on Lagos Island (Oyewunmi: n.d).

The SDA Church in Lagos has since then grown to more than 20 branches in different parts of Lagos. Administratively, apart from the Union headquarters located in Lagos, there are two SDA Conferences in Lagos: the Lagos Atlantic Conference and the Lagos Mainland Conference. The Lagos Atlantic Conference of the SDA Church has a territory in the following Local Government Areas in Lagos State: Ajeromi/Ifelodun, Amuwo-Odofin, Apapa, Badagry, Eti-osa, Ibeju Lekki, Isolo, Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland, Mushin, Ojo, and Surulere. It has about 22 branches and about 5,500 members (SDA Lagos Atlantic Conference 2013:1). The Lagos Mainland Conference has about 37 branches and over 7,000 members (SDA Lagos Mainland Conference 2013:1).

It is in the light of this context that the survey among the non-SDA public should be understood. The total population of the SDA Church in Lagos, according to the information released on the two Conferences as cited earlier, is less than 20, 000. Lagos State has a population of up to 15 million people. This gives an idea of the impact of its mission in this state.

Out of the 10 people interviewed, only five persons knew of the SDA Church. The level of knowledge was superficial in the case of three out of the five. Mr. Ribigbe responded that he did not know anything about the SDA Church despite the fact that his business was located in the same street as the Lagos Atlantic Conference's three-storey headquarters building. When he was asked if he knew anything about what the SDA Church's mission was, he did not know. Consequentially, he had no idea or impression about whether the denomination had made any impact on Nigeria's socio-economic or political landscape. This was similarly the case with the Mr. Emmayang, Mr. Opinaye, Mr. Ahkazim and Mr. Adefemi.

Among the five interviewees who had some knowledge of the Seventh-day Adventist Church four claimed to know the denomination superficially. They knew that SDAs go to church on Saturdays, unlike the majority of Christians who go on Sundays. One of the interviewees was a former SDA. Although she saw herself more or less as a member of the SDA Church, she had not been going to church for a few years. I did not ask her why she had left the Church.

When the latter group of interviewees were asked whether they knew the message or the mission of the SDA Church, all of them said they did not know. Mr. Ahkazim commented that as a Muslim, he did not have any desire to learn about Christian missions. However, two interviewees, Mr. Nibaba and Mr. Adefemi, replied that they knew the SDA Church had hospitals and schools. They were aware of the Adventist hospital in Ile-Ife, Osun State because the two of them both received their education in schools in Ile-Ife. Mr. Nibaba went further to explain that the SDA Church was better known in Ile-Ife and some parts of Oyo State because of their schools. Nine of the 10 people interviewed knew that Babcock University was owned and run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, none of those interviewed indicated that they had any knowledge of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). None of them could say anything about the mission of the Church. One of the interviewees' lack of knowledge was revealed when she, Ms. Moyeen, advised the SDA Church to establish a headquarter so that their presence could be felt, even though the SDA Church's headquarters had been in Lagos for decades. She advised the SDA Church to publicize its activities so that people could know what its members believe and practise.

5.8   Need for removing the limitations placed by SDA eschatological orientation

The preceding section concludes the analysis of the research. The SDA Church should be concerned about the apparent limited visibility of its mission in Nigeria as revealed by this research. The research highlights how the theology (especially eschatology) of the SDA faith community shapes their level of engagement with contemporary issues of the society. The mission of the SDA Church in Nigeria should be able to engage the country's socio-economic challenges head-on. Titus Presler (2010:195) describes mission as "the ministry in the dimension of the difference". The SDA Church should proactively ensure that its eschatological narrative does not undermine its ability to minister to the unique challenges of Nigeria and make a difference in people's lives.

Frank L. Emanuel (2015:18-27) gives the historical narrative of the theological development among the Evangelicals regarding the effect of their eschatology on social engagement. Part of the challenge is the desire to remain committed to the traditional and conservative ideals of Christianity, namely the literal meaning of the scripture and the work of salvation which is climaxed by the Advent. This thesis identifies similar factors affecting SDAs' attitudes to efforts to make this world a better place. For SDAs, it is the Second Advent that will end all

social, political and economic crises globally. In addition, SDAs have become almost overly careful of not compromising its ultimate and central Three Angels' Message, to the point of minimal social engagement. Apart from the aforementioned reasons, SDAs' understanding of ecumenical relations, church and state relationships also delimit their social engagement. The SDA does not have to compromise its doctrines, but it should make its teachings incarnational, relevant and contemporary.

SDAs' observation of the challenges facing other faith-based organizations may de-motivate them from toeing that path. Getting involved in social justice, advocacy and other social causes can put more strain on the resources of the denomination in terms of financial, human and logistic resources while the efforts may not yield desired results. Ian Wallace (2002:134-136) opines that in many situations, attempts by churches or faith-based organizations at holistic, transformational development do not deliver anticipated results: the targeted poor are often not relieved. Structures of leadership in faith-based organizations technically exclude the poor, those who are meant to be served; decisions, planning and executions are done by the clergy and a few influential members of the congregation. This is patterned after paternalistic models where donors determine the needs and the *modus operandi* of meeting the needs. Wallace also notes that many churches also lose their mission identity, especially when funded by organizations that do not necessarily share their faith. Faith-based organizations must therefore deepen their competences in relief and development ministry because the power of the Holy Spirit, which is uniquely endowed to them, is the factor needed in establishing the Kingdom of God and shalom on earth.

The SDA Church also mentioned the limitation they experienced in fulfilling their ecclesiastical mission when they received funding from secular organizations, as related by Wallace above. The Church in its statement discourages receiving funds from governments (Dabrowski 2010:189-190), and by implication other agencies whose donations can inhibit the fulfilment of the mission of the SDA Church. These challenges however should not obstruct the Church's social redemptive work in its host community. The SDA Church consequently must pursue social justice and advocacy as it vigorously proclaim the salvation-for-individuals gospel in Nigeria.

This part of the chapter highlights socially engaged activities of a few faith-based organizations. It also compares certain faith-based organizations with the SDA Church in terms

of social involvement. It notes how the activities of these faith-based organizations in Nigeria have contributed to the development of the socio-economic and political landscape of the country. It also acknowledges challenges they face in the process of making an impact. This section ends by challenging the SDA Church to learn from, to emulate and collaborate with all organizations who engage in social activism as part of its mission. These faith-based organizations include Islamic and Christian organizations such as the Federation of Muslim Women Association and The Justice Development and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church (JDPC/CARITA) respectively (Olarinmoye 2012:5). The JDPC/CARITA is an organization of the Catholic Church. There are many more such organizations that are involved in advocacy, serving as voices for the poor and the marginalized, and in civil rights agitations. The more such faith-based groups participate in collaborative developmental projects, the higher the impact they will make on Nigeria.

The Catholic Church is known to be very active in Nigeria's socio-economic and political development. The Catholic Church has policies that shape its activism around the world which is also applied in Nigeria. The publication of the Church Political Council for Justice and Peace (2004:204-229) highlights the Catholic Church's theology about how followers of Jesus Christ should engage in their communities. The publication also gives theological imperatives for political mobilization, defending human rights, supporting government, resisting government, how to support values of democracy, and institutionalizing these and other themes that aid development.

Michael Taylor (2011:5) notes that religious organizations have been seeking to play significant roles in development over time in Nigeria, but the role needs to get more sophisticated to match contemporary socio-economic and political needs and to demonstrate to unwilling governments that it is competent enough to be an authentic voice of the poor and the marginalized. As a component or sector of the larger society, along with other sectors such as the civil society formations, political parties, the private sector and labour unions, religious groups have the potential to be part of the formulation and execution of development policies. As noted in Chapter 4, a factor that militates against developmental policies in Nigeria is the exclusion of the poor and those who can significantly represent the poor in the process of policy formulation and execution.

In spite of the challenges facing religious formations to become a critical part of the development process in Nigeria, some churches, ecumenical groups and Islamic-based organizations have continued to work towards being relevant (Taylor 2011:3-21). Such organizations include the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church, the Baptist Church and ecumenical groups such as the CAN and the Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN). It is important to note that the SDA Church and any of its agencies are absent from this particular forum. The significance of the foregoing for this thesis is the fact that other Christian or religious groups have demonstrated their potential and ability to establish religious formations which can elevate the lives of the poor and the marginalized and make a significant impact on these communities. Therefore the SDA Church needs to complement these efforts to make it more effective for the good of the nation.

The SDA Church is rather only known for charity-based activities, and relief and development activities through its Adventist Health Services (AHS), ADRA, its educational institutions and personal welfare services at the local church level. These are laudable efforts but with very limited outcomes relative to the developmental deficiencies of the country. Nigeria as a country can benefit from the energy and mobilization capacity of its religious population if they work in concert to address the challenge of poverty where it matters, i.e. the political structures and administration of the country. The SDA Church's non-ecumenical stance does not need to inhibit collaborative opportunities for the purpose of national development.

All the SDA Church documents surveyed do not foreclose collaboration with other Christian organizations. In fact, it encourages collaboration when guidelines for such interactions are followed (Dabrowski 2010:251). The SDA Church should therefore actively seek means for such collaborations. These active collaborations are currently almost non-existent in Nigeria. The work of the gospel is never complete without speaking on behalf of the poor and the marginalized, and adopting the most effective approach available. While charity helps, social justice accomplishes more. Charity addresses mostly the symptoms of poverty but fails to address the root cause of privation. This thesis is geared towards making the SDA Church see advocacy and the pursuit of social justice as a legitimate aspect of its mission. It also seeks to promote the ending of poverty and privation in Nigeria.

5.9   Conclusion

This section gives a summary of the empirical work in a serial manner such that the essence can be captured in a snapshot fashion. The main issues discovered are thus highlighted.

a. SDAs have a clear and well-defined understanding of their mission. That is to propagate the message of the Second Advent of Jesus Christ to the world and also tell the world about the need to abide by the biblical Sabbath (seventh-day) observance. Their mission is anchored on Revelation 14:6-12, which is popularly called "the Three Angels' Message".

b. Although the SDA Church has made efforts in fulfilling its mission, it has not done well enough. Many people in Nigeria have therefore not heard, and do not know about, their message. The Church still has a lot to do to fulfil its mission.

c. SDAs believe that their Church should strive to impact Nigeria socio-economically. The Church has done a lot in that sphere but has done less than its potential. SDAs insist that the ultimate end of its efforts in this regard is evangelization.

d. The SDA Church can collaborate with other religions (other than Christianity) for the purpose of national development. But this should be done with caution, such that the principles and ideals of the Church are not compromised. In addition, the ultimate aim of collaborating with other religions, which is evangelization, must be placed in focus.

e. The SDA Church can collaborate with other denominations (ecumenical groups), not on theological issues, but solely on community development projects. The SDA Church is not part of CAN, although it is part of the Bible Society of Nigeria (BSN). The Church should be careful that its mission is not compromised in its relationships with other denominations.

f. SDAs feel the Church can collaborate with secular organizations for the purpose of national development. The objectives, goals and values of the collaboration must be clearly set. The relationship must not embarrass the Church in any way. Its conscience and mission must not be inhibited by the collaboration.

g. Members of the public believe that religion has not made a significant impact in realizing the socio-economic and political aspirations of the people of Nigeria.

h. Members of the public believe religion has the potential to serve as a catalyst in the development of Nigeria.

i. Members of the Nigerian public see charitable activities and the impartation of moral values as the main developmental responsibilities of religion.

j. Members of the public know very little about the SDA Church.

k. Members of the public do not know the mission of the SDA Church and know little about its impact on the development of Nigeria.

l. Although members of the Nigerian public were not asked what they thought about religious organizations being advocates for the marginalized or pursuing social justice as a means of contributing to national development, none of the interviewed persons recommended such courses of action. This suggests ordinary people may not be aware of the potential involvement of religious agencies in social justice. This may be due to limited information in that regard or they may feel faith-based organizations are not supposed to get involved in such activities.

Becoming a catalyst for transformational development: Concluding perspectives on the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its mission in democratic Nigeria

6.1 Introduction

This thesis aims at underscoring the need for the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in Nigeria to expand its missionary horizon to include being an agent of transformational development in Nigeria. It inquired into how the SDA Church's missionary activities can be holistic, contemporary and relevant, not just to individuals but to Nigerian society as a whole, especially as it struggles for sustainable development. The thesis draws attention to the idea that mission could be extended beyond the spiritual aspirations of individuals and the conversion of individuals into the SDA Church community. The point this thesis makes is that the SDA Church could be relevant in the socio-economic development of the country, in a structural and transformational manner and not as a mere palliative. In spite of the fact that the SDA Church is a moral agent committed to the proclamation of the gospel of Christ, it has not utilized its potential, as a divine agent of transformation, in addressing the moral decadence of the nation; this moral decadence has been severally adjudged as the grounds for the country's underdeveloped condition.

In order to gain insight into this lacuna in the SDA missionary activity, it was important to become more knowledgeable about the identity of the SDA Church, its mission as a global entity and how it operates in Nigeria. In addition, its beliefs, theology, how it transmits its belief, its relationship with other religions, other Christian churches and the state, and how its theological orientation affects its involvement in socio-economic development of the people were also studied, as set out in the objectives of study.

The following vital research questions were considered: Who are the Seventh-day Adventists, both in the international and Nigerian context? What is the theological undercurrent of the SDA Church's missiological orientation? What are the main features of the SDA missiological orientation? What is the SDA Church's theological position on ecumenism and political

engagement, and why is this church a-political and non-ecumenical? To what extent does this church collaborate with other religious organizations on social issues? How is the SDA Church in Nigeria currently socially engaged in addressing the poverty situation? What theological content would promote an orientation towards development? How and why does the SDA Church's missiological orientation culminate in an a-political and limited social involvement? What environmental or societal paradigm exists in Nigeria about the role of religious organizations in national development, and how has such a paradigm compromised the SDA Church's potential for social change? How can this church overcome these deficiencies, be more socially engaged and fulfil its role in transformational development? These issues were addressed in various chapters and sections in the thesis. In the first chapter the background to the study, the research methodology (qualitative) and design were delineated to gain an in-depth appreciation of the behaviour of the SDA Church in relation to transformational development of Nigeria.

In the second chapter, the historical context was given of the political development of Nigeria. This chapter provided the perspective for the development struggle of the country. It painted a picture of the ethnic diversity from which emerged the nation of Nigeria. The chapter also explained how religion features in the identity of the ethnic compositions of the country. The discussion pointed out that the British colonial machinery created structural political injustice which has continued to plague the country's developmental aspirations, even throughout the post-colonial era. The perceived injustice led to agitations, coup d'états, civil war, religious unrests, cravings for state creations and continuous clamour for socio-economic and political restructuring. Unfortunately, the restructuring and creation of states did not solve national instabilities, neither did it translate into the expected sustainable development of Nigeria.

The third chapter placed the attitude of the SDA Church to transformational development in Nigeria in its historical context. The chapter argued that this denomination's work in Nigeria was a product of its global missionary paradigm. Thus it was pointed out that the establishment of the SDA Church in Nigeria was deeply influenced by the objectives of the early American SDA missionaries. The missionaries themselves were influenced by the spiritual fervency and the Great Awakening milieu of the mid-nineteenth century, which laid supreme emphasis on eschatology and the Second Advent. As a result, in the process of fulfilling its perceived mission of preparing the world for the Second Advent, the SDA Church in Nigeria was also

engaged in human and social development through its medical and educational missionary work. In this respect this church's relief and development activities through its agency, the Adventist Relief and Development Agency (ADRA), personified the denomination's capacity for pragmatic impact on the society. Although the priority of the SDA Church in Nigeria was to prepare people for the Second Advent, its holistic missionary work complemented the national developmental aspiration of the country to some extent.

The fourth chapter highlighted the development efforts of Nigeria from independence to the democratic dispensation. The discussion revealed how Nigeria was not without strategic plans for its development. Its national development plans, the rolling plans, the World Bank-supported Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and other developmental policies followed the traditional micro-economic paradigm. Against this backdrop the chapter proceeded to advocate a more holistic approach to development which would measure and pursue development beyond parameters that address only physical and financial well-being. The chapter as such proposed a transformational development approach and made the point that the mission of the Christian church is indissolubly linked to the ideal of sustainable and transformational development. According to the chapter the absence of morality and spirituality in government policies for development has been responsible for the failures witnessed so far. Addressing these failures the chapter ended by encouraging the SDA Church to collaborate with ecumenical groups to facilitate the discourse in providing a transformational development strategy for Nigeria.

The fifth and penultimate chapter discussed the findings of the empirical study that was conducted as part of this thesis. The empirical study dealt with the perceptions and attitudes of Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) to mission, ecumenism, social justice and the socio-economic development of Nigeria. The chapter also revealed what non-SDA members of the Nigerian public thought of the SDA in relation to national development. It revealed that SDAs are highly focused on the issue of the Second Advent. SDAs have little hope in the political system, but believed rather that an eternal solution is only available at the Second Advent. The empirical study revealed that SDAs have very limited relationship with other denominations. In spite of the conservative attitude of the SDA Church to ecumenical, social and political issues, the study did show there is potential for collaborations with government, ecumenical groups and other sectors of the national life for the purpose of socioeconomic development of the country. It

showed that many SDAs are willing to get involved in governance. Some of them also want their church to be more vocal about the state of their country, Nigeria.

This final chapter, on the basis of the preceding chapters, will now by way of conclusion seek to bring some of the viewpoints of this study together in making certain recommendations to the SDA Church in Nigeria that could be pertinent to the developmental aspirations of the country.

6.2   SDA theology and transformational development

Komi A. Hiagbe (2015:164-165) saliently argues that religion serves as the bedrock and a spring upon and out of which life is understood and lived. Religion has such a pervasive influence on individuals and communities. Religion therefore, either inadvertently or otherwise, affects our socioeconomic realities. It means religious belief affects how the believers perceive justice, prosperity and wellbeing. It shapes the appropriateness of the response to injustice, poverty and general environmental degradation. Hiagbe here substantiates his assertions with historical evidence, such as the effect of the religious revitalization and rebirth in China. Hiagbe proposes a "deconstructing and reconstruction of indigenous epistemologies" to the extent that holistic prosperity can be a reality in poverty-stricken societies. This principle ought to be applied in the Nigerian context by the SDA Church. A body of religious beliefs held by a people can enrich their quality of life; conversely, certain interpretations of the metaphysical can hinder the transformational development aspirations of a people. This thesis therefore proposes new ways of understanding and applying certain SDA theologies, as the old ways may have limited followers' engagement in the socioeconomic development of Nigeria and have limited the effectiveness of their mission there. The new ways must remain faithful to SDA tenets while becoming applicable to the contemporary socioeconomic milieu.

6.2.1   Re-thinking Sabbath theology for transformational development

As established in paragraph 6.2 above, there is a relationship between religion and development, between how people believe or practise their religion and their socio-economic wellbeing. Re-thinking theology in this context proposes to enlarge or widen the focus and the application of how a community of faith applies its understanding of Scripture on how God relates to humanity and the world and how the community of faith should in turn relate to the

world. This section of the concluding discussion brings to light how the SDA Church can intentionally and deliberately use its theology to promote transformational development. In the process it also highlights some of the SDA doctrines that have the potential to serve as instruments for Nigeria's transformational development.

The doctrine of the Sabbath is of great importance to SDAs. It is one of the fundamental beliefs of this denomination. In the denomination's publications of its beliefs, the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference (2005:281-282) explains the Sabbath as part of the unchangeable law of God, an integral part of the Ten Commandments. The day is the day of rest, a day of worship and a day for holy service. It is a token of God's personal relationship with humans. The Sabbath is therefore a focal point in the worship of the Creator God. It is the foundation of true worship of the Creator (God) as distinguished from creatures.

SDAs teach that God rested on the seventh day, not because God was tired but so that God's rest on the Sabbath in the creation account (Genesis 2:2) serves as a model for humans to follow eternally. The denomination believes that it is significant that the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it for the use of humans. In the wilderness, as Israel journeyed to Canaan, God demonstrated the holiness inherent in the Sabbath by not providing manna on the Sabbath day (Exodus 16:21-26). The sanctity of the Sabbath was reemphasized when God included it in the Decalogue given to Israel at Sinai (Exodus 20) during its wanderings. According to SDAs, the validity of the Sabbath is eternal. From the Old Testament Judaism to the apostolic era of the New Testament, the Sabbath commandment remains sacrosanct (Seventh-day Adventist General Conference 2005:282-286).

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Catholic Church, the first Church, wrongfully transferred the solemnity of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday (Ellen White 1939: 386-387). The SDA Church believes that this unbiblical change in the day of worship has prophetic[28] implications. SDAs, citing Isaiah 56 and 58, believe that the truth about the biblical Sabbath shall however be restored. The declaration of the apocalyptic message of Revelation 14:6-12 is fulfilled by the SDA Church, an important part of which is the call to true and biblical Sabbath observance (Seventh-day Adventist Church General Conference 2005: 294-295).

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[28] Biblical or divine prediction of future events.

This section of the thesis proposes an expansion of the message of this doctrine, which is very important to SDAs, beyond the literal application of the Sabbath day. It seeks to use a deeper and wider scope of the Sabbath concept to address the need for transformational development of human life in Nigeria. While SDAs fulfil their perceived mandate on the issue of keeping the Sabbath day, it can maximize the potential capacity in the Sabbath ordinance to address national challenges of injustice, impoverishment, environmental degradation/abuse, skewed and unjust distribution of resources and to conflicts that ravage the country. The publication of Michael Cafferky of Sothern Adventist University, Texas gives insight into how the Sabbath law has great significance for the transformational development of the human race, which I in turn want to apply to the Nigerian situation.

Cafferky (2015:35-46) for example expands the concept of the Sabbath beyond the traditional day of rest. The Sabbath is brought in alignment with the United Nations' (UN) vision for sustainable development of the world (Cafferky 2015:35). Cafferky here links the Sabbath espoused in the sabbatical rest of agricultural land to other issues critical to development, such as redistribution of factors germane to prosperity, economic equity and justice. The Sabbath also conveys an important paradigm for God's love to humanity, the importance of care for the environment and the experience of *shalom* (Cafferky 2015:35-36).

Other concepts elucidated by Cafferky (2015:36-38) include Sabbath as rest. Physical rest is required after a period of work to energize for future work and ministry. This rest has become a metaphor for responsible deployment of the earth's resources in ways that will be helpful for the present while having the future in full consideration. He also presents God as caring for the environment and giving humans the responsibility to care for it. This is the work of humans. Rest and work are intertwined and critical for the flourishment of both humans and the environment. The Sabbath as a concept demolishes the false partitioning of humans' existence into body/soul and that which separate humanity from its environment. Humanity, animal life, plant life and the entire environment are all connected in an interdependent relationship. The soul is connected to the body. In the same way, humans are also connected to the environment. He argues further that when the earth is abused, it is an attack on God, the Creator. God is therefore also seen as an important part in the multi-directional relationships that bring true *shalom*.

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Cafferky (2015:37-38) continues to argue on the significance of the Sabbath as a metaphor for transformational development by highlighting the covenant aspect of the holy day. God is committed to humans as demonstrated by seeking fellowship with humankind on the Sabbath. The covenant of love with humans becomes a model for how humans are to relate to each other. The Sabbath promotes the sense of community rather than individuality. The sabbatical rest applied to the land and debt cancellation are also models for economic justice and the showing of mercy. These perspectives are not emphasized in the communications of SDAs to the world.

SDAs teach that the biblical Sabbath day is Saturday and that keeping Sunday and other violations of the holy day is a deviation from God's will for humanity. The concept of the Sabbath day however can have a deeper meaning, especially for the transformational development of Nigeria The significance of Cafferky's article to this thesis is that the Sabbath doctrine is central to SDAs' mission. The sustainable development application by Cafferky models the kind of theological re-thinking being proposed in this thesis.

6.2.2   *Re-thinking advocacy for transformational development*

According to Rebecca Mbuya-Brown and Laston Mteka (2015:11) advocacy involves taking deliberately a course of action aimed at producing certain policies and deploying resources in a certain manner. It does this by strategically swaying those responsible for making such policies. Mbuya-Brown and Mteka in this publication promoted advocacy for population control through family planning in Malawi. The project involved various religious organizations, including the SDA Church. The significance of Mbuya-Brown and Mteka's work to this thesis is that SDAs at different times have been involved in advocacy initiatives for sustainable development. SDAs' advocacy work extends to other spheres of life and is prominent in their pursuit of the separation of church and state affairs.

SDAs are strong advocates of religious liberty. Through its department called Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, the General Conference of the SDA Church has advocated the religious liberty of people to various political leaders of different countries, as well as to religious and other organizations of international stature. The SDA Church believes that humans should respond to the issue of faith according to the dictate of their conscience. No organization or person should dictate to people what to believe, or not believe, what to worship or not to worship. An anonymous writer (1997:1) underscores the effort and willingness of the SDA

Church to guard the right of people to follow their faith by advocating this even to members of Parliament, Senate, Congress and the President, as well as to judiciary or legislative agencies of the government.

The SDA Church through its Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) department is committed to pursuing the freedom of individuals and that of the SDA Church itself to express personal convictions on issues of religion. It seeks to ensure that the state and any political power are totally separated from the functions of religious entities. The SDA Church is willing to use judicial processes, if needed, to guarantee religious freedom (see example in 6.2.3 of this chapter).

This thesis argues that if the SDA Church as a world-wide organization could go to the highest authorities in governments or international bodies to ensure people's freedom to associate with any religion according to the dictate of their conscience (British Union Conference of SDA Church 2008:41-42), then it could also engage advocacy to ensure good governance or any other factor that will engender development in Nigeria. But the denomination has not been involved in this vital social task. SDAs need to expand their advocacy activities beyond the protection of the freedom of religious affiliation and expression of conscience to other areas of socio-economic importance. As we have noted in Chapter 4 of this thesis (4.5), transformational development is a holistic paradigm to development. The implication is that although freedom of religion is critical to development, it is not the only area that is begging for the attention of faith groups such as the SDA Church. The responsibility to tend and care for the world was given to the first pair of the human race, according to Genesis 26-28. SDAs believe life is sacred and we have a moral duty to preserve life (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2005:86). The poor management and irresponsible attitude to both human life and the environment have continued to mar the image of God in humans, especially in Nigeria. The SDA Church should therefore advocate and be the voice for those who have been dis-empowered to speak for themselves, just like it has done through its department, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, which advocates religious freedom.

6.2.3 *Re-thinking ecumenism for transformational development*

Eric Syme (1973:42-44) offers perspectives on how SDAs think about ecumenism and the relationship between church and state. The SDA Church was founded in the United States. The

theological foundations of the SDA Church were also influenced by the historical events of this denomination. Certain events in history made early SDAs react in certain theological fashion. Some of the events were the mass immigration of individuals who engaged in activities most Sunday churches considered inappropriate. This made the ecumenical National Reformers' Association, an interdenominational organization, in 1863 to advocate constitutional reforms which would have a bearing on the religious life of the people. It particularly tried to promulgate the national Sunday Bill aimed at criminalizing the unholy use of Sundays. Early SDAs resisted such a law that could adversely affect minorities and violate their right to freedom of religion, for example those who regard Saturday as the Sabbath day. Although SDAs were initially successful in resisting the law, a few years down the line some SDAs were actually jailed for not treating Sunday as a holy day by Arkansas courts. Adventists became casualties of the state interfering in religious matters (Syme 1973:43-45).

Syme (1973:42-43) also made reference to how the American Civil War put to test very important SDA beliefs. The observance of Saturday Sabbath and pacifism had to be negotiated by SDAs who enlisted. The demand of the government was going to bear adversely on their faith. But eventually, SDAs in the military could observe their Saturday Sabbath and also perform other non-combatant roles in the military.

These historical events in the United States continue to shape SDAs' thinking on their relationship with government and with other religious organizations. Such experiences cause the SDA Church to be reluctant and averse to forging relationships with governments and ecumenical groups; it would not want any group of people, especially minorities including itself, to be adversely impacted by policies or laws based on agreements between interdenominational groups or with government.

This thesis is not aimed to raise objections to the separation of church and state as canvassed by the SDA Church. The aim of this section is also not to discount the potential difficulties that may arise in state and church relationships or in ecumenism. It rather aims at challenging SDAs to re-think on how to strategically, deliberately and actively work with other faith groups to achieve common transformational development goals of Nigeria. For example, Syme (1973:44-45) records how the SDA Church in California formed an alliance with a secular organization, League of Freedom, which Syme noted represented businesses that SDAs would ordinarily never associate with because they were dealers in alcoholic beverages. The alliance

afforded the SDA Church the chance to defeat other powerful lobbyists such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Prohibition Party and others who were trying to get the national Sunday bill become legislated. In the same vein, the SDA Church in Nigeria should actively seek alliances, associations and partnerships with other faith groups and ecumenical organizations in order to lobby and advocate policies that will facilitate transformational development of the country. A transformed Nigeria would be a fulfilment of the missionary God who desires that God's image be restored in the life of Nigerians.

6.2.4   Re-thinking the eschatology toward transformational development

Theology, no doubt, affects how a (faith) community will relate and engage in the world. Poor conceptualization of eschatology can cripple people to inaction and perpetuate poverty, lack of development and injustice. As noted in Chapter 5 of this thesis, SDAs take the issue of the Second Advent seriously. They believe Christ will literally return soon to the world. This is the climax of SDA eschatology. The Second Coming of Christ will restore humanity and the environment to the original ideal. The continued belief in and expectation of the Second Advent supremely guide and shape SDAs' responses to the material world. Less importance is placed on the physical, socio-economic or political structures of this world in favour of the anticipated future manifestation of the kingdom of God.

Collium Banda (2016:42) canvasses for a theology of the historicity of God, which compels the Zimbabwean church to embrace eschatology in a way that empowers it to engage in this world for the purpose of transforming the world. The church is not to have a vision that causes its members to flee the world or insulate themselves from the world, but to have such a paradigm that makes the church fully involved in it so that the world can be transformed. This type of vision that engages the world very much applies to the SDAs who have the Second Coming at the core of their thought. While this thesis does not attempt to diminish the importance placed on the imminent Second Advent theology, it desires to highlight the fact that a faith community can become indifferent and apathetic towards current human challenges it is called to address (Matthew 5:13-14). As SDAs' missionary activities are consciously directed at making people live in preparation for the *Parousia* (the Second Coming of Christ), they should simultaneously actively propel people to think of how to develop the community they live in.

6.2.5 Re-thinking evangelism towards transformational development

Evangelism in the SDA Church is central to its missionary activities. SDAs vigorously pursue broadcasting the message of the love of God to humanity.

SDAs also use other avenues such as medical missionary, educational institutions and other SDA Church institutions to propagate the gospel. This thesis however argues for the expansion of its evangelism paradigm beyond the traditional outlook. It proposes that the SDA Church becomes more vocal in broadcasting the good news in national development thoughts. It should be involved in creating an environment conducive to policies that will guarantee improvement in healthcare, education, national security and other things that will restore the image of God in citizens of Nigeria. The denomination must be aware of the potential of resistance against its entrance into the development discourse by people who do not think it is the traditional domain of the church to so do. This resistance will be both internal and external, from those who limit the concept of evangelism to evangelization.

Fed Ranches (2004:1-4) notes the effect of the ancient Greek thought where an ontological dichotomy of the flesh and spirit prevailed. In this arrangement, the flesh is seen as inferior to the spirit. The infiltration of this outlook into the Christian thought makes the pursuit of the material well-being of humanity as something subjacent or as something negative. Such a worldview demands that humans put focus on the more spiritual future, which translates into an eschatological awareness that paralyzes engagement in the present world.

6.3 Conclusion

The SDA Church in Nigeria has a critical role to play in the transformational development of the country. Although Nigeria has made efforts through its developmental policies to tackle poverty, insecurity and environmental degradation, its policies have not yielded the desired results. The main causative factor for the failure of development policies by successive Nigerian government administrations is the moral challenge of corruption. Christian churches and faith-based organizations are essentially moral agencies positioned to address the moral challenges of the nation.

The numerical increase in ecclesiastical organizations such as the SDA Church should not be the sole criterion for measuring missiological success. It should not be the main objective of

SDAs. Numerical growth is likely to happen when it fulfils the biblical mandate of being salt and light of its community (Matthew 5:13-14). The influence SDAs bring to bear on the community is an indication of growth. The SDA Church and its congregations should therefore use its influence and advocate for good governance. This thesis notes the fact that the SDA Church in Nigeria has commendably invested large amounts of resources in charitable activities through its various organizations and ministry groups, such as the Adventist Relief and Development Agency (ADRA), Adventist Health Services (AHS), Adventist Men's Organization (AMO), Adventist Women Ministry (AWM), Adventist Youth Ministry (AYM) and other units of the denomination. However, the most effective approach should have a structural impact on the country as outcome. The SDA Church therefore has to pursue social justice and strong advocacy. The denomination needs to engage in the political process, not as a partisan group but through issuing releases and making public comments on the state of the country.

Although the SDA Church has concerns about ecumenical affiliations and seeks to ensure that religious liberty is guaranteed, it should seek ways of cooperating with ecumenical organizations with the view of pursuing national development objectives. The political sphere can be better influenced and made more accountable and responsible for governance when challenged by a united voice of the religious class.

Transformational development approaches the issue of development in a holistic manner, beyond micro-economic indices. The spiritual capital of the community is critical in its overall development. The SDA Church has the responsibility to its congregants, to society and the entire nation to continually shape their minds towards uprightness, contentment and other virtues that will be helpful in creating a society positioned for growth and development. The greatest asset of the religious class, including the SDA Church, is its influence.

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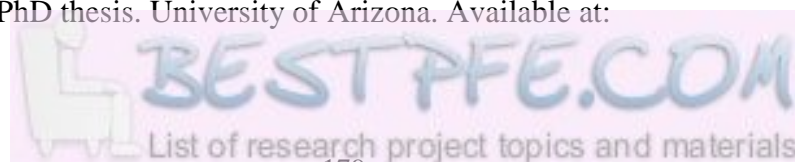
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ANNEXURE A

Letter of information for participants' consent to be a research participant

Dear Participant,

I, Olugbenga Efuntade, a doctoral student of the University of South Africa, Department of Missiology, am carrying out a study on Church and transformational development: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its missiological orientation in democratic Nigeria.

You are being requested to be interviewed for the purpose of my study. You are at liberty to determine the convenient time and location where this interview would be done. The duration of the interview is estimated to be around 20 to 30 minutes. Kindly note that you will not be paid or given any other form of compensation for participating in the research.

In addition, kindly know that your involvement in this study is voluntary, and you are therefore at liberty not to be involved if you do not want to. Also, if you decide to be involved in the interview, you may refuse to answer any questions you may not want to answer, even without giving any reasons for not wanting to answer. You may also decide to withdraw from this research at any stage. Your participation in this research is regarded as confidential. Your identity will only be revealed if you grant me the permission to do so.

Kindly note that if you agree to be interviewed, I would want to do an audio recording of our conversation. This will be in addition to making notes when necessary. However, you may prefer to have only a discussion with me, without being recorded. Please indicate your preference in the space provided.

I hope to publish our findings on this research project in my thesis, academic journals and books, but I will not publish information that you have indicated as confidential. I will be glad to share any of the publications with you if you wish to read it.

Yours sincerely

Olugbenga Efuntade

ANNEXURE B

Statement of consent

I have read the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and they have been answered to my satisfaction.

Please indicate your choice:

I voluntarily agree to take part in the research: Yes   No

The research interview may be audio recorded: Yes   No

I give consent that sections of the interview may be published, provided that the information is not linked to my real name: Yes   No

Signature of participant …………………………..

Date…………………………..

Signature of interviewer …………………………..

Date…………………………..

THANK YOU FOR ACCEPTING TO PARTICIPATE

ANNEXURE C

Interview questions for lay members of the SDA Church

A. Specific questions about SDA Church mission:

1. Who are SDAs?

2. What is the mission of the SDA Church in Nigeria?

3. How well has the Church done in fulfilling this mission in Nigeria?

B. Specific questions about SDA Church and national development:

1. In what ways has the Church impacted on Nigeria as a country?

2. Does the Church desire to impact Nigeria's socio-economic landscape?

3. What arms of the SDA Church are saddled with making socio-economic impacts?

4. What are the Biblical injunctions that serve as basis for SDA's attitude to national development?

5. Should the Church be interested in governance and development, and what are its roles to this end?

6. Is there any point of convergence between Church mission and national development?

7. Does the SDA Church in Nigeria issue official statements on the state of the Nation?

8. Would the SDA Church consider sponsoring a bill that will impact on national development either solely or in collaboration with other denomination(s)?

9. Does the SDA Church issue communiqués to the public on issues relating to the nation?

C. Specific questions about the SDA Church and relations with other religions, denominations and ecumenical groups:

10. What is the Nigerian SDA Church's relationship with other religions (Islam, African Traditional Religion, etc.)? Are there any points of interface, especially for national development? Would you support such relationships and interface?

11. What is the relationship of the SDAs with other Christian denominations and what do you think the relationship should be like?

12. What is the position of the SDA Church in Nigeria on ecumenism? Are there points of interface for the purpose of national development? Would you recommend SDA Church should be in ecumenical relationships?

13. Would the SDA Church collaborate with non-faith-based organization for the purpose of national development, do you support such collaborations?

ANNEXURE D

Questions for pastors of SDA Church

A. Specific questions about SDA Church mission

1. Who are SDAs and what is their mission in Nigeria?

2. How well has the Church done in fulfilling this mission in Nigeria?

B. Specific questions about SDA Church, national development and governance

3. Should SDA Church desire to impact Nigeria's socio-economic landscape?

4. What are the Biblical injunctions that serve as basis for SDA's attitude to national development?

5. Should the Church be interested in governance and national development? What are its roles to this end?

C. Specific questions about SDA Church and relations with other religions, denominations and ecumenical groups

6. What is the Nigerian SDA Church's relationship with other religions (Islam, African Traditional Religion, etc.)? Are there any points of interface, especially for national development?

7. Can a SDA pastor collaborate with other denominations on projects and activities for the purpose of national development?

8. Can an SDA pastor collaborate with non-faith-based organization for the purpose of national development?

ANNEXURE E

Interview questions for the leaders of the Adventist Men's Organization

A.   Specific questions about SDA Church mission

1.   What is the mission of the SDA Church and how does AMO help fulfil that?

B.   Specific questions about SDA Church and national development

2.   What is the role of AMO as an Adventist organization in national development?

3.   What specific projects geared towards socio-economic development or nation building has AMO executed?

4.   Would AMO partner with government agencies or non-faith-based organization for the purpose of socio-economic development?

C.   Specific questions about SDA Church and relations with government, other religions and denominations

5.   Should AMO collaborate with organizations in other denominations and with other religions for the purpose of national development?

ANNEXURE F

Questions to leaders of the Adventist Women's Ministry

A. Specific questions about SDA Church mission

1. What is the mission of the SDA Church and how does AWM help fulfil that?

B. Specific questions about SDA Church and national development

2. What is the role of AWM as a women's Adventist organization in national development?

3. What specific projects geared towards socio-economic development or nation building has AWM executed?

4. Would AWM partner with government agencies or non-faith-based organizations for the purpose of socio-economic development?

C. Specific questions about SDA Church and its relations with other religions, denominations or ecumenical groups

5. Would AWM collaborate with other denominations or religions for the purpose of national development?

6. Would AWM collaborate with non-faith-based organizations for the purpose of national development?

D. Specific questions about SDA Church mission

7. What is the mission of the SDA Church and how does AWM help fulfil that?

E. Specific questions about SDA Church and national development

8. What is the role of AWM as a women's Adventist organization in national development?

9. What specific projects geared towards socio-economic development or nation building has AWM executed?

10. Would AWM partner with government agencies or non-faith-based organizations for the purpose of socio-economic development?

F. Specific questions about SDA Church and its relations with other religions, denominations or ecumenical groups

11. Would AWM collaborate with other denominations or religions for the purpose of national development?

12. Would AWM collaborate with non-faith-based organizations for the purpose of national development?

ANNEXURE G

Questions for the leader of the Adventist Youth Ministry (AYM)

A. Specific questions about SDA Church mission

1. What is the mission of the SDA Church and how does AYM help fulfil that?

B. Specific questions about SDA Church and national development

2. What is the role of AYM in national development?

3. Does the AYM encourage young people to be involved in national development?

4. Is the subject of national socio-economic development, governance and nation building considered as appropriate for discussion in the AYM?

5. What specific projects geared towards socio-economic development or nation building has AYM executed?

C. Specific questions about SDA Church and its relations with other religions, denominations or ecumenical groups

6. Would AYM collaborate or have conversations with other denominations or religions for the purpose of national development?

7. Would AYM collaborate with non-faith-based organizations for the purpose of having conversations on national development?

ANNEXURE H

Questions for the President of a regional administrative unit of the SDA Church
(Western Nigerian Union Conference)

A. Specific questions about SDA Church mission

1. Who are SDAs?

2. What is the mission of the SDA Church in Nigeria?

3. How well has the Church done in fulfilling this mission in Nigeria?

B. Specific questions about SDA Church and national development

4. In what ways has the Church impacted on Nigeria as a country?

5. Does the Church desire to impact Nigeria's socio-economic landscape?

6. What arms of the SDA Church are saddled with making socio-economic impacts?

7. What are the Biblical injunctions that serve as basis for SDAs' attitude to national development?

8. Should the Church be interested in governance and development? What are the roles of the Church to this end?

9. Is there any point of convergence between Church mission and national development?

10. Does the SDA Church in Nigeria issue official statements on the state of the Nation?

11. Would the SDA Church consider sponsoring a bill that will impact on national development either solely or in collaboration with other denomination(s)?

12. Does the SDA Church issue communiqués to the public on issues relating to the nation?

C. **Specific questions about SDA Church and relations with other religions, denominations and ecumenical groups**

13. What is the Nigerian SDA Church's relationship with other religions (Islam, African Traditional Religion, etc.)? Are there any points of interface, especially for national development?

14. What is the relationship of the SDAs with other Christian denominations?

15. What is the position of the SDA Church in Nigeria on ecumenism? Are there points of interface for the purpose of national development?

16. Would the SDA Church collaborate with non -faith-based organization for the purpose of national development?

Questions for non-SDA members of Nigerian public

A. Specific questions on what the public thinks of religious organizations and national development

1. Do you think religious organizations have a role to play in national development?

2. Do you think religious organizations have contributed positively to the development of Nigeria?

3. Do you think religious organizations have a role to play in the political development of Nigeria?

4. What specific roles can religious organizations play in the political development of Nigeria?

B. Specific questions on the perspectives of the public on the SDA Church

5. Do you know the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church?

6. What do you know about the mission of the SDA Church?

C. Specific questions on the public's perceptions of the contribution of the SDA Church to national development

7. What contributions have SDAs made to the development of Nigeria?

8. What specific projects or institutions have the SDAs executed that contributes to the development of Nigeria?

9. What do you think the SDA Church can do to enhance developmental efforts by the government of Nigeria?

ANNEXURE J

Letter of supervisor

12 November 2015

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

As supervisor of the doctoral research project of Mr. Olugbenga Efuntade (student number 55736653), I hereby affirm that he is a bona fide postgraduate student of the University of South Africa doing his study in the field of missiology on the topic: *Church and transformational development: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its missiological orientation in democratic Nigeria.*

I commend him to you, with the request you assist him in pursuing this important research topic. His address is Chaplaincy Unit, Adeleke University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. He can also be contacted at 08033476310 or pastorgbengaefuntade@yahoo.com.

If you have any question about this research project, you are welcome to contact me at the department address below or by telephone +27 (0)12 429 4836 or 083 6078153. My email address is igswart@uwc.ac.za

Yours faithfully

Ignatius Swart

Professor with the Focus on Research
Research Institute for Theology and Religion
University of South Africa
Tel: 012 429 4836; 0836078153
swarti1@unisa.ac.za

ANNEXURE K

Letter from Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Nigeria

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NIGERIA

Western Nigeria Union Conference

Office of the Executive Secretary

#524, Ikorodu Road, Maryland,
P. O. Box 207, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
Tel: +234-806 614 9868
+234-807 819 3501

July 12, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I write to introduce Olugbenga Efuntade to you. He is a Pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Western Nigeria Union Conference. He is currently serving as the head of the Spiritual Life Department at Adeleke University, Ede, Osun State of Nigeria.

Pastor Olugbenga Efuntade is currently carrying out a research for his doctoral program at the University of South Africa.

Kindly allow him to interview you or assist him towards achieving his research purposes.

Thanks.

Yours sincerely,

[Stamp: SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH — EXECUTIVE SECRETARY — Date 12/7/16 — Western Nigeria Union Conf.]

Pastor Ezekiel A. Adeleye, DMin