

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: TOWARDS ENHANCING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN
NORTH-EAST NIGERIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

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Date Completed: October 2013

Communication is the engine oil that keeps relationships going. It is one of the special gifts that God gave to mankind from the very beginning. God Himself communicated first with the other divine Beings of the God head as recorded by Moses in the very first book of the Bible (Gen 1: 26). Mankind too has engaged in this art right from time immemorial but the problem has been that most of what is communicated fall short of effective communication which in turn gives rise to misunderstanding, distrust and crisis.

Effective Communication which will help the smooth running of the church machinery is not taken seriously and result has been some members complaining that they are not usually carried along by the leaders at the helm of affairs in North-East Nigeria Conference of SDA Church.

The researcher in an attempt to help improve communication, collected information using questionnaire and personal interaction from pastors and randomly

selected church members across the Conference. The profile of respondents include civil servants, business people, farmers, students applicants of various ages at the range of between 20 (at least) and 60 (at most).

The analysis of the data showed that only 27% members have access to cell phone number of their leaders and only 47% rate flow of information as good. For the purpose of raising this percentage to 75% in 2012, the writer developed a program on improving communication and ran it for three days in each of the two centers in the Conference.

After the successful implementation of the program, the evaluation at the end of 2012 showed an increase from 47% before the program to 80% after the program implementation. The researcher, who is a pastor in North-East Nigeria Conference, advised the conference leaders among other things to interact more with the field Generals (pastors), ensure Communication Director keep his team in the Churches abreast of issues and events before they happen, and the Conference to open a website. In addition, Lay Leaders in the field were encouraged to exchange phone numbers and e mail addresses with conference leaders, and to encourage computer literacy. The website project has started and is expected be in operation in a short time. With all these in place, leaders can now communicate with members freely and vice versa.

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ADVENTIST CHURCH

A project
Presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by
Onuwah David Ode

November 2013

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DEDICATION

This work is humbly dedicated to God Almighty for giving me grace to achieve this modest educational height, to Him is glory forever more. This work is also dedicated to my lovely wife, Shepherdess Abigail David Onuwah for her loving and ardent support, my late mother, Jenny Onuwah Adikpe for her encouragement and loving care, and my children, Ebenezer, Vivian, Randell and Rejoice, for their support and prayers that saw me through the four years of study.

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LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

BA	Bachelor of Arts Degree
FLSC	First School Leaving Certificate
DMin	Doctor of Ministry
HND	Higher National Diploma
NCE	National Certificate in Education
NENC	North-East Nigeria Conference
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
OND	Ordinary National Diploma
SMS	Short Message Service (Used for Text Message)
SSCE	Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research will not be complete without acknowledging my adviser, Pastor/Dr. Gaius Anonaba Umahi for his patience in guiding me through the development of this work.

I also appreciate the administration of North-East Nigeria Conference, for giving me the privilege to further my study. Profound gratitude also goes to the administration of Adventist University of Africa, for their effort.

I wish in a special way thank my wife, Shepherdess Abigail David Onuwah for her love, support all through my study and this research work. I thank my children Ebenezer, Vivian, Randell and Rejoice for their understanding, prayers and support.

I wish to thank my noble father-in law, Retired Pastor Jonah T. Umaru for his loving support. My gratitude also goes to my mentor, Pastor A. N Anenga, my district Pastor, Vealumun Iorkyaa and other colleagues too numerous to name, for their prayers, advice and support. However, Pastor Agape Dominic and Barr. O.U Heavens deserve a mention.

I wish in a special way to acknowledge Baba Kefas Tahumakei, Baba Simon Nabasu, Elder Zakka Aji, Elder Chinedum Nmeribe, Elder/ Mrs. Joseph Adebayo, Darlington Nwali, Gen. Musa Gambo (rtd) for your wonderful support..

Finally my roommates Pastors Prince Brobbey, Andre Songna, Luka Ezekiel, and entire graduating class of Pastoral Theology, May God bless you all.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Communication is essential. It is the oil that humanity uses to keep the wheel of their relationships running. It is a vital engine for the successful and smooth operation of any organization. Once there is interference or blockage in the communication process, things will hardly go well. In this age of information technology, every organization needs to develop a program that will ensure unimpeded flow of information at all levels. Sandra Hybells and Richards L. Weaver II posit that: “Communication is vital in every area of our lives. We use it for persuasion, to influence relationships, to discover, and uncover information.”¹

Even though mankind has engaged in communication at different levels and in diverse ways, all that takes place is not usually effective communication skill. Communication is as old as the history of mankind, it also means a different thing to many people, and this then means different definitions can be given as it is understood by diverse group of people.

Among the many definitions of communication that abound the following is considered relevant to this work: “Communication takes places when one mind so acts upon it’s environment that another mind is influenced and in that other mind, an

¹ Sandra Hybells, Richard L Weaver II. *Communicating Effectively*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill 2004), 5.

experience occurs which is like the experience in the first mind and its caused in parts by that experience.’’²

The above definition is descriptive of the process of communication. The second definition given by Julia T. Wood takes us much deeper. According to her; “Communication is a systematic process in which individuals interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings.”³ Four things are involved in the above definition. First, Communication as a “process” which means, it is ongoing and always in motion. The fact that communication is a process means it is moving ever forward and changing continuously as Julia T. Wood posited.⁴

Communication is also said to be systematic which means, it involves a group of interrelated parts that affect one another. The third key in the definition is the use of symbols which are representations of other things. Symbols include all language and non-verbal behaviours as well as music which did not convey mutual understanding between persons. Anything, that abstractly signifies something else can be a symbol according to one expert.⁵ For instance, we can symbolize love by giving someone a ring, saying, “I love you.”

The above definition focuses on meaning which is the very heart of communication. Meaning is not intrinsic to experience. Instead, it is something we create in the process of communication. When we talk with others to clarify our

² *New Encyclopedia Britannica* (1978), 4:005.

³ Julian T. Wood. *Communication Theories in Action: 3rd ed.* (Belmont, California Wadsworth/Thomson,2004), 9.

⁴ *Ibid*, 10.

⁵ *Ibid*, 10.

thoughts, we decide how to interpret non-verbal behaviours. In all these, we actually construct meanings by working with symbols.

The third definition includes a very vital component that was not captured in the first two. This definition sees communications as:

The process of relating an idea or ideas, observations, or information (message), verbally or otherwise by a sender to a receiver through a proper channel in such a way that the desired response (verbal or otherwise) is elicited from the receiver who in turn relates feedback message or action to the initial sender such that both parties continue to send and receive signals and messages until the communication purpose is achieved or the process terminated.⁶

In essence, the above definition maintains that communication is a process which involves fellowship, relationship and sharing. Communicating that is done well hits the specific target and achieves results. From the individual to the organizational level, communication is employed in the transmission of information. It is therefore accepted in this work that communication is a process whereby thoughts, ideas, information, instructions and reaction are conveyed by one person to another. This involves the use of words, symbols, pictures, gestures etc. It is a process available in face to face discourse. In such a case, communication can be direct. Communication can take place where this is channeled through electronic and other devices; e.g. television, via satellite, telephones, writing and visual aids.⁷ Thus when people, organizations or concerns interchange ideas, information, facts, emotions, using words, letters, symbols, pictures, they are communicating. Communication is

⁶ Oluwafemi Okunlola. *Communicating Effectively in Public* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Scepter Prints Limited 1999), 369.

⁷ Austin, Evelyn, *Senior Secretarial Duties & Office Organization* (England: McDonalds & Evans, 1974), 63

therefore a pattern of interconnectivity or networks which serves to make dissemination of material to be shared without difficulty.

North East Nigeria conference of Seventh-day church comprises 22 Districts at the time of this study and covers 6 states of the North-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This zone needs a good program of information dissemination necessary to both keep all areas and levels acquainted with what happens at the other side, and to successfully achieve or sustain its corporate goal.

Statement of Problem

Observations reveal that many institutional units and institutions within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including North-East Nigeria Conference often encounter challenges of effective communication. Results show that information either reaches target audience late or not at all. It is assumed or even misconstrued that noise emanating from channels used (and other related factors) may be responsible for this anomaly. This ineffective communication, resulting in poor responses to corporate programs that are geared towards the overall achievement of common goal constitutes a major set-back to the smooth running of the entity. Thus, this study is tailored towards finding ways to develop viable strategies to remedy communication problems.

Hypothesis

Viewed against the background that there may be frosty relationships due to ineffective communication in most fields, .it is therefore critical to examine some of the probable reasons this project intends to attempt to proffer answers to:

1. Some field Pastors may be suffering in silence due to the fact that they in fields where their Head elders are irrevocably connected to the “who is who”

in the Conference head quarters; thus giving them a sense of insecurity as yet to be ordained ministers who may have their future jeopardized by such “cabals” in their stations.

2. Secondly, is it possible that ministers with low educational backgrounds, relative to the towering educational resume of their members suffer from inferiority complex and as such fail to perform above par due to poor communication skills.
3. Hypothetically, some fields ministers may be prejudiced due to phony impressions about gang-ups against them by power brokers in their constituents; thus inhibiting their effective delivery (communication).
4. Another probability that may lead to breakdown in communication or epileptic communication for the desired church growth and territorial impact is the fluctuating signals emanating from the Global Telecom Service Providers on one hand and perhaps poor reception from an unwelcoming church congregation.
5. Furthermore, arrogance and lack of mutual cooperation between an unskilled field ministers versus semi skilled local church board members may hamper effective communication and invariably church growth. The above and more are some of the hypothetical situations the project seeks to unravel.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims at developing a strategy that will enhance more effective communication between and among all levels of church organization. To this effect it investigates current communication style of the entity to determine what may be responsible for the anomaly in the first instance. The study, further reveals whether

those charged with passing information at all levels are actually doing their work or not and whether personnel in charge are conversant with required skills for effective communication or not.

Significance of the Study

This study is of significance to the researcher. This is because without good and effective communication, issues and programs of the church will not be properly communicated and monitored. With effective communication in place, church leaders will relate better with their congregants and so enhance better understanding of the programs of the Church. This is the objective of this study. At the end of this research, it is expected that it will serve as resource material for church leaders and foundation for further research in North East Nigeria Conference and beyond. In addition, it will enhance free flow of information and reduce misunderstanding and friction which usually exist when communication is impeded or breaks down.

Delimitation

This project was carried out in the area designated as North-East Nigeria Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church comprising 22 Districts and spreads across 7 states of Plateau, Taraba, Gombe, Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Yobe as North-East geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Methodology

This study is a research development type thus; it made use of questionnaire to gather data. The respondents include Pastors and randomly selected members within the conference. In Chapter 2 the study used the theoretical foundation, and explore the Bible, E.G White's writings and other relevant literature were carefully reviewed.

Chapter 3 contains the description of local setting. For in-depth study, both quantitative and qualitative instrument of documentary research was conducted to identify factors affecting communication efficiency in North-East Nigeria Conference (to be referred to as NENC from time to time). In Chapter 4, the study designed and implemented a program geared towards improving communication in the Conference. The evaluation of the program was carried out as well. Chapter 5 of this study contains summary, conclusion and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meaning and Overview of Communication

An Australian Psychologist, Gordon Coates traced the meaning of the word “communication” to have been derived from the Latin verb “*communicare*” which means “to share” or to “make common”.⁸ This derivation however stops short of the English meaning of communication; all the same, it is a good foundation on which we can build.

So many definitions of communication abound among which, we shall consider the following beginning with that of the above writer:⁹

- Communication is the sharing of information
- Communication is the giving and receiving of messages
- Communication is the transfer of information from one or more people to one or more other people.

All the three definitions contain some elements of communication, the first is the simplest and also the broadest, but it is a bit non-specific. The second definition

⁸ Gordon Coates. “*Notes On Communication: A Few Thoughts About the Way We Interact With the People We Meet*.” Creative Commons, 2009. <http://www.wanterfall/ebook> (25 June, 2012).

⁹Ibid., 13.

went further to remind us that information or message must be received as well as sent in order to complete the process.

The last definition above only applies to communication between people. It can be argued that animals and plants, and even machines are included in communication process. For this purpose, we shall add the expanded version of the one given by Okunlola earlier cited in chapter one:

Communication is the process of relating ideas (formed out of sender's spiritual, psychological, technical and environmental experiences and expectations) verbally or otherwise (using chosen and available technical skills and channels) to another person (whose interpretation and acceptance of the meaning of the message shall be influenced by his or her spiritual, psychological, technical and environmental conditions) with a view to prompting a desired response, as the two parties continue to send and receive signals from each side until the communication purpose is achieved or the process is terminated.¹⁰

The above definition maintains that communication is a process which involves fellowship, relationship, and sharing. This kind of communication is bound to hit the specified target and achieve desired outcome.

The Bible and Communication

Communication is as old as the history of the world as recorded in the Holy Scripture. In fact we find the record of communication among the divine family of the God-Head as recorded by Moses: "And God said, "let there be light and there was light" Gen.1:3(KJV). This phrase was repeated in verses 6, 9, 11, 14 and 20 in connection with the various phases of creation activities. "And God said" that means He was communicating with some other person or persons apart from Himself.

¹⁰ Okunlola, 369.

In Gen. 1:26, the picture comes out clear that God the Father was addressing a meeting of the God family prior to taking a concrete action leading to the creation of man: “And God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth” (KJV).

The sacred records from this point contain numerous instances of God communicating with Adam the first man and his wife, Eve. Some of these communications were in the form of instructions on how to operate their paradise home in Eden as well as commands (Gen. 2:16, 17 KJV). Communication during the pre-fall stage of our world was a face to face encounter but when disobedience sets in and man lost out, face-to-face communication between God and man became a rare occurrence.

God spoke with Cain in form of a question: “... where is Abel thy brother...”? Cain heard and understood, and responded with a rude question: “Am I my brother’s keeper”? (Gen. 4:9, 10). Beside this we read God’s communication with patriarch Noah (Gen. 6:13-21; 7:1-4; 8:21-9:17), Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 15:1-15; 18:23-32), Isaac (Gen 26:2-5), Jacob (Gen 28:13-15;32:26-29), and Moses(Ex 3:4-22),many other instances through the Pentateuch.

God kept in touch through the ministry of prophets during the Old Testament era and through Christ and His apostles in the New Testament (see Heb. 1:1-3). The most profound result of God’s communication with man is the Holy Scripture which God caused to be written and preserved for all time (see 2Tim 3:16,17; 2 Pet 1:20, 21).

Communication in the Bible was not only God doing the talking, human beings too communicate at all levels using the various elements and models of communication that we shall be seeing in the succeeding pages of this work.

Ellen G. White and Communication

E. G. White as she is fondly called recognized communication as a medium through which God speaks to His people including herself. In her book, *Testimonies for the Church* vol.5 she wrote: “Sometimes when special dangers threaten the cause of God or particular individuals; a communication comes to me from the Lord either in a dream or vision of the night and these cases are brought vividly to my mind. I hear a voice saying to me, “Arise and write; these souls are in peril.”¹¹ Again she wrote about the communication channel that was opened to Adam in his state of innocence: “To Adam in his innocence was granted communication direct, free, and happy with his maker. After his transgression God would communicate to man through Christ and angels.”¹²

As we shall see later, communication is done through channels or mediums (media), both the Bible and E.G. White recognize God’s appointed mediums of communication with man. Commenting on Saul after God rejected him and he resorted to consulting with spirit mediums, she wrote:

The scripture account of the Saul’s visit to the woman of Endor has been a source of perplexity to many students of the Bible ... if as claimed by some, Samuel was in heaven, he must have been summoned thence... none can believe for a moment that Satan had power to call to the holy prophet of

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 511,882.

¹² E .G White, *The Story of Redemption* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 51.

God from heaven to honor the incantations of an abandoned woman. Nor can we conclude that God summoned him to the witch's cave; for the Lord already refuses to communicate with Saul, by dreams, by Urim, or by prophets; 1 Samuel 28:6. These were God's own appointed mediums of communication.¹³

Communication activities in both the Bible and the writings of E.G. White were done either between God and people, or between the people themselves. No form of communication with spirit world is encouraged or endorsed. God used the channels or mediums of communication to reveal His will to human beings and ever since mankind had engaged in communication though after the entrance of sin, there have been impediments to effective communication as we will be seeing later.

Models of Communication

Over the years, communication scholars have designed models to explain communication processes. We shall briefly examine some of those models.

H.D Laswell Model¹⁴

This model published in 1948 is one of the classic models of communication. Laswell's model is a verbal model which uncovers the communication process by asking five basic questions:

Who?

Says What?

In What Channel?

To Whom?

¹³ E.G. White. *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, D.C: Review and Heralds, 1980), 683.

¹⁴ H. D Laswell. *The Structure and Function of Communication Society in The Communication of Ideas* e.d Lyman Bryson (New York: Harper and Row, 1948), 37.

With What Effect?

To interpret this model, note the following:

- “who” identifies the source, sender or encoder
- “Says what” identifies the message or signal
- “In what channel” identifies the medium of transfer
- “To whom” identifies the receiver or decoder at the final destination of the message
- “With what effect” identifies the result, consequence of the communication or the feedback sent to the source.

These basic questions are integral to all other models designed by other experts to express the process of communication. Some have expanded the model adding feedback processes while some try to focus more on some definite aspect of these basic questions identified by Lasswell.

In 1955, Wilbur Schramm, another communication expert published a three step model to explain communication process.¹⁵ The first model represents the five basic steps in communication process. The source will encode a signal and the decoder will receive it at a destination. The second model shows the influence of the field of experiences of the encoder on the signal sent and received.

The third model includes the feedback loop which makes the encoder and the decoder to exchange positions continually. The encoder sends a message to the decoder. The decoder interprets it and becomes the encoder and sends the feedback message. The first encoder now becomes the decoder as he interprets the message received. So the process continues.

¹⁵ Wilbur Schramm, *How Communication Works: The Process and Effect of Mass Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955) , 4-8 quoted by Oluwafemi Okunlola: *Communicating Effectively in Public*, 371.

For a message to be clearly understood without ambiguity, the sender who originates the message is expected to encode the message through a channel with the appropriate signal that the receiver can be able to decode. This way he can formulate and send a reply that shows he understands the message, or if the message is a command or a directive, the receiver can perform the required function. Figure 1 explains this process more vividly.

Another communication guru, David Berlo in 1960 published a model to show the ingredients in communication¹⁶ (see Figure 2).

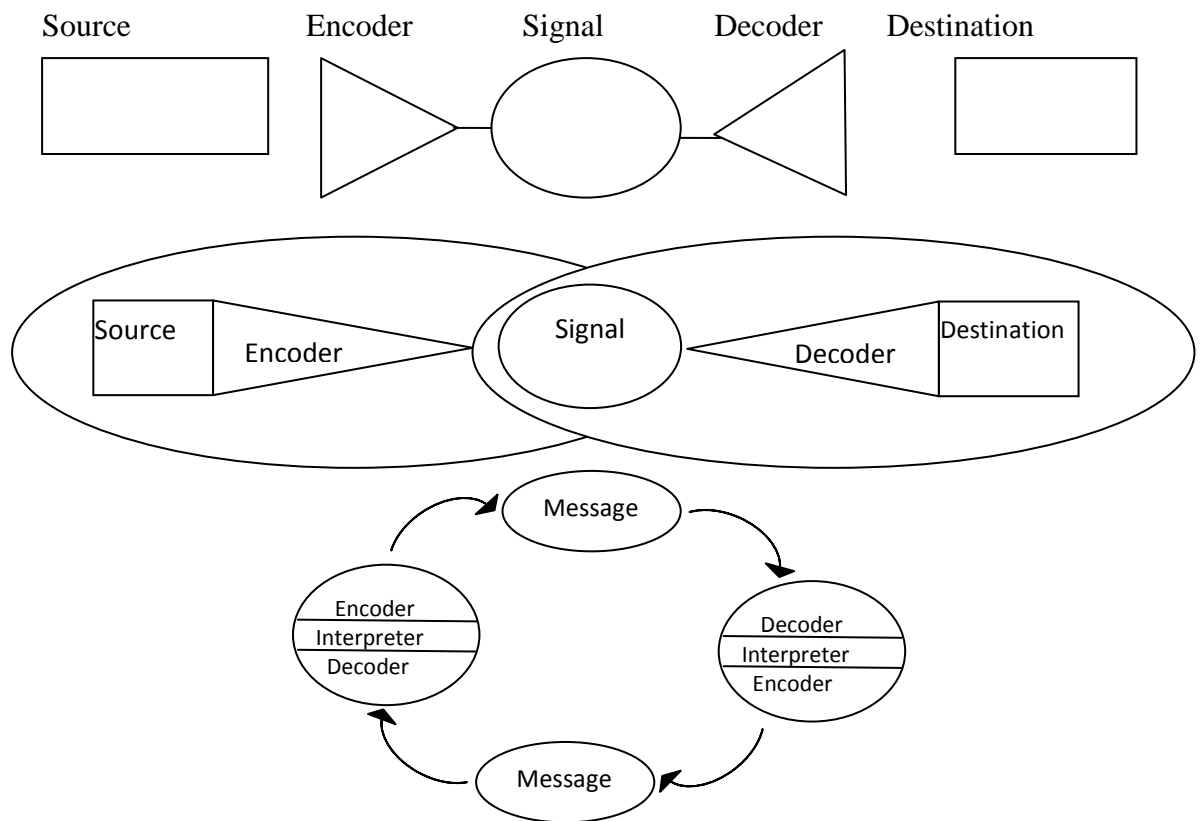


Figure 1. The Schramm Models of Communication

¹⁶ David K. Berlo. *The Process of Communication* (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 72.

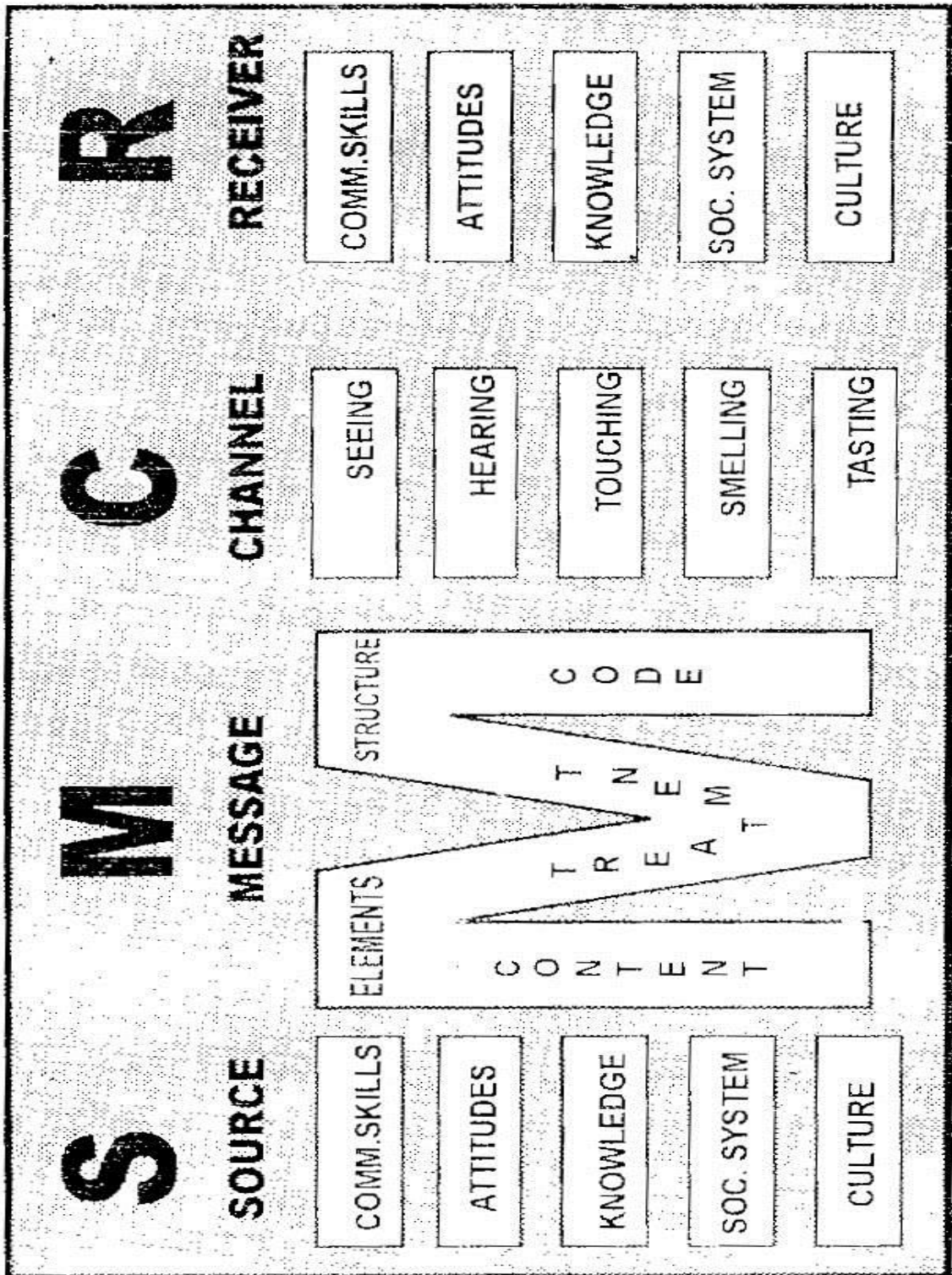


Figure 2: Berlo's Model of ingredients in Communication

Figure 2 shows that the ingredients which the source will use to model the signal to be sent will be constituted by his/her communication skill, attitude,

knowledge, social system and culture. The message itself is made up of ingredients such as the main contents, the treatment and the coding of the content. In other words the element and the structure of the content and of the code will constitute the nature of the message.¹⁷

Berlo's model shows that the five human senses are the channels through which the message is passed across. For example, the eyes are used to watch the televisions, ears are used to hear sermons, by touching the skin one can discover a rise in body temperature, the nose is used to sniff the burning food in the kitchen and the mouth (tongue) is used to discover sweet, bitter, and sour tastes.

Lastly the receiver will use his or her communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, social system and culture as ingredients to decode the message which the source has sent through the channel of one or all of his sensory organs

Features/Elements of Communication

The purpose of communication is to get your message across to others clearly and unambiguously. Doing this involves effort from both the sender of the message and the receiver. And it is a process that can be fraught with error; sometimes messages are misunderstood or misinterpreted by the recipient. When this isn't detected, it can cause serious confusion, wasted effort and missed opportunity. Communication is only successful when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information as a result of the communication. Therefore for communication system to achieve its aim the principles of clarity, precision, attention ambiguity should not be overloaded. The choice of media can be of great help in ensuring that the information to be disseminated gets to the targeted audience-sometimes face to

¹⁷ Ibid., 73.

face is better for say, meetings and interviews; while oral i.e. telephone, radio may serve. Sometimes also, writing i.e. letters, books, periodicals, newspapers, advertisement etc. better modes depending on the audience to be reached. In all cases, the communicator must bear in mind the decoders' knowledge education etc. when choosing the means to apply.¹⁸

By successfully getting your message across, you convey your thought and ideas effectively. When they are not successfully conveyed, your thoughts and ideas that you conveyed do not necessarily reflect your own. This can cause communication breakdown and create unnecessary roadblocks that stand in the way of achieving communication goals both personally and professionally.

Communication experts tell us that communication involves certain elements, namely:¹⁹

- **The Source:** The originator of the message. There can be primary source (the one who originated the message), and the secondary source (the one who got the message from the primary source).As the source of the message, you need to be clear about why you are communicating and what you want to communicate. You also need to be confident that the information you are communicating is useful and accurate.
- **The Sender:** That is the one sending forth the message. He may be the primary or the secondary source as well.

¹⁸Robert C Applebys, *Modern Business Administration* (London: Pitman Publishing, 1976), 112.

¹⁹ James Manktelow and Amy Carlson, "Introduction to Communication skills" http://www.helpguide.org/mental/effective_communication_skills.htm (29 June 2012).

- **The Message:** This is the process of transferring the information to be communicated into a form that can be sent and correctly decoded at the other end. The success in encoding depends partly on the ability of the sender to convey information clearly and simply. The message is the exact idea and content the sender wishes to share with the receiver.
- **The Channel:** The medium through which the message is being sent. Message conveyed through channels may include face to face meetings, telephone and video conferencing, and written including letters emails memos and reports.

Different channels have different strengths and weaknesses. For example, while it's not particularly effective to give a long list of directions verbally as some of the instructions may be forgotten or misapplied. Such long direction will certainly be better if written, say, by email.

- **Decoding:** Just as successful encoding is a skill, so is successful decoding. Decoding is a process of converting coded message into understandable language. It is very important for the decoder to read a message carefully or listen actively to an audio message.
- **The Receiver:** Receiver is the one receiving the message sent. The individual or audience having received the message has the task of decoding the encoded message.
- **Feedback:** The receiver or your audience will send you feedback, verbal or non-verbal reactions to your communicated message. In this way, the receiver now becomes the sender. The only thing that allows you to be sure or confident that your audience or recipients of your message understood you is through their reaction or response. If you find that there has been a misunderstanding, at least

you have the opportunity to send it the second time, after all, communication is an ongoing process.

- **Context:** The situation in which your message is delivered is the context. This may include the surrounding environment or broader culture.
- **Noise:** Any interference with the process of communication that prevents, reduces or misrepresents otherwise effective communication. Noise may come in at any stage in the process. Figure 3 below explains the above elements of communication process.

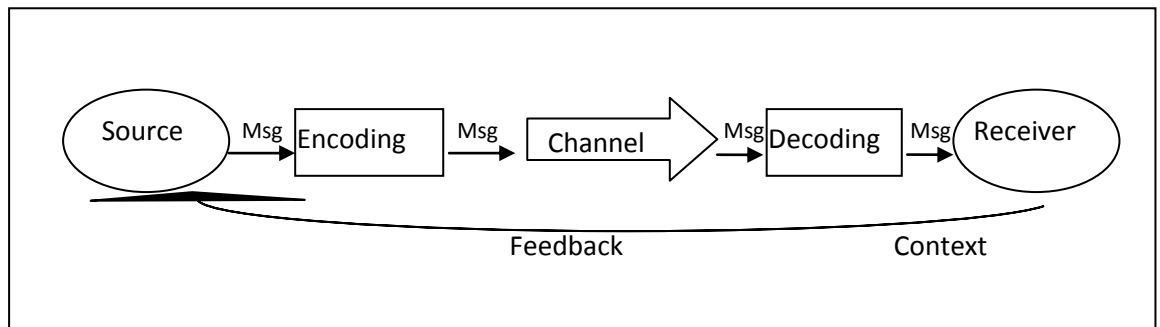


Figure 3: The Communication Process

Communication is not a one way sending of signals. On the contrary, it is a two way process involving the one giving the information on the one hand and the one who receives the message on the other. It is kind of relationship in which the sender and the receiver are simultaneously involved in exchange of ideas and information. As a sender speaks, the receiver is actively decoding and communicating a feedback. Thus both the sender and receiver are constantly exchanging roles.

Furthermore, it should be noted that, human speech communication is a process in the sense that it occurs within the scope of human experiences. In human

speech both the sender and the receiver are affected in their encoding and decoding process by their past, present and their envisaged future experiences.

Symbols of Communication

In the communication process symbols are used to encode the messages that are sent. These symbols can be verbal or non verbal. Oluwafemi²⁰ classifies them as follows:

- **Verbal Communication:** This involves the use of words as the voice is modulated to bring out meaning. This may be face to face as in the story telling, classroom teaching, or it may be through telephone.
- **Body Language:** This involves the use of gestures and through sets of facial appearances to communicate emphasis, joy, sadness, boredom, excitement etc
- **Posture:** This involves the parts of the human body to attain shape which has mutual meaning to the sender and receiver. For instance a Hausa man squatting to greet an elder communicates respect for the elder.
- **Colour:** The colour of clothes one wears may communicate something about the state of mind of the wearer. The message that a particular colour communicates will however vary from culture to culture. For example culturally in some parts of Nigeria wearing of black dress over all the body connotes mourning.
- **Pictures:** Picture is a strong symbol of communication especially when one is teaching children or trying to explain complex or abstract ideas. Television and video are gaining much ground because they are picture-oriented communication gadgets.

²⁰ Okunlola, 376.

- **Music:** Music is another powerful tool or symbol. Millions of people listen to various forms of music daily for entertainment. Information inserted into music has a very wide coverage.
- **Tears:** Tears communicate deep passion or feelings such as pain, sorrow, sadness or joy.

There are various other symbols which communicate specific information to people in different societal settings. People in secret cults have their signs of greeting and identifying one another. Raising two fingers to form a v shape has meaning in some setting. Raising the thumbs up has its own meaning. In some cultures, there is eye language which parents use to communicate to their children especially when a visitor is around. Symbols of communication are quite numerous which this research could not exhaust. Therefore when a communicator has an opportunity to speak in a strange culture, one should endeavor to know their important communication symbols and adjust as much as possible. For example, telling someone in Nigeria: “You are putting on weight”, is a compliment, but saying the same thing to someone of Western extraction may be interpreted as a grave insult instead of a fair compliment.²¹

Types of Communication

The symbols, the channels and the audience involved in communication determine the types of communication that exists. Therefore, one can classify communication into types according to the symbols used, channels used, and according to the type of audience the speaker is addressing. These are some of the generally identified types of communication:

²¹ Ibid., 375.

Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal communication occurs when a speaker is talking or thinking within him or herself in a bid to explain or analyze concepts, ideas, philosophy or belief.

Intrapersonal communication is centered on self, and as such, the communicator is both the sender and receiver. The message is made up of ones thoughts and feelings. The channel is the brain which processes what one is thinking and feeling. There is feedback in the sense that one can talk to himself or discard some ideas and replace them with others.

Intrapersonal communication is not a social activity since all the activities involve only one individual. The ideas internally expressed and nurtured within the individual (internal expression) invariably manifest in his physical action.²²

Even though one may not be directly communicating in intrapersonal communication, the experiences he has within him determine how he talks to himself. One can never look at himself without being influenced by the relationships he has had with others.

Interpersonal Communication

In this form of communication, an individual sends and receives messages to/from another mostly in a face to face interaction. Such interaction or information exchange cuts across verbal and non verbal modes of communication.

Interpersonal communication according to Aina can be viewed from componential, relational, and developmental perspectives.²³ While its componential

²² Sina Aina: *Anatomy of Communication* (Abeokuta, Nigeria: Julian Publishers, 2003), 32.

definition says, the process involves sending and receiving information within a small group, usually in a face-to face situation where feedback is immediate and spontaneous, according to the relational definition; interpersonal communication takes place between two people who share social relationship.

The developmental, however says it is the end of a process which begins with impersonal where our knowledge of the person with whom we are communicating is partial and relationship formal.

Certain deduction can be made from these definitions:

- That interpersonal communication often takes place in a face-to-face situation and the feedback obtained in such condition is natural.
- That it does not take place only in face-to-face situations; the tone of a letter written to another person, or telephone conversation between two individuals can have interpersonal tones, depending on the level of relationship. This is so because we tend to get more intimate with others as we know them better and the tone of discussion becomes informal or personal
- That communication can be interpersonal depending on the socially defined roles influencing what the participants say.

Because interpersonal communication takes place between two (few) people, it offers the greatest opportunity for feedback. Internal noise is likely to be minimal because each person can see whether the other is distracted or attentive. The persons involved in the conversation have many chances to check the message being perceived correctly. Interpersonal communication usually takes place in informal and comfortable settings.

²³ Ibid., 35-37.

Small Group Communication

Small group communication occurs when a small number of people meet to solve a problem. One person may address the group or it may be a panel discussion or even a study group. The group must be small enough so that each member has a chance to interact with all the other members.

Because small groups are made up of several senders and receivers, the communication process is more complicated than the interpersonal communication. With so many people sending and receiving messages, there are more chances for confusion as observed by Sandra and Richard.²⁴ Messages are also more structured in small groups because the group is meeting for a specific purpose. Small groups use the same channel as interpersonal communication, however there is also a good deal of opportunity for feedback. In keeping with their problem-solving nature, small groups usually meet in a more formal setting than people in interpersonal communication.

Public Communication

This is a form of collective communication which takes place in the public.²⁵ This involves a speaker addressing an audience or congregation in a formal setting. The setting is planned, specific time allotted and specific form of behavior is expected from participants. The speaker usually delivers highly structured messages, using the same channels as in interpersonal communication. In public communication, however, the channels are more exaggerated than in the personal communication. The voice is louder and the gestures are more expansive because the audience is bigger. The speaker might use additional visual channels, such as slides, flip charts and so on.

²⁴ Sandra Hybells and Richard Weavers II. *Communicating Effectively* 5th ed.(2004), 18.

²⁵ Aina, 43, 44.

Opportunity for feedback in public communication is limited. The audience members may have a chance to ask questions at the end of the speech, but usually they are not free to address the speaker during the speech. They may only send non verbal feedback or in some instances if they liked what the speaker is saying, they may interrupt the speech with applause.

The success or otherwise of public communication depends to some extent on certain factors, some of which are political, religious and cultural. For example there is a limit to the type of public communications permissible in totalitarian countries such as in Asia, Latin America and parts of Africa where military often take over governance by force thereby either proscribing or allowing only limited gathering. Even in Nigeria, though under a civilian democratic government but because of the senseless armed struggle by the Islamic Fundamentalist Boko Haram sect, public gatherings are not allowed in some parts of North where this study is being conducted.

Intercultural Communication

Today we live in a globalised world where people from different cultures mingle together, in school, at work place, in the church and even people who live in foreign lands. On campus of Babcock University in Nigeria and even at Adventist University of Africa Main Campus in Kenya, we find students of many nationalities and from a wide range of subcultures.

When we talk of culture, we mean a group of people who share a distinct set of norms, values and symbols.²⁶ By subculture, we mean people who are part of a

²⁶ Julia T. Woods. *Communication in Our Lives*. 5th ed. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Thompson corporation, 2009), 19-21.

large culture but also belong to a smaller group that has some different values, attitudes and beliefs.

To help people understand each other better, communicators, teachers, scholars, and writers have developed the field of *intercultural communication*. This mode of communication occurs whenever two or more people from different cultures interact. While it is true that there is no way to understand all cultures and subcultures. There is however certain characteristics that occur again and the theory of intercultural communication rest on these characteristics. As long as the people communicating understand communication have different attitudes and values, intercultural communication works the same way as in interpersonal communication in terms of channels and feedback.

Mass Communication

This mode of communication involves the use of the mass media in which mass numbers of people may be reached at once, across different geographical location or separated by space and time. Mass communication is a vast field of study that all we did here is a scratch of the surface. However this section of study will be incomplete without a passing mention of mass communication. Examples of mass communication include:

- ❖ **Electronic media:** Television, Video, Radio, Films, Email, Face-book, Satellite, the internet etc.
- ❖ **Print media:** Newspaper, Magazines, books, Journals etc.

Indigenous/ Traditional Communication

This mode of communication is still very common in the villages where messages are communicated through:

- ❖ The Town crier
- ❖ The beating of gongs, drums, the ringing of bell or the blowing of trumpets or the shooting Dane-guns.

All these have previously known common meaning, both to the sender and the receiver. While we must point out at this juncture that the types of communication mentioned are in exhaustive, we must also note that interpersonal, group and public communication types are of particular interest to this study because these are actively involved in the management and internal administration of the object of study – NENC.

Barriers to Effective Communication

Communication process can be distorted by various barriers. It is therefore important that both the sender and receiver be on their guard to resist if possible, and remove all forms of barriers from their communication process. Among such barriers are the following:

Physical Barriers:

- ❖ Noise: Noise interferes with your receiving a message or with others receiving your message.²⁷ Noise may be physical (environmental or industrial); physiological (hearing or visual impairment, articulation disorder); psychological (preconceived ideas, wandering thoughts); semantics (misunderstood meanings). Technically, noise is anything that distorts the message and prevents the receiver from receiving the message.

²⁷ Okunlola, 379.

- ❖ **Abnormal Temperature:** If the room is too warm, listeners' attention is diverted as they try to fan themselves to cool down. On the other hand if the room is too cold, it can constitute a barrier to the communication going on either in the church or classroom
- ❖ **Technical Barrier:** In public communication sometimes the microphones, amplifying devices do not work well, this can constitute barriers to effective communication.

This far, we have seen that communication is a gift God has given to human beings which if rightly employed, relationships and all other facets of human endeavor will function well when the basic rules of effective communication are followed.

Presently, communication in North-East Nigeria conference is assumed to be ineffective. What might be responsible for this state of affairs? What can be done to ensure that there is free flow of information at all levels? What strategies need to be developed in order to be sure that all entities within North East Nigeria Conference are communicating effectively? These are the concerns the study is set to reveal and address.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING

A Brief History of North-East Nigeria Conference

What is known today as the North-East Nigeria Conference, started 82 years ago in December 1931 with a missionary family, Elder J. J. Hyde at Jengre.²⁸ It all started as a medical ministry when the wife of Elder J.J. Hyde, a trained nurse established a jigger dressing station for the infested natives. Combining medication with the gospel, the Hydes soon won the hearts of the natives to the Advent message.

Having indicated interest they native helped in carrying the expansion work to different cultural group in the area such as Amo, Binawa, Buji, Chokobo, Dingi, Gure, Gusu, Janji, Kitimi, Kurama, Kuzamani, Lemoro etc from where it spread to more territories in Northern Nigeria.²⁹ With time the mission Headquarters was moved to Bukuru, where it administered the whole of Northern territory.

North-East Nigeria conference was carved out of the then North Nigeria mission in line with Nigeria Union Mission action in March 1, 1993, proposing March 10, 1993 as a date to regroup the existing mission into North-East and North-West

²⁸. 90 Years of Adventism in Nigeria 1914 – 2004: A Compendium (Lagos, Nigeria: Communication and PARL Departments of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria), 94.

²⁹ Ibid.

mission fields respectively³⁰ the two fields had as their pioneer presidents, pastor Y.M. Musa (North-West) and pastor E.D. Magaji (North-East).

Within the next decade, the two fields grew in leaps and bounds leading to the status of conferences. North-West was the first to be inaugurated in December 9, 2000.³¹ Then North-East in February 15, 2003.³²

North-East Nigeria Conference at inception was made up of 8 states and the Federal Capital Territory. These states include Benue, Plateau and Nassarawa (from North-central Geo-political Zone), and Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and Taraba States (from North-East Geo-Political Zone). However, 8 years later North Central Conference was carved out of North-East in December 2011 with Pastor Y.U. Harry as its pioneer President.

Description of the Region

North-East Nigeria like the country itself is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural entity. Plateau State where the North-East Nigeria Conference Headquarters is situated is home to more than 50 tribes and ethnic groupings with Berom being the largest ethnic group.³³

Berom people of Plateau State are believed to be the earliest ancient race to occupy West Africa, they are short and predominantly dark in complexion and it is likely they occupied more territories than they do presently, but were driven to remote

³⁰ I. B. Maigadi, *The Adventist Church in Northern Nigeria* (Zaria, Nigeria: Cultural Impressive, 2005), 33.

³¹ *Adventism in Nigeria – A Compendium*, 98.

³² *Ibid.*, 94.

³³ C. G. Ames, *Gazetteer of the Plateau Province* (Jos, Nigeria: S.W. Fatosin Nigeria Press, 1942), 53, 54.

and restricted area by numerical and militarily stronger people who arrived later.³⁴

Other tribes that inhabit the Plateau include Tarok, Mushere, Amo, Jere, Buji, Rukuba, Jarawa and a host of other smaller ones.³⁵

In Bauchi State, there are 55 tribal groups. Prominent among them are: Fulani, Hausa Gerawa, Sayawa Jarawa, Balewa, Karekare, Kanuri, Warjawa, Zulawa and Badewa. The State covers 45,837 square kilometers and has a population of 4,676,565.³⁶

Gombe State is home to 21 tribal groupings, the major ones commonly spoken include: Fulfulde (Fulani), Tangale, Tera, Waja and Kanuri. The state which covers 20,265 square kilometers, is described as “Jewel in the Savannah,” and has a population of 2,353,879.³⁷

Borno and Yobe states have 27 ethnic groups but the prominent ones are: Kanuri, Babru, Cibok, Marigi and Shuwa.³⁸ While Borno State has a population of 4,161,193 Yobe has 2,321,591 according to 2006 census figures. Information from these two states is sketchy due to the security challenge posed by the Boko Haram insurgency.

Taking Adamawa and Taraba State together, these two states boast of over 200 ethnic groupings. The major tribes are: Fulani, Mumuye, Chamba, Bachama,

³⁴ N.P. Iloeje. *A New Geography of West Africa: New Revised Edition* (Hong Kong: Shek Wah Tong Printing Press, 1982), 6.

³⁵ Mr. Simon Nabasu, a Major Oil Dealer and Community Leader, Interviewed by the Researcher in Jalingo, Taraba State 18 August, 2012.

³⁶ www.nigeriagallery.com, accessed 27 June, 2012.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Mr. Andrew Pulka, A Civil Servant in Maiduguri, Borno State, Interviewed by the Researcher via Mobile Phone, 03 August, 2012.

Kilba, Gude, Jukun, Kuteb and Tiv³⁹. It should be noted that while English Language is Nigeria's Lingual Franka, Hausa and Fulani (Fulfulde) are the languages largely spoken in North-Eastern Nigeria.

Population

According to the population census conducted in 2006⁴⁰ by the Federal government of Nigeria (which is the official figure to date), North-East Nigeria geopolitical zone has a combined population figures of 22,150,677. 11,423,102 out of the above figures are male while, 10,727,575 are female the Table 1 below contains the state by state account of the exercise.

Table 1: Population of North- East Nigeria

States	Male	Female	Total
Adamawa	1,606,123	1,561,978	3,168,010
Bauchi	2,426,215	2,250,250	4,676,465
Borno	2,161,157	1,990,036	4,151,193
Gombe	1,230,722	1,123,157	2,353,879
Plateau	1,593,033	1,585,679	3,178,712
Taraba	1,199,849	1,100,887	2,300,736
Yobe	1,206,003	1,115,588	2,321,591
Totals	11,423,102	10,727,575	22,150,677

³⁹ Mr. Kefas Tahumakei, a Retired Civil Servant, Interviewed by the Researcher at Numan, Adamawa State, 06 August, 2012.

⁴⁰Federal Republic of Nigeria, Population Statistics: accessed 26 August, 2012. www.nigeriagallery.com.

It should be noted that Plateau State is not originally part of North East Nigeria zone in official government gazette, but because it falls within the area designated as the North East Nigeria conference of Seventh-day Adventists, it has to be included. As a matter of fact, the Conference head quarter is located at Angludi district of Bukuru Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Politico-Economic Life

During the pre-colonial era, the people of the North-East like the rest of Northern Nigeria lived in villages and hamlets. The villages were usually named after the first settlers or their founders. In every village and tribe, there were recognized ruling families which in some cases were composed of the descendants of the original founders of the town or village.⁴¹ In some other cases as in most of the far North-Eastern States of Adamawa and Taraba, the most powerful was usually enthroned and henceforth succession was by royal descent, but who must be a male.⁴²

The traditional rulers were highly revered by all as they were seen as the custodians of the people's heritage and others largely out of fear.

Land tenure has been practiced by people of this region for ages. The land usually belongs to the chief of the village. This right came as a result of either first settlement or the ability to defend his boundaries. As a result no land was taken for building or farming without the consent of the chief. Land can be leased out perpetually or just for a period of time as may be determined by the ruling house.⁴³

⁴¹ Ames, 53, 54.

⁴² Mr. Sabastine Ngalari, an engineer with Adamawa State Civil Service, Interviewed by Researcher in Yola 15 August, 2012.

⁴³ Mr. Timothy Angbash, Agric. Officer in Bauchi, Interviewed by the Researcher in Bauchi, 5 October, 2012.

Marriage also existed as a social life of the people in this region prior to the coming of the Whiteman. The custom of marriage varies from culture to culture. However one thing they have in common is polygamy. The number of a man's wives was an indicator of how rich or strong he was. In some cultures, the payment of bride is simple and consists of giving of presents to the lady and her parents or working in the finance's parents for a period of time and finally the payment of the bride price which may be in form of animals, cowries or bollo (a flat metal used as money) it could be horse, a cow or number of goats as may be determined by the girls family.⁴⁴

Among the Angas of Plateau State marriages are said to be expensive and a long drawn out affair. An engagement is often entered into when a girl is still small and the preliminaries being settled by the boy's parents. When the girl is old enough then the boy shows himself to formally obtain her consent which is signified by her acceptance of a piece of cord which she wears thereafter.

Eventually, the suitor and his friends will kidnap the girl after a mocked struggle and take her to a friend's house where she remains for two to three months. During this period the parents will present the total amount of the bride price which must be paid in full. No sexual intercourse is yet lawful and a breach of that is punishable by a prescribed fine of quantity of goats and grains. At the end when the final bride price is settled, the groom with the assistance of his friends will build a new house where the new family would move in with the bride furnishing the house with her bridal gifts.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Tahumakei.

⁴⁵ Ames, 145.

The economic life of this region was farming, fishing, hunting and trading. The medium of exchange was originally by barter. Farmers exchange farm produce for meat, fish or domestic animals. The major crops include corn, rice, yams, cassava, millet, wheat and sorghum. In old Adamawa province, a large flat rod manufactured by local blacksmith was used as their first money apart from barter.⁴⁶

On the Plateau, with its mountainous topography, the place is mainly market to garden crops such as leafy vegetables, tomatoes, onions and Irish potatoes. These crops are grown here for the areas favoured cool and high altitude.⁴⁷ Other crops commonly grown in this area include Acha, Kokoyam, beans and ground nuts.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the people, but more than 80% practice subsistent farming, mostly for the family consumption which at times is hardly enough for the family throughout the year.⁴⁸

Religious Life

Prior to the coming of Islam and Christianity, majority of the people of North-East Nigeria were pagan idol worshippers except for the Fulanis who came with Islamic Religion.⁴⁹ They worshipped diverse gods, called “Tsafi”, “Dodo”, “Akpang” etc. Tsafi includes – several ideas and objects, all connected with the supernatural being who would be a deity. This was normally identified with objects of nature such as tree, hills, rocks, caves etc. Others were represented with animals, like goat, snake,

⁴⁶ Tahumakei.

⁴⁷ Iloeje,43.

⁴⁸ C.M. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria: An Ethnographical Account of Northern Nigeria*, (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd, 67 Great Russell Street, WC1B 3BT, 1925), 51.

⁴⁹ Tahumakei.

birds and fish, while by virtue of birth one can enlist the worship and membership of some of these deities, membership into others which are of secret nature was by initiation.⁵⁰

Before the advent of the colonial masters, the people had laws with which they operate and punish offenders accordingly, for instance, murder was considered a punishable offence in most of the tribes by death, the sentence was either carried out by the victim's family or by the king's servant, in other cases, murder was punished by a prescribed fine of varying amount and a purification ceremony.⁵¹ Theft is punishable in different ways by different people of the region. Sometimes, the thief is fined or sold into slavery and at times killed.⁵² Adultery/fornication offenders were usually punished by ex-communication in some cases or by a fine of varying severity. Witchcraft was considered a very serious offence; and witchcraft which affects the community in terms of bad harvest or an epidemic of disease was punishable either by banishment or even death of the offender.⁵³

Description of North-East Nigeria Conference

North-East Nigeria conference Head Quarter is located at Anguldi, Bukuru along Barrakin Ladi road where it has been since 1956 was moved from Jengre.⁵⁴ The Conference oversees the work in seven states as follows: Plateau, Bauchi,

⁵⁰ Ames, 53, 54.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Nabasu.

⁵⁴ John G. Nengel, *The Establishment and Development of Seventh-day Adventist Mission in Northern Nigeria, 1931-2003*, 6.

Gombe, Adamawa, Taraba, Borno and Yobe. The conference has a total of 22 districts.

Membership

Going by the report of the 2012 Conference Secretary's report, North-East Nigeria conference, has a membership strength of 14,016 members covering the entire North-East zone of the country with a distance from zero in Bukuru – to as much as 601 (Yola) and 603 (Maiduguri).⁵⁵ A breakdown of this membership is shown in Table 2.

Work Force

The profile of the conference shows that a total of 41 officers and staff are on the payroll of North-East Nigeria Conference as follows:

a.	Ordained Pastors	-	17
b.	Un-ordained Pastors	-	13
c.	Office Workers	-	11

In addition, of the above workers, only 12 are graduates, 3 are undergraduates and the rest are either secondary school or first school leaving certificate holders. It is hoped that some of them may develop further academically. It is under the forgone scenario that work was carried out amidst challenges, chief among which is the on-going armed insurgency that is being perpetrated by the Islamist extremists known as the Boko Haram (Western education is evil) elements, but to the glory of God it was carried out all the same.

⁵⁵ North-East Nigeria Conference Secretary's Records, 2012.

Table 2: Membership of North-East Nigeria Conference

S/n	Districts	Membership	Distance from Conference headquarters (km)
1	Bakin-kogi	619	50
2	Bauchi	53	135
3	Bassa	502	40
4	Bukuru	561	
5	Fuskan mata	438	45
6	Gombe	271	315
7	Jengr-gari	1,423	53
8	Jengre-hospital	1,699	52
9	Jos	526	20
10	Kadamo	517	55
11	Kantau	737	58
12	Kides	1197	61
13	Kitara	1239	60
14	Kyere	438	73
15	Laranto	812	22
16	Maiduguri	612	603
17	Matsira-amu	401	61
18	Mista-ali	285	30
19	Rimi	874	53
20	Shendam	172	165
21	Yola	190	601
22	Zarmaganda	450	13

Pre-program Survey

In order to facilitate this study, questionnaires were used in collecting data. Two types of questionnaires were used. Questionnaire type I was given to all pastors and pioneers in North-East Nigeria Conference. A total of eighteen questions were contained therein to find out how effective communication management is carried out by the stake holders. The questionnaire is designed to find out whether they as link between the Conference and local church/district are carried along well. Copies of

these were distributed to pastors at the beginning of August 2012 to be returned at the end of August 2012. Anonymity was granted to respondents.

Type II questionnaires was sent to churches in the five zones of the conference at the beginning of September. Section I contains five questions meant to find out general information and the personal records of the respondents. Section two contains five questions while section three contains eight questions. A period of one month was allowed for the completion and return of the questionnaires.

Questionnaire Type I

The questionnaire was distributed to pastors and lay workers called pioneers 41 copies were sent out only 33 were returned representing 80.49 % (see Figure 3). This shows that 8 were not returned. Detailed questions contained in the questionnaire are given in Appendix A.

Figure 4 indicates that 33 questionnaire out of the 41 copies sent out represent a good percentage to work with especially as the respondents cut across all the intended people group.

Table 3 shows that 31 (94 %) of respondents are married while 2 (6 %) are not yet married. The work status of respondents is shown in Table 4 below in which 14 or 42% are ordained while the remaining 19 or 58% are yet to be ordained at the time this exercise was conducted.

Table 4 shows that 33 respondents returned their completed questionnaire, 31 of them which represent 94% are married while the remaining 2 representing 6% are singles. 14 of them (42%) are Ordained ministers while 19 of them (58%). A summary of their years in service is provided in Table 5.

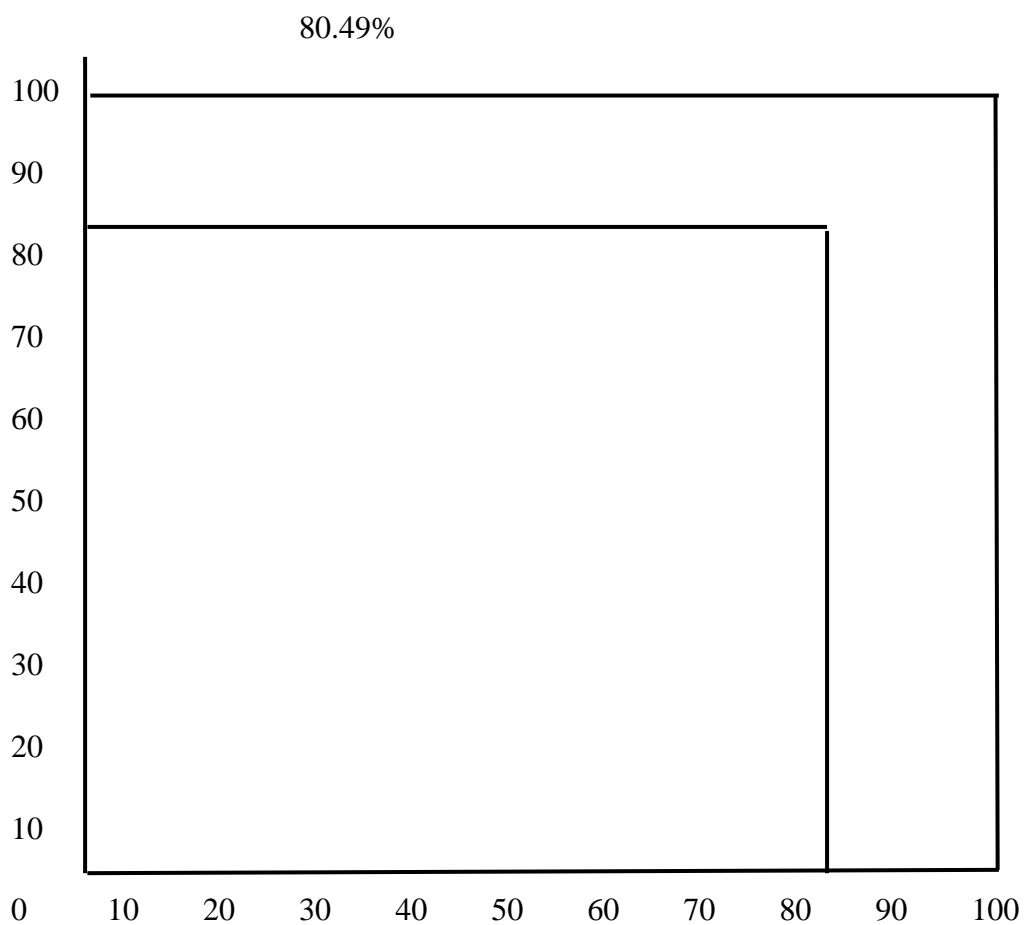


Figure 4: Percentage of returned questionnaire type I

Table 3 contains the marital status of respondents to questionnaire type 1.

Table 3: Marital Status of respondents

Marital Status	No.	%
Married	31	94
Single	2	6

Table 4 consists of the ministerial cadre of respondents.

Table 4: Ordained and yet to be Ordained Ministers

Ministerial Status	No.	%
Ordained	14	42
Yet to be Ordained	19	58

Table 5 shows that 21% of the respondents have served between 1 – 5 years in the ministry, 24% have served between 6 – 10 years, 15% have served between 11 – 15 years, 21% have served between 16 – 20 years, 12% have between 21 – 25 years and 6% have served for 26 – 30 years in the Gospel Ministry.

Table 5: Service records of respondents.

Years	No.	%
1 -5	7	21
6 -10	8	15
11-15	5	15
16-20	7	21
21- 25	4	12
26-30	2	6

Table 6 consists of time spent in present station by respondents. Table 6 shows that 33 respondents 36% spent between 6 months to one year in their present station, 30% spent two to three years, another 30% spent four to five years, while 3% spent six years and above in their present stations.

Table 6: Time spent at present station by respondents

Time Spent	No.	%
6 months – 1 year	12	36
2 months – 3 years	10	30
4 months – 5 years	10	30
6 years and above	1	3
21- 25	4	12
26-30	2	6

Table 7 consists of educational qualification of respondents to this questionnaire. Table 7 shows that educationally one of the respondents has a Doctorate degree, two have Master’s degree, six with BA degree, one has NCE, 22 have SSCE with only one having first school leaving certificate.

Table 7: Education qualification of respondents

Level of Education	No.	%
MA	2	9
BA/HND	6	18
NCE/OND	1	3
SSCE	22	67
FSLC	1	3

Table 8 consists of responses items 7 to 18 as were turned in by respondents to questionnaire type 1. These questions were asked to know how the respondents rate the flow of information in North East Nigeria Conference and their knowledge of the operations of the organization.

Table 8: Responses to questionnaire items 7 to 18

Items	Percentage Responses
7. Flow of information in NENC	Excellent (29%) Good (58%) Fair (9%)
8. Receiving adequate information	Yes (48%) No (52%)
9. Ownership of handset	Yes (100%) No (0)
10. Cell phone number of leaders	Yes (70%) No (21%) No responds (9%)
11. Knowledge of departmental directors	Yes (70%) No (30%)
12. Calendar of events	All (21%), some (58%), none (15%) No response (6%)
13. Regular reports to Conference	Monthly (76%), Quarterly (24%)
14. Well informed by Conference office	Yes (64%) No (9%) Not sure (18%) No response (9%)
15. Computer Literacy	Yes (30%) No (67%) No response (3%)
16. Communication outlets in the Church	Post (48%) Cell phone (3%) Email (3%) No response (18%)
17. Does Church have Communication	Yes (42%) No (52%) No response (6%)
18. Suggestions: Computer literacy/ICT	Secretary? (48%)

Questions in this table were asked to find the level of respondents' access to both personal information and that which comes to them from the Conference. It also sought to find out what means information gets to them faster and more effective.

This was to help the study proffer solution why communication flow appears not to be as effective as it should. Furthermore, it is necessary that members know their various leaders well and means of reaching them to get information when needed. Finally the study sought to know whether calendar of events were usually sent and if at all they get to the intended audience.

Questionnaire Type II

This questionnaire was sent to select church members in the conference. The questionnaire consists of three sections. Three hundred copies of this questionnaire were sent out. Two hundred and sixty copies were completed and returned representing 87% of the total population (see Figure 5). For the details of this questionnaire, see Appendix B.

Section one of this questionnaire consist of the demographic data of respondents. Table 9 below consists of gender and marital status.

Out of 260 respondents, 164 (63%) are male, 94 (36%) are female while 2 (1%) give no gave no response. On the marital status, 148 (56.92%) are married, 104 (40%) are single while 8 (3.1%) are either separated, window or divorced.

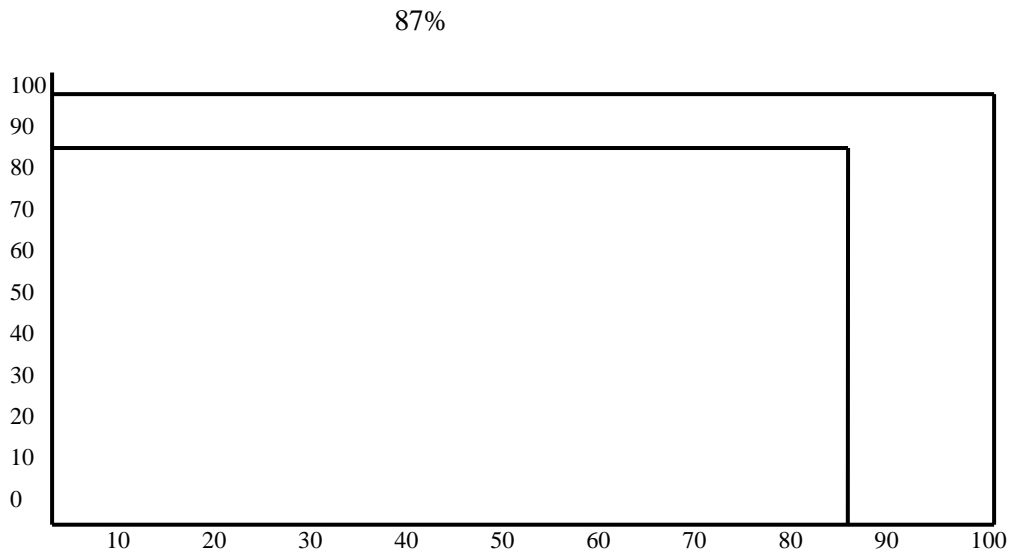


Figure 5: Percentage of returned questionnaire type II

Table 9 contains information on gender and the marital status of respondents. Table 9 shows that there were more married respondents than singles and more men than females.

Table 9: Gender and marital status:

Gender	No	%	Marital	No	%
Male	164	63	married	148	56.92
Female	94	36	single	104	40
No response	2	1	others	8	3.1

The age ranges of respondents are in the brackets of five years as shown in Table 10.

Table 10 provides data on the age range of respondents. The information supplied in this table showed that the age range of respondent was between 21 and 52 years meaning that they are all adults and that information given by them can be relied upon in making a conclusion.

Table 10: Age of respondents.

Age Range	No	%
21 – 25	46	18
26 – 30	57	22
31 – 35	39	15
36 – 40	43	17
41 – 45	26	10
46 – 50	22	8
51 –above	21	8
No response	6	2

Table 11 below provides data on the occupational characteristics of respondents. Data from Table 11 showed that information from respondents cut across a wide spectrum of people from various occupations who are members of the Church and that information supplied by them can also be relied upon.

Table 11: Respondents occupation

Occupation	No	%
Farming	36	13.85
Civil Servant	83	31.92
Business	61	23.46
Student	59	22.69
Others	21	8.08

Section two consists of five questions as show in Table 12 which has to do with access to personal information as well as those from the Conference.

Respondents in Table 12 were asked to know how they access their personal information as well as information from the Conference. In addition, the questions sought to know the level of computer literacy. In essence these sets of questions were intended to help this study recommend the most effective means of information sharing between the Conference and the constituent units.

Table 12: Responses to items on access to information

Items	Percentage response
1. Flow of information from NENC:	Excellent (11%), Good (26%), Fair (47%), Poor (17%)
2. Cell phone number of officers:	Yes (27%) No (73%)
3. Means of accessing information From Conference:	Letter (35%), Phone (26%), Internet (7%), Pastor (31%), No response (1%)
4. Access to personal information:	Post (18%), Phone (64%), Email (8%) No response (10%)
5. Computer Literacy:	Yes (52%), No (48%)

Table 13 shows respondents' level of knowledge of the operation of the Conference. The set of questions in Table 13 were asked to know whether the respondents have a working knowledge of the operations of the Church both at the local and at the Conference levels. This was to assist the study in developing appropriate strategies in order to ratify the anomalies that may have been inhibiting effective communication in the Conference.

Table 13: Knowledge of Church Operation of the Conference

No	Items	Percentage response
1	Heard of communication department?	Yes (58%) No (30%) Not sure (12%)
2	Knowledge of Communication Director.	Yes (26%) No (68%) Not sure (7%)
3	Frequency of business meetings:	Monthly (28%), quarterly (58%) yearly (11%) No response (2%)
4	Does Pastor inform you adequately?	Yes (68%) No (8%) Not sure (23%)
5	How members get information	Weekly announcement (74%) Bulletin (14%)
6	Is Communication effective in NENC?	Yes (39%) No (31%) Not sure (30%)
7	Communication can improve in NENC:	Yes (95%) No (2%) Not sure (3%)

Table 14 consists of suggested ways to enhance effective Communication I North-East Nigeria Conference. Table 14 consists of four items suggestions on strategies to enhance effective communication in the conference. 45% of the respondents suggest the use of cell phone Bulk text messages, media patronage as means of enhancing effective communication, 12% sought the use of newsletter, magazine and journals, 31% suggest communication education, while 12% suggest visitation by conference leaders, exchange information through calendar of events and follow up mechanism.

Table 14: Suggested ways to enhance Communication

No	Items	Percentage response
1	Cell phone/ ICT etc	45%
2	Newsletter/magazine/journals	12%
3	Communication Education	31%
4	Visitation/interaction/follow up	12%

Discussion of Findings

In order to evaluate findings from the questionnaire, it is necessary to compare the finding with the hypothesis upon which the questions were based.

Flow of Information from the Conference

It is the responsibility of the conference leaders to ensure that information flow to the local entities at all times. Equally, the Pastors who are the link between the conference and the local entities are shouldered with the responsibility of getting information down and up with unqualified clarity. The leaders who are vested with

the task of administering the conference territory are trying but much needed to be done in the area of information dissemination.

The researcher's experience as a departmental director shows that many a times when information is given from the office, some of the pastors either handle it carelessly or purposely keep such information in order to sabotage the Officer or Director. Question 7 of the questionnaire type 1 asked to rate the flow of information in NENC, even though 27% rate it excellent, 58% good, 9% fair and 6% poor when compared with the response in questionnaire type 2 on the same question showed a contrast as 11% rate the flow of information as excellent, 26% as good, 47% fair and 17% poor. This shows that information do not get down well as expected leading to uncomplimentary comments people usually make against the leaders at times.

Time spent by Pastors in a particular station can affect effective communication. The researcher opines that if a pastor spends a long period of time in a particular station, his style of doing things can become boring to the members who see nothing but repetition of the same thing all the time. Question 5 of questionnaire type asked to know the number of years a pastor spent in a station, 30% of the respondents say they have to four to five years and even 3% of the respondents spent more than six years in one station is an issue the conference should address so that members can have opportunity of enjoying the service of other talents

Lack of Understanding of Church Operations

Of the two hundred sixty respondents 58% responded to question 1 in section 11 of questionnaire type II that they heard of communication department, 30% have not while 12% are not sure. Responses to question 2 in the same section revealed that only 26% know the communication director, 68% do not and 7% are not even sure.

One of the core duties of the communication Department is to act as a bridge between the administration and the constituent units.⁵⁶ The complaint of some respondents is that they do not feel the impact of the department in the districts.

Question 3 in section III of questionnaire type II, ask to know members knowledge of church operation, 28% stated that business meeting are held monthly, 58% say quarterly, while 11% opines yearly with 2% no response to the question. It should be noted at this point that communication is not only the business of the Conference Office. The local leaders need to communicate their activities to members at specially called meeting of all baptized members of the church once a month when an urgent need calls for it, but the normal time is once every quarter.⁵⁷ It is necessary members are educated in this regards.

Computer Literacy and Effective Communication

Today we live in a computer age where by both personal and private information can be accessed with just a push of the buttons. The need for computer literacy cannot be over-emphasized. Church leaders and members should be encouraged to learn the use of computer. Response to question 15 of questionnaire type I whereby, only 30% of pastors are computer literate and a whopping 67% are computer illiterate is deplorable. All effort on the part of the Conference and the individuals concerned should be geared towards making sure they enroll at the nearest coaching center as they may be phased out sooner than later when they can no longer give the stuff needed in the current dispensation.

⁵⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Communication Department, *Mission Statement 2013*, <http://www.adventists.org> (18 April 2013).

⁵⁷ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Church Manual (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2005),89.

Early Information Sharing and Effective Communication

Respondents to question 12 of questionnaire type 1, 21% say all leaders send their calendar of event, 58% stated that some do, while 15% of them never receive such calendar at all is not the best for the set up. It is also not enough to just send calendar of events, this should be done at the beginning of the year and ensure that mechanism be put in place for monitoring.

Factors Inhibiting Effective Communication in North-East Nigeria Conference.

From the result of data analyses it is discovered that several factors are militating against effective communication in North-East Nigeria Conference; among them are:

- ❖ **Lack of free flow of information.** Even though responses to question 2 of the questionnaire type 1 showed 70% know the cell phone number of principal officers of North-East Nigeria Conference, the same cannot be said of the membership. In fact, responses to the same question in questionnaire type II showed that only 27% of respondents know the phone numbers of their Officers leaving 73% without access to their leaders' phone number. This is a serious inhibiting factor that should be addressed.
- ❖ **Lack of proper Communication Education.** Most local leaders are either kept in the dark or do not know how to get information from the Conference. This needs to be fixed in order to ensure a free and unimpeded flow of information.
- ❖ **Uncooperative attitudes of some leaders.** As noted earlier, a situation where information are given but those charged with disseminating these

information either carelessly misplace them or deliberately sabotage the effort of higher leaders.

- ❖ **Lack of early information sharing and follow up.** It is common knowledge that some time our leaders adopt fire brigade approach to communication issues. Instead of sending calendar and notice of meeting early, they at times wait (or so it seems) until the event is passed or send impromptu notice. North East Conference covers a very vast region with some districts as far as more than six hundred kilometers from the headquarters. In such situation a last minute notice cannot work easily as it could with areas that are close by. Other factors militating against free flow of information may be summarized as follows:
 - ❖ Lack of adequate knowledge of Church operation.
 - ❖ Lack of computer literacy
 - ❖ Lack of follow up and feed-back mechanism.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

As a result of findings, the researcher deemed it necessary to develop a program which is aimed at finding a solution to the above findings. The program was planned and approved by the Conference administration for the meetings to run for 3 days each in two centers, one at Gombe comprising Gombe Zone and the other at Jos comprising Jos, Laranto, Jengre and Kantau zones based on the proximity of the areas to the seminar centers.

Program Development

This area of research is quite new as materials are not handy. However in order to have a quality program, the researcher gathered communication materials from the Bible, the internet and a few other sources which were used during the field program. These materials include:

1. The communication materials from the General conference communication website, the Church Manual and the Bible.
2. Communicating effectively by Sandra Hybells, and Richard Weaver
3. Communication in our lives by Julian T. Woods.
4. Notes on Communication by Gordon Coates.
5. Internet Materials from internet such as www.helpguide.org

Objectives of the Program

As stated earlier, the objectives of this program is to enhance effective communication in North-East Nigeria Conference. It has been observed that information is either badly managed or poorly managed by those in charge. It is expected that this program would address issues such as, local leaders complaining that information about events either get to them late or not at all until the events are over. It is also intended to help Church leaders at all levels get better acquainted. Finally it would lead to a mechanism whereby local leaders could access Conference leaders and information more easily.

The time table for the three days seminar in each of the two centers is as follows:

Centre	Participants	Date of Seminar
Gombe	Gombe Zone (Gombe, Bauchi, Maiduguri and (Yola Districts)	October 4 – 6 th , 2012
Jos	Jos Zone Jos, Laranto Jengre and Kantau	October 11 – 13, 2012

These centers were arranged for the conveniences of the participants and the seminar coordinator. The main participants from these areas were the Pastors, District Elders and communication secretaries. Two hours were planned for seminar lectures every day.

Program Implementation

After all the necessary planning and preparations were in place, the first of the series were held at Gombe Church and later Jos Church with all the participants in attendance.

The topics carefully selected and presented were as follows:

Day 1

1. Introduction (Meaning and Origin of Communication)
2. Features of Communication
3. Symbols of Communication
4. Questions and Answers

Day 2

1. Types of Communication.
2. What is effective Communication?
3. Barriers to effective Communication.
4. Questions and Answers.

Day 3

1. Towards Enhancing Effective Communication
2. Need for Regular Reporting
3. Getting Acquainted with Leaders at the Conference
4. Need for Computer Literacy
5. Questions and Answers

The series were interactive in nature as participants freely expressed themselves on the issue at hand, asked very relevant questions and made useful suggestions as to how information management can be improved in the Conference. High point of the series was when the resource person put a call to some of the leaders and amplified it for all participants to listen and talk to their leaders.

Program Evaluation

After the series were completed, the last questionnaire meant to evaluate the program development was distributed to the District elders and communication secretaries of the 22 Districts at the beginning of November 2012 and a mechanism was put in place i.e. that of having the phone number of all those in possession of the questionnaires, the researcher was able to keenly monitor the collection of the same 100% at the end of the month. This goes on to show that if only the Church leaders could educate the congregants accordingly it will reduce the level of ignorance about the operations of the field.

Table 15 contains information supplied by the respondents on how they evaluate communication in the Conference in the aftermath of the program conducted by the researcher, whether indeed there was an improvement or not.

Table 15: Showing Percentage responses to items 1 to 7 of questionnaire type III

S/No	Items	Percentages responses
1	Flow of information	Excellent (16%) Good (64%) Fair (18%) Poor (1%)
2	Cell phone number of leaders	Yes (95%) No (5%)
3	Computer Literacy	Yes (64%) No (36%)
4	Knowledge of Communication Director	Yes (100%) No (0%) Not sure (0%)
5	Frequency of business meeting	Monthly (0%) Quarterly(100%) Yearly (0%)
6	Has communication in NEC improved	strongly agree (29%) Agree (57%) Disagree (14%)
7	Can communication improve	Strongly agree (61%) Agree (39%) Disagree (0%)

The analysis of questionnaire type III is focused on three main areas of importance. This is informed by the writer’s intention to see improvement in communication between the conference and local levels, improved communication within the local level and a strong mechanism to see channels of communication open at all time. The questionnaire was designed to address these three areas.

Table 16 shows the flow of information after the program implementation. 16% of the respondents, rate it as excellent, 64% stated it is good with only 18% fair and 1% poor. Item 2 dwelt on how many know their cell phone numbers 95% (yes), 5% (no). The data on respondents’ computer literacy, shows 64% literate and 36% not. 100% of respondents affirmed they know the communication director.

Question 5 asked on the frequency of business meeting. 100% of the respondents affirm that it is quarterly. 29% of the respondents strongly agree that communication has improved, 57% agree and 14% disagree. Question 7 asked whether communication in the conference can still improve. 61% strongly agree and 39% agree.

Table 16 below consists of suggestions by respondents on strategies for enhancing effective Communication in North-East Conference. 36% of the respondents suggest computer literacy for Pastors and Church members, provision of computer gadgets like desktops, laptops and customized phones for Church leaders. In addition, they stated that the use of bulk SMS is a cheap and easy means of getting information across. Furthermore, they opined that the Churches should be encouraged to make good use of both print and electronic media houses. 33% suggest continuous and regular communication education for Church leaders as well as seminars and workshops. 18% suggest that Conference leaders should send calendar of events early and ensure they get a feed-back, while 14% suggest that conference should be yearly or at least once in two years. During such a visit, an interactive session should be arranged whereby the leaders and Church members can rub minds on issues which could not be discussed by phone.

Table 16: Suggested ways to enhance effective communication in North-East Nigeria Conference

S/no	Items	Percentage response
1	Computer literacy/Church website/bulk text messages	36%
2	Communication Education/seminars/workshop	32%
3	Early exchange of calendar of event & information	18%
4	Visitation/interaction/follow up	14%

Achievement of the Objectives

After having conducted the program, questionnaires were given out and collected. The result of the analysis show that communication has improved in North East Nigeria Conference. Whereas before the program implementation, the percentage responses to questionnaire type 1 and 11 on flow of information has improved from 78% (commutative of good and excellent) in questionnaire type 1, 47% (commutative of good and excellent) in questionnaire type 11 to a commutative 80% (excellent and good) in table 16.

Also, the right of members to freely access their leaders and their counterparts throughout the conference is assured as attested to by 95% of respondents as against 70% (type 1 questionnaire) and 27% (type 11 questionnaire) who now know the phone number of their leaders. As part of the series, the researcher compiled and distributed the cell phone numbers of officers, Directors and all Pastors in the conference to the participants and as well collect the cell phone numbers of all District Head Elders and communication secretaries which were also given to the Officers and Directors. This has allayed the complaints that Conference leaders were inaccessible and do not carry people along.

Another objective achieved is the knowledge of operations at local level. Communication is not only Conference to local Church; the local churches too have a duty to communicate among themselves. Business meetings, use of Church bulletins and the use of bulk text messages were emphasized and adopted by participants. Item 5 in table 16 shows that 100% of respondents now attend business meetings meant for once in a quarter frequently; thus making them receptive to the benefits of such meetings.

A third achievement of objective is putting a mechanism in place for effective communication. After the series, the writer had consultation with the Conference Officers and other stakeholders on opening of the Conference website and the need to use bulk text messages as reminders, now that phone numbers and e-mail addresses of stake holders were in their possession. The issue of Conference website was taken

seriously and the Communication Director promised that work on that has commenced, assuring that it will soon be operational.

Finally, the program served as a veritable ground to get suggestion from participants on the ways forward in enhancing effective communication. As has been seen from the analysis, we have not yet attained 100% effective communication, but the intention of the researcher is to start from somewhere, no matter how little may be achieved at the beginning. With the little that may have been achieved if sustained, the Conference will certainly get to the stage where there will be perfect flow of information whereby there will be no more complain in regard to communication matters in North-East Nigeria Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

To sum it all up, effective communication is an important ingredient in nurturing relationship and powering the wheel of progress in any organization, including the North East Nigeria Conference. Communication is a wonderful gift God has given to humanity from the very beginning. God originated the art of communication and modeled it for man for all times. He employed this art in the heavenly council as well as communicated with man before and after the fall.

Communication's purpose is to pass information which the receiver is expected to understand and act accordingly, by sending an appropriate feedback. This takes place when the source originates a message and sends it through the channel to the receiver who in turn decodes the message and transmits corrective signals to the original source, based on the message received. This way, both the source and receiver exchange roles simultaneously. Communication is done through symbols, such as verbal language, body language, color etc. It can be intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public and mass media.

The North-East Nigeria Conference engages in communication at all levels. There is therefore need for every constituent to do so with clarity. This will help remove doubts and suspicion, which may lead to friction in relationship. Members need timely and regular information, just as those in authority need to be fed with same from various angles at all time.

For this to properly happen, ministers are called upon to pioneer the work of educating the Churches on the importance of prompt reporting as well as passing information received from the Conference as and when due. Leaders too are to ensure that information gets to the Churches on time.

The enhancement drive for effective communication was started in North-East Nigeria Conference in 2012 because of the hypothesis that either the leaders are not doing their jobs or the people down in the local district do not know their responsibilities as required.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study, the following conclusion can be drawn:

The method of information dissemination in North-East Nigeria Conference is not sufficient. A situation whereby information meant for Church members is either deliberately hidden or carelessly handled some times; rob members of the opportunity of participating in Church programs beneficial to them.

There are no deliberate plans for communication education. This is clear evidence that there is no mechanism of follow up when information is given out. More so, there were no seminars or workshop to remind Church members of their duty in contacting the office as often as possible. Some of the respondents to questionnaire type II even alleged that they do not know of Communication Department. As many as 42% respondents to question 1 on table 14 either do not know, or are not sure, while responses to question 2 show that 68% do not know the Director of Communication in the Conference. The matter is made even worse that

before the program implementation, some Churches do not even know of the Communication Department, let alone having a Secretary in their Churches.

As can be seen on table 2, some districts are more than 600 kilometers from the Conference headquarters. Hitherto, this distance had been a problem when churches would wait for weeks or even months before information could reach them. Even at that instances abounds whereby the District Pastors who were usually the bearers if such information may have some challenges which may lead to his forgetting them in his travelling bag until they become obsolete, but with the advent of modern gadgets, it no longer constitutes much of a hindrance to communication.

The communication program introduced by the researcher is a welcome development. Participants applauded it and asked that it continues. Therefore, for this program to be sustainable there should be a continuous education to the members by the Pastors and Conference leadership. This will be helpful to all Churches; not only in the North-East Nigeria Conference but other sister Conferences as well.

Finally, in the course of this study, the researcher discovered that this is a new area of study; hence Church materials on the study are scanty. However, it can be sustained and improved upon. The new Conference Communication Director has started working in the right direction. It is hoped that the Conference leadership should give him free hand to operate and support him.

Recommendations

The subject matter of this research is very important and is such a broad topic that recommendations for further study on other aspects related to it may be taken up as to make communication effective in North-East Nigeria Conference. It is incontrovertible therefore that Churches are built on people. According to the Holy

book; “where there is no vision, the people perish (Prov 29: 18).” One may therefore surmise invariably that; where there are also no people, the vision will perish because every vision is people oriented. As the saying goes, “it takes two to tango.” Whether they are clergies or congregants, seekers or pessimists, it is significant to act in a way that makes sure individuals are there for each other whenever they are needed.

Negotiating positive relationships comes down to keeping in the good graces of every Church member one meets, as a leader on the way to the top or while climbing up the Church ladder, because a day of reckoning may come here on earth and ultimately above (Rom 14:12). It should be noted that what goes around comes around.

Effective communication in the Church from the local level to the Conference could facilitate the bond of true Christian communion as well as improve the Christian culture of peace and intimate spiritual fellowship from the leadership level to the laity. This is so because communication in a Conference will always be a work in progress, with a lot of adjustments in the process until it reaches effectiveness. In a Conference where the foregoing virtues prevail, the ominous signs are good solid organizational communication, where barriers are eliminated, problems resolved conveniently and stronger institutional relationships are built for increased productivity.

It is against this backdrop that the recommendations below; aimed at enhancing effective communication in the North-East Nigeria Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is very critical:

1. Feedback should be encouraged in the Churches:

It is good for a minister to know when he losing touch with the congregants, due to either occupational challenges or non ethical issues, and quickly take steps to mend the relationship before it falls apart completely. Our survey here indicates that poor

communication, misinformation and communication breakdown in the local Church are capable of overheating the peace and unity expected in many a local Church: the subset of the Conference. Some surveys and discussions have acknowledged that lack of information is a cause. In others words keeping people in the loop. Some have said they don't feel important in the eyes of their Pastors. Some Church members have complained about how they are just a number. Providing a little feeling and personality to emails will reduce such complaint to an extent. Once a leader can express his sincere concern about his feelings for the Church members, they will feel important. Such face to face interactions; especially with the Church leaders may foster a healthy leader-congregation communion. In view of the enormous challenges of leadership, one of the most impressive ways the Conference could be in sync with their constituents recurrently or regularly is by well thought out emails that follow the chain of admonition, impartation, mixed with passion, empathy as and when desirable; and genuine brotherhood through face to face interactions. Modest email etiquette is therefore a good tonic for effective communication between the leader and the led.

2. Improve Workplace Culture

Effective communication among the laity and non staff of the Conference will go a long way to play a prominent role in developing long lasting Conference motivation. One of the many positive benefits gained from well established organizational communication is improved relationships which would build better bond within and without, as well as consolidate mutuality in the body of Christ. Although improving relationships between Church leadership and others is quite important, this has been glossed over most often; thus leading to avoidable situations.

Things will go smoothly when everyone is on the same page, with adequate understanding of goals and the direction the Conference is going.

Leaders should be given periodic training on effective communication for deeper understanding, so they can better appreciate the challenges of effective communication, and be capable of recognizing barriers that hurt the communication process. This would engender positive results, as it will foster effective communication in the Conference.

3. The Relevance of trained Communication personnel in each Conference.

Churches at the Conference level and beyond could improve organizational communication, by employment of candidates versed in Public Relations ethics as well as screening job candidates for communication skills during interviews.

Whereas members, who spread gossip, criticize or have consistently negative attitudes can hinder the flow of effective communication between the rank and file, members of staff with such traits are bigger cogs in the wheel of Church growth, hence the laity sees the leadership through them. Consequently, it is desirable to resolve issues with the employees and the congregation through training, discipline or termination (where termination becomes the last resort to open up a virile communication flow). It may be noted here that the people the Church does not train could tear it gradually but ultimately. The *Tobias*, *Sanballats* and *Geshemites* have not ceased from the Conference to the constituents, just like they prevailed during Nehemiah's days.

4. The relevance of Bonding through Non Formal Church Programs

Conference could communicate more when they have a bond of trust with their constituents. To this end, Church Pastors and other leaders should talk with their members to determine their hobbies and interests, and create informal avenues to unwind from the stress of administration and be as much as possible natural with each other. This is because, most congregants see their leaders, especially Pastors as *demi-gods* who neither eat nor indulge in social life at all. The leaders' active involvement in recreational events, such as *barbeques; theme-park days*, quarterly *social business meetings* on Sundays; will give Conference a sense of community and let them know that their membership, service and fellowship are appreciated. Constituents who feel appreciated through awards of gift items and souvenirs will lay down their lives, time, wealth and talents in serving the Church and communicate more effectively with other members and the leadership about their unflinching faith in the denomination as well as work harder in wooing prospects to their Church.

5. Maintaining a Cordial Relationship across the Board

In the Conference, a co-pastor may one day become the next leader. Maintaining a civil and professional atmosphere in all of dealings and relationships will keep us in good stead with those we might need later on in our ministry vocation. Some kill joys in Conference ministry may be pettiness, factionalisation and nepotism/favoritism. As a minister, one may hear negative talk about predecessors or individuals the successor has not met or known properly, especially in a new station, it is more advisable to cautiously avoid the trap of adopting another person's opinion as your own. Your own relationship with the person could be productive and

beneficial if you give it a chance. Pastors posted to new fields should as a matter of necessity, be properly given adequate orientation on effective communication as a tool for enduring Church administration before they resume duties. Of course, these are the basic ministerial *sine qua non* drummed into the pastors from the outset of pastoral ministry orientation, it is worthy of note that the Bible itself states: “faith comes by hearing and hearing....(Rom 14: 12)” That is to emphasize the importance of resonance on sensitive and vital information that are critical to effective communication among Church’ opinion leaders. Although, good listening is an attribute of effective communication, a leader who shows off what he knows may not ingratiate himself to anyone. Rather, he will just put people off. Listening and asking smart questions, in particular when one is in a new environment, is a better strategy. This should be encouraged and fostered among our Conferences, because strife has demeaned modest Church growth efforts in some locations to a very large extent. Leaders should see beyond their ecclesiastical titles and administrative positions for the Holy Spirit to be dynamic in His power to save, heal and plunder hell to populate heaven.

Because this project is in exhaustive, further study is therefore recommended to be done in the following areas:

1. Studies should be carried out on factors inhibiting effective communication as a factor for improved evangelism in the North-East Nigeria Conference. This would bring to the fore why some areas are successful and simple while others are difficult.
2. Study should also be carried out on effective Church information system, an imperative for proper record keeping.

3. That conference should extend the customized globalcom mobile phones to district elders and communication secretaries to enhance efficiency of their work.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE TYPE I

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

BABCOCK UNIVERSITY STUDY CENTER RESEARCH PROJECT

“TOWARDS ENHANCING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH”

To: All Pastors, North-East Nigeria conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Dear Sir,

Kindly supply the following information needed for my Research Project, a partial requirement for the Degree Masters of Arts Pastoral Theology.

Your sincerity will be highly appreciated and you may choose not to write your name.

Yours Sincerely

Onuwah David Ode

1. Status: District pastor () Church pastor () Pioneer ()
2. Marital status: Married () Single () Separated ()
3. Are you an ordained pastor? Yes () No ()
4. As a Pastor, how many years have you served in the gospel ministry?

5. How many years have you served in your present station? _____
6. Kindly check the educational qualification applicable to you. PhD/D.min ()
MA () BA/HND () OND/ND I () NCE () SSCE () First
School leaving Certificate () others ()

7. How will you rate the flow of information in North-East Nigeria Conference?
Excellent () Good () Fair () Poor ()
8. Are you adequately informed about the operations of various Departments in North-East Nigeria Conference? Yes () No ()
9. Do you have a hand set (cell phone)? Yes () No ()
10. Do you have the cell phone number of the conference officers? Yes ()
No ()
11. Do you know how many Departmental Directors we have in North-East Nigeria Conference? Yes () No ()
12. How many of the officers and Directors send in their yearly program of activities? All () Some () None ()
13. How regularly do you send your reports to the Conference? Monthly ()
Quarterly () Yearly ()
14. Are you well informed by the conference office? Yes () No ()
Not sure ()
15. Are you computer literate? Yes () No ()
16. Does your church have any of the communication outlets (check as applicable)
post office box () cell phone () email ()
17. Does your church have a communication secretary? Yes () No ()
18. What suggestion can you make to enhance effective communication in North-east Nigeria Conference.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE TYPE II

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

BABCOCK UNIVERSITY STUDY CENTER RESEARCH PROJECT

**“TOWARDS ENHANCING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN NORTH-
EAST NIGERIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH”**

To: Selected Church Members. North-east Nigeria Conference of SDAs

Dear Brother/ sister,

“TOWARDS ENHANCING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN NORTH-EAST
NIGERIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH”

Kindly supply the following information that will enable me complete my Project, for the course MA in Pastoral Theology. You may choose to be anonymous as your sincerity will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours Sincerely

Onuwah David Ode

SECTION I

1. Gender/Sex: Male () Female ()
2. Age: _____
3. Marital status: Married () Single () others ()
4. What is your occupation? Farmer () Civil Servant () Business ()
Student () Other ()

SECTION II

1. How will you rate the flow of information in North-East Nigeria Conference?
Excellent () Good () Fair () Poor ()
2. Do you have the cell phone number of the principal officers of the conference?
Yes () No ()
3. How do you normally get information from the conference office? By letter
() Through phone calls () Through internet () Through the Pastor ()
4. How do you access your personal information? By post () By phone ()
By E-mail () Others (). Check only one option.
5. Are you computer literate? Yes () No ()

SECTION III

1. Have you heard of the Communication Department? Yes () No ()
Not sure ()
2. Do you know the Conference Communication Director? Yes () No ()
Not sure ()
3. How often does your church hold business meetings? Monthly ()
Quarterly () Yearly ()

4. Does your pastor inform you adequately about the operations of the conference? Yes () No () Not Sure ()

5. How does information get to church members? By weekly announcement () through the church bulletin () on the church notice boards () by phone calls/ text messages () others

6. Do you believe communication in North-east Nigeria Conference is effective? Yes () No () Not sure ()

7. Do you believe that communication in North-east Nigeria Conference can improve? Yes () No () Not sure ()

8. State strategies that can enhance effective communication in North-east Nigeria Conference

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE TYPE III

**ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA
BABCOCK UNIVERSITY STUDY CENTER RESEARCH PROJECT
“TOWARDS ENHANCING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN NORTH-
EAST NIGERIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH”**

To: District Elders and Communication Secretaries. North-east Nigeria Conference of SDAs

Dear Brother/ sister,

“TOWARDS ENHANCING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH”

Kindly supply the following information that will enable me complete my Project, for the course MA in Pastoral Theology. You may choose to be anonymous as your sincerity will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours Sincerely

Onuwah David Ode

1. Gender/Sex: Male () Female ()
2. Age: _____
3. Marital status: Married () Single () others ()
4. What is your occupation? Farmer () Civil Servant () Business ()
Student ()
5. Flow of information in North-East Nigeria Conference? Excellent () Good
() Fair () poor()
6. Do you have the cell phone number of the principal officers and Directors of
the Conference? Yes () No ()
7. Are you computer literate? Yes () No ()
8. Have you heard of the Communication Department? Yes () No ()
Not sure ()
9. How often does your church hold business meetings? Monthly ()
Quarterly () Yearly ()
10. Do you agree that communication in North-East Nigeria Conference has
improved? Strongly agree () Agree () Disagree ().
11. Do you agree that communication in North-East Nigeria Conference can still
be improved? Strongly agree () Agree () Disagree ().
12. Can you suggest programs and activities that further enhance effective
communication in North-East Nigeria
Conference: _____

APPENDIX D

COMMUNICATION SEMINAR HELD IN TWO CENTERS OF NORTH- EAST NIGERIA CONFERENCE

Prepared by Pastor David O. Onuwah

DAY 1 LECTURE 1

MEANING AND PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION I

INTRODUCTION

Communication is very essential to human relationship and his entire existence. It is the oil that human being use to keep the wheel of their relationship running smoothly. We communicate every day and everywhere through various means and methods to our loved ones, our colleagues and some times with even animals and machines. In this seminar, we shall explore various aspects of communication as a term how it can be effective to our setting.

What is communication?

Merriam Webster Dictionary defined communication as “a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs and behavior”

According to Collins English Dictionary communication is defined as “the impartation or exchange of information, ideas or feelings”. From the above definitions, we saw particular aspects of communication which include exchange and impartation of information, ideas and feelings. It can be further stressed that communication involves a process of sharing with another person or persons one's knowledge, interests, attitudes, opinions and ideas.

Origin of communication

The earliest we can think of is what Moses recorded in Genesis. Let us consider the following:

1. And God said, let us make man in our image...”(Gen 1:26)
2. “God said, it is not good that man should be alone...” (Gen 2:18)
3. Serpent and Eve (Gen 3:1-5)
4. Adam and God (Gen 3:9-10)
5. In Handing down the punishment for the fish rebellion God spoke to the hearing of all the persons involved in the saga.

From this beginning, mankind have been engaging in various forms of communication using features and symbols known in ancient times and those invented during the various stages of human civilization.

Features of communication

For communication to take place certain features or elements are involved. These include.

- The source: - that is the originator of the message.
- The sender: - The one sending out the message.
- The message: - that is the idea information, symbols, signs, feeling being sent out.
- The Channel- Is the medium through which the message is sent
- Receiver- The one receiving the message sent and in the course of sending a feed back becomes a sender as well.
- Feedback- The transmission of evaluative or corrective information to the original source or sender about the message received.
- Communication is a process. It is not just a one way sending of signals. Rather it is a kind of relationship in which the sender and receiver are simultaneously involved in exchanged of ideas and information. In this process both the sender and receiver are constantly exchanged roles.

DAY 1 LECTURE 2

In this segment we shall explore further how communication works. We will look at the purpose and symbols with which communication is carried out.

COMMUNICATION PURPOSE

Communication is not a mere sending of signals for the fun of it. Rather it has set targets which it aims at meeting. For instance, the communication may want to persuade some one to accept or believe a particular idea or concept, as in the case of a gospel preacher or a classroom teacher. On the other hand, a comedian or musician may just want to entertain and create fun. In both cases, the communicator may just want to pass an information which he wants his listeners to know and understand.

SYMBOLS OF COMMUNICATION

A sender may use different symbols to encode his message. Among such symbols are:

- ❖ **Verbal Language:** This involves the use of words as the voice is modulated to bring out meaning. This may be face to face as in a classroom teaching, story telling etc or it may be through telephone
- ❖ **Body language:** the use of gestures and facial appearances to communicate various moods such as joy, sadness, boredom etc.
- ❖ **Colour:** the colour of clothes one wears may communicate the state of his/her mind.
- ❖ **Pictures:** this is most helpful with teaching children and youth.
- ❖ **Music:** this is a very powerful symbol since almost every one listens to music, any information encoded in musical lyrics gets across to a very wide spectrum of listeners.
- ❖ **Tears:** tears communicate deep passion or feeling of pain, sorrow, or even joy.

Beside these, there are various other symbols that communicate specific information to people in different societal settings.

CONCLUSION

Communication is a vehicle through which humans share and exchange ideas, feelings and information through signs and symbols. It begins with the source which encodes a message through the channel and is decoded by the receiver who in turn sends a feedback signal to the source thereby exchange roles simultaneously. Communication's target or purpose is to pass information which the sender wants his listeners to accept, believe or understand. Finally communication uses different symbols to encode and decode messages

Note: Encode- To either convert a body of information from one system of communication to another, or to convert a message into code.

Decode- To convert a coded message into intelligible form. To recognize and interpret an electronic signal.

DAY 2 –LECTURE 1

PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION PART II

First let us review what we studied yesterday.....

Today we shall be focusing on types of communication, barriers to effective communication and how communication can be effective.

Types of communication

Communication experts generally identified the following types of communication:

- a. Intra-personal communication- this takes place within an individual because it centers on the self, you are both the sender and receiver.
- b. Interpersonal communication- this occurs when we communicate on one-to-one basis –usually in an informal setting.
- c. Small-Group communication: This occurs when a small number of people meet to solve a problem. Any wonder why the Seventh - day Adventist Church is adopting this method of evangelism. Every member of the small group has a chance to interact with other members freely.
- d. Public Communication: Here the sender- receiver process takes place. The speaker (sender) sends a message (speech or sermon) to the audience (receivers).

- e. Inter-Cultural Communication: By culture, we mean a group of people who share distinct set of norms, values and symbols. Our cultures differ significantly so a good communicator should be mindful of that.
- f. Mass Communication: This involves the use of the mass media in which mass number of people at different locations can be reached at the same time. Examples of mass communication include.
 - Electronic Media – Television, video, radio, films, satellite, the internet etc.
 - Print Media – Newspapers, Magazines, Journals, Books including Bible.
- g. Indigenous/Traditional Communication: In ancient time this was the most effective type of communication. Even at present it is very common in villages where people live in close proximity messages are communicated through.
 - The Town
 - Beating of gongs, drums, ringing of a bell blowing of trumpet or shooting of a gun.

All these have previously known common meanings to both the sender and receiver.

DAY 2- LECTURE 2

What is effective communication?

In our to days world we have to send, receive and process a number of messages every day. But effective communication is more than just exchanging information. Effective communication requires us to also understand the emotion behind the information. This can improve relationship at home, work, and in social situations by deepening your connections to other and improve team work, decision making, caring and problem solving.

Communication experts formulate five principles of effective that we shall consider as follows.

- ❖ Get appropriate feedback – Be sure your message or instruction is understood as you intended.
- ❖ Get really connected with your audience. Closely related to the principle above you need to know that communication is a two way process. So you

have to recede what you want the outcome of your communication to be. Are you trying to inform, persuade, praise, shock or inspire? The watch word is be really connected with your audience, do not take things for granted.

- ❖ Listen and understand first engage your audience closely watch out their gestures when talking, this will help you understand why a student is not performing well or a staff member is not doing well. These may be emotional trauma behind some one's dismal performing.
- ❖ Understand that is more than surface meaning of words. You need to be able to interpret other people's message and study their body language especially when you are addressing an audience. Those who are receptive will give you eye contact but the other group may either work way, feeling of boredom and vague.
- ❖ The fifth principle is respect. We need to respect the feeling, ideas and opinion of others. Not only those who disagree with us. We come from different the other fellows that we can really gain their cooperation. If people know you don't respect than they in turn will lose respect for you.
- ❖ Conclusion: If we are having problems communicating effectively, we need to start analyzing where we have gone wrong; we can begin by asking the question, what sort of feedbacks do we allow for? Do we understand how to appeal to people's emotions and reasoning powers? Do we understand what make one audience tick? Have we tried to find out about their real lives and what is important to them? And are we showing lack of respect by trying to hoodwink than? By addressing these questions as fickle as possible you go long way towards improving the outcomes of one communication.

Barriers to Effective Communication.

Communication process can be distorted by various barriers. It is therefore important that both the sender and receiver be on their guard to resist if possible, and

remove all forms of barriers from their communication process. Among such barriers are the following:

Physical Barriers:

- ❖ **Noise:** Noise interferes with your receiving a message or with others receiving your message⁵⁸. Noise may be physical (environmental or industrial); physiological (hearing or visual impairment, articulation disorder); psychological (preconceived ideas, wandering thoughts); semantics (misunderstood meanings). Technically, noise is anything that distorts the message and prevents the receiver from receiving the message.
- ❖ **Abnormal Temperature:** If the room is too warm, listeners' attention is diverted as they try to fan themselves to cool down. On the other hand if the room is too cold, it can constitute a barrier to the communication going on either in the church or classroom
- ❖ **Technical Barrier:** In public communication sometimes the microphones, amplifying devices do not work well, this can constitute barriers to effective communication.

DAY 3 – LECTURE 1

**WAYS TOWARDS ENHANCING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
IN OUR CONFERENCES**

So far we have discovered that for communication to be effective the following principles must be present.

1. It is a two way transaction
2. It involves active listening

3. It must reflect the accountability of speaker and listener
4. It utilizes feed back
5. It must be clear.

Our studies today will folds on strategies towards charging effective communication in our conference.

Need for regular reporting

By this it means churches/districts reporting activities to the conference at regular times:

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually

The Seventh day Adventist Church Manual recommends that church should also report to the local church at specially called business meeting usually once in a quarter and at the close of the year. At such meetings which the pastor presides, and information should be given to the congregation regarding the work of the church for the quarter and the entire year as the case may be, and based on those reports, the church should approve a full plan of action for the coming quarter or the next year. All departments of the church are expected to give red information of their activities during such meetings. It is at such meetings they will have the opportunity of knowing how the church operates. In addition church member who are not members of the church board can ask questions and make useful inputs is the church's program.

When reports are going regularly it help to remove suspicion from inquisitive member. People will be carried along as they have regular access to free flow of information leaders to will have the opportunity of feedback from church members as they listen to the reactions and response when information is given regarding the various lines of the church work. This way they can evaluate their performance and work on areas of challenges.

DAY 3 – LECTURE 2

MEET OUR CONFERENCE LEADERS

During this segment we shall present information concerning the elected leaders of the conference and how they can be contracted with relative ease. We shall classify these leaders as follows:

Principal Officers or Administrators. These leaders are usually three in number.

Conference President. He chairs the executive committee and is the ranking officer of the conference

- ✓ Conference Secretary: He acts as secretary to the executive committee. He is the keeper of the conference records such as minutes of meetings, documents of landed property of the entire conference. In addition he handles correspondences that go to the conference office and those going out.
 - ✓ Conference Treasurer: The treasurer is usually in charge of the conference finances. As the tithes, offerings and donations are sent to their conference, the treasurer handled the disbursement of such funds and usually report either to the executive committee or to the conference at sessions. He /She is the custodian of all conference funds.
- a. Departmental directors: presently, North-East Nigeria Conference has twelve department directors as follows:
- I. Stewardship and trust services
 - II. Strategic planning and development
 - III. Legal service and PARL
 - IV. Education and chaplaincy
 - V. Health ministries
 - VI. Youth and children ministries
 - VII. Adventist men ministries
 - VIII. Adventist women ministries
 - IX. Communication director
 - X. Global mission/evangelism
 - XI. Ministerial secretary/ family ministries
 - XII. Shepherdess international

In addition phone numbers and email address of the leaders and even those of office support staff and pastors from all the 22 district is attached herewith. After this

lecture it is hope that the problem of not knowing whom to contact for information will be a thing of the past members now know how to contact their leaders and give information as well as receiving same from them. It should be stressed that in addition to sending information to churches, leaders should pay periodic visits , this will afford members the opportunity of interacting with them. Furthermore when information is sent, out the officer or director should ensure he/she gets feedback.

Need for computer literacy

Computer literacy is a necessity for the modern man pastors and church members should be encouraged be computer literate the age of letter writing is fast fading and the current trend demand that we engage in a system of sending and receiving information through the fastest means and that is computer.

What is computer?

Merrien Webster dictionary defined computer as “a programmable electronic device that can store, retrieve, and process data “many types of computers are available for use today.

- ✓ Desktop computer
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ I pad
- ✓ Cell phones etc.

With an internet modern you can access information from any where in the world to day. You no longer need to travel long distances to post letter or accessing information.

Benefits of Computer:

- It is faster
- It reduces the risks of travel long distances
- It stores information for you to be retrieve when ever you need them
- Treasures your privacy

Can you think of more?

Closing Exercise

- Time for questions and answers
- Time for suggestions
- Time for special prayers:
 - ❖ Prayer for the program conducted
 - ❖ Special prayer for the success in enhancing effective communication in north east Nigeria conference
 - ❖ Prayer for travelling mercies for participants

Wishing you all success in service for the Lord.

DAVID ODE ONUWAH

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EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

2013	MA Pastoral Theology (Adventist University of Africa)
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1982	General Certificate of Education GCHS Abunde, Lessel
1977	First School Leaving Certificate (CKS Anchimogbo-Iyeche, Igede)

WORKING EXPERIENCE

1993 – 1994	Church Pastor
1994 – 2001	District Pastor
2001 – 2005	Student Pastor
2005 – 2009	District Pastor
2009 – 2012	Director, Youth and Chaplaincy
2012 – Date	Church Pastor.