

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: TOWARDS REVIVING ENEKA AND ELIMGBU CHURCHES IN RUMUOKWURSI DISTRICT OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS: PORT HARCOURT CONFERENCE, NIGERIA

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The quest to measure up with the popular spiritual trend common among Christian churches has brought about changes in beliefs and practices of some Christians in the world. Many are willing to do anything to experience what some refer to as the Pentecostal power, characterised with signs and wonders. Churches where such manifestations of signs and wonders are experienced are believed by some to have been visited by God and are experiencing spiritual revival. This so called revival movement, which seems to overlook the Scripture, its study, interpretation and practices as rule of faith and a spiritual sword and safeguard for believers in Jesus Christ, emphasizes emotional ecstasy and antinomianism. The movement has swept a great percentage of the membership of Elimbu Church to form splinter groups and laid the foundation for schism among members, stagnating the growth of the church, not only in Elimbu, but in Eneka Church as well.

Quantitative and qualitative research approaches were adopted. Primary and secondary sources of information available were used to ascertain the biblical and theological stand on revival, comparing these with the popular trend of revival and its effects on Elimbu and Eneka Churches. Strategies were developed, implemented, and evaluated to enhance the revival of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) churches in Elimbu and Eneka.

The research findings reveal that some SDA members in Elimbu and Eneka believe that the popular Pentecostal revival is of God and needs to be adopted by the church while others hold a view akin to biblical based God-centred revival. The study further shows that the Pentecostal revival seems to undermine the teachings of the Scripture and the significance God's law. The said movement combines Christian beliefs with traditional practices. The strategies were implemented which brought renewal of members' faith.

The approaches adopted by the popular revival movements pose great danger to the unity, growth and spiritual life of the SDA Church and is not likely godly. Adventists are therefore not safe to adopt the spiritual exercises and practices prevalent among the adherents of the charismatic cum Pentecostal churches.

Regular Bible study, prayer for God's guidance, genuine repentance, obedience to God and active labour for the salvation of others are therefore recommended as means of experiencing sustained revival of the church.

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A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by

Chidi Onyemaehi Agburuka

April 2018


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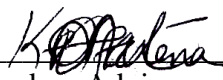
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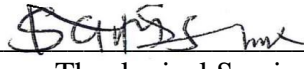
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This little work is dedicated to the Almighty God!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMMI	Africa Medical Missionary Institute
AV	Authorised Version of the Bible
GC	General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
ISBE	International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia
KJV	King James Version
NEB	New English Bible
NET	New English Translation of the Bible
SDA	Seventh-day Adventists
SOP	Spirit of Prophecy
OT	Old Testament
TMI	Total Member Involvement

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Prior to the Fall (Gen 3), joy and complete satisfaction seems to be the order of the day. This appears to be so as the available biblical account does not state otherwise. However, since the Fall and its resultant severed relationship between God and humanity, as recorded in the Scripture, the longing to have a deeper fellowship with a being higher than humans and to experience a joy not inherent within humanity prevails—God alone can supply the need.¹

The search for fellowship with the divine has either led humanity to find the true God or the adversary, the devil called Satan. The battle between the forces of light and those of darkness to gain the worship of and/or have supremacy over humans reveals in no little way the reality of the war referred to as the Great Controversy (Rev 12:7-9). The controversy is not likely limited to a certain place or nationality; it cuts across every nook and cranny where humans live (Rumuokwurusi District inclusive). This may explain why walking with God is characterised with ups and downs—being faithful and at times unfaithful to one’s profession of faith. This struggle and battle professed believers in God often experience could be explained as a longing for “a genuine experience with Christ—for themselves and for the church.”²

¹Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008).

²Ellen G. White, *True Revival: The Church’s Greatest Need* (USA: Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 2013), vi., accessed May 29, 2017, <http://centrowhite.org.br/files/ebooks/egw-english/books/True%20Revival.pdf>.

The search for a renewed relationship with God who alone can guarantee humanity life is enormous and crucial. This search is referred to as revival.

Unfortunately, Iain H. Murray observes that “modern authors are able to show why revivalism is discredited, they fail to recognize the all-important distinction between religious excitements deliberately organized to secure converts, and the phenomenon of authentic spiritual awakening which is the work of the living God.”³

The quest to state in clear terms the steps one must follow so as to experience revival personally or to make believers in Christ experience same seems to manifest itself in varied interpretations or hermeneutics adopted by different religious groups cum biblical scholars. As Gerhald F. Hasel aptly points out, a crisis rages that relegate the authority of the Scripture to the background. This is evident in instances where “personal opinion usurps the authority of the Bible.”⁴ The eminent biblical scholar states categorically that: “The crisis of the authority of the Bible is thus very much a matter of how it is interpreted; the crisis deeply influenced by hermeneutics (the principles of biblical interpretation).”⁵

Statement of the Problem

Josh Moody who witnessed revivals, read critically and studied closely contemporary revivals and historical facts on revivals, comparing them with Jonathan Edwards’ theology of revival submits that

‘revival’ as a word carries a confusing set of possible meanings, and is commonly associated with two different and competing ideas. Strangely enough, each of these common philosophies of revival is also something of a

³Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750-1858* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994, reprint 2002), xix.

⁴Gerhald F. Hasel, *Understanding the Living Word of God* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1980), 16.

⁵*Ibid.*, 17.

distortion of a more fully biblical description of a revival.⁶

Moody further expatiates that the “conflicting interpretations of revival mean revival itself is suffering guilt by association.”⁷ The distorted views about revival and what could bring about revival which is common among many Christian groups has become a challenge that besets Eneka Church and Elingbu Church in Rumuokwurusi District of SDA in Port Harcourt Conference, Nigeria, creating disunity, contention among members, and steady decline in spirituality by warm embrace of Pentecostalism by influential members of the SDA, as none is immunised against the environmental cum spiritual trends they are exposed to.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study was to explore the views on revival among Christians, especially in Eneka Church and Elingbu Church, Rumuokwurusi District. This study also seeks means to bring true spiritual revival to enhance unity and foster team work in accomplishing the herculean task of disciple-making. The research intends to provide a guide to all who seek biblical revival and role of the Holy Spirit as a means of fortifying the Church against the scheming of Satan. Saddled with this project work is making a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit and other spirits that maybe at work in the gatherings of God’s people who claim to be experiencing spiritual revival while advocating lawlessness.

Justification of the Study

There seems to be a cancerous spiritual cum theological debate among scholars/religious leaders on what could bring about religious revival among

⁶Josh Moody, *The God-centred Life: Insights from Jonathan Edwards for Today* (Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 32.

⁷Ibid.

Christians which some perceive to be destroying the fabric of the Church uniqueness and mandate—“a loss of Seventh-day Adventist identity among some pastors and members; the growing tide of worldliness in many of our churches; the danger of disunity; a spiritual complacency and apathy which leads to a lack of involvement in the mission of the church.”⁸ It is therefore imperative and timely that the contending views be investigated with the aim of identifying the best and acceptable Christian practice among the prevalent views, and to redirect the church to the theologically sound and biblically supported steps of uniting, harnessing, and enlisting all for the actualisation of the mission of the Church and Holy Spirit-enhanced spiritual revival.

Delimitations

Though the entire membership of the district need spiritual programmes to remain effective for Jesus Christ, this study shall be carried out in Eneka Church and Elimbu Church. The members (baptized members) to be considered in this research must not be less than five years in the District. The research work shall span for a period of roughly two years. The gender, ethnic, membership, age, income level, education level, shall be considered as need be. The study shall not deeply dwell on pneumatology, worship styles, music, unity, Pentecostalism, and angels; it shall briefly discuss on each of them, investigating their impact on SDA Church in Eneka and Elimbu, Rumuokwurusi District, Port Harcourt Conference in Nigeria.

Definition of Terms

Eneka: a name of a local SDA Church; it is the name of the community where the church is situated.

⁸Ted N. Wilson, *Ted Wilson Concerns*, 41 mins 37sec. mp4.

- Elimgbu: a name of a local SDA Church; it bears the name of its host community.
- Pentecostalism: a worldwide movement among Christians which places as premium the operation and manifestation of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and miracles. The movement does not have specific united practices/doctrines.⁹
- Pentecostals: Adherents of Pentecostalism.
- Port Harcourt Conference: an organisational structure of the SDA Church that is made of Districts within Port Harcourt City and its environs in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- District: an organisational structure of the SDA Church which is made up of local churches.
- Revival: a renewal or refreshment of the church spiritual life which is believed to be enhanced by God.
- Rumuokwursi: name of a community, local church, and a district.
- Ikwerre: a name of an ethnic nationality, its language, and one of the Local Government Areas in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Methodology

This research work adopted both quantitative and qualitative research approach. Primary and secondary sources of information were used to accomplish the project work succinctly. Equally employed in accomplishing the project work were: questionnaires, oral interviews, and a revival cum Bible Study series in the churches within the District. The chapter two considered a review of available and valuable literatures on revival, chapter three was based on field research, chapter four

development of revival programme/strategies, and chapter five will centre on summary, conclusions and recommendation as need be.

⁹ *Pentecostalism*, accessed August 8, 2017, from <http://www.sekten-sachsen.de/files/fremdsprach/pfingst-e.pdf>.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Admittedly, the word “revival” is hardly found in the Scripture. However, the ideas that portray humanity’s longing to be reunited to his creator for life and spiritual refreshment are littered in the Holy Writ. The verb forms of the word “revival,” undoubtedly, are used by some translators of the Scripture and at various portions of the word of God. One of such usage of the verb forms is in the joyous expression of the Remnant after the Israelites’ exilic experience: “For we *were* bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem” (Ezra 9:9 KJV).

Reviving and Revive

The terms “reviving” and/ “revive,” according to Jonathan K. Mickelson, is from the Hebrew word מִיְחַיָּה transliterated as *michyah* and pronounced as *mikh-yaw’*. It stands for: “preservation of life,” “sustenance,” “the live flesh” or “the quick.” This word is variously translated in the KJV as: “preserve life,” “quick,” “recover selves,” “reviving,” “sustenance,” “victuals.”¹ It is also read from the *ISBE* that the word “reviving” is translated from the Hebrew *miyyâ* (Ezra 9:8) which stands for “chance to renew our lives,” “means of renewal,” “to return to life or vitality; or, in its transitive

¹ Jonathan K. Mickelson, *Mickelson’s Enhanced Strong’s Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries, in The Word* [Electronic Bible], 2008.

case, “to restore to life or vitality.”² The Greek equivalents, according to *ISBE* are *anazáœ* — 'become alive,' 'spring to life' (Rom 7:9), and *amathállœ* — ‘blossom again’ (Phil 4:10); the AV renders it as “live,” “quicken,” “relieve” (Lam 1:11, etc.), convert (Ps 19:7), flourish again, etc.; NEB also “give new life,” “renew,” “restore,” give again, “spring to life,” “blossom again, etc.”³ Mickelson, considers the Greek equivalents as: *ἀναθάλλω* transliterated as *anathallo* and pronounced as *an-ath-al'-lo*, meaning “to revive,” and derived from *thallo* “to flourish”; *ἀναζάω* *anazao* (*an-ad-zah'-o*) “to recover life.” Literally or figuratively it stands for to “to live again” or “revive.”⁴

The Concept of Revival in OT and NT

In the OT and NT worldview God is considered as the One who gives life or the One who alone can bring about spiritual revival of His people (Deut 32:39, 1Sam 2:6-10, John 14:6). Revival in the Scriptural usage could as well mean a granting of healing or peace to the distressed by God (Pss 71:20; 85:6). It is sustained by communion with God as the individuals exhibit humility and are of contrite heart (Isa 57:15). Revival indicates that separation of humanity from God brought death to humanity and God’s gift of life and quickening is indispensable (Isa 59:2, Rom 6:23).

Furthermore, God’s Word and law is portrayed as having the ability to bring about life or revival to humanity (Pss 19:7; 119:25, 37, 40, 93, 107). This, no doubt, may explain why the king of Judah, Josiah, employed the services of the Levites and Priests of God in teaching God’s people His word, having discovered the havoc the transgression of the Law brought upon the entire nation of Israel (2Kg 22-23, 2Chron

² *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev., ed. in PC Study Bible V5 [CD ROM].

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Mickelson, *Mickelson’s Enhanced Strong’s Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries*.

34). Jesus Christ did not differ in this understanding as reflected in His prayer for the Church (John 17:17). The Word of God must be considered as not just as “an abstract doctrine, but the re-creation of the whole life of man.”⁵

Again, God in answering the prayer of Solomon after the Temple dedication gave conditions that need to be met for revival of His people thus: “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place” (2Chron 7:14, 15 KJV).

The importance of humility, prayer, obedience to God, and repentance as conditions necessary for God’s blessings of forgiveness, outpouring of the Holy Spirit, refreshing, conversion and revival is not limited to OT era. Jesus Christ preached repentance and commanded His disciples to wait in prayer with deep searching of hearts prior to the descent of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:15, Acts 1:4, 5). Joel emphasised the urgent need of returning to God with deep brokenness of heart for the sinfulness of sins committed against God, fasting and prayer (2:12ff).

Though the Holy Spirit woos and brings convictions of sins to humans, each one may choose to yield to the appeals of the Spirit or reject same (Deut 30:15-19, Josh 24:15). God who initiates the process of repentance in order to reconcile, restore, and revive all still actualises the same today via the Word and the Holy Spirit (Gen 3:9, Isa 1:18, Matt 11:28-30, Acts 2:37-39; 5:38, Heb 4:14-16; 12:1-2).

⁵Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, rev. ed. (NY: The Macmillan Company, 1859), 67.

Spirit of Prophecy and Revival

One of the identifying marks of the Remnant church of Bible prophecy as believed by the SDA is the gift of Prophecy. This gift is believed among the SDA to have been made manifest in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White. This influential author wrote many books in different areas of church life and human endeavour.

Regarding the topic under discussion, E. G. White asserts that:

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children.⁶

In the author's standpoint, there are necessary conditions that believers in Christ, His church, need to meet if they actually desire His blessing of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which, of course, will enhance a tremendous spiritual revival of the church for the proclamation of the gospel. The conditions are enumerated as follow: "by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing."⁷

By humiliation here, the author implies being humble or humility; a mortification of self and pride and all other forms of sin or unrighteousness that bring reproach to God and to His work. To the rewriter, repentance does not imply a cry as a result of the punishment to be meted out to the one who has transgressed God's law; it rather implies a sorrow for and turning away from sin, a deep brokenness in the heart of the transgressor of God's law as a result of the realisation of the sinfulness of sin and its deadly consequences, and the invaluable prize Jesus paid, and a willingness not

⁶E G White, *True Revival: The Church's Greatest Need* (Silver Springs, MI: Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 2013), 8, accessed May 29, 2017, <http://centrowhite.org.br/files/ebooks/egw-english/books/True%20Revival.pdf>.

to continue in rebellion against God but seeks for God's forgiveness and pardoning grace, cleansing and purification and empowerment to live a holy life to Christ Jesus' glory.

Prayer is also mentioned above as a crucial requirement and prerequisite for the outpouring of God's Spirit and revival, for God will not compel believers in Jesus Christ to receive what they are not yet prepared for. As E. G. White buttresses the point, "A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer."⁸ It is therefore not strange and unlikely that the entire church, all who profess faith in Jesus Christ on earth, will sincerely and vigorously ask God of the Holy Spirit for empowerment so as to finish the warning message and good news of salvation to the unsaved. This could be so as each member of the church still reserve their inalienable choice to either trust and call on God for intervention for spiritual rejuvenation or refrain from such expression of faith (Deut 30:15, 19, Jos 24:15).

The unwillingness of all to unite for this singular act is expressed in the SOP writing thus: "There are persons in the church who are not converted, and who will not unite in earnest, prevailing prayer. We must enter upon the work individually. We must pray more, and talk less. Iniquity abounds, and the people must be taught not to be satisfied with a form of godliness without the spirit and power."⁹

Too demanding as it may seem, yet putting away evil practices, sins and deep searching of hearts among God's people is non-negotiable as the world expects the commandment-preaching and teaching people of God to live a life consistent with their profession. Unfortunately, the great challenge against the progress of the work of

⁷White, *True Revival*, 8.

⁸White, *True Revival*, 8.

⁹Ibid.

God will be from within. As White reveals, “We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world.”¹⁰

Revival and Reformation

In view of the foregoing, a clear distinction is enshrined in the SOP writings between revival and reformation to prevent unnecessary ambiguity or misconception concerning the two experiences necessarily required to take place among God’s people. As one will glean from the documented SOP writings, “a revival and a reformation must take place,” not by human devising, but this will be accomplished only by the workings of the Holy Spirit.

As E. G. White elucidates:

Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.¹¹

The assertion of E. G. White above seems to imply that there is the possibility of false revivals. The author vividly points out that there is appointed work that revival and reformation must unavoidably accomplish jointly in the lives of those who have experienced the outpouring and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Conversely, a failure of the believers to exhibit the work required of the Holy Spirit, the claim of any revival experience then becomes doubtful and the work unlikely that of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰White, *True Revival*, 9.

¹¹ E. G. White, *The Review and Herald*, February 25, 1902, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008).

False Revival or True Revival

Though it may not be denied that there is a widely rekindled interest, claims of conversion, and great influx of people to churches as a result of supposed revivals of our time; unfortunately the demand for “acorresponding (sic) increase of real spiritual life”¹² appears to be a mirage. The converts of this sort of revival relapses into deeper darkness than they have ever experienced as their supposed light quickly vanishes. This is well captured in the inspired writing thus: “Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles.”¹³

Furthermore, individuals caught up by the aforementioned experience only seek after sensational religious service but detest and repudiate plain warnings and truth of God’s words that address their eternal interest. The reverse is the case for those who are truly converted, they trivialise not with their relationship with God and His warnings enshrined in the Scripture for their eternal benefits.

Again, E. G. White predicts that prior to the coming of Jesus Christ, God’s people will be given the Holy Spirit to enable them carryout God’s commission—disciple-making via the gospel message and mission to the world. Though Satan surely will attempt to hinder God’s final work intended to bring about true revival in churches he holds sway, his influence shall not be allowed to have sway in God’s commandment-keeping people who anchor their faith on the accomplished merits of Jesus Christ’s atoning death and mediatory works on their behalf. In the prolific author’s words of revelation, we read:

¹² White, *True Revival*, 17.

¹³ White, *True Revival*, 19.

Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming.¹⁴

In the author's view, many of the revivals recorded in the past last half century (18th century AD following) were characterised by excitements and mingled with truth and falsehood, which will surely repeat again to make many feel that God is working in their midst even while they rebel against His law and government, not realising that the enemy of humanity has been the one at work to mislead. However, the counsel is that "none need be deceived." Whoever that anchors his faith only on the light revealed in God's word will easily and unmistakeably "determine the nature of these movements." The author maintains that "Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed."¹⁵

Revival and Prayer

It may not be refutably questionable that prayer is required for revival to take place (Matt 7:7, 8, John 16:24). But the question that may arise is: what kind of prayer is crucial for revival to take place? Can anyone compel God to send forth the promised Comforter cum latter rain for no justifiable reason or for any utterance made by anyone devoid of the gospel commission motif—"the prayer of the humble suppliant"¹⁶ for salvation? The fulfilment of this commission, Taylor G. Bunch asserts,

¹⁴ E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008).

¹⁵ White, *The Great Controversy*, 464.

¹⁶ White, *The Desire of the Ages*, 667.

propelled the disciples to earnestly prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit. According to Bunch, “Pentecost and its glorious results were the answer to persistent and urgent prayer. In answer to their prayers the Spirit came in no modified energy but in the fullness of divine power.”¹⁷ Bunch maintains that the second outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Latter Rain, which will revive the church will only be an experience as prayers are offered to that effect (Zech 10:1). To him, individuals must begin the task as one who waits for the entire church to do so will only be disappointed. However, an individual’s constant prayer may ignite others in the church bringing about “meekness, humility, and a consciousness of dependence on God, and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife”—unity, a crucial prerequisite for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸

T. M. Moore who edited Jonathan Edwards’ *Prophetic Prayer Book* suggests that the Holy Spirit’s descent and the revival of the church will only be possible as many people from different nations of the world will unite with the nation of Israel in “express agreement, to come into a visible union in extraordinary, speedy, fervent, and constant prayer, for those great effusions of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁹ Josh Moody in analysing Jonathan Edward’s works on revival is of the opinion that revival “could be stimulated by fervent effectual prayer of the people of God initiated by God. Such seasons of revival were days of urgency because no-One could restart the engine of revival on their own power.”²⁰ Bill Elliff opines that revival will start if each believer in Jesus Christ makes a circle, “steps into it, and prays, ‘Lord, send revival, and begin it in this

¹⁷ Taylor G. Bunch, *Prevailing Prayer* (Abrams, WI: Lighthouse, 1998), 18.

¹⁸ Bunch, *Prevailing Prayer*, 19, 20.

¹⁹ Jonathan Edwards, *Praying Together for True Revival*, T. M. Moore, ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007), 26.

²⁰ Josh Moody, *The God-centred Life: Insights from Jonathan Edwards for Today* (Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 35.

circle.²¹ Richard Owen Roberts considers the kind of prayer that could bring about revival as continual, intercessory, passionate prayer on behalf of the unsaved which may be comparable to the prayer Moses and Paul offered for Israelites. This kind of prayer reflects the willingness of the petitioner to pay or forsake anything, should God demand for it (Exod 32:11-33:3, Rom 9:3-4).²² Edwin Orr, who witnessed the revivals or the awakening that cut across many nations in the recent past history of the Christian faith, advocates and strongly believes that revival can only be experienced as a result of a united, concerted prayers offered to God to revive His church. To him every revival begins with a prayer movement. The prayer the author refers to here is not a routine prayer offered while eating or mere prayer offered during regular worship services; it is an extraordinary prayer. Extraordinary prayer takes place, according to the author, “when people are found getting up at six in the morning to pray, or having a half night of prayer until midnight, or giving up their lunch time to pray at noonday prayer meetings, that is extraordinary prayer. It must be united and concerted.”²³

Contrarily, Elmer L Towns and Douglas Porter postulate that there is no need of anyone to pray for the commencement of revival. To them, it is unnecessary praying to God for any revival. The authors emphatically command: “Don’t pray for revival, just repent of all known sin, do every thing (sic) you’re supposed to do, give God all—not part—but all your time, and you’ll experience revival.”²⁴ They came up

²¹ Bill Elliff, *Building a Revival Culture: A Guide to Leading Your Church in Seeking Spiritual Renewal* (Buchanan, MI: Life Action Ministries, 2012), 6.

²² Richard Owen Roberts, “The Effectual Revival Prayer of Moses.” <http://www.evanwigg.com/revival/prinpray/mosespra.html>.

²³ J. Edwin Orr, *Revival and Prayer*, accessed from <http://www.revival-library.org/index.php/catalogues-menu/revival-miscellanies/revival-prayer/prayer-and-revival>.

²⁴ Elmer L. Towns and Douglas Porter, *The Ten Greatest Revival Ever* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 2000), 2.

with the concept “atmospheric revival” while attempting to explain the glory that they claim filled a Baptist Church auditorium; the experiences which seem to have happened simultaneously at “Liberty University and Thomas Road Baptist Church in the fall of 1973.”²⁵ This concept seems untenable as the atmosphere is amoral.

Furthermore, Towns and Porter posit that revival is an instantaneous emotion that puts to hold every human activity. In their view, revival terrorises people, puts an immediate end to their hobbies, work, academic pursuit and other human activities. The revival the authors recall here is said to have been triggered by a confessional weeping of a student at the church altar after the congregation has formally closed the worship session and most people (including the church pastor) had departed for their homes. Information was therefore passed across to the church that revival has come upon the church. The said revival was abruptly brought to an end by the action of an individual— “one student rose to confess his sins, but he seemed to be bragging about what he did when he sinned; there was no shame, nor brokenness. The Holy Spirit— Who knows the heart—departed the meeting.”²⁶

Dennis Hartin believes that there are conditions set by God for the experience of revival among His people. Revival, according to him, is solely for the believers while conversion is for the unbelievers. The author contends that the challenge responsible for seldom experience of revival within the church of God is ignorance on the part of believers with regards to the conditions required of the church by God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for revival, and an unwillingness to live up to the conditions God has outlined for the revival of the Church.

Among the conditions stipulated clearly by God in the Scripture for the revival experience, according to the author, is prayer. Hartin emphatically asserts that God’s

²⁵ Towns and Porter, *The Ten Greatest Revival Ever*, 8.

people must firstly show forth humility towards God and His laws/principles by totally cutting off from all forms of pride. Hartin contends that, “Not only is pride a major blockage to revival, but one of the most difficult of all sins to deal with, because it requires the removal of self, as the centre of our life, and replacing it with God.”²⁷ Unfortunately, many are unwilling or reluctant to kill pride.

Besides these conditions, Jonathan Goforth insists that there will be “no hope of a mighty, globe-encircling Holy Spirit revival without there being first a back-to-the-Bible movement.”²⁸ The author’s deep concern is the dishonour and doubt cast on the Bible. Goforth further insists that: “Unless the Bible is to us in very truth the Word of God, our prayers can be naught but sheer mockery. There never has been a revival except where there have been Christian men and women thoroughly believing in and wholeheartedly pleading the promises of God.”²⁹

Yet affirming the significance of prayer, Younghoon Lee maintains that throughout the history of the church prayer precedes true revival. To him, revival will only cease as constant prayer for revival ceases.³⁰ Beside its role in revival, David Yonggi Cho submits that “Prayer will cause the differing gifts of ministry to work together—not in competition. Prayer will develop the motivation of love that will keep all spiritual gifts and manifestations in proper order. Prayer is the answer!”³¹

²⁶ Towns and Porter, *The Ten Greatest Revival Ever*, 9.

²⁷ Dennis Hartin, *God’s Conditions for Revival* (Queensland, Australia: Jollen Press, 1988), 5.

²⁸ Jonathan Goforth, *By My Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1948), accessed June 16, 2017 <https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/msrevival.html>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Younghoon Lee, *Prayer: Key to Revival*, accessed June 6, 2017, http://www.jwipn.com/downloads/1339598507_prayer_-_key_to_revival.pdf.

³¹ David Yonggi Cho, *Prayer That Brings Revival* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1998), 58.

However, G. Campbell Morgan relates a seeming contrary revival experience thus:

There is no preaching, no order, no hymn books, no choirs, no organs, no collections, and, finally, no advertising. I am not saying these things are wrong. I simply want you to see what God is doing. There were the organs, but silent; the ministers, but among the rest of the people, rejoicing and prophesying with the rest, only there was no preaching. Everybody is preaching. No order, but yet it moves from day to day, week to week, country to country, with matchless precision, with the order of an attacking force.³²

The observation above could be weighed only with the Scripture as Paul counsels to figure out the supernatural forces at work as human feelings alone may be misleading (1 Thess 5:21).

Revival and Worship

The impact of revival on worship or the relationship between revival and worship is a crucial point that should to be addressed succinctly as there are varied opinions on revival and worship among biblical scholars and religious leaders which seem to be harmless to the spirituality of Christians. The statement of Jesus Christ that those who worship God will do so “in spirit and in truth” (John 4: 23, 24), undoubtedly, has plethora of understanding and interpretations among professed Christians. These interpretations may not be without impacts on their proponents and adherents. This may be why E. G. White insightfully reveals that though there was a genuine revival in the days of Joshua which brought the Israelites back to the true covenant they had with God, and that this revival was sustained via the constant rebuke and warnings of the patriarch. However, after his death and those of the elders who witnessed the mighty works of the living God, the people of God relapsed back to the worship of Baal and other gods—apostasy because of a mingling of the worship of

³². G. Campbell Morgan, “The Revival: Its Power and Source,” *The Welch Revival* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, nd), 83.

God with “erroneous principles and ambitious pride.”³³ The great controversy indicates that Satan and his fallen angels’ presence is not lacking in revival settings, for the wily foe readily presents his agents, those who engage in selective acceptance of some truth in the Scripture as those to become counted among the converted during a revival. They, later on, will assist in disrupting God’s worship, and in spreading and placing heresies above “the testimony of the Scripture.”³⁴ Satan’s longing for worship has led to the mixture of human traditions and the biblical truth. It unfolds in the way some scholars perceive the concept of worship as “nothing more than a pitiful excuse for a pathetic display of painstaking spirituality.”³⁵ Yet, others consider it as “a means of attaining eccentric esoteric experiences – a spiritual state supposedly superior to others.”³⁶

No doubt, then, Robert H. Welch considers worship as music. Welch views the music leader as the worship leader and is saddled with the responsibility of seeking the kind of music/song that members like, a music that must please the worshippers. In the author’s view, music is not part of worship; it is worship itself. The music leader must therefore get every kind of music to enable him/her meet the needs of the church. The biblical scholar emphasises that all kinds of music are needed by the church. To him, music is important to worshippers than Bible study. In other words, Bible study is second to music ministry/worship.³⁷ This species of worship is not different from the practice among the emerging church worship Fernando Canale reports as having “all

³³ E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, September 25, 1900.

³⁴ E. G. White, *Signs of the Times*, July 12, 1883.

³⁵ Denver Cheddle, *What is worship?*, accessed on October 16, 2017, from <http://www.bibleissues.org/pdfs/Worship.pdf>

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Robert H. Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011), 328-330.

styles of music from heavy rock and roll to traditional hymns, ancient rituals, spiritual disciplines, Christian seasons, and, Jewish traditions.”³⁸ Popular and overwhelming within the Christian world is the trend to impress the young minds with the gospel of Jesus Christ by adopting a contemporary brand of worship which is believed to enhance their retention in the church. This brand of worship is said to be experienced-based rather than bible-based. This worship setting paves way for the introduction of icons and other ancient traditional beliefs to the Christian church such as ancient eastern mysticism and the Roman Catholic mysticism which is common among her monks—emerging worship gathering. Prayer is emphasised in this kind of worship at the expense of Bible Study and Biblical preaching.³⁹

This popular and almost acceptable worship style devoid of sound biblical preaching is believed to have gotten a foothold on some ministers within the Adventist Church. The advocates of this kind of worship speculate that:

the way to attract and retain Adventist young people in the church was through a more ‘up-to-date’ message and ‘progressive’ methodology. Those who adopted this way of reaching young people often desisted from preaching Biblical messages and resorted to the kind of ‘innovative’ methods found in some of the megachurches—approaches that included celebration-style contemporary worship, entertainment, and other means that are supposedly ‘better in reaching the postmodern mind.’⁴⁰

With the varied opinions on what should constitute worship as is evident among religious leaders and biblical scholars, it becomes imperative that one consider

³⁸ Fernando Canale, “The Emerging Church—Part 2: Epistemology, Theology, and Ministry,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 22/2 (2011):71.

³⁹ Fernando Canale, “Principles of Worship and Liturgy,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 20/1-2 (2009):89-111. Woodbridge, Noel B. “Evaluating the Changing Face of Worship in the Emerging Church in terms of the ECLECTIC Model: Revival or a Return to Ancient Traditions?” *Conspectus*. 187-207, accessed on October 17, 2017, <https://www.sats.edu.za/userfiles/Woodbridge,%20Emerging%20worship.pdf>

⁴⁰ Israel Ramos, “What Adventist Young People really Want: The General Youth Conference Experiment,” *Here We Stand*, Samuel Koranteng-Pipim ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 2005), 62.

the timely counsel of Fernando Canale that “when our worship service becomes divisive, we need to reflect about some of the explicit and implicit reasons we have for what we do.”⁴¹ The eminent biblical scholar contends that worship could not be a cultural thing as every cultural form acceptable to the contemporary society may not be a yardstick to measure acceptable worship to the Almighty. Again, to rely on self-expression as an adequate guide to corporate worship acceptable to the Lord will likely constitute a blunder, for whatever anyone feels becomes his/her way of worship, amounting to confusions. Hence, permanent biblical principles should guide the worship of God; though these principles may not all be itemised in a particular portion of the Scripture, they are to be gathered via deep systematic study of the Scripture.⁴²

SDA Authors and Revival

Kolawole Isaac Ajiboye asserts that revival is coined from Latin word *revivere* which stands for “to live again” or “to return to life.” The author further elucidates that for one to live again (to be revived or experience revival), the individual must have died at least once. Expatiating on this death, the author compared the death that leads to revival with Paul’s recommended type of death in the epistle written to the church in Galatia (2:21). The picture here illustrates a painful death that leaves no part of the individual untouched—excruciating death of the cross.⁴³ This death is what a renowned scholar described as “the most ignominious form of death.”⁴⁴ Ajiboye

⁴¹ Canale, “The principles of Worship and Liturgy,” 89.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Kolawole Isaac Ajiboye, “Anatomy of Church Revival,” *Contemporary Christianity: Practice, Relevance and Response*, Emmanuel Orihentare Eregare, ed. (Lagos, Nigeria: Freedom Networks Press, 2016), 32, 33.

⁴⁴ Efe M. Ehioghae, “Men in the Hands of an Angry God,” *Contemporary Christianity: Practice, Relevance and Response*, Emmanuel Orihentare Eregare, ed. (Lagos, Nigeria: Freedom Networks Press, 2016), 217.

further insists that for an individual to experience true revival, there must be, on the part of the individual an acknowledgement of sins committed and a repulsive feeling for the sinfulness of sin within the individual. It is expedient then that the individual goes through the process of the crucifixion of bodily desires and passions which, according to the author, commences with remission of sins and then paves way for the experience of new creation and discarding the former life.⁴⁵ To the author, the study of the scripture is a prerequisite for revival. The author asserts that: “The word of God is the gateway to revival. Being revived and living it is a unique experience. It is not the same thing as knowing about revival.” In other words, a wishful thinking or a mere knowledge about revival only makes one to have a fantasy of living in heaven while dwelling here on earth, an experience drug addicts often feel. Revival therefore constitutes a holistic experience cum phenomenon that cuts across every part of the individual’s life. The assertion of this author is that “true revival requires that God takes over both of our reasoning and emotion.” The submission here therefore remains that revival is neither “a one-day event” nor a 3-day prayer and fasting thing to be scheduled annually; it is continuous communication with God.”⁴⁶ Mark Finley affirms this view in the introductory remark one read in the Adult Sabbath School Study Guide: “In every generation God’s Spirit strives to bring revival to the hearts of His people. Revival is an ongoing, daily experience.”⁴⁷

It implies that believers are not once saved always saved. The tendency for one to let go religious and eternal principles enshrined in the biblical doctrines of the Christian church is possible. This, no doubt, suggests that continual dependence on

⁴⁵ Ajiboye, “Anatomy of Church Revival,” *Contemporary Christianity*, 34.

⁴⁶ Adeboye, “Anatomy of Church Revival,” *Contemporary Christianity*, 36.

⁴⁷ Mark Finley, “Revival and Reformation,” *Adult Sabbath school Bible Study Guide*, Teachers ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Sabbath School and Personal Ministries department, 2013), 3.

God for guidance and strength via the study of the Scripture and prayer is necessary to remain active and alive spiritually. This understanding may have prompted the prayer and follow the Bible movement among the SDA.

Furthermore, Finley reports that “revival is all about a God of loving kindness seeking to deepen His relationship with us. The initiative in revival is His. His Spirit creates longings within us. His Spirit convicts us of our need. His Spirit reveals Jesus’ goodness and grace.”⁴⁸ The Lord’s goodness leads humans to repentance (Rom 2:4).

However, these activities of the Holy Spirit in revival could be resisted or neglected by believers and humans. The response of God to His people in the OT after the Temple dedication indicates that the works of the Holy Spirit among the followers of Jesus Christ are conditional and subject to their response to God’s appeals (2 Chron 7:14). Among the conditions God enumerated were: humility, prayer, seeking God’s face, and turning away from wickedness—repentance. The response also reveals that God may not be the one compelling and converting people against their will to become Christians as some biblical scholars presume as they report scenarios and phenomena common in popular revival meetings they observed.

Other Christian Authors and Revival

Revival is said to have been coined from the Latin *re*—again, and *vivier*—live. The combination of these Latin words therefore stand for to live again. Based on the etymology of this word, some scholars conclude that: Revival does not create life. It resuscitates it. It is therefore exclusive for those who have experienced life previously, but whose spiritual life has grown barren and anaemic because of sin.⁴⁹ To this set of

⁴⁸ Mark Finley, “Revival and Reformation,” *Adult Sabbath school Bible Study Guide*, Teachers ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Sabbath School and Personal Ministries department, 2013), 3.

⁴⁹ Henry T. Blackaby, Richard Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Fresh Encounter: God's Pattern for Spiritual Awakening* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2009), 17.

believers, it is assumed that revival may not be a renewed interest in worship, prayer meetings or any other religious services, though they may be consequences of revival. To them, true biblical revival deals specifically with one's relationship to God—sin has only one remedy, and that is repentance. Without repentance there is no revival.⁵⁰

However, James Orr informs that the word “revival” was first used within the religious circle in the year 1702, “at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when a powerful spiritual awakening claimed the public attention.” While some in this era referred to it as a “general awakening of or in religion” especially within the evangelicals, there seems to be some who claim the word was applied to witchcraft as well.⁵¹ Divided opinions also abound on the definition of revival based on the individual's experience or understanding. Stephen Olford sees revival as “the strange and sovereign work of God in which he visits His own people—restoring, reanimating, and releasing them into the fullness of His blessing.”⁵² It is also defined as “God's invasion into the lives of one or more of His people in order to awaken them spiritually for kingdom ministry.”⁵³ To one, it is “a time when heaven is closer to earth.”⁵⁴ Yet another considers it as “a community saturated with God.”⁵⁵ A biblical scholar sees it as “an extraordinary movement of the Holy Spirit producing

⁵⁰ Blackaby, Blackaby and King, *Fresh Encounter*, 18, 19.

⁵¹ J. Edwin Orr, *The Re-study of Revival and Revivalism* (Pasadena, CA: School of Word Mission, 1981), iii.

⁵² Stephen Olford, *Heart Cry for Revival* (Memphis: EMI Books, repr. ed., 1980), 26. Winfield Bevens, *What does Revival Look Like?* Accessed from <http://gcdiscipleship.com/2011/11/09/the-holy-spirit-revival/>.

⁵³ Malcom McDow and Alvin Reid, *Firefall: How God has Shaped History through Revivals* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 7.

⁵⁴ Francois Carr, *Revival: The Glory of God* (Pretoria, South Africa: Ankar Printers, 2004), 17.

⁵⁵ Duncan Campbell, *The Price and Power of Revival* (n.p.: The Faith Mission, n.d), 33.

extraordinary results.”⁵⁶ Another understood it as “the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God. It is the restoration of him to the centre of the life of the church.”⁵⁷

Again, “a remarkable increase in the spiritual life of a large number of God’s people accompanied by an awesome awareness of the presence of God, intensity in prayer and praise, a deep conviction of sin with passionate longing for holiness and unusual effectiveness for evangelism leading to the salvation of many unbelievers,” is also considered as “a true Holy Ghost revival.”⁵⁸ It is also categorised as “a divine intervention in the normal course of spiritual things. It is God revealing Himself to man in awful holiness and irresistible power. It is man retiring to the background because God has taken the field.”⁵⁹ To Wesley L. Duewel, it is “the manifestation of God to His people, convicting by His awesome presence and by His infinite holiness. Revival is God holding out His arms of love to us and refusing to give up on us.”⁶⁰

However, Charles G. Finney contends that revival is not a miracle. He considers a miracle as a divine interference which sets aside or suspends the laws of nature. Buttressing his points on why revival is not a miracle, the religious author asserts that: “All the laws of matter and mind remain in force. They are neither suspended nor set aside in a revival.” The author expatiates that humanity when undergoing a revival in religious experience only uses the gifts God has already impacted on nature to His glory; not that any power hitherto absent is given to

⁵⁶ Richard Owen Roberts, *Revival* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1982), 16.

⁵⁷ Martin Lloyd Jones, *Revival* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1987), 47.

⁵⁸ Brian Edwards, *Revival! A people Saturated with God* (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1990, repr. 1994), 28.

⁵⁹ Arthur Wallis, *In the Day of Your Power: A Picture of Revival from Scripture and History* (Columbia, MO: City Hill, 1956, repr. 1990), 22.

⁶⁰ Wesley L. Duewel, *Revival Fire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 25, 26.

humanity which were not available before the commencement of revival. He further elucidates his points thus:

A revival is not a miracle, nor dependent on a miracle, in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means - as much so as any other effect produced by the application of means. There may be a miracle among its antecedent causes, or there may not. The apostles employed miracles simply as a means by which they arrested attention to their message, and established its Divine authority. But the miracle was not the revival. The miracle was one thing; the revival that followed it was quite another thing. The revivals in the apostles' days were connected with miracles, but they were not miracles.⁶¹

Finney maintains that revivals are not necessarily brought about by miracles; they rather come as a result of humanity's proper use of the appropriate means provided naturally by God. To elucidate the argument, an analogy is put across using a grain by the author. The same way a grain is multiplied only when it is sown, though not without God's blessings, revival is naturally experienced as the means provided by God are appropriately employed and utilised. It therefore implies that God has placed naturally principles with the tendency to produce revival in the means which humanity is enjoined by Him to exercise to produce revival, for if it were not so, God would not have enjoined same. The word of God or the Scripture is comparable here to the seed, preaching of the word as the sowing of the seed, and revival as the production of the crop. Hence, cause and effect is advocated for here by the author while the popular prevalent teaching by some scholars that considers revival as divine interference in religious issue within God's church and people is considered dangerous to the prosperity of the church and a total absurdity.

Finney considers revival as a return of the Church from its backslidings to God which is not devoid of the conversion of sinners. To him, a conviction of sin via deep searching of heart on the part of the backslidden which creates the feeling of

⁶¹ Charles G. Finney, *Revival Lectures* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell company, nd), 4.

hopelessness leading to a breaking up of the fountain of sin is non-negotiable. Revival is also noticeable in repentance of the backslidden church with conspicuous deep humility and a forsaking of sin and evidenced by a new beginning of obedience to God. Finney asserts that it renews the faith of believers in Christ Jesus, propelling them to love the Lord more as their perception of eternal realities are cleared of blindness and formalities that becloud their belief and understanding of spiritual things. This, according to the author, brings about love and zealousness to work for the conversion and salvation of the lost throughout the planet earth. The religious leader emphatically maintains that the revived “will not only be urging them to give their hearts to God, but they will carry them to God in the arms of faith, and with strong crying and tears beseech God to have mercy on them, and save their souls from endless burnings.”⁶² Finney posits that revival also breaks off worldly power and sin from Christians, predisposing them “to such vantage ground that they get a fresh impulse towards heaven; they have a new foretaste of heaven, and new desires after union with God; thus the charm of the world is broken, and the power of sin overcome.”⁶³

Ironically, Finney also believes that revival is a special kind of excitement that God employs to capture back the attention of His people to Himself each time they relapse into worldliness and worship of other gods. As the author puts it: “Almost all the religion in the world has been produced by revivals. God has found it necessary to take advantage of the excitability there is in mankind, to produce powerful excitements among them, before He can lead them to obey.”⁶⁴

⁶² Finney, *Revival Lectures*, 4-5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

G. Campbell Morgan considers revival as a spontaneous and mysterious happening that sweeps across nations and results in forceful conversion of the unconverted. To him, therefore, revival does not stop or cease; it rather passes on and if any fails to utilise the opportunity, it may not be possible for the individual to be saved.

Morgan opines that evil practices and wickedness among humanity often precede revivals. It seems to imply that before revival is expected moral decadence, and spiritual death must be on the increase and other vices. In the authors view it is expressed thus: “The decay of religious faith, the deadness of the churches, the atheism of the well-to-do, the brutality of the masses, all these, when at their worst, herald the approach of the revival.”⁶⁵ This assertion seems to refer to the aforementioned phenomena as precursors to revival. In other words, the easy path to evoke revival or call the attention of the divine to send revival could be to deliberately deploy the above-mentioned vices in order to awaken “the soul of the nation” and trigger up revival.⁶⁶

Yet, Blackaby and King refer to revival as “a divinely initiated work in which God’s people pray, repent of their sin, and return to a holy, Spirit-filled, obedient love relationship with God.”⁶⁷ “One of the distinguishing characteristics of revival”, Blackaby and others assert, “as well as one of the greatest points of criticism has centered (sic) on its emotional responses.”⁶⁸ Furthermore, the authors contend that “over the history of revivals, people have cried out, wailed, fallen to the ground,

⁶⁵ G. Campbell Morgan, “The Revival: Its Power and Source.” *The Welch Revival* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, nd.), 20.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Blackaby, Blackaby and King, *Fresh Encounter*, 15.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 19.

fainted, shrieked, moaned, and laughed.”⁶⁹ It implies that there is nothing strange or abnormal about these experiences should they be manifested in any revival meeting in this generation, for if God was the architect of the earlier revivals characterised with these phenomena, the prominence of such happenings in Christian churches now ought not to call for any unsavoury remark or call for any caution. Referring to the experiences of God’s servants—Isaiah and John (See Isa 6:5, Rev 1:17) to justify the emotionalism inherently apparent in revivals, they rationalise: “If we are not experiencing a deep emotional response when we encounter our Creator and judge, we may need to ask why not.”⁷⁰ Revivals, to them, are more than mere “mass of emotionalism” as there were numerous experiences of such kinds through the Christian history which were orderly, peaceful and without “excessive affectations.”

Conversely, they imply that nonexistence of these phenomena in any given revival meeting or experience will seem questionable, abnormal, and doubtful to be called a true revival emanating from God. They insist that there is only one kind of genuine revival which could be conducted in two different ways. One is directed by the religious leader and is centred on God’s word, while the other is carried out by the laity and is characterised or driven by testimonies.

Charles G. Finney later acknowledged errors in his several past revival lectures. The author considered the revival recently taking place as superficial and lacking true heart conviction of sin and lack of humility on the part of the converts. To the author’s later view, excitement which is devoid of the intelligent understanding of the requirement of God as is enshrined in His law and obedience to same is to be

⁶⁹ Blackaby, Blackaby and King, *Fresh Encounter*, 19.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

considered dangerous. “The great excitement attending revivals is an evil often incidental to real revivals of religion,” the author submits.⁷¹

Beverly Carradine, posits that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of song; where spontaneous singing lacks in the church coupled with spiritual coldness, mechanical and professional preaching, neglect of the Scripture, the Sabbath desecration, sin defiant, lack of missionary zeal, almost empty worship centres, “social frigidities and class petrifications” are evidences that indicate the church is not revived.⁷²

The Holy Spirit and Revival

The personality and functions of the Holy Spirit is a doctrine not fully understood and unanimously accepted among religious leaders and biblical scholars. This apparent disagreement and debate among biblical authors and scholars based on the person and function of the Holy Spirit with respect to revival may have arisen as a result of the hermeneutical approach or school of thought each group of scholars have adopted in interpreting the biblical text.

To Jo Ann Davidson, God’s full knowledge could only be ascertained via the Biblical Canon. The Scripture is where the heavenly God chose to reveal Himself as a triune God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—the Godhead. The author submits that, “His divine nature cannot be fully understood without God the Holy Spirit, along with Jesus and the Father. When the Bible is studied attentively and listened to carefully this becomes apparent.”⁷³ John H. Sailhamer affirms the statement above viz: “From the earliest stages of human-divine communion, as recorded or

⁷¹ C. G. Finney, *Revival Fire* (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1995), 10.

⁷² Beverly Carradine, *Revival Sermons* (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1997), 7.

⁷³ Jo Ann Davidson, “A Power or Person: The Nature of the Holy Spirit”, *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 27/1 (2016): 24.

implied in the OT, it is believed that the true revealed religion was grounded in a single covenant of grace experienced through faith in God's promised redeemer."⁷⁴

A careful and humble submission to the biblical revelation about the Holy Spirit is therefore crucial as one may not have an adequate understanding of the Holy Spirit based on human reasoning and speculation. Unlike Jesus Christ who has been incarnated, lived among men, heard, touched, and even left footprints while on earth, the Holy Spirit has neither been incarnated nor left any footprint, hence "the Spirit is more inscrutable, making misunderstandings possible when trying to understand Him."⁷⁵

This may not be far from the reason the inspired author aptly instructs believers on the issue of the personhood of the Holy Spirit thus:

The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.⁷⁶

Richard F. Lovelace rightly observes that the neglect of the Scriptural teachings and a reliance on the so called spirit leadings alone is the challenge of some revivals. The author elucidates on the spurious revivals devoid of the Scripture with laments on the delusive confidence reposed on certain individuals within the church to the point that they are believed to "'have' or contain God's Spirit to such an extent that their thoughts and actions are inspired and free from the sin and error of ordinary believers."⁷⁷ It appears unthinkable that the Holy Spirit who, according to the

⁷⁴ John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 590.

⁷⁵ Davidson, "A Power or Person: The Nature of the Holy Spirit," 24.

⁷⁶ Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008).

⁷⁷ Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Chicago: IVP Academic, 1979). 240.

Scripture, took active part in the creation of humanity, in the conception, incarnation, baptism, life and ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and still guides, instructs, seals the saints, and who authored the Scripture undermine the teachings of the Scripture and be referred to as an impersonal force (Gen 1:1, 2; Matt 1:20; Luke 1:35; Matt 3:16; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:14; Matt 12:18, 24-32; Mark 3:22-30; Heb 9:14; Rom 8:11; Acts 10:38; 2 Tim 3:16).

Davidson affirms the personality of the Holy Spirit based on the personal pronouns employed by the author of the book of John while writing on the Holy Spirit:

John underscores this point by using the personal pronoun *ekeinos* (“he”) to render Jesus’ references to the Spirit—whereas Greek grammar normally would use the neuter *ekeino* (“it”) to agree with the neuter noun *pneuma* (“Spirit,” the Greek equivalent of *ruach*). This personal pronoun, used in the great Trinitarian address given by Jesus (John 14-16), and is all the more striking because in 14:17, where the Spirit is first introduced, John uses the grammatically appropriate neuter pronouns (*ho* and *auto*). The subsequent shift to the masculine pronoun conveys John’s theology— which the Holy Spirit inspired! The Spirit affirms His personhood with personal pronouns.⁷⁸

It therefore implies that the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ bear witness in the Scripture “that the Spirit Himself is personally and distinctly God.”⁷⁹ The Holy Spirit, instead of coercing and tormenting people against their will, leads sinners to Christ, convicts, counsels, teaches, and empowers believers in the Church to do the will of God as is enshrined in the Scripture.⁸⁰

As Ron E. M. Clouzet timely points out, “What we understand regarding the nature of the Holy Spirit will influence our response to His work in our lives.”⁸¹ In

⁷⁸ Davidson, “A Power or Person: The Nature of the Holy Spirit,” 27.

⁷⁹ J. Scott Horrell, Nathan D. Holsteen, and Michael J. Savigel, *God in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Exploring Christian Theology: Revelation, Scripture and the Triune God*, Vol. 1, Nathan D. Holsteen, and Michael J. Savigel, Gen. eds. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2014), 194.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Ron E. M. Clouzet, “The Personhood of the Holy Spirit and Why It Matters,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 11.

some quarters is the assumption that revival has to do with the pouring out of the divine into humanity which brings about extraordinary manifestations.

Hence strange phenomena such as: “the jerks, shouting, ‘slain in the Spirit,’ speaking in tongues, barking, dancing in the Spirit,”⁸² “an increase in spiritual gifts like tongues or prophecy or healing”⁸³ and other emotional expressions which are often instantaneous are associated or believed to be revival and evidence of God’s presence among His people.

Unfortunately, these popular notions are not being accepted by all who profess faith in God. Eddie L. Hyatt questions the authenticity of these revivals which according to him is devoid of Bible study. The author asserts that: “Seeking spiritual experiences apart from Scripture is dangerous. Those taking this careless approach are, unwittingly, caught in the wake of a cultural trend that is carrying people away from the Bible to non-Christian, non-Biblical forms of spirituality.”⁸⁴ Evaluating the effect of the supposed manifestations in this belief system, Angel M. Rodriguez laments that: Some are suggesting that in answer to our prayers for the sick God will send the Spirit as a healing power, making it almost unnecessary to consult physicians. It implies that if one perseveres in the prayer of faith the power of the Spirit will be manifested. This is a dangerous emphasis that could do serious spiritual, psychological, and physical damage to those who are sick.⁸⁵

⁸² Elmer L. Towns and Douglas Porter, *The Ten Greatest Revival Ever* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 2000), 5.

⁸³ Alan Smith, *What is Revival and why dowe want it?*, accessed 23 May 2017, <http://catchthefiredfw.com/what-is-revival-and-why-do-we-want-it/>.

⁸⁴ Eddie L. Hyatt, *Revival: Discerning Between the True &The False* (Tulsa, OK: Hyatt Press, 2009), 18, accessed 8 August 2017, <http://www.eddiehyatt.com/revivalbook.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Angel M. Rodriguez, “The Holy Spirit, Sickness, Prayer, And Healing,” *General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Biblical Research Institute*, accessed 23 May 2017, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/holy%20spirit%2C%20sickness.pdf>

The confusing effects of the theological plurality within the church on what constitutes true spiritual revival and the role of the Holy Spirit are overwhelming. The challenge is enormous and calls for urgent attention and crucial to prayerfully re-educate each member of the church to closely examine the Scriptures, for there lays the only safeguard.⁸⁶

Graig L. Bloomberg asserts that forgiving one who has offended the other is the work the Holy Spirit enables believers to do and: “Where genuine repentance does not occur, there will invariably be a changed relationship that involves a certain distancing by the two parties.”⁸⁷ In other words, the author posits that disunity among Christians is not likely a proof that the Holy Spirit is present let alone reviving the membership of the church.

The Holy Spirit’s role in the existence and actualisation of the mission of the Christian church seems to be indispensable. No doubt, then, that Denis Fortin aptly points out that: “The Holy Spirit creates and works with the church to ensure the fulfilment of the gospel commission. Without the Spirit the church would be spiritually dead.”⁸⁸

Jirí Moskala while elucidating on the role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ ministry asserts that:

The triumphant death of Jesus historically validated His activities, and Jesus’s glorification was a seal for the involvement of the Holy Spirit in ancient times. Thus, the cross was the prerequisite for the giving of the Spirit of God to the world, and at the same time the justification and affirmation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament dispensation. His activity was real and in full

⁸⁶ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008).

⁸⁷Graig L. Bloomberg, *Jesus and the Gospel: An Introduction and Survey* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2009), 335.

⁸⁸Denis Fortin, “The Holy Spirit and the Church,” *The Message, Mission and Unity of the Church: Biblical Research Institute Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 2*, Angel Manuel Rodriguez ed., (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2013), 320.

measure but depended as always upon the openness, cooperation, and readiness of God's people.⁸⁹

Larry L. Lichtenwalter in no different manner affirms the personality and function of the Holy Spirit in four crystal-clear perspectives to include: "salvation and becoming a disciple of the triune God (1 Pet 1:2, 23); 2) Christology (1 Pet 1:11; 3:18); 3) gospel proclamation (1 Pet 1:11; 3:18); and 4) suffering, trials, adversity (1 Pet 4:14)."⁹⁰ To this scholar, the possibility of living a holy life is only possible with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, the Godhead (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) seem not to work at variance as some scholars and religious leaders within the Christian faith present the Holy Spirit as one who grants them freedom to believe and practise what often conflicts with the clear injunctions spelled out in the Scripture. The disunity apparent among the supposed Holy Spirit-filled popular churches is not likely in congruent with the Godhead who "are united in character, purpose, and love. There is no conflict among them, no working at cross-purposes, no competition, not even disagreement."⁹¹

Furthermore, it is believed by some that the Holy Spirit "draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God."⁹² The functions of the Holy Spirit as stated above could be resisted or rejected by individuals as God gave the power of choice to all humanity. It seems to imply that

⁸⁹Jiri Moskala, "The Holy Spirit in the Hebrew Scriptures," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 24/2 (2013):19.

⁹⁰Larry L. Lichtenwalter, "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit in the General Epistles and the Book of Hebrews," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 23/2 (2012):81.

⁹¹ Jerry Moon, "The Quest for a Biblical Trinity: Ellen White's 'Heavenly Trio' Compared to the Traditional Doctrine," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 143.

⁹² Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 69.

renewal of spiritual life or revival of the church is dependent upon the response of the church to action of the Holy Spirit. This stand is at variance with the teaching of some biblical scholars that suggests that the Holy Spirit compels and converts people to the LORD Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 3

FIELD RESEARCH

No one individual or group of people who dwell on the planet earth really lives in isolation. Not living in isolation is not necessarily limited to learning social skills as educationists may assume while emphasising on learning skills for social interactions, especially for the ones having disabilities. Of course, humans are social beings who are influenced at different degrees by encounters and events disposed to them.¹ This is in line with the submission of H. C. Achunike who succinctly wrote his observations based on the trend of Pentecostalism and its conspicuous influence among Roman Catholic priests and seminarians, particularly in Nigeria. In his words, we read: “Pentecostal flamboyant lifestyle affects priests and seminarians. This is precisely because we belong to a society that is flamboyant, a society that worships wealth or money or possession.”²

The influence of Pentecostalism is not limited to Roman Catholic priests and seminarians. The effects of Pentecostalism which is mingled with flavours of the African Traditional Religion (ATR) or African Religion cuts across the membership of Eneka Church and Elingbu Church in Rumuokwurusi District of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ikwerre Land, Rivers State, Nigeria.

¹Lucinda Thelen, *Teaching Social Skills Because No One Lives in Isolation*, accessed, August 9, 2017, from <http://cdd.tamu.edu/sites/cdd.tamu.edu/files/Teaching%20Social%20Skills-.pdf>.

²H. C. Achunike, *The Influence of Pentecostalism on Catholic Priests and Seminarians in Nigeria* (Onitsha: Africana First, 2004), 66, in Donatus Pius Ukpong, *The Presence and Impact of Pentecostalism in Nigeria*, accessed August 8, 2017, www.glopent.net/..presence-and-impact-of-pentecostalism-in-nigeria.pdf.

Social Cultural Background

Eneka Church and Elingbu Church are located and named after communities in Ikwerre Land. The Ikwerre or Iwhuruoha people are the predominant tribe in Rivers State. They are comprising of four (4) Local Government Areas in Rivers State—Ikwerre, Port Harcourt City, Obio-Akpor, and Emohua; and Port Harcourt City is where the Capital of Rivers State is situated. Rivers State was created in 1967 (seven years after the Nation's independence). They were 800,000 in number as of 1991 Census record. They occupy 4°, 50'N, 5°, 15'N, 6°, 30'E and 7°, 15'E of the tropical rainforest where it rains annually 2000-2800mm in two seasons, average temperature 20-32°C centigrade and the relative humidity above 65%.³

The Ikwerre people are religious people and prior to the advent of the Christian missionaries they practice ATR. They received the missionaries' faith based on the benefits they were to get from them such as schools and health facilities. As Rowland Olumati rightly puts it:

The Ikwerre religious world is complex and plural. Religion regulates their whole life and provides them with the survival kit to meet the existential needs of life. Ikwerre thought world is saturated with myriads of spirit beings (renwu) that are either benevolent or malevolent. There is no dichotomy between the material visible world and the invisible spiritual world, both flow together. Thus among the Ikwerre it is believed that various diseases, miseries, misfortunes or deaths are causally the effect of the evil spirits or supernatural forces. These spirits are so powerful that they may exert great influence on man both in his earthly life and hereafter.⁴

Though Ikwerre people believe in many spirits, they hold to one Supreme God known as *Chiokike*, the Creator God, who sustains all. He has everything in His control and is considered to be without a beginning and end. All other gods and spirits

³Napoleon Ono Imaah, "Architecture and Ikwerre Culture: Hidden Dimensions," *Narodna umjet.* 41/1, (2004): 70, accessed 9 August 2017, <http://hrcak.srce.hr/24610?lang=en>.

⁴Rowland Olumati, "The Impact of Christianity and Modernity on Ali - Earth Goddess of the Traditional Religion of the Ikwerre People, Rivers State, Nigeria," *African Research Review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia Vol. 9(1)*, Serial No. 36, January, 2015:95-108.

were created by *Chiokike*; they only serve as intermediaries between Him and humanity. Among the gods adored by Ikwerre people is *Eli* or *Ali*, the earth goddess. It is believed that the goddess blesses the people with fertility and inflicts those who commit homicide, suicide, incest, sex in the bush and on the bear floor, theft, etc. if rituals were not performed to appease the goddess. The *rukani*, ancestors or living dead, are also adored and consulted when challenges arise.

Ikwerre people are prominently farmers; the discovery of oil in Ikwerre lands and its exploitation by oil companies has discouraged and hampered their agricultural activities due to low yields and productivity. They practised subsistence farming and hunting of bush animals for consumption and for commercial purpose, if much is caught.⁵

Rumuokwurusi the District consisting of other churches—Eneka, Rumuodara, Elimgbu, Oro-igwe, Pipeline, and Estate has now become a cosmopolitan city. But its political status has not changed the worldview of the people. The District was carved out from the former Choba District and organised to district status in 1993. The district later gave birth to two other districts: Oyigbo, and Oro-Evo.⁶

Church setting

Rumuokwurusi District is strategically located in the busy Port Harcourt-Aba Express road and is transversed through by the East-West road. The popular Oil Mill Market in Port Harcourt is also situated in Rumuokwurusi District. In other words, the districts is densely populated with people from different ethnic groups in Nigeria who seek for a greener pasture. The different persons and people represented in the District

⁵Solomon A. Ikunga, ⁵“The Impact of Western Culture on Sustainable Development: a Case Study of Ewekwu Community,” *Research Journal of Humanities, Legal Studies & International Development* Vol. 2 No. 1 April 2017, 89.

constitute a variety of cultures, backgrounds, and world views and religious experiences they represent. The invasion of the Ikwerre land by the Europeans led to the discard of the cultural values and its substitution with “individualism and egalitarianism which “are signs of a decaying society in which the younger generation are no longer willing to listen to the elders neither do they carry out their obligations in the society.”⁷ Though the cultural beliefs of the people are a challenge, the most prominent factor corroding the fabric of the district spirituality is the wave of Pentecostalism.

Pentecostalism

This is a brand of Christianity that generally is believed to have started after the 16th Century reformation in Europe. Paul Fahy opines that Pentecostalism constitutes false religious spirit incursion which promotes ecstasies and has been in existence from the beginning and is revealed in syncretism that plagued Israelites among the Canaanites who surrounded them. However, it is most prominently displayed in the ministry of William Seymour (1870-1922) in Azusa Street in the 1906s. To the experience there, he writes:

All the symptoms later associated with the Toronto experience were present in Azusa Street: shaking, slaying in the Spirit, tongues, various physical gestures, babbling and jabbering gibberish, contortions, sexual impropriety, jerking, shrieking, barking, hooting, crawling etc. Although tongues was the central focus, it was claimed that all the supernatural gifts had been restored to them. It was not uncommon for women to lie prostrate on the floor for hours on end surrounded by weeping crowds and preachers running around the room shouting.⁷⁶ Men would jump and shout while women danced and sang. People often sang together but singing different words, melodies and rhythms while people lay on the dirty floor, slain in the ‘spirit’. While all this was going on,

⁶J. I. C. Arungwa, *The District Archive*, Rumuokwurusi District, Port Harcourt Conference, Eastern Nigeria Union Conference of SDA Church.

⁷Ikunga, “The Impact of Western Culture on Sustainable Development: a Case Study of Evekwu Community,” *Research Journal of Humanities, Legal Studies & International Development* Vol. 2, 90.

there were frequent arguments at the back from people opposing the proceedings. Truly this was chaos.⁸

This supposed manifestation of the Holy Spirit among the Pentecostals as is being described above seem not to be different from the account a demon-possessed friend of Louis Torries. The author narrated how his friend, upon meeting a medium, started to display weird behaviour, got into a dancing gyration, twirling around the living room while the medium was producing hissing sound like that of a snake, an experience that lasted for an hour and ordering, with a strange voice, that no one prays, and encircling Torries' friend who by then has gone into trance while dancing belly dance.⁹

On the contrary, Reinhard Hempelmann asserts that:

Pentecostalism is a global Christian revivalist and missionary movement that places the transcendent workings of the Holy Spirit and charismatic practice (the spiritual gifts of healing, speaking in tongues/glossolalia and prophecy, cf. Acts 3 and 1 Cor 12-14) at the centre of its spirituality. It is defined by four fundamental teachings, all of which involve some kind of practice: salvation, healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit and expectation of the immanent Second Coming of Christ. Alongside its evangelical concerns (conversion/rebirth, fellowship, mission), Pentecostal spirituality focuses on experiences and phenomena (e.g. miracles, visions, deliverance from possession, ecstatic states) that go beyond religion.¹⁰

This author however notes that Pentecostalism has varied perceptions depending on the religious and political influence where it is rooted. For him, the perception Pentecostals within the western world where enlightenment influences have caused many to disbelieve biblical faith and miracles struggle to make a dependable reality. On the other hand, the author acknowledges that Pentecostals found in Africa,

⁸ Paul Fahy, *Origins of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement* (USA: Understanding Ministries, 1998), 43.

⁹ Louis R. Torres, *Demons or Angels: Demonic Possession* (Gaston OR: Torres LC Ministries, 2013), 104, 105.

¹⁰ Reinhard Hempelmann, *Pentecostalism*, trans. John Cochrane, accessed 8 August, 2017, http://www.glopent.net/Members/suarsana/suarsana_paper_workshop_2014.pdf/view.

Asia, and South America battle with the issue of inculturation.¹¹ To the author among the significance of the movement socially includes: “strengthening their self-confidence, getting in touch with their own emotionality, pursuing their interest in education and achieving social mobility.”¹²

Pentecostalism and Rumuokwurusi District

Rumuokwurusi district in Port Harcourt Conference has given birth to a Pentecostal Adventist Church, a church patterned according to the theology and world view of Victory Sanctuary SDA Church, Lekki, Lagos State. This grandchild of Victory sanctuary is said to have begun in 2005 after a youth evangelism and was championed by the then Port Harcourt Federation Youth Leader, IkennaNzeadibe, a ‘prayer warrior.’ This movement that grew gradually and became a dissident group in Port Harcourt Conference of SDA Church, Eastern Nigeria Union Conference, began as a weekly regular rotational prayer and fasting meetings round the District.¹³

When the District could no longer contain their excesses, they secured a worship place in a hotel along Port Harcourt-Aba Express Road, and named the group *Strong Tower Seventh-day Adventist Church*. This wave even swept serving Elders in Elimgbu Church in Rumuokwurusi District. The members of this group were not limited to Rumuokwurusi District; all who love emotional and feeling-centred kind of worship identified with and became part of the group. Though this group is currently

¹¹ Hempelmann, *Pentecostalism*.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Richard Ukpebor, Head Elder, SDA Church Rumuodara, interview by the author, Port Harcourt, 8 August 2017.

situated in Oro Evo District, a nearby District, many throughout the Port Harcourt Conference who love the flavour of Pentecostalism do worship there till present.¹⁴

Efforts were made by some ministers to reclaim some which yielded successful fruits. Unfortunately, it seems that the Leadership of the Church outside of the Conference encourage and perceive no wrong or error in the group's theology and practices. For more than a year the group rendered no financial account/report to the Conference. And the Port Harcourt Conference former president, Dave M. Nyekwere wrote a letter to the entire Membership of the Conference, indicating that the group is not a part of the Conference. This drastic action propelled its leadership to seek for resolution as the letter caused many worship with them to withdraw from the fellowship. This letter was not without squabble with the higher organisation at the Union level. The Conference action which brought about a relative reconciliation as a pastor was assigned to monitor and correct the anomaly inherent in the movement caused the leader of the group to forge the signature of one the bank signatories after signing his with the intent of withdrawing funds from the group account, an action which questions the spirit behind this movement.

The Challenges of the Theology

Pentecostalism theology gives undue regard to religious experience to the neglect of the Scripture. As Samuel koranteng-Pipim puts it: "Increasingly, Christians are questioning everything in the Bible except what agrees with their subjective religious experience (often called "the Holy Spirit's leading")." This accounts for

¹⁴ Stanley Obinna Obia, Port Harcourt Conference Area 1 SDA Youth Federation President, interview by the author, Port Harcourt, 9 August 2017.

phrases such as: “The Spirit has called me,” “as the Spirit leads,” “the Spirit accepts me,” etc that one often here those who are under this influence.¹⁵

Furthermore, Kelvin O Onongha who did a thorough research work on Pentecostalism and its challenge within the Nigeria context discovered its affinity with ATR, its beliefs and practices.¹⁶ One of such beliefs is spiritualism embraced by some to obtain power for miracles. Unfortunately, “spiritualism,” as Norman Gulley aptly observes, “remains satan’s trump card. With cunning and craft he plays it. He works through it to appeal to senses just as he did in Eden. It worked then, and it’s succeeding now.”¹⁷ Gulley further elucidates that spiritualism within the Pentecostals and the charismatic is responsible for their seeking after tongues instead of the Saviour, and works instead of Christ, a purposeful diversion that “gets people off the right road that leads home”—salvation found in Jesus Christ alone.¹⁸

It is therefore syncretism in its blending of Christianity with other religions. This is a characteristic quality of the New Age religion that paves way for deception and dual allegiance. Such compromise certainly may not bring about an advance of the cause of Christ as some feel.¹⁹

Another negative side of Pentecostalism is its creation of fear theology. Instead of reverence to God, much emphasis is placed on evil forces and witchcraft. There are conspicuous proofs that this theology has crept into the backdoor of the Adventist Church. As Kelvin O. Onongha aptly observes,

¹⁵ Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word: How New Approaches to the Bible Impact Our Biblical faith and Lifestyles* (Berrien Spring, MI: Berean Books, 1996), 217.

¹⁶ Kelvin O. Onongha, *Pentecostalism in Nigeria: Phenomenon, Prospects and Problems to Mainline Churches* (Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State: Babcock Consulting, 2011), 67.

¹⁷ Norman Gulley, *Jesus is Coming!: A Christ-Centered Approach to Last-Day Events* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1998), 160.

¹⁸ Ibid.

witchcraft beliefs are strongly entrenched in the psyche and worldview of African Adventists more than what may be realized. Each time a discourse veers in such a direction anecdotes shared indicate that there exists unhealthy fear, even awe for the purported activities of those with such powers. In certain occasions and contexts some members and ministers have even been accused of possessing powers to bewitch and oppress others.²⁰

Anointing

Another trend that is becoming so strangely interesting and fascinating is the idolisation and bastardisation of the anointing service and what it actually represents in the Scriptural epistle of James (5:13-17). It is almost metamorphosing into the pharisaic worldview among supposed believers, and to some Adventist leaders in particular, to assume that close contact of believers with the unsaved amounts to evil contamination that calls for urgent anointing so as to ward off and cancel perceived evil manipulation or machination of Satan and his human agents that, if not speedily attended to, could lead to the death of the supposed contaminated believers. One may be compelled to ask if the living God whom believers serve is no longer able to protect His children from the unseen forces of darkness seeking continually to deceive, distract, and destroy His elects. Could it also be that Satan's servants are now overlords of God's servants? Perhaps God is no longer alert and watchful over His faithful? This bastardisation and idolisation of the anointing oil unarguably prompted the timely publication of Prof S. M. Nwaomah, *The Gospel of Wholeness: Biblical Reflections on Anointing, Healing and Prosperity*. Decrying the overzealousness of some religious leaders and members, the eminent scholar writes that "the desperation to anoint and be anointed has led to all sorts of ingenuity by those who peddle

¹⁹ Gulley, *Jesus is Coming!*, 160.

²⁰ Kelvin O. Onongha, "African Pentecostalism and Its Relationship to Witchcraft Beliefs and Accusations: Biblical Responses to a Pernicious Problem Confronting the Adventist Church in Africa," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies*, Vol. 13 No. 1, Art. 6. (2017): 50, accessed, 8 August 2017, digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1369&context=jams.

anointing with oil.”²¹ To those who teach and adopt such bizarre and unscriptural, yet popular, kind of anointing prevalent among the Pentecostals, anointing has become all in all in itself—it is believed to bring about wealth (all-round prosperity) without work. It has also become efficacious in healing all kinds of diseases, and an arm-twisting formula before God and men that grants untold favours to those who accept and are being anointed. SDAs are not shielded from the pervading influence of these prevalent beliefs common among other religious persuasions.²² In this same vein, a concerned religious leader laments the strange practice some religious leaders who undermine the privacy and sacredness of certain parts of the opposite sex in the name of anointing.²³

Nwaomah, in evaluating this trend that is shaking the very foundation of some Adventists Ministers and members, causing them to sacrifice their uniqueness and identity of the faith Adventist profess, points out that:

1. It has introduced perverted practices into the church. Unlike the biblical practice of anointing individuals such as kings and sanctuary materials, anything and everything, including secular theatres for sensual entertainment, are being anointed by individuals who lack understanding of biblical teachings and practices concerning anointing.
2. Invitation of non-Seventh-day Adventist pastors to lead out in some Seventh-day Adventist Church anointing programme and services. The author relates that in some of the cases, the invited Pentecostal pastor divines cum declare visions for the members of the church.

²¹ S. M. Nwaomah, *The Gospel of Wholeness: Biblical Reflections on Anointing, Healing and Prosperity* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Positive Press, 2012), 64.

²² *Ibid.*, 92, 93.

3. It has led some Adventists to search for anointing from other religious persuasions irrespective of their theological difference and doctrinal stand. The ceaseless craving to be anointed so as to obtain solutions to certain challenges that constitute threat to them has caused some in Adventist Church to seek after it elsewhere in the case where the individual's church pastor is not willing or hesitates to supply the supposed urgent need. Some have even started "to question the authenticity of their Adventist faith and practices" as a result of the experiences they had from without the Adventist Church.²⁴
4. And lasting, it has given room to splinter groups in the Adventist Church. Some SDA Church in Nigeria now practice perverted forms of anointing and rationalise same by claiming that they do so as a means of preventing the members of the faith from seeking for such service in other denominations.²⁵

In an attempt to curb the strange practices infiltrating the Adventist Church, an author writes that: "there was no need for anyone to conduct some "anointing services" for church members, pews, microphones, and other objects to ensure the receptivity of the Gospel message."²⁶

Eneka Church

This church is said to have started earlier in 1986 but could not survive.

However, another attempt of evangelisation of Eneka community in late 2002 gave rise to its present organised church existing today. Though the Rumuokwurusi District

²³ H. C. Achunike, *The Influence of Pentecostalism on Catholic Priests and Seminarians in Nigeria*, in Donatus Pius Ukpong, *The Presence and Impact of Pentecostalism in Nigeria*, accessed August 8, 2017, www.glopent.net/..presence-and-impact-of-pentecostalism-in-nigeria.pdf.

²⁴Nwaomah, *The Gospel of Wholeness*, 93-95.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

as a whole had a terrible blow which left the District without a pastor, with the covering supervision of the church by the then Sabbath School and Personal ministries director, Pastor Atapia O. Atapia, Eneka was organised into the sisterhood of churches in the then Rivers Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2004.

At the organisation, Eneka Church had a membership of eighty-six (86) persons. The growth of the church from its inception in the year 2004-2015 stood at as a result of disunity among the members, spiritual weakness, and recently a moral fall of the minister assigned to feed the church. The incident generated a great hindrance to the church as the minister in question was blackmailed for months and compelled to pay a reasonable amount of money in order for the victim to keep the information undisclosed to the public.

Unfortunately, the failure of the minister to sustain the monthly due agreed upon led to exposure of the incident to the public domain. The ugly scenario caused no little harm to the membership. It created doubt in the membership on the dependability of ministers and marred the image of the church in the society. Moral decadence and cohabitation among members (male and female singles) increased astronomically. The church was also influenced by the tide of Pentecostalism within the entire district.

Elimgbu Church

After several efforts made by the District to establish a church in Elimgbu failed, the Lord finally made a way for the planting of the church in the year 2004 after the mega city evangelism sponsored by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This church was organised into the sisterhood of churches in Rivers

²⁶ Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "Prayer Warriors and Prayer Offensives," *Here We Stand: Evaluating New Trends in the Church*, Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, ed. (Berrien Spring, MI: Adventists Affirm, 2005), 153.

Conference the SDAs on 11th -12th of February 2011 by Pastor Moses O. Okai. The membership of the church stood at 156 during its organisation.

Regrettably, soon after the organisation of this church, Pentecostalism separated two third (2/3) of the membership to the Strong Tower Seventh-day Adventist Church. Bickering and monastic squabbles among the few members who remained led to stunted growth of the church and spiritual confusion. Like the Pentecostals, the Scripture was not rightly interpreted; the feelings and supposed voice of the ‘spirit’ became standard for doctrine evaluation and principles.

The apparent disunity among members of the church retarded their zeal, withered the church’s spiritual life, and evaporated the “spiritual refreshment and keenness.”²⁷

Hence, the church urgently needs a purification or sanctification, a pressing need Jesus Christ did request of the Father on behalf of the church (Jn 17:17). “A purified church”, writes Robert E. Coleman, “will be able to receive unhindered the power of the outpoured Spirit”²⁸ which, no doubt, will enhance a speedy accomplishment of the gospel commission.

Quantitative Research

In ascertaining the spiritual condition of the church in view of the hermeneutical diversity surrounding the church, questionnaires were administered and personal interviews were conducted to acquire vital information needed to accomplish the project. The analysis of the data collected is shown in the tables below

²⁷ Wesley L. Duewel, *Ablaze for God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989), 87.

²⁸ Robert E. Coleman, “The Hope of a Coming World Revival”, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th ed., Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1981, 1992, 1999, 2009), 201.

Data Analysis

The tables represent the world view and beliefs of those who participated in the survey administered for the purpose of actualising the project goals. The letters A, D, and U, stands for *Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Undecided* respectively.

Table 1. Analysis of the Importance of the Scripture

S/N	Questions	A	D	U
1	Bible study is not necessary to kick start a revival.	30	60	10
2	There is no danger in Bible interpretation if set goals are met.	20	80	0
3	The voice of the spirit is to be obeyed instead of the Scriptural teachings.	25	67	8

To the above questions addressing the importance of the biblical text and its interpretation role in revival reflect a high level scriptural ignorance. This condition portrays spiritual darkness and vulnerability of the church to deceptions. The church in this spiritual condition is not likely experiencing the sanctifying effect of the scripture which the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the life of the repentant sinners—imparted righteousness (John 17:17). The data show that 30% of the respondents consider bible study unnecessary for the commencement of revival, 60% of them on the contrary deem bible study necessary for revival while 10% are unable to identify or are indifferent to the significance of bible study in kick starting a revival.

Table 2. Analysis of the Role of the Holy Spirit in Revival

S/N	Questions	A	D	U
4	The Holy Spirit is the one who brings revival in the church.	100	0	0

All acknowledged the Holy Spirit as the one who brings about revival. But they seem not to fully discern the test required to prove the spirits if they are of the Lord or of the enemy of humanity. The data represent 100% of the respondents. It indicates there is no divided opinion among the respondents that the Holy Spirit, as a divine person, only can bring about revival, not human effort.

Table 3. Analysis of the Cause Misfortunes and Miracles

S/N	Questions	A	D	U
5	Ill health and misfortunes among Christians are caused by Satan and his human agents.	40	60	0
6	Miracle is the true test of discipleship	25	65	10

The data above indicate that 40% of the respondents consider ill health and misfortunes among Christian as solely acts of Satan while 60% of the respondents did not consider ill health and misfortunes as the sole acts of Satan. By implication, the 60% above may have considered other factors as equally responsible for human ill health and misfortunes. It also implies that the 40% who accept and hold on to the belief that all misfortunes are acts of Satan are likely to easily fall prey to the Pentecostal beliefs which often give room for schism among family members and believers. On the other hand, the 60% may not be gullible to the aforementioned bait of the Pentecostals.

Furthermore, the responses of the 40% above seem to undermine the effects of humanity's lifestyle choices and their consequences which often affect health and longevity. Attributing every challenge to mischief emanating from the evil forces could breed suspicion and accusations among members. It may encourage intemperance among believers and promote reckless living, paving way for the

popular Pentecostal belief that every health challenge is an attack manipulated by Satan and his agents.

25% consider miracles as true test of discipleship, 65% disagree with the view, and 10% took an indifferent stand. Though God perform miracles, making miracle the true test of discipleship is likely faulty, dangerous, and misleading, for Satan performs “deceptive miracles.”²⁹

Table 4. Analysis of Worship and Music

N/S	Questions	A	D	U
7	The Seventh-day Adventists seem to be cold in their worship	37	60	3
8	Music is a crucial and integral part of worship	100	0	0
9	There is no harm in drumming like others; it makes the worship lively	25	69	6
10	The youth are leaving the church because of its coldness and archaic songs	38	60	2
11	The Scripture supports dancing during public worship	25	85	0
12	Singing from the hymnal does not make one feel God’s presence	25	69	6

37% Of the respondents see the SDA worship as cold, 60% of the respondents insist it is not cold, while 3% took an indifferent stand. 100% of the respondents accept music as crucial part of worship. 25% advocate for drumming during worship, 69% perceive danger in so doing, and 6% could not state their view. 38% also hold that cold worship occasioned by archaic songs is responsible for youth leaving the church, 60% disagree with the view, and 2% are indifferent. 25% of the respondents consider dancing during public as scriptural, 85% disagree with this view.

²⁹ E. G. White, *Selected Messages Book 3*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008), 390.

25% of the respondents agree that use of hymnal makes no impact on their worship, 69% acknowledge its impact as positive, and 6% took no stand.

The data above indicate an increasing desire of the SDA members in Eneka and Elingbu to embrace the contemporary music and worship styles observable among the Pentecostals. However, the view that music could keep the youngsters from leaving seems doubtful and untenable. That the Scripture endorses dancing during worship appears refutable theologically.³⁰ Music and worship should glorify God, build Christian character and maintain “a balance between feelings and biblical theology and morality.”³¹

Table 5. Analysis of the Manifestation of the Holy Spirit

N/S	Questions	A	D	U
13	The Holy Spirit’s presence in worship brings revival, shouting, great joy, and rolling on the ground by worshippers.	0	95	5
14	Speaking in tongues is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit that enhances miracle and wondrous signs.	9	80	1
15	Seventh-day Adventists need the contemporary praise and worship songs and services of prayer warriors to fight spiritual battles.	29	67	4

The data above show that 95% of the respondents disagreed that the Holy Spirit is responsible for noisy worship characterised with rolling on the ground of worshippers while 5% of the respondents did not make their view known. 9% acknowledged the speaking in tongues accompanied by miraculous sign and wonders

³⁰ Philemon O. Amanze, “A Contextual Study of Dancing as a Part of Worship among Seventh-day Adventists: King David a Case Study,” *Music and Worship in Africa: Adventists’ Dialogue from Biblical, Historical, and Cultural Perspectives*, Sampson M. Nwaomah, Robert Osei-Bonsu and Kelvin O. Onongha, eds (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, 2014), 36.

³¹ Sampson M. Nwaomah and Theodore U. Dickson, “Contemporary Worship Music and Its Implications for Adventist Music Ministry in Africa,” *Music and Worship in Africa: Adventists’ Dialogue from Biblical, Historical, and Cultural Perspectives*, Sampson M. Nwaomah, Robert Osei-Bonsu and Kelvin O. Onongha, eds. (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, 2014), 64, 65.

as manifestation of the Holy Spirit, 80% disagreed with the view, and 1% took indifferent stand. 29% of the respondents agreed that SDA need the contemporary praise and worship songs and services of prayer warriors to fight spiritual battles, 67% disagreed and 4% kept mute to the question.

The data above, no doubt, show the level of understanding of the members on the operation of the Holy Spirit. The view that the church need the services of the so called prayer warriors may lead some to visit other churches to get some prayers or instigate members to copy such prayer patterns as observable among the Pentecostals.

Table 6. Analysis of the Importance of Prayer and Witnessing

N/S	Questions	A	D	U
16	Having prayer conferences devoid of Bible study and witnessing may lead to revivals.	30	65	5
17	Christians need prolonged violent prayer to be revived.	25	74	1

The data indicate that 30% of the respondents agreed that Bible study and witnessing are secondary to prayer conferences for revival, 65% disagreed, 5% did not respond to the question. 25% also believed that prolonged violent prayer is needed for, 74% disagreed with the view, and 1% remained in indifference.

The information as recorded above show that members believe that prayer is crucial for revival to take place. Unfortunately it seems that they do not all understand the promise made on the fulfilment of the gospel commission and the author of the Scripture. The ignorance of the power imbedded in the study of and obedience to the principles of the “Book written by the Life-giver Himself”³² may not be anything less than a fatal mistake.

³² Roger J. Morneau, *A Trip into the Supernatural*, Updated ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982, 1993, repr. Babcock University Press, nd), 83.

Table 7. Analysis of the Relevance of Biblical Interpretation

N/S	Questions	A	D	U
18	Every religion is acceptable before God; none should judge anyone.	10	90	0
19	There is no harm in seeking prayer and counselling from any anointed man of God.	35	65	0
20	Obedience to all God's commandments and unity are not necessary for revival.	15	85	0

10% of the respondents held that all religions are acceptable to God while 90% disagreed with the teaching. 35% held that seeking prayer and counselling from other religious leaders pose no danger while 65% of the respondents disagreed with this stand. The data as represented here implies that a great percentage of the church visit prayer houses. 10% of the respondents are not likely aware of their identity as ambassadors of God commissioned to enlighten and make disciples for God. Another 15% of the respondents considered the Decalogue and unity as unnecessary articles of faith that may not enhance revival. On the other hand, 85% of the respondents believe that obedience to all God's commandments and unity are necessary for revival of the church.

CHAPTER 4

THE ADDRESS OF THE PROBLEM

Realising that even the minister is not immunised against temptations and the tendency to experience spiritual burnout, it is expedient that the pastor or shepherd of God's church deliberately make efforts to daily renew their spiritual life. The counsel of apostle Paul to the Corinthian church in his first epistle is timely: "So let the one who thinks he is standing be careful that he does not fall" (1Cor 10:12 NET). In other words, all believers in Jesus Christ are vulnerable to the assaults and sophistries of Satan except they depend on the victory won on their behalf by the atoning death of Jesus Christ (John 15:5) and that they can do the humanly impossible through Christ Jesus who strengthens them (Phil 4:13). As E. G. White rightly warns:

Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you cannot overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God.¹

Programme Development

The programmes developed to address the issues prominent in the survey responses are spiritual. This is so as the issues themselves are clearly spiritual challenges. Spiritual apathy and stunted growth among believers are not conditions imposed on the church by the devil and his supposed human agents without choice.

¹ E. G. White, *Messages to Young People*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008), 99.

One of the conditions plunging the church to untimely spiritual paralysis is the choice to remain in the state of inactivity in lieu of disciple making task commanded and commissioned the church membership by Jesus Christ. E. G. White affirms that: “The very life of the church depends upon her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord's commission. To neglect this work is surely to invite spiritual feebleness and decay. Where there is no active labor (sic) for others, love wanes, and faith grows dim.”²

Hence, the programmes the researcher found appropriate to address the spiritual, relational, financial, and challenges of the church in Eneka and Elingbu, and Rumuokwurusi District at large are: weekly Bible Study for Leaders, Rotational one (1) week revival series, FORT, NEWSTART, Skill Acquisition, forming and empowering Small Groups and quarterly Communion service.

Weekly Bible Study for Leaders

This Bible Study class is geared towards training both Sabbath School action unit leaders and small group leaders on Tuesdays throughout the District. The venue for the meeting is the headquarter church, Rumuokwurusi. The time has been at 5:000 pm. This class study is in line with the counsel given the church thus:

The best medicine you can give the church is not preaching or sermonizing, but planning work for them. If set to work, the despondent would soon forget their despondency, the weak would become strong, the ignorant intelligent, and all would be prepared to present the truth as it is in Jesus. They would find an unfailing helper in Him who has promised to save all who come unto Him.³

Rotational One Week Revival Series

The purpose of the week-long revival cum Bible study meeting was to enlighten the churches on the devices of Satan geared towards decimating the church, tackling the challenge of spiritualism popular in the district via the plausible

² E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 825.

movement referred to as Pentecostalism, and to bring about unity among members within the churches across the District. Many (SDAs inclusive) seem not to be aware of the right tool to use in testing the spirit in order to differentiate between the Holy Spirit and the fallen angels (1Thess 5:21). This study investigates the origin of angels, their abilities, their wisdom, their roll towards worship, their interest in one's health, angels mission etc.

FORT

This is an acronym that stands for

F—Family

O—Occupation

R—Religion

T—Testimony⁴

The crucial point about FORT is that it is a means of teaching church members how to begin a meaningful conversation that may lead to Bible study with a colleague or prospect. Communication accelerates the growth of intimacy as confidence is built gradually. It bothers on what to say, how to say it, and when to say.

The above areas are crucial in training the church on how to show care and concern to Believers and Bible friends via communication skills that matters. This tool is also employed by the Pastor and other church leaders during the visitation of church members. It creates healthy relationship between believers and bible friends. It helps the minister not to pry into the privacy of the bible friends and the membership.

³ E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1895.

⁴Gary Gibbs, *Winsome Witnessing: Dynamic Ways to Share Your Faith* (Keene, TX: Seminars Unlimited, 2003, 3004), 19.

NEWSTART

The purpose of this programme is to nip at the bud the challenge of ill health and on how to maintain good health. It is an acronym that stands for:

N—Nutrition

E—Exercise

W—Water

S—Start

T—Temperance

A—Air

R—Rest

T—Trust in divine power

The researcher enlisted the services of health professionals in the District in carrying out this plan. It is intended to curb the trend of members viewing or hurling accusations at their relations and loved ones as witches and wizard afflicting them with ill health; not their life style choices and disobedience to natural health principles and laws instituted for humanity's good by God.

The services of the staff of AMMI were requested with the aim of teaching members practical steps to prevent diseases. This AMMI assistances attracted many to the meetings as they freely gave health lecture and offered natural healthy supplements to both the members and to invited bible friends.

Skill Acquisition

This was intentionally included to the revival series to help members be creative and diversify their means of livelihood and improve their income, that they may support the gospel work as well as their families with cheerfulness. The target audience here were the youngsters and the unemployed within the District who are

often enticed by the promises of prosperity gospel propagated by the Pentecostal church leaders. This programme covered areas such as: Mushroom production, Computer programming and use of the internet, paint production, air freshener and detergent production, bakery and cooking skills.

The skill acquisition on paint production, detergent production, baking and cooking skills was conducted in Elingbu Church.

Communion Service

This service was intended to enhance fellowship among believers in Jesus Christ within the District. It is also a means of reassuring believers in Christ the hope of salvation and its consummation at the Second Advent of the Lord. It paves way for admonitions in righteousness, the need to forgive and live in peace with others, and privilege of praying together for the advancement of the work of God.

Programme Implementation

Dane Griffin's assertion that "Nothing in the universe in the biological, physical, or spiritual realm—is more powerful than unity"⁵ remains crucial in accomplishing church programmes and executing tedious tasks such as holistic revival of the church membership. The idea of unity, universal unity in the earth made new after the end of the controversy, is what E. G. White had in mind, states clearly here: "One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation."⁶

Furthermore, the minister or any church leader may not be able to work in isolation to bring about any revival or visible growth in the church without enlisting

⁵ Dane Griffin, "The power of Unity", *Adventists Affirm*, accessed 9/09/2017 from <http://www.adventistsaffirm.org/article/258/previous-issues/volume-24-number-2/the-power-of-unity>.

⁶ White, *The Great Controversy*, 678.

the members/followers to accomplish set goals. Henry Blackaby and Richard

Blackaby affirm this thus:

Even the most outstanding leaders cannot accomplish sufficient tasks apart from the capable effort of others. A solitary leader is a contradiction in terms. History's most heralded leaders learned how to maximize the talents and sacrifices of others to multiply their efforts.⁷

The researcher conducted a week-long revival meeting in Elingbu from January 17—23, 2016 in the evenings. Knowing that the Pentecostal ravaging influence within the District started in Elingbu Church and led to the almost dissolution of the young Church, the Lord was earnestly sought for God's leading as the meetings were based on the Scripture, and the Spirit of Prophecy (SOP) writings.

The meetings cum studies provided an opportunity for the church membership to understand the schemes of Satan and all the host of fallen angels in the supposed revivals common among the Pentecostals. The study also exposed to the slowest learner the instrumentality of heavy sound systems coupled with uncontrollable shouting and excitements among the Pentecostals as seeming harmless tools in the archdeceiver's hands in covering up his deception.⁸ The apparent confusion borne in the minds of some between the operation of the Holy Spirit and that of the demons were cleared as the Word of God was made new to all who attended. The studies brought to bear to the membership the forces sowing seeds of discord among believers, and the reason for the unfaithfulness of the church.

Again, the Eneka Church series held from January 31-February 6, 2016. The leaders and members attended. The same materials used in Elingbu Church revival were used in the meetings. However, efforts made to visit and have words of encouragement with the individual who had a moral fall with the church minister was

⁷ Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Leading People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville, TN: H&B, 2011), 294.

unsuccessful. With the visitation planned and carried out, the schism among believers in this church has reduced drastically.

Small Group

Getting the members involved in the mission of the church is not only biblical; it is timely. The purpose of small group is, among other reasons, to keep everyone in the church active for the furtherance of the gospel. It is in line with the GC scheme of activities for promoting TMI for revival and growth of the church.

Realising the crucial role of small group for the growth of the church membership and the need for it to remain focused in that direction, Kurt W. Johnson writes: “Every small group needs to have evangelism at its emphasis. Otherwise, it can become a clique or a closed society that views visitors as intruders.”⁹ This divine initiative intended to strengthen and revive the church is common in New Testament records as adopted by Jesus Christ and the apostles (Matt 4:18-22, Luke 6:13-16, Acts 2), and was revealed to the church today via the writings of E. G. White thus:

“The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers.”¹⁰

Programme Evaluation

The goals set for the revivals, Bible study, skill acquisition, and health lectures were to awaken members from their spiritual lethargy, grant them financial

⁸ E. G. White, *Selected Messages* 2:36.

⁹ Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups: From Theory to Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2011), 75.

¹⁰ E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008), 7:21.

support/security, and enlighten them on the best life style practices that will not only grant them good health and longevity while serving God, but will help them be fortified against the antagonistic theology propagated by the Pentecostals that create enemies where there are none.

Though it is difficult to humanly measure the spiritual life of the church without a fault, all the efforts put to reviving the churches has produced tangible and verifiable impact on the churches within Rumuokwurusi District. There is increase in the attendance level of members to weekly and other church programmes, not just in Eneka and Elingbu Churches but in the entire district, as the strategies were finally made district wide programme. Another area the revival strategies made remarkable impact is the functional district wide small group evangelism groups that visit newly baptised members, nurture, and follows up all who attended any church/district programme within the Distract.

Furthermore, the financial returns (tithes and offering) and the witnessing cum discipleship zeal of the entire district increased in comparison with the previous year (2015). Available and verifiable Annual Camp Meeting Report of Port Harcourt Conference of Adventist Church shows that Rumuokwurusi District had one of the best reports as a result of the steps adopted to revive Elingbu Church and Eneka Church which later became a District wide series.

The aftermaths of the revival strategies were: increase in the financial obligation from thirty one million, six hundred and eighty-two thousand, six hundred and five naira, seventy kobo (N31, 682, 605.70) (year 2015) to forty four million, twenty-two thousand, one hundred seven naira, forty-five kobo (N44, 022, 137.45) in the year 2016, an increase of twelve million, three hundred and thirty-nine thousand,

five hundred and thirty-one naira, seventy-five kobo (N12,339,531.75); sixty seven persons were baptised into the church and are still in the church.

More so, at present the two churches (Elimbu Church and Eneka Church) have established and commenced worship in two Branch Sabbath Schools and unity is restored to the church by God's grace.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the project considers the summary of the various views held by individuals and groups on revival, the research conclusion and possible recommendations on issues to be considered should there be need for further research in this area of study that may strengthen and foster an all-round development and fortification of the Church against the prevailing popular but spiritually declining influence of God's power to transform lives for eternal salvation.

Summary

Though opinions on revival and how it is expected to commence abound, there seems to be no universally accepted stand among biblical scholars on religious revival of believers in Jesus Christ. Some consider revival as a forceful manipulative power of the Holy Spirit on the Christian church and the unconverted that lives the church with neither choice nor time to prepare for the outpouring of God's spirit.

Yet others assume that every startling experience that leaves humanity, especially those who profess faith in Christ, without explanations and puzzled is revival or the blessing of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. To some, certain repetitive sentences or phrases and formula prayers are necessary for the revival of the church to commence. Still, others hold to the speculation that revival is a mere excitement that God employs at will to call the attention of His people back to Himself each time they relapse into one sin or the other. It implies that He allows wickedness

and injustice to prevail to a certain degree before He does the needful to cleanse the mess.

Though some rely on certain lectures to kick start revival without any request in prayer to God, others emphasise prayer without repentance (sorrowing for sin and turning away from it), obedience to God's word as it is expressed in the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments, and forgiveness on the part of believers.

However, a unique opinion reveals that revival will only come in response to prayer, and that there must be deep searching of hearts, confessions of sins to God and forgiveness of sins, reconciliation among Christians and a unity of members of the church in Jesus Christ; not the ecumenical unity promoted by various religious organisations based on the traditions of men.

On the surveys conducted among SDAs, some do not see any danger in Pentecostal theology and practices infiltrating into the church. They rather see it as a medium of winning back the confidence of the church's young people via a change of liturgy to compensate for the supposedly cold and lifeless worship of the Church.

The entire research reveals that a majority of Christians around the world do not study their bible; they rather rely on the scholars and religious leaders to both read the Scripture, interpret same, and think for them while they remain in their comfort zones expecting a miraculous intervention of God to make powerful witnesses instead of being a witness for God, awaiting His outpouring of the Spirit for the completion of the gospel commission.

Conclusion

The attempts by many supposed scholars in the Adventist Church to consider the Pentecostal theology and world view which often eclipse the word of God and its power to transform lives of both old and young as not-too-different from SDA

doctrines and consequently “borrowing [from the Pentecostals] is transforming the ministerial practices of the Church from a Biblical to a Charismatic paradigm”¹ This almost popular trend, not “the coldness of the church,” is responsible for the Luke warmness and mass exit of the young people from the SDA Church. Another challenge that separates the young people from the church is parents’ lack of spiritual mindedness, and hypocrisy of their fellow young ones. The introduction of clowns to the church service, enticement with gifts, cannot keep the youth if there is no demonstration of God’s transforming power.² There is therefore no justifiable reason from the Scripture that slightly suggests that shouting, entertainment, and excitements are useful instruments God employs to call His people out of worldliness and spiritual slumber to Himself or that they guarantee that the Holy Spirit is in attendance in such worship gathering.

More so, the spiritual revivals and reformation that occurred among God’s people, according to the Holy Writ, in the days of Josiah and Nehemiah could not be said to be based on emotional ecstasy and sensuality common in the revivals prevalent among Christian groups and increasingly making influx into the SDA Churches today. On the contrary, the Scripture was being read and the people were taught the law of their God, the Creator of the universe, which hitherto has been transgressed, hidden/obscured and rejected. This study of the Word, with the conviction of the Holy Spirit, made all the difference that renewed and revived their lives (2Kings 22, Neh 8). Were age necessarily a criterion for importing and adopting the worship devoid of God’s knowledge and reverence as has become the order of the day, for the outpouring

¹Fernando Canale, “The Eclipse of Scripture and the Protestantization of the Adventist Mind: Part 2: From the Evangelical Gospel to Culture”, *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 22/1 (2011):112.

²V. Bailey Gillespi and Timothy J. Gillespie, *Hey! Love Them and They will Come!* (Riverside, CA: Hancock Center, 2011), 175-177.

of the Holy Spirit (as some assume), youngsters like Josiah, Daniel, Azariah, Mishael, and Hananiah, even Timothy, ought to have opted for a neighbouring pagan worship styles and secular literatures to learn their “civilised culture and theology” to be retained in the congregation and worship of the true God.

Again, the Holy Spirit who also authored the Scripture, definitely is not the same person working surreptitiously in the lives of many who profess faith in God while denying the immutability of God’s law, the transcript of His character and commanding others to freely transgress same, and who claim to have been blessed and revived by Holy Spirit.³ A parading of “faux spiritual performances in the temple’s court”⁴ or anywhere devoid of the required balanced relationship between the church and God (vertical level relationship) and each other within the church and those without (horizontal level relationship) may not be a revival.⁵

It is crucial that religious leaders and parents realise that the family is the microcosm of the church and society and that revival or retention of the youth could be traceable to the revival of family worship cum daily activities. A revival of a consistent participatory family worship where the Scripture is read, spiritual songs are sung and prayer offered among the various families that constitute the church is non-negotiable. Littered in the Scripture are commands of God for families to worship and instruct their family members in the way of the LORD and its potency in winning millions to Jesus Christ and preserving the truth to unborn generations (Deut 6:6-7; 11:17, 18, Jos 24:14, 15, Eph 6:4, Col 3:16).⁶

³ E.G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008).

⁴ Paul Z. Gregor, “Practical Spirituality in Isaiah 1:10-20,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 22/1 (2011): 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶ Joel R. Beeke, *Family Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2002), 3-11.

David Trim and Marye Trim maintain that the General Conference (GC) initiative for revival and reformation will only become a reality as the individuals that make up the church personally seek for it. They submit that: “A revival does not change the whole church, all around the world, to be a success in the eyes of Heaven. It needs to change just one life: mine.”⁷

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations that will help prevent or curb the tide of spiritual declension sweeping away the Church identity and mission focus, bring about the needed spiritual revival:

- I. Pastors/Ministers should adopt, personalise, and integrate into their daily life the GC Revival and Reformation plan by reading/studying the Scripture and praying for their personal revival by the Holy Spirit.
- II. Members of the Church should be trained on how to share their faith with others and be involved in the activities of the Church.
- III. Pastors should intentionally make out time to prayerfully study the God-given counsels and predictions enshrined in the SOP writings, practise, teach, and encourage members to do same so as not to be swept away by the ingenuity Satan and his fallen angels.
- IV. The youth/young people in the Church should be equipped and engaged in the mission of the Church as a way of establishing and strengthening their faith in Jesus Christ.
- V. Pastors and members should learn and practise the simple lifestyle practices that promote good health and prevent diseases so as to avoid the miraculous healing appeals of the Pentecostals.

⁷ David Trim and Marye Trim, “Revival and the Holy Spirit,” *Ministry: International Journal*

- VI. Small Group and Sabbath School Action Unit meetings, daily study of the quarterly Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, other Bible Study plans and prayer meetings, should be employed and judiciously used to keep the Church spiritually afloat.
- VII. Personal witnessing and visitation to members and non-members should be ongoing to prepare and qualify the church for the visit of the Holy Spirit and the pouring out of the Latter Rain.
- VIII. Music/Song leaders should be educated to compose songs that are biblical and theologically sound for God's glory and edification of God's Church.

for Pastors, Feb. 2017, 17.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to get useful academic information from you to enable the researcher carry out a reliable and thorough investigation of issues affecting the existence and spirituality of the church. All information given here by you shall be treated with strict confidentiality. So, supply the information as required from you freely without any external influence compelling you to choose something contrary to your opinion on these questions itemised here below..

Thanks in anticipation

Yours in the Lord

Section A

Demographic Information

Please tick the option that suits you

- 1) Age (in years):15-20/ 21-30/31-40/41 and above
- 2) Level of Education: Secondary/Undergraduate/Graduate/Postgraduate.
- 3) Gender: male/female.
- 4) Marital status: single/married/Divorced/.
- 5) Years spent in your current church: 5-10/11-15/16-20/21-30/31 and above

Section B

From the questions below, you are to tick the option that best describe your view:

Agree (A), Disagree (D), Undecided (U)

S/N	Questions	A	D	U
1	Bible study is not necessary to kick start a revival.			
2	There is no danger in Bible interpretation if set goals are met.			
3	The Holy Spirit is the one who brings revival in the church.			
4	Ill health and misfortunes among Christians are caused by Satan and his human agents.			
5	Seventh-day Adventists are cold in their worship liturgy.			
6	Music is an integral part of Christian worship.			
7	Drumming like the Pentecostals will make the church lively.			
8	The youth are leaving the church because of its coldness.			
9	The Scripture supports dancing during public worship.			
10	The Holy Spirit brings about revival, shouting, great joy and rolling on the ground by worshippers.			
11	Every religion is acceptable to God; no one should discriminate.			
12	There is no harm in seeking prayer and counselling from any anointed man of God.			
13	Unity among believers and obedience to all God's commandments do not bring revival.			
14	Speaking in tongues is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit that signs revival and miraculous works.			
15	Seventh-day Adventists urgently need the contemporary praise and worship songs to be revived.			
16	The voice of the spirit is to be obey instead of the Bible.			
17	Singing from Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal does not make one feel the presence of God.			
18	Having prayer conferences devoid of Bible study and witnessing revives all.			
19	Christians need prolonged violent prayers to be revived.			
20	Miracle is the true test of discipleship.			

APPENDIX B

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS

1. How long have you worshipped with Elingbu/Eneka Church?
2. Is your membership with the church?
3. Do you know where the Strong Tower SDA Church started?
4. Could you describe when the meeting that led to Strong Tower SDA Church started?
5. Who were leading out in the meetings?
6. Were they praying and singing?
7. Did those who were attending studying the Bible?
8. Were they going out for witnessing and sharing the three angels' messages?
9. Did the church leadership support the movement and their practices?
10. Why do you think some members joined this church that runs a parallel administration with the Conference?
11. Do you think there is anything wrong with the teachings and worship of the group?
12. Do some members of Eneka and Elingbu Churches still worship with Strong Tower SDA Church?

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