Title: A strategy for the development of the literature ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Zimbabwe

Author: Leonard Masuku

Date completed: March 1995

Granting Institution: Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS)

Description: Unpublished Dissertation (DPTh): 290 pages

Abstract:

The scarcity of literature evangelists in most of the local Seventh-day Adventist churches in Zimbabwe presents a major problem that affects the overall operation of the literature ministry. The case of Zonke SDA Church has been selected for this study because it is representative of the situation in most of the local SDA Churches in Zimbabwe. The main purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to understand why the majority of the local churches are not involved in the literature ministry and (2) to establish principles from the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White to facilitate the effective involvement of church members in literature ministry.

This study is organized into four parts: (1) description, (2) analysis, (3) interpretations, and (4) action plan.

Part I: Description

The Zonke SDA church has no literature evangelists. Ndoda Moyo, the local church pastor, viewed the literature ministry as the responsibility of the field publishing director. He also doubted if the church members would be interested in literature work since most of them
were educated and affluent. Moyo also observed that church members who started literature work sold books for a short time and quit. The case reveals the problem of a lack of literature evangelists in local SDA churches in Zimbabwe and the prevailing attitudes of the church members that may be responsible for the situation.

Part II. Analysis

The study examines the problem by (1) reviewing the history of canvassing work in Zimbabwe, (2) analyzing the sociocultural, religious, and economic dynamics which are likely to influence the relationship of church members toward literature work, and (3) reviewing the conceptual framework of literature evangelism with its functional and organizational structures. Hindrances to the effective participation of the church members may be result of a misconception of the nature of the literature ministry, which has excluded the direct involvement of the local church in planning and organizing its activities and its implementation.

Part III: Interpretation

The study investigated the scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White to gain an understanding of the nature and the application of literature ministry. The literature ministry did not exist during Bible times in the same manner as it is commonly known and practices today. Nevertheless, both the Old and New Testaments indicate that the ministry of the written word was central for both the spiritual life and the existence of Israel as a nation. Local churches that received the written epistles had the responsibility for their circulation. The writings of Ellen G. White also affirm the scriptural position.
Part IV: Action Plan

To encourage the involvement of church members in literature work, the study provides an action plan that establishes the literature ministry as a department of the local church by (1) union and conference committee actions; (2) election of the local church publishing director and secretary, and approval of the composition of the local church publishing council at the time of the annual election of church officers; (3) the designation of a church elder as the chairperson of the publishing council; and (4) the education and training of church members.