

COLUMBIA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF
STARVATION'S (NAPS) THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF EVANGELISM

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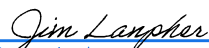
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ABSTRACT

In the pantheon of global missionary work, the presence and contributions of African American missionaries, particularly within the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, represent a critical yet understudied facet of missiology and evangelism. The existence of NAPS within Adventism has been overlooked despite its strategic efforts having achieved notable results in local and global missions. Hence, this study aimed to examine NAPS' theological and methodological approaches to evangelism, which make their missions successful. Specifically, the questions included the historical significance of NAPS, their theology and practice of evangelism, and contributions to the SDA Church, Black Adventist missions, and youth development.

The study used a qualitative case study methodology, incorporating a review of documents, questionnaires, and face-to-face and video interviews. Thirty-nine participants who worked for NAPS in different capacities were purposefully identified, and consent was obtained. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis pegged to Braun and Clarke's standards for conducting good thematic analysis.¹

The findings indicate that NAPS provides a viable platform for Black Adventist youths to engage in holistic missions and evangelism. Though NAPS' theology is interwoven with the SDA Church's fundamental beliefs, they are not limited by them. NAPS' theology and practice of evangelism advocate and disseminate the Good News, integrating acts of proactive, empathetic service and concrete aid with preaching in low socioeconomic, underserved, and marginalized communities. This ethos embodies a compassion-based ministry to the "least of these," as evidenced by NAPS' slogan, "We don't just send relief; we hand-deliver it with love

¹ See Appendix A and Appendix B.

and care.”

The dissertation concludes that NAPS’ strategies have positively contributed to the SDA Church and impacted Black Adventist missions, including youth development. As best practices moving forward, the study proposes embracing technology, developing leaders, fostering collaboration, adaptability, and succession planning. The study suggests that church leaders, missiologists, and religious educators adapt their evangelistic praxes to include the input of underprivileged people who have previously been disregarded. It also recommends including the contributions of NAPS in the reservoir of academic and ecclesiastical literature for posterity to benefit from and expand on their strategies.

Key Words: Adventist Missions, Black Adventism, Evangelism, National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS).

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the remarkable women who have graced my life: my BMW (Beautiful Marvelous Wife) Rhonitta, whose radiance illuminates every challenge; my mother, Claudia, a paragon of humility and kindness; my late grandmother, Louise, whose memory is enshrined in the heart of this work; and my daughter, Joanna, whose future sparkles with promise. Each has sown into this achievement in unique and memorable ways, and I am forever grateful. Thank you!

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I am deeply grateful to God, the Alpha and Omega of my faith. Through Your providential guidance and unending grace, I have made it through this challenging and enlightening path.

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To my children, Joel and Joanna, who have graciously lent your father the time needed for this scholarly labor at the expense of innumerable moments we could have shared—the worth of your sacrifice is priceless. May this work stand as a beacon, inspiring you to relentlessly chase your dreams and a reminder that my dedication to you as your father is rivaled only by my love for you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALWI – Abundant Life Wellness Institute

EGW – Ellen G. White

ESV – English Standard Version

GC – General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

GCNARC – General Conference Nurture and Retention Committee

GEMMS – Global Evangelism and Medical Missionary School

NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NAD – North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists

NALA – NAPS Abundant Life Academy

NAPS – National Association for the Prevention of Starvation

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

NKJV – New King James Version

NPO – Nonprofit Organization

OU – Oakwood University

RC – Regional Conference

RQ – Research Question

SDA – Seventh-day Adventist

SID – Southern Africa-India Ocean Division of Seventh-day Adventists

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INTRODUCTION

Research Introduction

“An African American missionary is a paradox, a seemingly incongruent concept because the African American missionary is virtually non-existent,” reveals Linda P. Saunders.² She adds that “of the nearly 400,000 global missionaries world-wide, African-Americans represent less than one-tenth of one percent.”³ However, the statistics do not always paint a full picture because the stories of Black contributions to Christianity and their respective denominations, historically, have been suppressed, disregarded, skewed, or are still being studied, written, or yet to be discovered and told. From this perspective, there is a gap in the literature, which this research proposes to address.

The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS) is one of the organizations whose Black contributions to Christianity have been sidelined. This research aimed to locate NAPS among the contributors to the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) by examining NAPS’ theological and methodological approach to evangelism. NAPS has contributed to Adventism in North America and Southern Africa; hence, their contributions should be a part of the Black SDA legacy. While the denomination can be credited for giving Black people a platform to highlight the works of some prominent African-American and West Indian leaders and organizations, the SDA Church should also include NAPS to free them from historical obscurity.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church itself is also a paradox. On the one hand, it is one of

² Linda P. Saunders, “Laying an Historical Foundation to Examine The African-American Church’s Relationship to 21st Century Global Missions To Create A Contextualized Missions Training Model For Future Generations of African-American Missionaries,” (PhD dissertation, Columbia International University, 2020), 1.

³ Saunders, “A Feasibility Study to Develop a Missions Training Center to Recruit African-American Young Adults for Global Missions Through Education and Training,” (Master’s thesis, Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 6.

the fastest-growing protestant denominations in North America and the world.⁴ On the other hand, it is declining, especially among Millennials and Generation Z. That is not to say they are only attracting an older demographic. However, the Church is indeed aging, but they are neither effectively retaining younger populations nor intentionally passing the leadership mantle to the young in a timely manner.⁵ Unearthing, adapting, and applying NAPS' evangelistic framework could also be a solution to help resolve congregational decline and reboot mission-driven Black churches in the North American Division (NAD) of SDA.

From a North American perspective, where the SDA Church has a slower growth rate and smaller membership than the Southern Africa India-Ocean Division (SID), this dwindling trend is concerning, given the Church's history with race relations in the United States and the continuing debate over white and Black conferences.⁶ In their research, the Barna Group discovered that American "Black engaged Christians (61% teens, 62% young adults) are more reluctant than the white majority (74% teens, 73% young adults) to say they value missionaries'

⁴ G. Jeffrey Macdonald, "Adventists' Back-to-Basics Faith is Fastest Growing U.S. Church," Religion News Service (USA Today), March 17, 2011, accessed October 30, 2021. https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2011-03-18-adventists_17_ST_N.htm#mainstory. The author wrote, "Newly released data show Seventh-day Adventism growing by 2.5% in North America, a rapid clip for this part of the world, where Southern Baptists and mainline denominations, as well as other church groups are declining. Adventists are even growing 75% faster than Mormons (1.4 percent), who prioritize numeric growth." Edwin Manuel Garcia, "Adventist Church global membership nears 18 million, with 1.1 million baptisms in 2012" Adventist News Network (Adventist Review) October 15, 2013, accessed March 15, 2022. <https://adventistreview.org/annual-council-2013/adventist-church-global-membership-nears-18-million-with-1-1-million-baptisms-in-2012/>. Yet G. T. Ng, General Conference of SDA executive secretary, told church leaders during his report at the 2013 Annual Council in Silver Spring, Maryland, that nations in the northern hemisphere are experiencing slow growth, while the Adventist population is booming in much of the southern hemisphere. this has been the continuing trend in the SDA denomination as evidenced by their 2020 and 2021 Annual Council reports. See chapters 2 and 3 of both reports at <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/statistics/ASR/ASR2021A.pdf> and <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/statistics/ASR/ASR2020A.pdf>

⁵ Ryan Simpson, "Younger Church, Aging Leadership (Part One)," *Atlantic Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (2015), accessed October 31, 2021. <https://atlantic-union.org/younger-church-aging-leadership-part-one/>.

⁶ Calvin B. Rock, *Protest and Progress: Black Seventh-day Adventist Leadership and the Push for Parity* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2018), 29-34.

work.”⁷ While there is a lot of truth to this assessment, again, it is not the whole picture, and the SDA Church should not fold its hands in the face of such statistics. Instead, it should embrace what Saunders advised and thoroughly examine the African-American church’s relationship to global missions outreach. Their presence will add diversity to the global missions’ endeavor – as manifested in NAPS’ evangelistic ethos.⁸

Rationale and Need

Assessing NAPS’ theological and methodological approach to evangelism was vital because its strategic evangelistic framework has produced consistent results in domestic and global missions. That proposition would warrant documentation in the narrative related to African American involvement in evangelism in the SDA Church. Such a legacy of Black contributions need not be lost or hidden in the shadows and can further stimulate missional engagement among Black Adventist congregations.

The Church’s co-founder warned, “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us and His teaching in our past history.”⁹ Yet, all too often, humans do forget, and history repeats itself (Eccl 1:9-11). Therefore, this research served to benefit church leaders, the North American Evangelism Institute (NADEI), Adventist Frontier Missions, Regional Conferences (RCs), pastors, and missiologists – a crucial reminder of the laity’s role in the work of ministry (Eph 4:12).¹⁰ It also sought to provide content for

⁷ Barna, “Young Christians Value Missions, But Question Its Ethics.” *Barna Research Group*, accessed October 30, 2021. <https://www.barna.com/research/young-christians-value-missions/>.

⁸ Saunders, “A Contextualized Missions Training Model,” 1.

⁹ Ellen White, *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1992), 359.

¹⁰ With a growing Black population within the SDA Church in the late 1800s and 1900s, the constant need for racial unity and equality became inescapable. Black Adventist Regional Conferences (RCs) seemed to be the answer to advance the gospel work among Blacks without splitting the denomination. These RCs are primarily responsible for the spiritual care and evangelization of Black Adventists in their respective territories. The road to becoming bonafide and fully recognized entities in the World Church of SDA was not easy. However, RCs exist by authorization of the General Conference (GC) Spring Council in 1944. All RCs hold membership, like other local conferences, in the union conferences of the North American Division (NAD) of SDA. See “History,” Office for Regional Conference Ministries, last modified April 27, 2022, <https://adventistregionalministries.org/history>.

researchers and inspire Black Christian youths that they too can make a difference in the cause of God.

Additionally, the study addressed the current gaps in understanding concerning Black Adventists engaged in missions, evangelism, and intercultural studies by adding to the body of available knowledge. For example, of the three main repositories of all things Black Adventists, Oakwood University (OU), BlackSDAHistory.org, and the SDA Encyclopedia, the latter two in their current archives had nothing about NAPS' ministry.¹¹ There were few or no current published works about NAPS' contributions to Adventism and the *missiones ecclesiarum* that robs the body of Christ of information that can help others find their place in the Great Commission. This body of work sought to address that concern.

There was also a paucity of doctoral research about the presence of Black people in global missions and their perspective on the global missions movement.¹² However, this dissertation could add one more brick in piecing together the narrative about African American contributions to Christian missions, specifically, NAPS' contributions to the SDA Church's missionary activities. Future and yesteryear scholars can build on it to propel the conversation further while reinforcing that the gospel's mandate is for all disciples – the priesthood of all believers (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; and 1 Pet 2:9).

¹¹ There were no references (hits) found (articles, interviews, or books) on these sites for the terms “NAPS” Or “National Association for the Prevention of Starvation.” Yet NAPS was formed and housed on the campus of Oakwood College, now Oakwood University (OU) – an Historically Black College and University (HBCU), in Huntsville, Alabama, which is essential to the history of the SDA Church. OU is the premier Adventist institution for educating Black Adventists in North America and has produced many of the Black educators and missionaries listed on BlackSDAHistory.org and in the two-volume work, *Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color*. Most Black SDA pastors in the United States are trained at OU which has also bred some of the renown Black preachers like E. E. Cleveland, Charles Bradford, C. D. Brooks, Walter Pearson, Jr., Dr. Henry Wright, Dr. Barry Black, Dr. Charles Wesley Knight, and Dr. Carlton P. Byrd.

¹² Saunders, “A Contextualized Missions Training Model,” 3-4.

Most theses, dissertations, and published books on Black Adventists focus on a prominent figure or feature several Black contributors together. Few were credited entirely to one organization, even fewer were dedicated to a Black SDA ministry, and none covered NAPS.¹³ These concerns prompted this research to determine: How has NAPS contributed to the mission of SDA Church – its highest value?¹⁴

Research Problem, Limitations, Terms

In this dissertation, I analyzed NAPS' theology and evangelism practice and assessed their ministry's contributions to the SDA Church. The study sought to unearth the strategies that have consistently yielded a fruitful harvest in North America and Southern Africa, with the hope of making an application to ministry in the local church and providing a notable reference in the annals of Black Adventism. It was necessary to address several sub-questions of the primary research problem to accomplish this objective.

First, what is the history of NAPS, and how did it become a global ministry?¹⁵ Their

¹³ For example, see Ernest E. Rogers, "A Study of the Evangelistic Methodology and Preaching of Edward Earl Cleveland," (PhD diss., Michigan State University, Lansing, 1967). Catherine Marie Johnson, "Contributions of African American Women to Post-Secondary Education: Eva Beatrice Dykes (1893-1986)," (Master's thesis, Michigan state university, Lansing, 1992). Romuald C. Jones, "Utopia Park, Utopian Church: James K. Humphrey and The Emergence of the Sabbath-day Adventists," (PhD diss., Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, 2001). Herbert Griffiths, "The Impact of African Caribbean Settlers on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Britain: 1952-2001," (PhD diss., The University of Leeds, West Yorkshire, 2003). Samuel G. London, Jr., "From Conservatism to Activism: Evolution of Adventist Participation in Civil Rights Politics," (PhD diss., Purdue University, West Lafayette, 2006). Harold L. Lee and Benjamin Baker, C. D.: *The Man Behind the Message* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2013). Sharon Ferguson Beasley, "Pioneering Women of Southern Education: A Comparative Study of Northern and Southern School Founders," (PhD diss., University of South Carolina, Columbia, 2014). William J. Southerland, "Negotiating the Delta: Dr. T.R.M. Howard in Mound Bayou, Mississippi," (Master's thesis, University of South Florida, Tampa, 2016). Douglas Morgan's, Lewis C. Sheafe: *Apostle to Black America* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2010) and *Change Agents: The Lay Movement that Challenged the System and Turned Adventism Toward Racial Justice* (Westlake Village: Oak and Acorn Publishing, 2020).

¹⁴ As evidenced by the SDA Church's "Strategic Plan – I Will Go," accessed October 31, 2021. <https://iwillgo2020.org/>. It is about the whole church—church members, local churches, missions, conferences, unions, divisions, the General Conference, and other institutions—partnering to share the gospel with our communities and to the ends of the earth.

¹⁵ RQ1.

journey was important to understand to set the backdrop for which NAPS' evangelistic endeavors could be appreciated as warranting inclusion in missiological research. Second, what is NAPS' theology of evangelism?¹⁶ While methodology can yield best practices necessary for contemporary ministry, understanding the fundamental theology behind those methods provides the "why" behind the "how." Knowing what and how to do ministry needed to be balanced with why it was being done. Third, what is NAPS' practice of evangelism?¹⁷ Armed with an understanding of NAPS' theology of evangelism, their methodology could be better understood and thoughtfully applied. Determining if the organization had a strategic framework for domestic and global evangelism would be useful. Fourth, in what ways has NAPS contributed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Black Adventist missions?¹⁸

Answering these questions helped tell the story yet to be told and paved the way for prospective researchers to build on. Finally, what suggested best practices for evangelism can be implemented moving forward?¹⁹ This question was important for summarizing potential applications of the research findings and making recommendations for future research.

Limitations

This research study was delimited in scope denominationally, demographically, and geographically. It was both limited and delimited theologically and limited methodologically. While telling the story of African Americans involved in Christian missions is helpful, this study focused on NAPS and their impact on the SDA Church. Therefore, it did not address Black contributions to Christianity as a whole but more specifically about NAPS' contribution to the SDA Church. While applications could be drawn broadly, the focus remained on the

¹⁶ RQ2.

¹⁷ RQ3.

¹⁸ RQ4.

¹⁹ RQ5.

original context of the study.

To further focus the study on the research problem, NAPS' operation in the North American Division (NAD) of Seventh-day Adventists excluded Canada and was delimited to the United States. Additionally, evaluating NAPS' contribution in the Southern Africa-India Ocean Division (SID) of Seventh-day Adventists was limited to those countries in Southern Africa comprising only Zambia, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Botswana, Mozambique, and Malawi.

The research focused on the period from NAPS' formation in 1978 to 2021. However, a brief historical review of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the development of the work among Black people was necessary. The years studied included 1999 to 2019 to analyze NAPS' missiological approach. While the study pursued an understanding of NAPS' theology and practice of evangelism, it was not an exhaustive study of the same. Future researchers can delve deeper into a systematic study of NAPS' theology and practice. Still, this study was foundational – introducing NAPS to the gamut of African Americans engaged in missions.

Defining of Terms

The following essential terms were used throughout the study and are here defined to grasp the subject's meaning. The term *Black* will be used to define people of African descent living in the United States of America. African American and *Black* will also be used interchangeably. *Adventism* will refer to the beliefs, practices, principles, and nuances of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. *Division* will mean one of the highest governing bodies in the SDA organizational structure – primarily the North American Division (NAD) and the Southern Africa-India Ocean Division (SID). The SDA Church operates in a hierarchical structure, starting with the local Church at the bottom and the General Conference (GC) at the top. Above the local churches are Conferences (all churches in a geographic area, like a state or

territory), then Unions (conferences in a larger territory or multiple regions), then the Division (which provides oversight for “groups of unions in specific geographic areas of the world”).²⁰ Though “participants” and “respondents” are sometimes used interchangeably, when reporting the results and analysis, *participants* will primarily mean those who completed the survey questionnaire. In contrast, *respondents* will refer to those who were interviewed during the data collection process.

Literature Review

A literature review was necessary for this investigation to ascertain what gaps still exist in the foundation laid by others regarding the contributions of African Americans to the missional legacy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While the body of literature is increasing concerning Black Adventist missionaries’ contributions to the denomination, more data is needed to fill the gaps in the literature. Despite NAPS’ achievements in evangelism and global missions, scholarly work is lacking.

Arthur Glasser argued that when it comes to “A Biblical Theology of Missions,” the kingdom of God is the prominent theme of both the Old and New Testaments.²¹ The fact that previous generations focused on the various aspects of God’s sending and the missional activities of the early church, those themes, defended Glasser, are insufficient to establish a

²⁰ SDA Church, “How is the Seventh-day Adventist Church Organized and Structured?,” accessed January 26, 2022. <https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>. There are thirteen divisions in the SDA world Church – all of which function under the auspices of the General Conference which “coordinates the work the denomination does collectively on a global scale.” The two main divisions this study will focus on are the North American Division (NAD) (“home to 1.2 million members worshipping in almost 5,700 churches across Bermuda, Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Johnston Island, Marshall Islands, Midway Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, United States of America, Wake Island, and the French possession of Saint Pierre and Miquelon.”) and the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID), which covers “Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini (new name for Swaziland – 2018), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Namibia, Reunion, Saint Helena (including Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha), Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Over 4.3 million members worship in nearly 12,800 congregations across the territory.”

²¹ Arthur F. Glasser, “A Biblical Theology of Missions” in *The Portable Seminary: A Master’s Level Overview in One Volume*, eds. David Horton and Ryan Horton (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2006) 545.

firm theological foundation for missions. Only the kingdom agenda of God is powerful enough to impact every aspect of humanity. Consistent with the law of first mention, Glasser opined that in Genesis, the first mandate given to Adam and Eve was the seed for a holistic mission – family, community, culture, and civilization.²²

Glasser also observed that when the first humans rebelled, thwarting God’s vision, it resulted in God’s judgment on the antediluvians, making it necessary to renew the missional mandate with Abram, to bring God’s kingdom blessings to humanity again (Gen 12:1-3). Israel’s myopic estimation of her covenant responsibilities meant she could not fully grasp God’s vision for all nations – gentiles included, to be citizens of His kingdom.²³ This kind of missional mindset was related to the research topic because, though not purely theological research, this dissertation presented a parallel theme to Glasser’s kingdom motif yet expanded beyond it.

However, according to Geoff Tunnicliffe, a central kingdom focus has been threatened for centuries. The rapid pace of change in the twenty-first century has also left many churches and mission agencies struggling to stay afloat or face the future with bold dreams.²⁴ He sought to analyze and prescribe solutions for this trend in his article “Mission Trends and Strategies.”²⁵ While local context must be examined, he acknowledged that global trends significantly impact ministries. Some include increasing globalization, persecution, secularism, postmodernism, HIV/AIDS, wealth inequalities, at-risk children, and the fact that [now over]

²² Glasser, 546. See also Erick Mendieta, “Typology and Adventist Eschatological Identity: Friend or Foe?” *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal*: Vol. 1: No. 1, Article 5 (2015), accessed February 21, 2022. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/vol1/iss1/5>. “The law of first mention” stresses that the context of the first time any idea is introduced in Scripture sets the tone for its use in the rest of the Bible.

²³ Glasser, 547.

²⁴ Geoff Tunnicliffe, “Mission Trends and Strategies” in *The Portable Seminary: A Master’s Level Overview in One Volume*, eds. David Horton and Ryan Horton (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2006), 576.

²⁵ Tunnicliffe, 576-581.

“sixty-five percent of the global church is from pre-dominantly non-white nations.”²⁶

For the church to remain relevant and still contribute to God’s global mission enterprise, Tunncliffe suggested, among the multitudinous possibilities, that it strategically engage in tentmaking, partnership facilitation, church planting, leadership development, uniting with the national church, encouraging emerging mission leaders, integral mission, standing with the persecuted church, ministering in a multicultural context, and short-term missions.²⁷

These general trends and strategies may be found in most mission entities, yet they do not scratch the surface of key issues affecting the Black church’s involvement in global missions and the uniqueness of Black Adventism. This research further contextualized challenges and solutions relevant to the above demographics.

In “Multicultural Realities: A Call to Diversify the ‘Unity’ of the Church,” Simone Twibell observed that the social fabric is shifting, and the many public spaces reflect the diversity outside the church. She candidly asked, “If all these places are as diverse as they appear, why aren’t our churches better reflecting this reality?”²⁸ Therefore, it is clear this problem is not germane to Adventism only. It is an issue that nearly every protestant denomination is dealing with today. Twibell does not propose to keep things as they are or to run from the challenge. To the contrary, she contended, the Church is an eschatological community. It has the promise and power of the Holy Spirit, consequently “developing cultural richness and heterogeneous fellowship in the midst of a world full of racial tension,

²⁶ Tunncliffe, “Mission Trends and Strategies,” 580.

²⁷ Tunncliffe, 581-587.

²⁸ Simone Mulieri Twibell, “Multicultural Realities: A Call to Diversify the ‘Unity’ of the Church” in *Evangelical Mission Quarterly* (EMQ), Vol. 58, Issue 1, (2022), 16, accessed February 17, 2022. <https://missionexus-net.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/2021/12/30/multicultural-realities-a-call-to-diversify-the-unity-of-the-church/>.

xenophobia, and bigotry is the task ahead.”²⁹ She suggested some practical considerations, starting with acknowledging cultural differences rather than ignoring them. The biblical priorities of reconciliation, forgiveness, grace, and love must prevail. She concluded we are all on a pilgrimage “toward the realization of the Kingdom.”³⁰

The same problems still haunt not only the Black Church but Christianity as a whole. However, issues about missions and evangelism are still lacking, and there is no evidence about how they work from a practical perspective. This dissertation sought to show that missional focus can bring unity and diversity without downplaying cultures.

Jon Dybdahl’s *Adventist Missions in the 21st Century* was a call to examine the Church’s need to reexamine its mission in the new millennium.³¹ Many of these calls have come from denominational leaders addressing missional issues affecting the Church, none more serious than the steady membership decline and retention challenges. The General Conference Nurture and Retention Committee (GCNARC) has twice called for long overdue discussions to address these matters with their Nurture and Retention global summits.³² Their publication, *Discipling, Nurturing, and Reclaiming*, shared best practices to be more effective and efficient in God’s mission by some of the leading practitioners and scholars in the Church.³³ Their work focused primarily on bridging the gap at the local church level and not considering the global implications, leaving room for other strategies that this research seeks to provide.

²⁹ Twibell, “Multicultural Realities.”

³⁰ Twibell, 17-18.

³¹ Jon L. Dybdahl, ed., *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century: The Joys and Challenges of Presenting Jesus to a Diverse World* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 13.

³² The first was held on November 18-20, 2013, and was titled “Discipling, Retaining & Reclaiming.” The second was held on April 5-7, 2019, and covered the areas of: Discipling, Nurturing, and Reclaiming.

³³ General Conference Nurture and Retention Committee, *Discipling, Nurturing, and Reclaiming: Nurture and Retention Summit* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2020), iii-viii.

George Knight, a renowned Adventist scholar, unpacked Adventism's theological mindset and approach to mission in his book chapter titled, "Remnant Theology and World Mission." In this chapter, he explained why SDAs do not see themselves as just another denomination, even with their peculiar beliefs. Rather, Knight noted, "Adventism from its very beginning has fervently believed that it was a people of prophecy and that it had a special part to play in the closing events of world history."³⁴ This motif centers on Adventists' interpretation of Revelation, particularly chapters 10-19. Therefore, the three angels' messages inform their prophetic mission of proclaiming the everlasting gospel (Rev 14:6-12).³⁵ This insight loaned itself to researching NAPS' theology of evangelism but also uncovered what else informed their evangelistic practices.

Another insightful book chapter related to the theme of this research was Randal Wisbey's "Involving Young People in Mission." Adventists are quick to quote the church's co-founder about the role of children and youth in *finishing the work*. Yet, according to Wisbey, "too many Adventist young people are information rich and experience poor," they are no longer content with being pew warmers and going through the motions.³⁶ He recommended two key opportunities to involve them in missions: community service and short-term mission experiences.³⁷ While those building blocks are warranted, today's generation needs more opportunities, and this study provided practical and fulfilling options to give youths a sense of identity, belonging, and purpose.

³⁴ George R. Knight, "Remnant Theology and World Mission" in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century: The Joys and Challenges of Presenting Jesus to a Diverse World*, ed. Jon L. Dybdahl (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 88.

³⁵ Knight, "Remnant Theology and World Mission," 88-94.

³⁶ Randal Wisbey, "Involving Young People in Mission" in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century: The Joys and Challenges of Presenting Jesus to a Diverse World*, ed. Jon L. Dybdahl (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 214-215.

³⁷ Wisbey, "Involving Young People," 215-216.

The missional focus of this study also warranted reviewing the work of Linda P. Saunders, an authority on the need for mission training and the demand for Millennials and Generation Z living and participating in global missions. That focused area of discipline became evident when she began exploring her master's thesis but later delved deeper into her doctoral studies. In her Ph.D. dissertation, she built on the narrative that African Americans are missing from the global mission narrative.³⁸

Saunders posited that Black churches had forgotten the legacy of others before them and that there is a need for training, which is a missing component from Black churches today. The findings revealed that African Americans abandoned the global mission mandate due to slavery, colonialism, Jim Crowism, and the refusal of White mission boards to accept and send Black missionaries.³⁹ Having that backdrop built an appreciation for this current research's emphasis on how today's Black Adventist missionaries are rising to the occasion to reclaim the legacy of evangelism and missions while facing challenges unique to this era.

"The fact that there are so few Black American missionaries serving cross-culturally is disheartening," lamented Leslie Pelt. Historically, she continued, "Blacks have been deeply involved in missions all over the world."⁴⁰ She examined the chronology of Black people engaged in missions before the 1800s, during the 1800s, and in the 20th century. Of importance were the reasons she shared for the decline in Black mission work, which can be attributed, in part, to rapid growth that caused them to stay at home to serve the growth, lack of financial resources, and not being welcomed in some foreign countries. Pelt stated that mission

³⁸ Saunders, "A feasibility Study," and "A Contextualized Missions Training Model."

³⁹ Saunders, "A Contextualized Missions Training Model," 253-255.

⁴⁰ Leslie Pelt, "Wanted: Black Missionaries, but How?" in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (EMQ), accessed February 16, 2022. <https://missionexus-net.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/1989/01/01/wanted-black-missionaries-but-how/>.

agencies should be aware of these unique challenges Black Americans face as they seek to rouse their global mission responsibilities.⁴¹ These conditions still pose challenges for African Americans, and this dissertation sought to demonstrate how Adventists are affected by similar trials.

The early struggles of Blacks in Adventism and that of other denominations were tainted by the haunting history of slavery and its associated evils. In “Slavery and Religion,” Edward L. Queen asked some pertinent questions regarding how the practice challenged religion and Christianity while inflicting devastation on the spiritual practices of the slaves.⁴² “Did the master have a duty to provide religious instruction to his slaves?” asked Queen. How, then, did they get around it? The master was not always willing to do so because some – at that time – reasoned the law prohibited enslaving Christians, and Christianity ruined slaves.⁴³ On the other hand, most religious leaders refuted that argument by insisting the Bible itself endorsed slavery, and the Apostle Paul plainly instructed slaves to obey their masters. Christianity, they contended, improved the deportment of the enslaved, causing them to willingly do what they previously would have only done under compulsion.⁴⁴

Queen’s article informed the current research to assess NAPS’ theology and practice of evangelism, as it is important to export an unamalgamated message not to distort God's character and teachings. If, as Queen alluded, the religion of the slave owners permitted them to engage in the slave trade, then the tenets of their faith were on trial. Yet, the justification for the practice came from the Bible, the very thing used to Christianize the *heathens*, also

⁴¹ Pelt, “Wanted.”

⁴² Edward L. Queen, “Slavery and Religion,” *Encyclopedia of American Religious History*, 4th ed. Facts on File, 2018, accessed February 16, 2022. online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=101273&itemid=WE01&articleId=197277.

⁴³ Queen, “Slavery and Religion.”

⁴⁴ Queen, “Slavery and Religion.”

condemned the injustices levied upon them by those *evangelizing* them. Hence, this study went beyond background information and provided an analysis of the framework NAPS uses – vital to understanding their actions and evaluating their fruit in light of the biblical Jesus – His mission and His message.

Calvin Rock's *Protest and Progress: Black Seventh-day Adventist Leadership and the Push for Parity* is a monumental work highlighting the blood, sweat, and tears of Black SDA leaders and how they endured and bravely fought to achieve parity in all levels of denominational structure. Rock, himself a warrior in the arena of the Black struggle, took the reader along the journey of the four major Black protest movements, what he called "push." These included the push for social and administrative participation: 1899-1928, which faced constant rejection and political gymnastics from White leadership.

Secondly, the push for Colored Conferences, after the first effort failed, the need for structural accommodation still warranted protest: 1929-1944, which eventually succeeded, but not without major loss.⁴⁵ Some prominent leaders who first cast the vision for this reality did not stay with the denomination, including heavyweights like James K. Humphrey, Lewis C. Sheafe, John W. Manns, and Arna Bontemps.⁴⁶ Third, the push for Black Unions occurred from 1969-1980, which lost three bouts of sustained appeals to the powers that were. The final push was for equitable retirement security: 1998-2000, which won a major victory for Black leadership and the cause of Regional Conferences.

This dissertation builds on Rock's platform, providing an informed background leading up to NAPS' creation and expansion. Rock's masterpiece was mostly historical, while this research examined the past and provided needed best practices for evangelism applicable to the

⁴⁵ Rock, *Protest and Progress*, xiii-1.

⁴⁶ Rock, *Protest and Progress*, 57-66.

current times. It was also intended to fill the gap concerning the lack of Black missional impact by examining NAPS' contributions at home and abroad. Lastly, as evidenced by NAPS' mission activities both in Black and White entities, this work may present an overlooked solution that missions could and should be the answer to the ongoing debate today on the need and relevancy of RCs amidst the growing societal and church changes.

Closely related to Rock's analysis was Alfonzo Greene's seminal research that proved to be a treasured historical lens into the development, struggles, defeats, setbacks, and victories of Black Adventist pioneers. His work was also on par with that of Saunders.' These three were most instructive on my topic to set it on the right canvas to paint a picture of another Black entity's contribution to the body of Christ and that of Adventism.

Greene traced the formation of Adventist Regional Conferences, highlighting the key players and schisms. The key actions leading to this reality are still seldom known by many today. Still, his seminal work will be there for years to help corroborate the stories and legacies of the courageous people who did not back down when they were repeatedly knocked down.

Greene also demonstrated how the plight of Blacks in Methodism was similar in many ways to Black Adventist pioneers in that they were all part of the American conditions that affected Black people at the time. However, notwithstanding the many hardships and unjust treatment, Blacks still embraced the gospel message delivered by Methodist ministers. Greene penned, "It was due to Wesley's uncompromising position in opposition to slavery that accounted for the reaction of Black Americans to Methodism."⁴⁷ In 1780, the Methodist denomination officially voted to oppose slavery and denounced it in 1784. Yet Methodists compromised their stance in practice because, as Greene observed, "Methodism and the way of

⁴⁷ Greene, 204.

confronting the issue of slavery of Blacks became indistinguishable from the narrative of American morality.”⁴⁸

Another theologian and church administrator, R. Clifford Jones, highlighted an aspect of Black contributions to religion as a whole and to the SDA denomination, as few Church scholars have. Jones paints a picture of the rise of Black Sabbath-Day Adventists under the leadership of James Kemuel Humphrey, a Baptist minister from Jamaica who became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1902, then a minister of the Church. As a capable leader, Humphrey sought to preach a practical and balanced Christian message and carried a vision for the betterment of Black people. However, his passions were not accepted by the upper echelons of the denomination, but Humphrey would not alter his plans. He was ultimately defrocked in November 1929, and his congregation, in January 1930, was expelled from the denomination. Humphrey then started the United Sabbath-Day Adventists the same month in response to the racial treatment and social indifference of the SDA Church.⁴⁹

There is no need to hide this side of history merely because Humphrey chose to break away from the denomination to find his own. The SDA Church can only lament what could have been had Humphrey chosen to stay or received the help he desperately needed. This dissertation may shed light on what is necessary for current supporting ministries to remain on the denominational ship while making the kind of impact they envision.

Trevor O’Reggio’s “The Father of Black Adventism: Charles M. Kinny” presented a brief history of the first Black Adventist preacher and how he contributed to early Adventism.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Greene, “Regional Conferences,” 205.

⁴⁹ R. Clifford Jones, *James K. Humphrey, and the Sabbath-day Adventists* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 34-39, 180. See also Gary Land, *Historical Dictionary of Seventh-day Adventists: Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements, No. 56*. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2005), 139-140.

⁵⁰ Trevor O’Reggio, “The Father of Black Adventism: Charles M. Kinny” in *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 25, no. 1 (2014): 116, accessed February 17, 2022, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jats/vol25/iss1/15>. O’Reggio chose to spell Charles’ last name as “Kinny”

O'Reggio authored his paper because he felt that Church scholars had forgotten this iconic figure, as evidenced by the fact that they had written so little about Kinny. Ironically, he was the first African American minister ordained in the SDA Church.⁵¹

After his baptism in 1878, at the age of twenty-three, Kinny was on “fire” for ministry work. He immediately began serving as Secretary of Reno, Nevada’s Tract and Missionary Society.⁵² Kinny diligently studied the best strategies in peaching and judiciously used friendship evangelism by giving door-to-door Bible studies, Bible readings, and selling Adventist literature as a colporteur. O'Reggio noted that twenty-two years after Kinny’s 1889 ordination, he was “the most respected and revered spokesperson for his people.”⁵³ His strong evangelistic foundation was worth building on, and this study hoped to show how NAPS accomplished that.

Carol Hammond, who served as an adjunct professor at Bowie State University and Columbia Union College and as an elementary teacher, presented an excellent journal on Black Seventh-day Adventists’ contribution to missions. Many Black Adventists appreciate this volume because it is helpful to African Americans who want to recapture a sense of missional responsibility and beauty. Over one hundred and twenty-five names appeared on her honor roll list of Black SDA missionaries engaged in service.⁵⁴ She started with the very first Adventist missionary of color, James E. Patterson, whom the church sent to the island of Jamaica in

versus “Kinney.” He noted that this is because in most of the official church documents about Kinny, his name is spelled as Kinney. However, he unequivocally said, “I am departing from this practice and will use Kinny since all the letters, every single one of them without exception that were signed by him used the spelling “Kinny.” All of which, he said, can be found at the Adventist Heritage Center. See *file 013316* at the James White Library, Andrews University.

⁵¹ O'Reggio, 116-117.

⁵² O'Reggio, “The Father of Black Adventism,” 117.

⁵³ O'Reggio, “The Father of Black Adventism,” 124.

⁵⁴ Carol Hammond, *Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color: A Compilation of Stories and Experiences of Ambassadors for God* (Calhoun: Teach Services Publishing, Inc., 2019), 433-436.

1892.

Hammond also narrated stories and historical accounts of key individuals and families who served together from 1892 to the 2000s. What was striking about Hammond's book is that it shows missionaries of color, from diverse backgrounds were not confined to their home countries or one particular region of the world. Their indelible contributions spanned years of service on the African continent in places like Nigeria, Liberia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, and Rwanda; the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, the Middle East, and South America.⁵⁵

Hammond's work informed this research study because it offered a broad stroke of missional insights. It provided the impetus to make this work a reality. Thus, future generations can maintain the legacy of Black contributions and carry the baton further than before.

Though Hammond's list of missionaries of color included both men and women contributing to the SDA Church, Lisa Clark Diller's and Caitlin Jankiewicz's articles spotlighted several key female contributors who were also among Adventist and African American firsts. Clark emphasized the Black women who impacted Adventists' missional focus on health reform and medical missionary work. She uncovered that "the first Black graduates from Adventist medical schools were women, starting in 1902, and the church was an early pioneer in educating women physicians as well as people of color."⁵⁶ Clark emphasized the accomplishments of Ruth Janetta Temple, Mary Britton, and Charlotte (Lottie) Cornelia Isbell Blake.⁵⁷ This research highlighted the place of women in NAPS' ranks and

⁵⁵ See also Pelt's list of Black missionaries for similar locations.

⁵⁶ Lisa Clark Diller, "Unexpected Scope of Work: Black Women Doctors and the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (2018). *Faculty Works*, 8, accessed, February 24, 2022. https://knowledge.southern.edu/facworks_hist/8.

⁵⁷ Diller, "Black Women Doctors," 8. Dr. Blake (1876-1976) was the first African American SDA to become a licensed physician in 1902. Dr. Britton (1855-1925) became Kentucky's first black woman physician in 1903. Dr. Temple (1892-1984) was the first Black woman to graduate from Loma Linda University, an SDA educational institution, in 1918.

student missionary volunteers who majored in the medical and allied health fields. In addition, it also analyzed other evangelistic strategies for reaching people in their context.

Jankiewicz also accentuated several noteworthy women who contributed to the Adventist legacy in her article “Forgotten Women in Adventism.” Not all the women mentioned were Black. However, they shared a few similar struggles with Black women – simply because they, too, were women. Notable, however, were two prominent women in Black Adventism: Anna Rachel Knight and Eva Beatrice Dykes.⁵⁸

Jankiewicz’s closing revelation again made this dissertation necessary in documenting important stories worth telling. She remarked, “In researching the stories of these forgotten women, what struck me most was how a single person’s life, when surrendered completely to God, can be so significant in furthering the gospel message.”⁵⁹ Church scholars must not allow the narrative to continue that Blacks are simply missing from missions when, for the most part, their legacies were allowed to, in many cases, slip into anonymity. Something with which Jankiewicz herself was concerned.⁶⁰

Her work adds another layer to the contributions of minorities, in this case, not just Black people, but women – and more importantly, Black women. This work created a link between women in missions, women in education, and other professional service industries. This dissertation included in the discussion the people who have played a role in NAPS’ evangelism prowess so that they may also shine a spotlight on other female professionals who were and are engaged in missions and evangelism.

⁵⁸ Caitlin Jankiewicz, “Forgotten Women in Adventism” *Lake Union Herald*, 838 (2019), 16, 19, accessed, February 18, 2022. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs/838>. Knight (1874–1972) was the first Black instructor at what is now Southern Adventist University. Dykes (1893-1986) was the first African American female to complete requirements for a PhD in the United States and founded Oakwood University’s renowned choral ensemble, the aeolians.

⁵⁹ Jankiewicz, “Forgotten Women,” 19.

⁶⁰ Jankiewicz, “Forgotten Women,” 19.

Missions training and education also have potential implications for this study. Thus, Andrew Walls' "World Christianity, Theological Education and Scholarship" was noteworthy. In it, he gave a clarion call for a rethinking of theological education and a radical paradigm shift in scholarship according to the needs of the times. He asserted that it was time to develop multilateral relations worldwide and that theological education has everything to gain from developing interactions between Africa, Asia, and Latin America.⁶¹

Walls' assertion can be tied to the idea of training (or education) for Blacks as it relates to engagement in global missions, a theme Saunders has eloquently postulated in her research. For Walls, four viewpoints were necessary to make this shift a reality. The geopolitical (by pressures arising from political developments), the religio-demographic (contextual interrelatedness of religions), the academic (the context in the world of learning as a whole), and the theological (with special reference to the state of the theological academy).

Analyzing NAPS' evangelistic methodologies in training and education revealed they measured up to Walls' summons for a change in basic assumptions. The dissertation also has the potential to help African Americans rise to their historic and prophetic destiny and equip themselves to proclaim the kingdom message once again, at home and globally.

When speaking of education, ministry, and training for Black Adventists, it was imperative to include Oakwood University (OU) in the discussion. Benjamin Baker, the chief historian at BlackSDAHistory.org, documented in *A Place Called Oakwood: Inspired Counsel* that before its founding in 1896 as an industrial training school, it seemed as if a divine hand was leading to acquire the property for the school. In 1891, SDA Church pioneer Ellen G.

⁶¹ Andrew F. Walls, "World Christianity, Theological Education and Scholarship." *Transformation*, 28, no. 4 (2011): 237, accessed, September 26, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43052868>.

White delivered one of her famous messages, “Our Duty to the Colored People,” in which she charged church leaders to build up the Black work in the South.⁶²

The Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists’ (ESDA) article on OU stressed the point that, at this time in the Church’s history, the question was not about affording Black Adventists a formal education but about what type of education and the best strategy to delivering it to them. It also referred to the fact that when Oakwood began in 1896, at least two dozen colleges by other denominations and charities were already funding colleges to educate freed slaves and their children.⁶³

OU’s background was vital to the research since NAPS had its genesis at OU, and its volunteer and missionary base were and are predominantly OU students and graduates. Whether ironic or prophetic, God has used a place tainted with Black suffering to equip their descendants for His kingdom mission agenda. At the same time, NAPS has transcended its OU roots and “recruiting” base for missions. Although the researcher connected the OU-NAPS link, the focus remained on NAPS as an individual entity, with its theology and practice of evangelism.

Ted Esler’s article, “Innovation and the Field Missionary,” was also helpful to this dissertation. In it, he presented a case for how missionaries innovate in the field. His definition goes beyond mere technology, for “Ministry innovation is broadly about outcomes (who we are seeking to impact with ministry), service (how we execute the ministry), and organization (what means are used to minister).”⁶⁴ In the past century, he believed missionaries spearheaded

⁶² Benjamin Baker, ed. *A Place Called Oakwood: Inspired Counsel A Comprehensive Compilation of Ellen G. White Statements on the Oakwood Educational Institution*. (Huntsville: Oakwood College, 2007), v-vii.

⁶³ Leslie N. Pollard, Samuel London, Mervyn A. Warren, Cheryl A. Galley, Lela Gooding, Nigel Barham, and Simone Wells, "Oakwood University" in *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, (2021), accessed February 22, 2022, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=AFWD>.

⁶⁴ Ted Esler, “Innovation and the Field Missionary.” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly (EMQ)*, Vol. 57, Issue 4, (2021), 6, accessed, October 6, 2021, <https://missionexus->

the Church Growth Movement, the Emerging Church Movement, and Diaspora Church Planting efforts.⁶⁵

Yet he gave no credence to the mission agencies who may have sent the missionaries nor to the churches and supporters who may have sponsored them. This study shows how these entities are crucial to NAPS' missional success.

Esler gave four prescriptions to missionaries to help them stay at the forefront of innovation. First, he emphasized the need to cross-pollinate their missionary experience by leaving their local environment and exposing themselves to other fields. Second, Esler reiterated the importance of understanding models and methods from various approaches. Third, he recommended experimentation and testing as part of their approach to ministry. Fourth, be open to collaboration.⁶⁶

Esler's perceptions aided my research by giving another lens to consider what has been overlooked in organizational culture. Assessing the NAPS missionary group on that dimension better ascertained if they were innovative in their evangelistic endeavors and if they were applicable in the context of the local church.

After reviewing the literature, the researcher addressed other gaps that necessitate further analyzing NAPS' theology and practice of evangelism. The purpose was not only to add to the strong legacy of Black Adventism's contribution to the SDA Church but also to uncover further strategies to help curb congregational decline and reignite a passion in the heart of African Americans for missions. Much of the literature provided insights into the historical development of the Black work in Adventism. It revealed essential inspiration from

net.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/2021/09/28/innovation-and-the-field-missionary/.

⁶⁵ Esler, "Innovation," 1.

⁶⁶ Esler, 8.

the key figures who embraced the call to go into the world. Yet, there was a need for ongoing relevancy and strategies to keep pace with the times. This research brought an updated perspective on how Black Adventists are still contributing to the growth of the SDA Church and making a lasting impact for the kingdom of God.

Locating the Researcher

From my earliest recollections in St. Vincent – the place of my birth and upbringing, my family taught me sound biblical values. My great-grandfather was a Baptist preacher, and my mother, Claudia, made sure our family attended church five times a week because that is what she learned from her mother, Louise. Our family was instrumental in establishing the little white church in our village, which was only about a three-minute walk from our house. Several missionary families often came to the little white church to pastor and held Vacation Bible School (VBS), skits, and revival meetings. At VBS, I grew fond of the Bible and wanted to learn as much as possible. At age twelve, one of my favorite missionary pastors baptized me.

After graduating from Grammar School, I left our Caribbean paradise to pursue a new life and higher education in America. The US Navy was the best career option to achieve this dream, but it was also the beginning of an adventurous adult life. While I enjoyed the military travels to distant lands, I noticed that the values I inculcated at an early age began to wane. Before I realized it, I was having the “prodigal son” experience. However, that reawakening drove me to a three-year Bible study, and I decided to become a Seventh-day Adventist. Soon after, I transitioned from the Navy to engage in ministry and humanitarian relief.

My wife was attending Oakwood College (now Oakwood University) at the time and would go on canvassing missions with NAPS. That was my introduction to the organization and a firsthand observation of Black people actively engaged in domestic evangelism and global missions. We became missionaries with NAPS throughout her matriculation at Oakwood –

-serving the suffering and under-served in some of the most neglected and at-risk cities in America and abroad.⁶⁷ Like many professionals, especially pastors, who were once student volunteers with NAPS, we continued to do missions at home and abroad while fulfilling our role of pastoring congregations in Texas.

The dissertation topic bears a personal connection with the researcher. It may help to inspire his African American parishioners to not only take hold of the global mission plow but also to continue the legacy of Black Adventist missionaries sharing the everlasting gospel in unique ways. Based on my Afro-Caribbean background and being a part of the Adventist church, my experiential insights and perspectives as an insider will, at times, allow me to draw upon my firsthand perceptions to comment on conclusions relating to NAPS' theology and practice of evangelism.

Research Methodology

This section discusses the methodology chosen for the study and the rationale; missiological nature, design, and data collection. The researcher utilized a qualitative case study to analyze NAPS' theology and practice of evangelism and assess the ministry's contribution to the SDA Church. A qualitative methodology was best suited to this study because the research objectives and subsequent questions focus on obtaining information to "understand a complex reality and the meaning of actions in a given context."⁶⁸ The rationale for choosing this qualitative methodology was to "produce in-depth and illustrative information to understand the various dimensions of the problem under analysis."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Some of the countries included Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Botswana, Mozambique, Liberia, and Suriname.

⁶⁸ André Queirós, Daniel Faria, and Fernando Almeida, "Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods," *European Journal of Education Studies* 3, no. 9 (September 7, 2017): 369, accessed March 2, 2022, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.887089>.

⁶⁹ Queirós, Faria, and Almeida, "Qualitative and Quantitative Research," 370.

At the same time, the research being undertaken was also not within a vacuum. According to Edgar J. Elliston, missiological research “takes various forms and employs a wide range of academic disciplinary methods singly and jointly.”⁷⁰ The missiological nature of the study did not isolate it from the broader context of other fields of study. This research was similar to anthropological studies which support missiology.⁷¹ However, cultural anthropology was most relevant to the study as it is inextricably linked to the *emic* perspectives of Black Adventism and African Americans. However, there may be significant applications to the broader *etic* viewpoint of Christian evangelism.⁷² In addition, anthropologists commonly use questions based on participant observations and interviews to develop a case study relevant to a particular context. These techniques allowed for checks and balances to ensure reliability in data collection and validity of results.⁷³

Case Study Research Design

I used the qualitative case study as my research methodology in this study. John W.

Creswell defined case study research as:

A qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and cases themes..⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Edgar J. Elliston, *Introduction to Missiological Research Design* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2011), xxiv.

⁷¹ Gary Ferraro and Susan Andreatta, *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*, 10th ed. (Stamford: Cengage Learning, 2014), 4. “Anthropology is the study of people—their origins, their development, and their contemporary variations whenever and wherever they have been found.” See also Serena Nanda and Richard L. Warms, *Cultural Anthropology*, 12th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc., 2020), 1-6. Cultural Anthropology is “the comparative study of human societies and cultures. Its goal is to describe, analyze, and explain different cultures, to show how groups have adapted to their environments and given significance to their lives.” Anthropology is divided into five subdisciplines: biological or physical, linguistic, archaeology, applied, and cultural (which itself has many different subfields).

⁷² Elliston, *Missiological Research Design*, 143.

⁷³ Elliston, *Missiological Research Design*, 141-142.

⁷⁴ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2018), 96-97.

The advantages of a bounded case, multiple sources of information, and the analysis and reporting choice of the researcher all favored this methodology.

Of the three types of case studies Creswell identified, the instrumental case study was most relevant to this research because it allowed the researcher to develop a detailed description of NAPS' evangelistic strategies and how they have contributed to Church growth within Black Adventism. Since the researcher's focus of analysis for the bounded case involved studying one organization – NAPS and ascertaining if its strategies could be applied in the local Church, then using Creswell's recommendation, the single instrumental case study seemed ideal to illustrate the issue.⁷⁵

Data Collection

Based on the rationale for the qualitative case study above, I used documents, audiovisual materials, interviews, and questionnaires as this study's primary data collection methods. According to Creswell, these forms of data are appropriate for the various types of studies but are also well-suited for case studies.⁷⁶ First, I conducted a documentary study of primary sources to establish NAPS' contextual and historical narrative by examining relevant historical documents, ministry communication documents, personnel documents, and evangelistic and promotional materials. These materials were primarily obtained from Oakwood University and NAPS headquarters.⁷⁷

Utilizing Creswell's compendium of data collection approaches in qualitative research as a guide, NAPS' audiovisual materials were also examined to supplement interviews and questionnaires.⁷⁸ These included assessing photographs, videos, musical sounds, websites, and

⁷⁵ Creswell, 98-99.

⁷⁶ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 100, 160-162.

⁷⁷ Mainly from NAPS headquarters.

⁷⁸ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 163, 162.

social media messages.

Exploring the effectiveness of NAPS' evangelistic strategies and recommended best practices for moving forward required recruiting participants from previous or current NAPS staff, board members, and former or current volunteers. After the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was approved, I recruited participants via email, phone, and social media to request interviews and completion of an online questionnaire. Their information was obtained from the organization's website, mission documents, and friends who know them. I then emailed and called accordingly. My research also extended to their social media profiles and NAPS' Facebook page and groups, where many target participants were followers. Those found on these platforms were messaged using the same channels. I also posted a video explaining the research with the link to the survey.

Of the thirty-nine total participants, the majority were married and included five full-time pastors, one chaplain, and three volunteer lay pastors. Twenty-five participants completed the SurveyMonkey questionnaire; nine females and sixteen males, ages twenty-six to forty-nine, completed the questionnaire. Twenty-one participants completed the survey from the US, two from Zambia, and two from Zimbabwe. The sample size was sufficient to provide the necessary data to help resolve the research problem and sub-questions. When participants replied to the recruitment message to fill out the questionnaire, they were directed via the same channel in which they were contacted by clicking a link to Survey Monkey. On that site or page, they clicked a button to agree to the consent form in Appendix C and then began the questionnaire.

Fourteen NAPS leaders with comprehensive knowledge of the organization were also interviewed. Of these fourteen respondents, six were females, and eight were males, and their

ages ranged between eighteen to over sixty.⁷⁹ The interview respondents had experiential insights, which afforded key insider information and another layer of data that regular volunteers did not divulge. The choice for this number and type of leaders to interview were similar to those chosen by Choi, Min Yoon, and Lewis for their dissertations on a similar topic (but covering different people and cultures involved in evangelism).⁸⁰

When respondents replied to the recruitment message to be interviewed, they were asked to confirm a mutually acceptable date and time for the interview. The semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted via Zoom, Restream.io, and in person. Each interview took about 60 minutes, and the interviewee acknowledged and agreed to the consent form (see Appendix C) before commencing the session. The researcher traveled to Alabama between June 16–19, 2022, to interview ten respondents. Of those, eight interviews were conducted at NAPS’ headquarters in Sawyerville and Gainesville (in the Blackbelt region of Alabama). While there, I also observed the respondents in their ministry setting as they carried out some of their duties and outreach activities. The other four interviews were conducted virtually. The interviews were audio and video recorded and then transcribed with Rev.com, Otter.ai, and other professional transcription services.

Analysis and Interpretation

Creswell suggested “making a detailed description of the case in its setting.”⁸¹ A description of NAPS, its theology, and its practice of evangelism was to help ascertain NAPS’

⁷⁹ See Chapter 4 for demographic breakdown on the participants and respondents.

⁸⁰ Sung Eun Choi, “An Analysis of John R. W. Stott’s Theology of Evangelism and Practice of Evangelism,” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006). Young Min Yoon, “An Analysis of D. James Kennedy’s Theology and Method of Evangelism.” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007). Bobby R. Lewis, Jr., “A Critical Investigation of C. B. Hogue’s Concepts of Evangelism and An Assessment of His Impact on Evangelism in the Southern Baptist Convention,” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009).

⁸¹ Creswell, 206.

evangelistic and missional contributions to the SDA Church and the best practices for moving forward. Additionally, the researcher used the thematic analysis approach presented by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke to analyze the data. They defined thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data.”⁸²

Braun and Clarke’s six-phase guide to performing thematic analysis was followed to produce a scholarly analysis report: (1) Familiarize yourself with your data. (2) Generating initial codes. (3) Searching for themes. (4) Reviewing themes. (5) Defining and naming themes. (6) Producing the report.⁸³

Elliston cautioned that no matter what method or mixture of methods is used, there will be a risk to validity and reliability. Consequently, he expressed the need for precision to produce reliable and valid findings without an ethical offense.⁸⁴ To lend credibility to the data analysis approach chosen, the researcher also used Braun and Clarke’s 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis.⁸⁵ Through interpretation, the researcher sought to make sense of it – giving more breadth and depth of meaning to the data beyond the codes and themes.⁸⁶

To validate the accuracy of this case study, Creswell advised qualitative researchers to engage in at least two validation strategies.⁸⁷ Therefore, the researcher triangulated the research

⁸² Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology,” *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, no. 2 (2006): 79, accessed February 23, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>. They have noted the following ten advantages of thematic analysis: (1) Flexibility. (2) Relatively easy and quick method to learn and do. (3) Accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research. (4) Results are generally accessible to educated public. (5) Useful method for working within participatory research paradigm, with participants as collaborators. (6) Can usefully summarize key features of a large body of data, and/or offer a ‘thick description’ of the data set. (7) Can highlight similarities and differences across the data set. (8) Can generate unanticipated insights. (9) Allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data. (10) Can be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development.

⁸³ Braun and Clarke, “Thematic Analysis,” 87. See description of each in Appendix A.

⁸⁴ Elliston, 81.

⁸⁵ Braun and Clarke, 96. See “Table 2 A” in Appendix B.

⁸⁶ Creswell, 195.

⁸⁷ Creswell, 259-263.

findings against other published sources and the input of field experts. I emailed Dr. Martin Ekoumou, a University of Texas Rio Grande Valley professor, for his input. He founded *Don't Lose Hope Global* and has many years of experience in evangelistic community outreach to low-income and at-risk communities. He coordinated several collaborative community health expos with the researcher when he served as pastor in McAllen and Pharr, Texas. Dr. David Hoyte, founder and president of Regional Christian University and Area Evangelistic Missions in Edinburg, Texas, also read the dissertation and provided an officially signed document of his review with suggestions. The results were also emailed to the participants, respondents, NAPS staff, and leaders for review and input. Several responded affirming the research, and for those who did not respond, the researcher took it to mean they had no issues with the findings. One respondent, in particular, provided invaluable insight into Chapter Four and led to the necessity of recommending including more voices in NAPS' African branches in future research. Corroborating evidence in this manner also strengthened the data collection and analysis protocols used in the study – where they would have been weakened without such triangulation.⁸⁸

Chapter-by-Chapter Outline

The dissertation has six chapters. The Introduction introduced the research topic, the rationale and need for the study, the research problem, limitations, the definition of key terms, a literature review, and the research method and procedure.

Chapters one through five addressed the five sub-questions of the research problem. Chapter One located NAPS historically by examining its development and journey to a global ministry. Presenting this historical backdrop facilitated understanding the underpinnings of

⁸⁸ Elliston, 146.

NAPS' theological and methodological approach to evangelism and missions. It also provided foundational insights to examine NAPS' evangelistic endeavors as warranting appreciation and inclusion in the African American SDA missiological discourse.

In Chapter Two, the researcher analyzed NAPS' theology of evangelism to get a clear picture of "why" they do what they do and the beliefs and practices that have shaped their organizational culture and missional drive. Before crediting their evangelistic methodologies, their "how" was crucial to ascertain the biblical mandate behind their "why."

Chapter Three evaluated NAPS' practice of evangelism to determine how they are accomplishing the Great Commission. Understanding these methods helped to determine whether they can be broadly applied and whether or not a strategic framework exists for domestic evangelism and global missions.

The results of the qualitative data were presented in Chapter Four. The researcher shared the findings unearthed from reviewing documents, questionnaires, and face-to-face and video interviews. The contents of this chapter formed the basis for discussion and analysis in the next chapter.

In Chapter Five, the researcher analyzed and discussed the findings. After discovering NAPS' theology and practice of evangelism, this chapter assessed their impact on the SDA Church and Black Adventism and the improvements that NAPS should make going forward.

Chapter Six concluded with a synopsis of the general research findings, implications of NAPS' missional impact, recommendations, and suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF NAPS AND HOW DID THEY BECOME A GLOBAL MINISTRY?

The Black Church's story has been told in many ways and is still being defined as additional scholarship emerges. Within this narrative is the idea that Blacks are missing or are coming up short when it comes to engagement in the *missiones ecclesiarum*.⁸⁹ However, numerous Black Adventists engaged in the Great Commission – even amidst the tapestry of slavery and bigotry embedded in the major denominations of the 1800s.⁹⁰ The Seventh-day Adventist Church, birthed out of great disappointment, attracted Blacks to their unpopular yet captivating eschatological preaching of the 1830s and 40s. The missional drive of these Black Adventist pioneers, their love of the Bible, a willingness to make Christ known, and a burning desire for the heavenly City have permeated the Black Church through the last two centuries. They helped pave the way for ministries like NAPS to germinate and continue the legacy.

This chapter presents a backdrop to investigate NAPS' evangelism strategies as meriting inclusion in the missiological conversation. To understand NAPS' history and how it became a global ministry, it is essential to study primary sources by examining relevant historical documents, personal documents, ministry communication documents, and promotional and evangelistic materials. This development then lays the groundwork to establish NAPS' contextual and historical narrative and the other chapters.

The heritage of Africans and people of color in God's story harkens much further back than their 1619 arrival on American soil.⁹¹ Keith Augustus Burton finds them in the ancient

⁸⁹ Elliston, *Missiological Research Design*, 204.

⁹⁰ Elliston, *Missiological Research Design*, 205. See also Hammond's *Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color* (xi-435) and volume 2 of the same by Dr. DeWitt S. Williams.

⁹¹ "Many consider a significant starting point to slavery in America to be 1619, when the privateer *The White Lion* brought 20 enslaved African ashore in the British colony of Jamestown, Virginia." History.com Editors, "Slavery in America," *A&E Television Networks*, last modified May 19, 2022, <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>. See also History.com Editors, "First Enslaved Africans Arrive in Jamestown, Setting the Stage for Slavery in North America," *A&E Television Networks*, last

text. He noted that Cush is the first identifiable geographical region mentioned in the Bible, taking his cue from the four rivers flowing out of Eden (Gen 2:10-14). The first river, Gihon, encircled the land of Havilah, “Where there is gold” (verse 11). In contrast, Pishon encircled the land of Ethiopia (verse 13), and the Tigris is said to be located east of Assyria (verse 14a). The river Euphrates generally is considered to flow through Babylon (verse 14b). Burton postulates that these prominent rivers associated with Eden were in the Ham regions, Cush’s posterity, and what he refers to specifically as “Biblical Africa.” These were also referenced points for the prophets.⁹² Through the prophet Zephaniah, God encouraged, “From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, My worshipers, The daughter of My dispersed ones, Shall bring My offering” (3:10).

David also noted in Ps 105:23, “Israel also came into Egypt, And Jacob dwelt in the land of Ham.” Abraham hailed from Mesopotamia and directed his promised son to marry a Syrian, whose son also married an Aramean woman. Joseph, who was sold into slavery but became ruler over all the land of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh, married an Egyptian (Gen 41:39-45, 50). Moses directed the Israelites to answer the LORD their God, saying, “My father *was* a Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous” (Deut. 26:5). This famed prophet married a Midianite (Exod. 2:15-22) as well as a Cushite (Num. 12:1). King Solomon’s wife was a dark woman as evidenced by her own words in Song of Solomon 1:5, 6. There is also the queen of Sheba (1 Kings and 2 Chronicles) whose story was so well-known to Jesus that He declared in Matt 12:42, “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this

modified August 16, 2022, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/first-african-slave-ship-arrives-jamestown-colony>.

⁹² See Isa 8:1; Jer 13:3; Rev. 9:14; and 16:12. Keith Augustus Burton, *The Blessings of Africa*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academics, 2007), Kindle e-book, location 253-258.

generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.”

Consider Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian who, because of his reputation, went directly to the king to petition to release the prophet Jeremiah from the dungeon (Jer 38:1-13). God showered him with favor for his kindness when Jerusalem fell to Babylon. He instructed Jeremiah to “Go and speak to Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring My words upon this City for adversity and not for good, and they shall be *performed* in that day before you. But I will deliver you in that day,” says the LORD, “and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you *are* afraid. For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword, but your life shall be as a prize to you because you have put your trust in Me,” says the LORD”” (Jer 39:15-18).

Passages like those above (and more) have often been conveniently obscured or wholly ignored, while others like Gen 9:18-27 were overused to perpetuate narratives that keep the masses ignorant. J. Daniel Hays, *dean of the Pruet School of Christian Studies and professor of Biblical Studies at Ouachita Baptist University*, observed concerning America’s racial prejudice that “no other passage in Scripture has been as abused, distorted and twisted as has Gen 9:18-27.” He continued, “Both before and after the Civil War, this text was frequently cited by Whites to argue that the slavery or subjugation of the Black races was, in fact, a fulfillment of the prophecy in this text.” Unfortunately, the societal climate at the time was rife with such ideologies. Even pastors and scholars perpetuated that since Japheth, who they claimed represented White people and because “Ham” meant “Black” or “burnt” therefore, God commanded that Ham’s offspring (the Black race) become enslaved peoples of the White

races.⁹³

Regardless, God does not see nor judge like the world. He shows no partiality because “in every nation, whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:34-35). At the first advent of Jesus, under threat of death, His parents took Him to Egypt to save His life – fulfilling the prophecy, “Out of Egypt I called My Son” (Matt 2:13-15). While being led to Calvary, a Libyan, Simon of Cyrene, helped to carry His cross (Matt 27:32; Luke 23:26). On the day of Pentecost, heaven did not frown upon the varied nations gathered as thousands joined the early Church under the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Among the oft-overlooked ‘devout’ followers “from every nation under heaven” were Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Libyans from near bordering Cyrene, and Arabs (Acts 2:5-12). There could have been a Gospel according to the Ethiopian eunuch, who already had a tender heart towards God, having gone to Jerusalem to worship. There is no further record of his marvelous works for the kingdom of God following his conversion and baptism. The implication is that when he arrived, he shared the good news with Candace, the queen of Ethiopia, and its citizens (Acts 8:26-40).⁹⁴

God loves all people, and the New Covenant breaks down all walls of social class and division (Isa 56:3-8; Rom 10:11-13; Gal 3:27-29; Col 3:10-12). When Jesus gave the Great

⁹³ J. Daniel Hays, “What does the Bible say about Race ?” *Ouachita Baptist University Blog*, June 23, 2020, accessed February 23, 2022, <https://obu.edu/stories/blog/2020/06/what-does-the-bible-say-about-race.php>. *Ham*, חַמַּיִם from H1190 means hot or sun burn and a region of Palestine. See “H1990 - Ham - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (NKJV),” *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed December 2, 2022, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1990/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>. *Ham*, חַמַּיִם from Strong's Number H2526 means hot (as in location or place) and “a son of Noah; also (as a patronymic) his descendants or their country.” See King James Bible Dictionary, “Strong's Number H2526,” *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* by James Strong (S.T.D.) (LL.D.) 1890, accessed December 2, 2022, <https://kingjamesbibledictionary.com/StrongsNo/H2526/Ham>. In the Genesis 9:26-27 passage, Ham is not cursed; it is Canaan (Gen 9:26-27). God did not issue the curse, but it was Noah who invoked a curse after waking up from being drunk (verse 24).

⁹⁴ See more about African impact on the early Church at the “Historical Timeline of the African Provinces” by The Center for Early African Christianity (CEAC), dates ranging from 1-999 C.E., accessed November 16, 2022, <https://www.earlyafricanchristianity.com/copy-of-timeline-african-provinces>.

Commission (Mark 16:15; Matt 28:18-20), by default, it meant all people groups, Blacks included. Therefore, the missiological conversation must also have more contributions by people of African descent. The kingdom of heaven and the earth made new will comprise people from every tribe, nation, and tongue (Rev 5:9; 13:7; 14:6, 22:2), demonstrating God's ideal and vision for His children to "dwell together in unity" (Ps 133:1).

Adventists Arising

While history did not always live up to God's ideal, it gave glimpses of hope for what could be when the Word of God takes center stage and brings genuine revival. For Blacks in the American landscape, religion was essential to their African American experience. The quasi-entanglement of race and religion still dictates much of Black culture today.⁹⁵ Black Adventists have had their unique experience in a denomination that also believes their historical roots run deep and far, not only as far back to the Millerite Movement of the 1830s and 40s but beyond:

To Wesley and the eighteenth-century Evangelical revivalists, to the great Protestant Reformers and to such earlier dissenting groups as the Lollards and Waldenses. Back to the primitive Celtic Church of Ireland and Scotland, the persecuted church of the first three centuries after Christ, back to Christ and the apostles themselves. Yet it is obvious that modern Adventism developed in the setting of the great advent awakening which took place in the early years of the nineteenth century.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Greene, "[Black] Regional Conferences in the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church," 1.

⁹⁶ R. W. Schwartz, *Lightbearers to the Remnant: Denominational History Textbook for Seventh-day Adventist College Classes* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1979), 13. For a brief history of the Lollards see Charles Knightly's PhD dissertation, "The Early Lollards: A Survey of Popular Lollard Activity in England 1382-1428," (University of York, 1975); W. Stanford Reid, "The Lollards in Pre-Reformation Scotland." *Church History* 11, no. 4 (1942): 269-283, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3160372>; and Curtis V. Bostick, *The Antichrist and The Lollards: Apocalypticism in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 48-75. For a brief history of the Waldenses, see Giovanni Schiavo, "Waldenses and Other Italian Protestants in Colonial America," *Center for Migration Studies Special Issues* 2, no. 1 (1976): 21-22, accessed December 6, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2050-411X.1976.tb00356.x>; Jason K. Lee, "Waldenses," *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization*, 2011, doi:10.1002/9780470670606.wbecc1448; Euan K. Cameron, *The Waldenses of the Alps, 1480-1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 7-48; and two reviews of Cameron's work by M. D. Lambert, *The Journal of Theological Studies* 37, no. 1 (1986): 256-59, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23963105>; and Peter Biller, *The English Historical Review* 102, no. 404 (1987): 664-69, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/571896>.

The early nineteenth century was a period of spiritual rebirth and renewed vitality for pockets of Christian denominations in the United States. This religious revival, known as the Second Great Awakening, was triggered by the political climate of the time, social tensions, various reform movements, and the institution of slavery. Unlike the First Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century, typified by a renewed focus on sacred piety, the Second Great Awakening overwhelmingly sparked newfound interests and interpretations of Bible prophecy – particularly the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.⁹⁷ However, both awakenings had an underpinning of evangelistic zeal.

As with any revival, genuine or counterfeit, there were various expressions and responses to the eschatological messages heralded by ministers and laypeople alike. As Olugbenga Adetokunbo Efunade noted, “This was the milieu of religious fervency and an attraction to Bible studies, Bible prophecies, and other religious activities in North America and parts of Europe.” It was a period that saw the emergence of spiritualism and the development of the missionary movement.⁹⁸ There was an explosion of revival meetings, evangelism campaigns, and personal witnessing as churches fervently taught that the second coming of Jesus Christ was imminent. However, the same passion also led to many other religious groups and protestant camps amidst the various doctrinal perspectives and contradictions. The Second Advent Movement was one such movement that emerged out of the Second Great Awakening.

When French General Louis-Alexandre Berthier captured Pope Pius VI in 1798, a

⁹⁷ Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, “The World in Which Adventism Began,” In *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2015), 13-22.

⁹⁸ Olugbenga Adetokunbo Efunade, “Church and Transformational Development: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its Missiological Orientation in Democratic Nigeria,” (DTh., University of South Africa, 2019), 69.

prophetic lightbulb went off in the minds of many Protestants, driving them to the book of Daniel for answers. The followers of the Second Advent movement believed the event fulfilled the 1,260-day prophecy (Dan 7:25). Christians with an eye on the return of Christ then turned their attention to decoding Daniel's longest time-prophecy – the 2300 days (8:14).⁹⁹ The Advent movement also led to the establishment of numerous Missionary and Bible Societies which played a significant role in extending the flames Second Great Awakening. Followers of the Second Advent Movement, known as Adventists, especially championed the belief that the world was ending with the looming return of Christ.

The proliferation of Bibles significantly increased peoples' interest in studying scriptures for themselves in a manner they could not do before, as they had to rely primarily on the ministers' sermons on Sundays. The readily available knowledge, in turn, bolstered the formation of several reform movements that sought to eradicate social ills in preparation for the anticipated return of Jesus Christ. Major denominations like the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodist churches birthed other religious minority movements that broke off to start their own. They did not want to have any denominational affiliation. Some of these movements shared principles from the central theological tenets of the day but would also refine their doctrines to suit their new identities and biblical understanding. Such was the case of the

⁹⁹ Adventists then and now hold that in Dan 7:25, "times and times and the dividing of time" is equivalent to 1,260 literal years (see also Dan 7:8, 20, 24; and 9:24). This is otherwise referred to as 1,260 days, 3 ½ times, and 42 months (Rev 11:3; 12:6, 14: 13:5). Their hermeneutical approach to apocalyptic time prophecy holds that a day is equal to one year based on texts like Num 14:34 and Ezek. 4:5, 6. See Gerhard Pfandl, "In Defense of the Year-day Principle," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 23, no. 1 (2012): 3-17, accessed November 28, 2022. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jats/vol23/iss1/2/>. The author is a retired associate Director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference (GC) of SDA and holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Old Testament from Andrews University. From 1977-1989 he was a Professor of Religion at Bogenhofen Seminary in Austria. Prior to joining the Biblical Research Institute of the GC of SDA in 1999, he served for seven years as Field Secretary of the South Pacific Division of SDA in Sydney. He has also published many articles for scholarly and popular journals in German and English and is the author of several books and study guides, e.g., *Daniel the Seer of Babylon* (Review and Herald, 2004) and *The Gift of Prophecy* (Pacific Press, 2008). See also Schwarz and Greenleaf, "The World in Which Adventism Began," 14.

Millerites, from which the Seventh-day Adventist Church came.¹⁰⁰

Millerism and the Millerites

During the 1830s and 1840s, the Second Great Awakening garnered tremendous steam from the Millerite movement, whose followers were also called Adventists. Michael Barkun dubbed this era “the largest, most intense, and most wildly noted premillennial movement in American history.”¹⁰¹ The father and spokesperson of the Movement was William Miller, the son of a Revolutionary War veteran. He was born on February 15, 1782, in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and was content to settle for the humble life of a farmer and carpenter. However, after his 1816 Christian conversion, Miller became a Baptist minister. He at first engaged in intense Bible studies to confront his deist friends and to reconcile the seeming contradictions in the Bible.¹⁰² However, Miller focused on a more concentrated study of Daniel’s prophecies. As he became more solidified in his understanding of the prophecies, especially his interpretation of Daniel 8:14, he predicted that Jesus Christ would return to the earth between March 1843 and March 1844. Miller’s presentations on his discoveries earned him frequent speaking engagements. In August 1831, he began to preach with fervor about the second coming of Jesus Christ “around 1843,” captivating ever-increasing audiences wherever he went. Miller’s conviction and spirited lectures inspired followers from several of the leading

¹⁰⁰ Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, “The Great Advent Awakening,” in *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church* (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2015), 23-34. See also Schwarz and Greenleaf, “The World in Which Adventism Began,” 14-19.

¹⁰¹ Michael Barkun, review of *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism*, by George R. Knight, *Journal of American History*, 82, no. 1, (June 1995): 228–229, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2081994>. According to Zakai, Connors, and Gow, millennialism is the belief in a future thousand-year age of blessedness, beginning with or culminating in the Second Coming of Christ – in England and America. See Avihu Zakai, Richard Connors and Andrew Colin Gow, editors, “Anglo-American Millennialism, From Milton to the Millerites,” *Studies in the History of Christian Traditions*, 113 (Boston: Brill, 2004): xviii, 210 in *The American Historical Review*, 110, no. 4 (October 2005): 1131–1132, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.110.4.1131>.

¹⁰² Deism is “a movement or system of thought advocating natural religion, emphasizing morality, and in the 18th century denying the interference of the Creator with the laws of the universe.” See Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “deism,” accessed December 13, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/deism>.

churches of the time. Sincere in his efforts, Miller sought to rouse the people of his day from slumber with his midnight cry message. As his adherents came to be known, the Millerites passionately believed that the world would end with the imminent return of the bridegroom.¹⁰³

William Miller's personality alone would not have allowed him to have this kind of impact during this period. If he was to be a type of Moses to deliver nineteenth-century believers into the promised Canaan, then he needed a Joshua to uphold his arms. "Father Miller" found this friendship and support in Joshua V. Himes, who was instrumental in promoting Miller's teaching as a publicist, marketer, and organizer. Himes took the message of the Advent movement from a flickering candle in New England to a bright torch across the nation. His radical entrepreneurial temperament made him a prominent figure in galvanizing and positioning the movement for growth and impact. He was the principal editor of *The Signs of the Times* (and other periodicals), a strategic media to spread the Advent message. Himes also organized large conferences and camp meetings that drew thousands and helped rally adherents to their particular doctrine of the times.¹⁰⁴

The movement is estimated to have had at least fifty thousand followers but dwindled

¹⁰³ Mary H. Mitchell, "The Midnight Cry: A Defense of the Character and Conduct of William Miller and the Millerites Who Mistakenly Believed that the Second Coming of Christ Would Take Place in the Year 1844," by Francis D. Nichol. (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association. 1944), in *The American Historical Review*, 51, no. 2, January 1946, 331–332, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/51.2.331>.

¹⁰⁴ Joshua V. Himes was born May 19, 1805, in Rhode Island to Stukely and Elizabeth Vaughan Himes. He was commissioned in 1825 as a missionary by the Conference of Christian Churches, a restorationist movement germane to nineteenth-century America. In 1827, he was ordained to ministry and the fruit of his calling was evident in his church growth, church planting, and many reformation efforts, including his support of the abolition of slavery. His life's focus changed when he committed to William Miller's teaching on Christ's Second Coming and remained a major champion of the cause through two disappointing failed predictions. See Douglas Morgan, "Himes, Joshua Vaughan (1805–1895)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, September 13, 2020, accessed November 29, 2022, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=49HD>. Himes' ministry spanned more than forty years and according to Wellcome, a historian and member of the Advent Christian branch of Adventists, Himes had "published and superintended more papers, tracts, and books and circulated more gratuitously, than any other man or society connected with the Second Advent Message." He also organized more than 300 churches, assisted in organizing 14 state and sectional conferences, baptized over 1,500 souls, traveled 20,000 miles per year lecturing roughly once per day, and held about 5,000 meetings. See Isaac C. Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, Doctrine and People*, (Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1874), 90, 91.

when they faced disappointment when Christ did not return on March 21, 1843, as Miller predicted. All was not lost since the majority did not give up the “Blessed Hope.” However, during the summer of 1844, a few of Miller's followers advocated for a new date when Christ would come and cleanse the earth. Samuel S. Snow, a Millerite minister, advanced the “seventh-month message,” believing that the Jewish Day of Atonement occurred on October 22nd. In its first issue, Snow’s True Midnight Cry paper, on August 22, 1844, argued that Christ would return in the autumn of 1844. “With Miller and the Advent movement in general, Snow believed that “the cleansing of the sanctuary” would be accomplished by the second coming of Christ—that is how Christ as the antitype would fulfill what the high priest’s work on the Day of Atonement typified.”¹⁰⁵ They linked cleansing the sanctuary described in Dan 8:14 to cleansing the earth.

By this time, the Millerite Movement reached its peak with more than one hundred thousand in the United States and beyond accepting the message of Christ’s imminent return and looking forward to the blessed event. Committed to their belief and sincere in their certainty of Christ’s return on October 22nd, 1844, some sold their properties, refused to harvest their fields, and gave up on regular life. They favored sharing the Gospel with their time and used their remaining means to warn the world to get ready to meet the Lord. The believers filled the hours leading up to October 22nd with earnest expectation, prayer, singing, and solemnity. Many believers stayed up late into the night to watch and wait for the return of Christ. However, the believers were left saddened and disillusioned when sunset and midnight came and went without Christ’s appearing. “The Great Disappointment” is the name that

¹⁰⁵ Kevin Vinicius Felix Oliveira and Clodoaldo Tavares, “Snow, Samuel Sheffield (1806–1890),” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, April 07, 2022, accessed November 29, 2022. <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=9A6O>.

history has given to this occurrence.

To say that Millerites were in shock after the Great Disappointment is an understatement. After this second failed prediction, many Millerites lost their faith, abandoned the movement, and some went back to their Churches. Yet a small number remained committed to the beliefs of Millerism and the Advent Movement. Why not total desertion? Perhaps the answer lies in Catherine Albanese and Stephen Stein's suggestion that "Millerism is best understood not in terms of eccentricity, pathology, deviance, or deprivation ... but as representative of the religious outlook of nineteenth-century America."¹⁰⁶ From all this seeming insanity, the Millerite Movement also shaped other nineteenth-century religious movements, including Jehovah's Witnesses, the Advent Christian Church, and the various Church of God congregations.¹⁰⁷ However, Adventists most closely held to the historicist views of Miller but also went on to refine their doctrinal positions through rigorous Bible studies, prayer, and soul-searching.¹⁰⁸

Being labeled a cult did not deter the thriving band of Sabbath-day Adventists. Despite having meager beginnings in New England and suffering persecution and ridicule for their Millerite connections, remaining Adventists would again advocate another contrarian fundamental belief to the mainline protestant churches. Challenged by Rachel Oaks, a Seventh-Day Baptist, they embraced Sabbath-keeping as part of their religious practice and teachings. After almost two decades of steady growth and adopting new doctrines, they officially organized on May 21, 1863, in Battle Creek, Michigan, adopting Seventh-day Adventists as

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Priscilla J. Brewer, "*The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century.*" Ed. by Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), *Journal of American History*, 75, no. 3, December 1988, 931–932, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1901603>.

¹⁰⁷ Pfandl, "In Defense of the Year-day Principle," 4.

¹⁰⁸ Abner F. Hernandez, "Adventist Eschatological Identity and the Interpretations of the Time Periods of Dan 12:11-12," *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal* 1, no. 1, Article 6 (2015): 65-71, accessed November 28, 2022. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/vol1/iss1/6>.

their unique identity.

The SDA Church has become a worldwide denomination with over twenty-one million members in 212 countries (out of the 235 countries and regions of the world recognized by the United Nations). Their outreach has flourished into 9,419 schools, 22 food industries, 229 hospitals and sanitariums, 1,475 clinics and dispensaries, 18 media centers, and 57 publishing houses.¹⁰⁹ Currently, the largest portion of their membership is in Africa – connecting the Church’s legacy to contributions by people of African descent and serving as a reminder of the struggles Blacks went through to get to this point.

Blacks and the Millerite Movement

The historical, religious, and political import of the Black Church is undeniable. It existed before, during, and long after the Millerite movement. The horrors of slavery made the longing for freedom an insatiable craving for Blacks. Many of them, both enslaved and free, found in the Advent message an appetizing hope of eternal liberation and the imminent possibility of sharing in the rich promises of equality in heaven. Though they met with severe persecution and discrimination because of their race and acceptance of Miller’s ‘strange’ doctrines, they endured in their faith. They also played a significant role in advancing the Millerite movement and the gospel to their people. They often attended various camp meetings and listened intently to the Bible prophecies about the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

¹⁰⁹ As of December 31, 2020. *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, “Seventh-day Adventist World Church Statistics 2021,” General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, updated February 14, 2022, <https://www.adventist.org/statistics/>. On November 28, 2022, the Adventist directory, maintained by the *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR)*, reflected 75 publishing houses around the world – spread among its 13 Divisions. Of these, 19 are in the United States with the Review and Herald Publishing Association and the Pacific Press Publishing Association, seemingly the top two publishing houses within the North American Division of SDA. These two publish most of the key SDA scholars, authors, pastors, administrators, and Church materials. See <https://www.adventistdirectory.org/ViewAdmFieldSubEntities.aspx?AdmFieldID=GC&EntityType=P&ShowContained=1&OffSrc=0>, <https://www.adventistdirectory.org/SearchResults.aspx?CtryCode=US&EntityType=P> and <https://www.adventistpublishing.org/about-us/world-publishing-houses>.

In Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s *The Black Church: This is Our Story, This is Our Song*, he accentuated the role of religion in fostering dignity in African Americans and wielded a tapestry of colors to give breath, depth, and homage to Blacks of not only yesteryear but those still carrying the mantle of hope and are championing the cause of a people the world cannot ignore. Yet, as it still is today, and more so back then, Blacks were too “often denied the opportunity to see their own reflections or hear their own voices in so very many aspects of the broader American society.”¹¹⁰ The First Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s “was a soul-saving message exalting Jesus’ gospel of blessed redemption and heavenly salvation in a fallen world.”¹¹¹ It created a progressive shift in Protestant churches – a type of democratized religion in which revival (camp) meetings saw whites and Blacks, free and enslaved, worshipping together under the same tent or roof.¹¹²

The consequent Second Great Awakening saw a tidal wave of Blacks to the likes of the prominent denominations of the day, primarily Baptist and Methodist Churches. The trend was partly due to some churches taking a stance against slavery. By this time, some Blacks were already ministering as preachers, evangelists, and missionaries. Their contributions were vital to society and the body of Christ but not always acknowledged. Though most local churches and denominations were white because of societal position, several were becoming Black in church membership.¹¹³ In Gates’ view, these diverse representations underscored “the strength, diversity, power, and enduring relevance of Black churches and leaders to the larger African

¹¹⁰ Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Black Church: This is Our Story, This is our Song* (New York: Penguin Press), 230.

¹¹¹ Gates, Jr., *The Black Church*, 40.

¹¹² Gates, Jr., *The Black Church*, 40-41.

¹¹³ Johns Hopkins University historian, Michael P. Johnson noted, for example, in 1817, the Methodist Church in Charleston had around three hundred and fifty whites compared to fifty-four hundred African Americans – “more than ten to one.” See *The Black Church*, 46.

American experience and U.S. history as a whole.”¹¹⁴

William E. Foy

The Millerite movement did not reach much of the Southern United States as it heavily did the Northern regions around Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, and Michigan. As such, early Black Millerites who had close connections to the movement or became active therein were primarily from the surrounding New England areas.¹¹⁵ One was William Ellis Foy, born about 1818 in Kennebec County, Maine, and was baptized in 1835 by Elder Curtis Silas, a forthright abolitionist. Foy joined the Freewill Baptist Church in Augusta, just south of his birthplace.¹¹⁶ In 1840, he moved to Boston to study for the ministry and there encountered Millerites. The first Millerite general conference occurred on October 14, 1840, at Chardon Street Chapel, where Joshua V. Himes pastored. It was only a few blocks from Foy’s home, located at 16 North Grove Street in the Beacon Hill neighborhood – also close to Adventists’ printing presses and five organized Black churches.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ From Gates’ work, it is evident that stories of contributions matter as he dedicates several pages to the “Speakers of the Word.” Photos of these luminaries are presented within thirty-two extra embedded pages between pages 102 and 103 of *The Black Church*. The quotation is found on the first of the embedded pages (SPEAKERS OF THE WORD), which are not included in the total page count of the actual book.

the embedded pages (SPEAKERS OF THE WORD), which are not included in the total page count of the actual book.

¹¹⁶ William E. Foy, *The Christian Experience of William E. Foy: Together with the Two Visions He Received Jan. and Feb. 1842*, (Portland: J. and C. H. Pearson, 1845), 7-8. On page 24 of this pamphlet is an attestation by a Daniel Palmer, Church Clerk, that Foy was a regular member in good standing at the first Freewill Baptist Church in Augusta. See also Benjamin Baker, “Foy, William Ellis (1818–1893),” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, December 30, 2020, accessed December 21, 2022, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=9CEN>.

¹¹⁷ Seventh-day Adventists have not always eagerly highlighted the legacy of William E. Foy, but he is a definite figure in the Church’s annals. Dr. Delbert Baker was the principal SDA historian to uncover an extensive body of research relating to the life and times of Foy and published *The Unknown Prophet*, in 1987, with an updated edition in 2013. SDAs agree that Foy was the first of three individuals to receive heavenly visions during and post Millerite movement. The other two were Hazen Foss and Ellen G. White (in that order). Three of the five black churches organized in the thriving black Beacon Hill community include: the *First African Baptist Church* (or Belknap Street Church, which William Miller addressed in his explanation letter of absence from the first Millerite general conference. He hoped to see and hear “those colored brethren, too, at Belknap St. with Christian hearts.” Heaven, he hoped, “has stamped them as its favorites.” See William Miller, “Miller’s Letters—No. 9,” *Signs of the Times*, November 1, 1840), 118; the *Twelfth Baptist Church* on Southark Street; and the *African Methodist Episcopal Church* on May Street. See *The Unknown Prophet*, 9-13, 60-63, 69; and Baker, “Foy, William Ellis (1818–1893).” See also James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Black Bostonians: Family Life*

Foy is also said to have received visions from God, after which he became a Millerite adherent – perhaps because they showed interest in the antislavery movement. However, their primary concern with preaching overshadowed tangible social engagement.¹¹⁸ In 1845, Foy penned his visions and spiritual journey in a pamphlet called *The Christian Experience of William E. Foy*. His wife and several whites of his day confirmed Foy’s visionary encounters, including Dr. Henry Cummings and SDA prophetess Ellen G. White.¹¹⁹ SDA pioneer John N. Loughborough captured the following eyewitness accounts of Foy:

There was an educated mulatto in the State of Massachusetts, by the name of Foye, who was an eloquent speaker. He was a Baptist but was preparing to take holy orders as an Episcopal minister. The Lord graciously gave him three visions, which bore clear evidence of being the genuine manifestations of the Spirit of God. He was invited from place to place to speak in the pulpits, not by the Episcopalians only, but by other denominations. When he spoke, he always wore the clergyman’s robe, such as the ministers of that church wear in their services. His visions related to the near advent of Christ, the travels of the people of God to the heavenly city, the new earth, and the glories of the redeemed state. Having a good command of language, with fine descriptive powers, he created a sensation wherever he went.¹²⁰

Sojourner Truth

Another noteworthy Black Millerite was Sojourner Truth, born into slavery about 1797 as Isabella Baumfree. From her enslaved beginnings in Swartekill, Ulster County, New York, she became a freewoman under that state’s emancipation legislation in 1828. Truth made it her life’s calling and legacy as an abolitionist, women’s rights activist, temperance reformer, and

and Community Struggle in the Antebellum North (Holmes and Meier, 1999), 41-43; George Washington Williams, *History of the Twelfth Baptist Church, Boston, Mass., From 1840- to 1874* (James H. Earle, 1874). Baker, *The Unknown Prophet*, 72-74; and Baker, “Foy, William Ellis (1818–1893).”

¹¹⁹ Foy, *The Christian Experience of William E. Foy*, 24. On this last page of Foy’s pamphlet features ten testimonials of Bostonians who witnessed two of Foy’s visions in 1842 – nine of them white and one who seem to be his wife. See also Ellen G. White’s 1906 interview with D.E. Robinson, where she emphatically attested that Foy had four visions in “William Foy - A Statement by E. G. White (DF 231),” *Ellen G. White Estate*, accessed December 21, 2022, <https://ellenwhite.org/media/document/8112>; and *The Unknown Prophet*, 123-124.

¹²⁰ John N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Battle Creek, MI: General Conference Association, 1892), 70-71. See also Arthur L. White, “William Ellis Foy (DF 231),” *Ellen G. White Estate*, accessed December 21, 2022, <https://ellenwhite.org/media/document/2434>.

evangelist. Her 1850 autobiography featured “The Second Advent Doctrines” and chronicled her travels and interactions with Millerites, with whom she sometimes lodged and spoke at their camp meetings.¹²¹

Some have wondered if she ever became a practicing Adventist. It may be inconclusive as no official church document has surfaced to substantiate the claim unequivocally. However, according to *Lineage Journey*, Sojourner Truth was baptized by Uriah Smith (a prominent SDA minister, author, administrator, and editor).¹²² In reality, it is more plausible that she had close connections with Sabbath-keeping SDAs when she moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1857. Burton and Baker reported that White lectured at the Adventist college, church, and sanitarium. She also became friends with John Byington, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, and the nurses and doctors at the Adventist Battle Creek Sanitarium, where Truth regularly received care.¹²³

When she wished to publish another book about her life in 1875, Sojourner Truth sent a letter to William Lloyd Garrison requesting that he write the introductory chapter. The letter further stated Truth was ill, without a source of income, and the work needed to be published to

¹²¹ Benjamin Baker, “Early Adventists,” *Blacksdahistory.org*, accessed December 21, 2022. <https://www.blacksdahistory.org/copy-of-firsts>; Olive Gilbert (1801 – 1884), *Narrative of Sojourner Truth (1850)*, (Boston: J. B. Yerington and Son, Printers, 1850), 109-114.

¹²² Lineage Journey, “Adventists: Slavery Abolition & Oakwood University | Episode 46 | Season 2 | Lineage,” May 15, 2019, <https://youtu.be/16eqibatewg>; “Adventists, Abolition, and Oakwood,” Lineage Journey, accessed December 27, 2022, <https://lineagejourney.com/read/adventists-abolition-and-oakwood>; “The Adventist Truth and Sojourner’s Legacy,” *Lake Union Herald* 115, no. 1 (January/February 2023): 18-20, where Kevin M. Burton, director of the Center for Adventist Research and assistant professor of Church History at the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University, takes three pages of his article to substantiate various probable reasons for Truth being a baptized member in the Adventist Church. He pointed to the bonafide testimony in a *Message Magazine* interview of James Hannibal Lewis, a longstanding Black Adventist resident of Battle Creek who recalled and shared extensively that “Sojourner Truth was baptized by Uriah Smith, in the Kalamazoo River, at the end of Cass Street.” See James E. Dykes, “Lifted Lamp in the World’s Wild Storm,” *The Message* (February 1958): 27; “Footnotes: Regarding Our Contributors,” *The Message*, (February 1958): 34.

¹²³ Byington was the first president of the organized SDA Church. Kellogg was a renowned SDA physician who is said to have cut off some of his skin and grafted it onto Truth’s body. See Burton, “The Adventist Truth,” 17-18; Baker, *The Unknown Prophet*, 76-77.

provide for her urgent needs. A special mention was that “Advent Publishers have already agreed to print the work.”¹²⁴ On the day of her death, November 26, 1883, the *Battle Creek Moon* announced that Uriah Smith would officiate at her funeral at the Dime Tabernacle Church, the then SDA headquarters, which, as pastored by SDA minister Wolcott Hackley Littlejohn.¹²⁵ However, the funeral occurred on Wednesday, November 28, 1883, at the Congregational and Presbyterian church, where Rev. Reed Stuart, an independent minister, officiated.¹²⁶ Patricia Humphrey’s Black History article noted that Ellen Bradbury Paulson, who attended the funeral, said of Sojourner Truth: “She was a good SDA.”¹²⁷ Furthermore, they buried Truth in the same burial ground where primary SDA co-founders James and Ellen White were buried, at Oak Hill Cemetery in Battle Creek.

Kevin M. Burton believes that because of the aforementioned definite ties to Millerism and Adventism, some closest to Truth sought to sever her affiliation with the SDA denomination.¹²⁸ Even in death, Truth still spoke to those advancing the freedom struggle. For example, “Is God Dead?” is inscribed on her grave. Those words, some historians say, were her reminder to the famed Frederick Douglass that God is “*Master* over the lives of those who trust Him.”¹²⁹

Frederick Douglas

Frederick Douglass, born into slavery in Talbot County, Maryland, became a freedman,

¹²⁴ Sojourner Truth, William Lloyd Garrison, and Frances W. Titus, “Letter from Sojourner Truth, Battle Creek, Mich., to William Lloyd Garrison, February 21st, 1875,” Correspondence, Battle Creek, Mich., February 21, 1875, *Digital Commonwealth*, accessed December 30, 2022, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/m900pr449>.

¹²⁵ Kevin M. Burton, “Wolcott Hackley Littlejohn: Defender of the Faith,” *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 97. See also Burton, “The Adventist Truth,” 15.

¹²⁶ As reported in “Additional Local,” *Battle Creek Daily Journal*, November 26, 1883, 1, Col 3; “Brevities,” *Battle Creek Daily Journal*, November 27, 1883, 3, Col 1. See Burton, “The Adventist Truth,” 16.

¹²⁷ Patricia L. Humphrey, “Pioneer of Freedom,” *Columbia Union Visitor* 94, no. 4 (February 15, 1989): 5.

¹²⁸ Baker, *The Unknown Prophet*, 76-77; Burton, “The Adventist Truth,” 16.

¹²⁹ Humphrey, “Pioneer of Freedom,” 5.

abolitionist, journalist, and statesman. The influential writer and orator used his talents to combat the evils of slavery and the need for racial equality. His social activism brought him into contact with Millerites and Seventh-day Adventists. In a speech delivered on April 16, 1883, Douglass noted the following about William Miller:

When Father Miller proved by the Bible, from whose pages so many things have been proved, that the world would come to an end in 1843, and proved it so clearly that many began to make their robes in which they were to soar aloft above this burning world, he was asked by a doubting Thomas, “But Father Miller, what if it does not come?” “Well,” said the good old man, “then we shall wait till it does come.”

The colored people of the United States should imitate the wisdom of Father Miller, and wait. But we should also work while we wait.¹³⁰

In his autobiography, *My Bondage, and My Freedom*, Douglass recounted his experience of an event in 1833 that Adventists believed pointed to signs of the times of Jesus’ second coming. The fifteen-year-old Douglass was ready to meet Christ – his friend and deliverer as the Leonid meteor shower of November 13, 1833, reminded him and Millerite followers of the prophecy regarding stars falling from heaven (Matt 24:29 and Rev 6:13).¹³¹ In their mind, the next logical event would be the sky receding “as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place” (Rev 6:14). Commenting on the phenomena, Canadian astronomer, Peter Mackenzie Millman, who gave birth to the new field of meteor research while at Harvard University, noted, “For nearly four hours the sky was literally ablaze More than a billion shooting stars appeared over the United States and

¹³⁰ “Address By Hon. Frederick Douglass, Delivered In The Congregational Church, Washington, D.C., April 16, 1883,” Washington, D.C., 1883 and quoted by Kevin Burton in “Unbounded Regard”: Frederick Douglas and Adventists,” *Spectrum Magazine*, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://spectrummagazine.org/news/2021/unbounded-regard-frederick-douglass-and-adventists>.

¹³¹ Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), 145; Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (New York: Pathway Press, 1941), 117.

Canada alone.”¹³² Denison Olmsted added, “The meteors began to attract notice by their unusual frequency or brilliancy, from nine to twelve o'clock in the evening, were most striking in their appearance, from two to five, arrived at their maximum, in many places, about four o'clock, and continued till rendered invisible by the light of day.”¹³³

SDA Historians discovered that Douglass established a reform society with at least four Millerites. He decried racial discrimination in Christian churches while being a guest speaker at Joshua V. Himes' Chardon Street Chapel – a regular location for Millerite gatherings.¹³⁴ Douglass would also commend Himes during an 1846 Evangelical Alliance meeting in England because Himes spoke out against admitting slaveholders to the Alliance.¹³⁵ New England clergyman Charles Fitch, a prominent Millerite leader, revivalist, social reformer, and abolitionist, accompanied Douglass to an antislavery society meeting where they both condemned the practice of racial segregation on public transportation.¹³⁶

While sufficient evidence hints at Douglass' connection with Millerite Adventists, he was a non-Adventist. Though he was acquainted with James and Ellen White when they lived in Rochester in the late 1840s, his Millerite relationship seemed limited to his work as an

¹³² Peter M. Millman, "The Falling of the Stars," *The Telescope*, 7 (May-June 1940), 57; Steven Tors and Wayne Orchiston, "Peter Millman and the study of meteor spectra at Harvard University," *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage* 12, no. 3 (2009): 211-223.

¹³³ Denison Olmsted, "Observations on the Meteors of November 13th, 1833," *The American Journal of Science and Arts*, 25 (1834), 363-366, 386, 393-394.

¹³⁴ Benjamin Baker, Douglas Morgan, and Kevin M. Burton, "Unbounded Regard" and as noted in "Antislavery," *The Liberator*, June 3, 1843, 86. *The Liberator* was a Boston newspaper (January 1, 1831–December 29, 1865) published by William Lloyd Garrison, journalist and abolitionist. According to Britannica, it was "the most influential antislavery periodical in the pre-Civil War period of U.S. history." See T. Britannica, editors of Encyclopedia, "The Liberator," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, November 12, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Liberator-American-newspaper>.

¹³⁵ Baker, Morgan, and Burton, "Unbounded Regard" and as stated in "Anti-Slavery League," *The Liberator*, October 16, 1846, 165.

¹³⁶ Baker, Morgan, and Burton, "Unbounded Regard;" "Middlesex County A.S. Society," *The Liberator*, October 22, 1841, 171; Samuel Gomide and Douglas Morgan, "Fitch, Charles (1804–1844)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, September 4, 2020, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=A9AJ>.

abolitionist and orator and their kindred stance against the ills of slavery. However, his oldest child, Rosetta Douglass-Sprague (1839-1906), and his assistant became a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church around 1892, as evidenced by her membership at the First SDA Church in Washington, D.C.¹³⁷

Black Seventh-day Adventists

Many other Blacks encountered Millerism, including Charles B. Ray, William G. Still, Benjamin C. Tilghman, Elizabeth Groves, Cyrus F. Poole, William D. Nichols, Charles Bowles, John Lewis, William L. Thompson, Jarena Lee, James M. Whitfield, Henry H. Garnet, and Lewis C. Lockwood.¹³⁸ They all made considerable contributions to the struggle against slavery, for civil rights, for the promulgation of the gospel among their own, and some take their rightful place as important figures in American history. Yet two other notable African Americans who should remain etched in Black Adventist History are Eri L. Barr and Charles M. Kinny.¹³⁹

Eri L. Barr

Most Adventist research shows Kinny as the first Black Adventist ordained minister, but recent works demonstrate that Barr preceded Kinny. However, Barr's ministry extended

¹³⁷ Benjamin Baker, "Lessons from the Night the Stars Fell 181 Years Ago," *Adventist Review*, last modified November 27, 2014, <https://adventistreview.org/news/lessons-from-the-night-the-stars-fell-181-years-ago/>; Benjamin Baker, "Black Adventists Firsts," *Blacksdahistory.org*, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://www.blacksdahistory.org/black-adventist-firsts>.

¹³⁸ Baker, "Black Adventists Firsts;" Baker, *The Unknown Prophet*, 74-76. For the purpose of this study, Sabbath-keeping Adventists or Sabbatarian Adventists came after the Millerite disappointment of 1844 as before then, members of the Movement were primarily adherents who came out of other denominations of the day but still worshipped on Sunday. Though followers of that new group would become and form the Seventh-day Adventist Church, SDAs herein will represent those adherents who comprised the membership in 1863 (when the denomination was officially organized) and afterwards.

¹³⁹ Eri L. Barr was the first Black Sabbatarian Adventist minister and Charles M. Kinny was "the father of Black Adventism" and the first man of color to be ordained *after* the SDA Church officially organized in 1863. See Benjamin Baker, "Barr, Eri L. (1814–1864)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, January 29, 2020, accessed February 4, 2022, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=8CDT>; Trevor O'Reggio, "Kinny, Charles Marshall (1855–1951)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, February 26, 2022, accessed December 8, 2022, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=CJFR>.

more to the Black Millerites and Sabbatarian Adventism period, while Kinny's service and impact thrived post-organized SDA era.¹⁴⁰ Eri L. Barr was born as a free man on May 23, 1814, in Reading, Vermont. His father, William Barr, a mechanic and probably a Methodist, wanted his son to get an education and sent him to the Wesleyan Academy in 1836. It is uncertain if he graduated, but the prep school lists him as an English department student.¹⁴¹

Before embarking on an adventurous call to the ministry, the progressive Barr worked in the same trade as his father and brother. His marriage certificate shows that he wedded Lori Z. Harvey, a white woman. Methodist minister A.K. Howard officiated the wedding on December 7, 1842. They had one daughter, Emma, in 1844, but the marriage lasted only sixteen years as Barr's religious fervor would negatively impact his home life. Lori Barr ended the union on December 10, 1858, due to Barr's "willing absence."¹⁴²

By this time, Barr was an ardent follower of and believer in the Millerite doctrine. He experienced the Great Disappointment with them but did not surrender his faith as some did. In a letter dated November 29, 1844, Barr wrote to a brother Marsh in *The Voice of Truth*, a Millerite paper, to encourage the saints experiencing the bitter letdown of October 22nd. Each sentence in the letter was replete with scriptural overtones and closed by pointing them back to the "glorious hope of soon seeing Jesus." in the tone of a pastoral epistle, he exuded confidence in "the sure word of prophecy" and saw no reason to be disheartened.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ O'Reggio, "Kinny, Charles Marshall."

¹⁴¹ Stanley D. Hickerson, "Was Eri L. Barr the First Black Adventist Minister?" *Adventist Review*, last modified April 7, 2015, https://adventistreview.org/news/was-eri-l.-barr-the-first-black-adventist-minister/?_ga=2.192841258.1440865869.1673214579-1016133577.1666748965; Baker, "Barr, Eri L." See also Baker, Benjamin. "Among the Mountains and Valleys of Vermont": The Life of Eri L. Barr, Religious Pioneer," *Vermont History* 90, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2022): 24-54, https://vermonthistory.org/journal/90/VH90_01_AmongTheMountains.pdf.

¹⁴² Hickerson, "Was Eri L. Barr the First Black Adventist Minister?," Baker, "Barr, Eri L.;" Marriage Certificate, Eri L. Barr and Lori Z. Harvey, December 7, 1842, Vermont Vital Records, *New England Historic Genealogical Society*, Ancestry.com; Record of Divorce, Eri L. Barr and Lori Z. Barr, December 7, 1842, *New Hampshire Bureau of Vital Records*, Ancestry.com.

¹⁴³ Baker, "Barr, Eri L.;" Hickerson, "Was Eri L. Barr the First Black Adventist Minister?"

Like others who emerged from the unpleasant experience of 1844, Barr continued to study with the little flock. Eventually, he embraced the Sabbath doctrine and the three angel's messages of Revelation 14 around 1852. This new Sabbatarian Adventist Movement was more progressive than its Millerite predecessor. They certified Barr as a minister of the gospel. He traveled with other itinerant ministers throughout the Northeastern towns and states to preach the Good News and encourage former and scattered believers. Hickerson cites that Ellen White, co-founder of the later organized SDA Church, had a vision in Dorchester, Massachusetts, on September 30, 1852, where she saw that Barr was among the ministers "to be depended upon."¹⁴⁴

The Black Vermonter, in the antebellum period, was several times chosen as chairperson during General Conference sessions, preached to whites on speaking tours with at least eight Sabbatarian ministers, including Frederick Wheeler, Joseph Bates, and John N. Andrews, and had a leading role in founding the SDA denomination and Black Adventism. The SDA General Conference Archives reveal that Barr also ordained others to the gospel ministry. For example, the Personal Information Form of Augustin C. Bourdeau, a French-Canadian pioneer, lists elder E. L. Barr as the one who ordained him in 1856. This monumental act proved that Barr was recognized, vetted, and vested. As Baker observed, "The fact that Barr [a Black Adventist] could ordain [even white preachers] is another confirmation of his standing and authority in the movement and its racial equality." Barr held a respectable place among Sabbatarians, pointing to Adventists' progressivism and inclusivity.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Hickerson, "Was Eri L. Barr the First Black Adventist Minister?"; Baker, "Barr, Eri L." It was customary for Sabbatarian preachers during this period to supplement their evangelistic work with a trade or farming. Church members would give small donations as they were able to and provide them with food and lodging.

¹⁴⁵ Baker, "Barr, Eri L.;" Augustin C. Bourdeau, Personal Information Form, *General Conference Archives*, Box WH 2511, 2.

Though his Adventist ministerial career lasted only eight years, Barr's soul-winning efforts brought some one hundred and fifty to three hundred into the ranks of Sabbath-keeping Adventists. Interestingly, the estimated total membership in the late 1850s was between two to three thousand – meaning Barr was responsible for seven and a half to ten percent of the total adherents. His contribution to Adventism is self-evident. He served as a bridge between Millerite Adventists, Sabbatarian Adventists, and Seventh-day Adventists. His ministry and leadership could have expanded into the early years of the newly formed organization had his life not been snuffed out by Tuberculosis at forty-nine years of age. He died on May 16, 1864, a week before his fiftieth birthday, in Alma, New York.¹⁴⁶

Charles M. Kinny

While Blacks found some allies among several Sabbatarian Adventists who aligned with their plight and worked to advance the advent message among them, they realized that their white brethren could only go so far in the quest to eradicate slavery and prejudice. Adventism would not, for many years, deal with racial issues within its rank. They preferred the path of least resistance. It would take the likes of Charles M. Kinny to disrupt the status quo.¹⁴⁷ He was born on April 1, 1855, to Andrew and Lucy Ann Kinny in Richmond, Virginia. In 1878, hearing evangelistic sermons delivered by John N. Loughborough, he was baptized into the SDA Church. Shortly after, he worked for the church, and denominational leaders then looked to him for an effective model to evangelize Blacks.¹⁴⁸

The church sent him to various states to work and, with success, started several

¹⁴⁶ Baker, "Barr, Eri L.;" Hickerson, "Was Eri L. Barr the First Black Adventist Minister?;" Benjamin Baker, "Eri L. Barr (1814-1864)." *Blackpast*, last modified August 12, 2019, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/eri-l-barr-1814-1864/>.

¹⁴⁷ R. Clifford Jones, "This Is Our Story: The black experience in Adventism," *Adventist Review*, last modified February 7, 2022, <https://adventistreview.org/magazine-article/2220-18/>.

¹⁴⁸ O'Reggio, "Kinny, Charles Marshall."

churches and companies. Much of his early work was more personal evangelism than public, though he did much of the latter, which impressed both Blacks and whites. Kinny's labors among his people bore astonishing fruit. He was ordained in 1889 in Louisville, Kentucky, becoming the first African American ordained minister in the SDA denomination.¹⁴⁹ While Kinny served throughout the South and other states, he, like many others, had to deal with the racial challenges facing Blacks at the time – both in society and in the Church. He was more optimistic than many of his contemporaries yet practical in his approach to fulfilling the evangelistic missionary mandate of the gospel.

Kinny went as far as advocating for separate meetings and some other forms of separation when the prejudices of whites would hinder the mission of the Church. Yet, he did not seek a total separation from the denomination. Still, he gave sound propositional principles to apply in dealing with racial policies and practices while functioning within the confines of the General Conference of SDA. He regularly pleaded for resources to evangelize Blacks. Though he periodically received no support in this regard, Kinny maintained a steadfast focus on ministering to the needs of his people and became like a “father” to them – much like the Apostle Paul was to the Gentiles.¹⁵⁰

In the end, however, Kinny concluded that separation should be a feasible and tactical alternative for the sake of the Adventist mission.¹⁵¹ Kinny’s strong evangelistic foundation and strategies are noteworthy, and his mastery of those practices, in many ways, still inform Black

¹⁴⁹ According to O’Reggio, recent research shows that the pioneering Sabbatarian Adventist minister, Eri L. Barr was a recognized “traveling minister” who also ordained other ministers. Thus the student’s characterization of Barr as the first Black Sabbatarian Adventist minister and Kinny as the first ordained Black SDA minister *after* the SDA Church officially organized in 1863. O’Reggio made a similar distinction, noting that, “Barr’s ministry took place in a different era and context, and came to a close when the denominational organization was barely completed.” See O’Reggio, “Kinny, Charles Marshall.”

¹⁵⁰ O’Reggio, “Father of Black Adventism,” 129-130.

¹⁵¹ Jones, “This is Our Story.”

Adventist missionary activities today. The feats he endured amidst the difficulties, including lack of financial support from White Church officers, should also enlighten the current era of Blacks working with what they have to accomplish the same missional mandate.

Regional Conferences

Black Seventh-day Adventists are indispensable to the worldwide SDA Church today. Not only because forty-one percent of the global membership resides in Africa but also because almost thirty percent of the entire North American membership is in [Black] Adventist Regional Conference churches.¹⁵² These “Regional Conferences” (RCs) were thus designated because, unlike the customary state (White) conferences, which had one or two states in their territorial assignment, a larger territory covering several states or regions was assigned to RCs. With dispersed congregations nationwide, steady membership growth, increased tensions, and several attempts at meaningful change, the time had come for such an action. There are nine RCs in the North American Division of SDA: The Allegheny East, Allegheny West, Central States, Lake Region, Northeastern, South Atlantic, South Central, and Southeastern, Southwest Region Conferences.¹⁵³

The Office of Regional Ministries believes that the formation of RCs is in harmony with the principles of 1 Cor 12:4-6 – diversities of gifts, administrations, and operations.¹⁵⁴ Still, to twenty-first-century onlookers, including various segments of the denomination, having Black-

¹⁵² Based on 2020 statistics, 6% of the global SDA membership were in the NAD. See Gary Krause (@garykrause7), “Dr. G.T. Ng, General Conference Executive Secretary, Reports to #GCAC20 that this is What an Adventist Village Look Like Today” *Twitter*, October 7, 2020, <https://twitter.com/garykrause7/status/1313837933665947648?s=20&t=63d6O5crHTURt8wxviqtUg>. Krause serves as Director of the Office of Adventist Mission, GC of SDA. The same pie chart depicting the 2020 makeup of the SDA church was also tweeted on the same day by university professor and magazine editor, Wilbert Maluquish, ThD (@WilberMaluquish), “Makeup of SDA Church #GCAC2020,” *Twitter*, October 7, 2020, <https://twitter.com/WilberMaluquish/status/1314016900515594240?s=20&t=63d6O5crHTURt8wxviqtUg>. See also Office for Regional Conference Ministries, “History.”

¹⁵³ Office for Regional Conference Ministries, “History,” last modified April 27, 2022, <https://adventistregionalministries.org/history>.

¹⁵⁴ Office for Regional Conference Ministries, “History.”

and-white conferences seems like a past relic. Nevertheless, when conversations about solving the paradox arise, they often end with a simplistic suggestion, “Why not close the Black conferences?” History has a more complex answer. One which many are not willing to carefully revisit to understand why and how RCs came about in the first place. Regional Conferences inevitably were a response to the racism, disparity, and segregation that Black Adventists experienced in the SDA Church. This shift was nothing new – only long overdue.

The bigoted quandary of Black Sabbath-keeping Adventists and the discrimination other Black protestant Christians faced mirrored society. Sharing the fateful saga of Adventism’s James K. Humphrey, Lewis C. Sheafe, John W. Manns, and Arna Bontemps, Richard Allen also broke from the Methodist Church. He co-founded the independent African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church – serving as its first bishop. Then, in New York City, dissatisfaction led to forming the AME Zion Church (AMEZ) as an independent denomination. Other leading figures formed the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas and other independent Black Christian churches. Black Adventists did not desire a total split, though. Their fight, or push, as Rock calls it, was more for integration, symmetry, parity, resources, and representation.¹⁵⁵

Perhaps the words of James Baldwin in his *The New York Times* essay may have been on the minds of Black leaders back then – “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”¹⁵⁶ In 1890 and 1909, the General Conference of SDA rejected forming Black RCs. Between 1907 and 1929, unfortunate schisms caused leading

¹⁵⁵ Rock, *Protest and Progress*, 57-66.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted by NPR’s host, Ramtin Arablouei, “James Baldwin’s Fire,” aired September 17, 2020, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/912769283>. It is attributed to his 1962 essay in the *New York Times*. See James Baldwin, “AS MUCH TRUTH AS ONE CAN BEAR,” *The New York Times*, last modified January 14, 1962, <https://www.nytimes.com/1962/01/14/archives/as-much-truth-as-one-can-bear-to-speak-out-about-the-world-as-it-is.html>.

Black ministers like Humphrey, Sheafe, Manns, and Bontemps to leave the denomination because of systemic racial policies.¹⁵⁷ From 1927 to 1944, they had no policy-making voice concerning the work among Blacks. In 1929, forming RCs was again rejected.¹⁵⁸ Finally, in 1944, at the General Conference Spring Council, the leaders present voted to recommend establishing RCs:

WHEREAS, The present development of the work among the colored people in North America has resulted, under the signal blessing of God, in the establishment of some 233 churches with some 17,000 members and

WHEREAS, It appears that a different plan of organization for our colored membership would bring further great advance on soul-winning endeavors, therefore

WE RECOMMEND, That in the unions where the colored constituency is considered by the union conference committee to be sufficiently large, and where the financial income and leniency warrant, colored conferences be organized.¹⁵⁹

Seventh-Day Adventist Pioneers

The era of William Miller left followers of his movement greatly disappointed. Joshua V. Himes and others were instrumental in surviving the ordeal and doing what they could to keep the “remnant” moving forward.¹⁶⁰ Yet, as new doctrinal positions and interpretations took

¹⁵⁷ Lewis C. Sheafe was a versatile preacher whose early ministry distinguished him as being able to connect interdenominationally and interracially. Before becoming an SDA Apostle, he pastored Pilgrim Baptist Church in 1888, Mahoning Avenue Baptist Church in 1892, Jerusalem Baptist Church in 1894, and served as chaplain of the St. Paul chapter of the Afro-American League (AAL) in 1889. He actively engaged in civil rights causes to better His people. His preaching was gladly received by different audiences, including white Adventists. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, described Sheafe as “an orator, a wonderfully able man, a more liberally educated and cultured man [who] can deliver a more forcible address than any other Seventh-day Adventist minister,” and that “not a white minister who can begin to stand beside him.” See Douglas, Morgan, “Sheafe, Lewis Charles (1859–1938),” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, June 01, 2022, accessed January 6, 2023. <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=FCFO>; and J.H. Kellogg to E.G. White, December 19, 1900, EGWE.

¹⁵⁸ Alfonzo Greene, Jr., “[Black] Regional Conferences in the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church Compared with United Methodist [Black] Central Jurisdiction/Annual Conferences with White SDA Conferences, From 1940 – 2001,” (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, 2009), 15-16.

¹⁵⁹ Office for Regional Conference Ministries, “History.”

¹⁶⁰ Though Himes remained an Adventist in his belief and practice, he eventually disassociated himself with denominational Adventism in 1876. He maintained a generally positive relationship with Seventh-day Adventists and lauded their practical social impact in the community. See Morgan, “Himes, Joshua Vaughan (1805–1895).”

hold of the little flock, they morphed into Sabbatarian Adventists. Then, in May 1863, notwithstanding resistance to the idea of organization, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was officially established in Battle Creek, Michigan.¹⁶¹ The new denomination of three thousand five hundred members prized themselves as still looking forward to the second advent of Christ but also keeping all of God’s commandments, especially the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday). They also self-identified as the remnant of Bible prophecy (Rev 10:8-11; 12:17) and emissaries of the everlasting gospel – the Three Angels Messages (Rev 14:6-12).

Concerning SDA pioneers, Lynette Frantzen cautioned against the general practice whereby most Adventist publications and presentations portray them as “old men with solemn faces and long beards, women with stiff dresses and no expressions on their faces.”¹⁶² Her primary concern with these representations in magazines, books, and online was that people would think and see the early Adventist pioneers as their pictures – archaic and somber. Frantzen’s article, “Young Adventist Pioneers,” cautions that “when the Seventh-day Adventist Church was newly formed, it was teenagers and young adults who held many leadership positions and helped to transform the church into the organization it is today.”¹⁶³ This section

¹⁶¹ Rock, *Protest and Progress*, 2-4; George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 3rd ed. (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2013), Kindle e-book, location 863-864; "Adventism's Co-Founder," *Ellen G. White Estate*, accessed January 11, 2023, <https://ellenwhite.org/articles/75>; Benjamin Baker, "Timeline of Black Adventist History 1800-1864," [blackdahistory.org](https://www.blackdahistory.org/black-adventist-timeline-1800-1864), accessed January 10, 2023, <https://www.blackdahistory.org/black-adventist-timeline-1800-1864>.

¹⁶² Many noteworthy women were also SDA pioneers, besides Ellen White. They are not frequently highlighted when the subject is presented but two great sources for a list of women pioneers are the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, "Adventist Women Pioneers," last modified March 16, 2022, <https://www.adventistfaith.com/media/recorder/adventist-women-pioneers>; and the extensive list by the General Conference Women’s Ministries Department, "Adventist Women of Distinguished Service," last modified October 16, 2008, <https://women.adventist.org/adventist-women-of-distinguished-service>. See also Adan Ramos Lagos and Del Delker Howell, "A Pioneer Who Spread the Adventist Message in Central America," Adventist News Network, last modified July 25, 2020, <https://adventist.news/news/a-pioneer-who-spread-the-adventist-message-in-central-america>; Heather-Dawn Small, "Distinguished Service: 18 Women," *Adventist Review*, last modified February 14, 2022, https://adventistreview.org/?p=24646?_ga=2.89622171.1440865869.1673214579-1016133577.1666748965; and "Memorable Pioneers."

¹⁶³ Lynette, Frantzen, "Young Adventist Pioneers: Emphasis on the Young!," *Adventist Review*, accessed January 11, 2023, <https://www.adventistreview.org/archives/2004-1522/story2.html>. See also the chart, "Comparative Life Spans of Leading Pioneer Workers" in *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 214.

briefly highlights these youthful leaders' contributions to the SDA Church.

Depending on the historian or source of SDA heritage, different names are credited as pioneers of the SDA denomination. What is agreeable among the majority is that Ellen G. White, James Springer White, Joseph Bates, John N. Andrews, John Byington, Hiram Edson, and Uriah Smith were principal founders.¹⁶⁴ Others included John Loughborough, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, Owen Russell Loomis Crosier, Stephen Haskell, Frederick Wheeler, William W. Prescott, and Daniel T. Bourdeau.¹⁶⁵ This section will only focus on the principal founders.

Ellen G. White

Ellen G. White (E. G. White) is conceivably the most famous and influential in Adventism's past, present, and foreseeable future. Some sources list her as the most widely translated American author – with more than one hundred thousand pages of written works published in over one hundred and sixty languages. Her seventy years of ministry impacted millions worldwide and birthed academies, universities, industries, clinics, hospitals, and publishing houses. Born Ellen Gould Harmon in Gorham, Maine, on November 26, 1827, to devout Methodist parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon, she and her twin sister, Elizabeth, were the youngest of eight children. She only had a third-grade education because, at age nine, another student threw a stone and broke her nose, which caused her to discontinue school.

¹⁶⁴ See works by Knight, *A Grief History Of Seventh-Day Adventists*; Rock, *Protest And Progress*; blacksdahistory.org; Norma J. Collins, *Heartwarming Stories Of Adventist Pioneers*, Book 1. (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005); Norma J. Collins, *Heartwarming Stories Of Adventist Pioneers*, Book 2. (Hagerstown: Review And Herald Publishing Association, 2007); Adventist Pioneer Library, "Biographical Sketches Of The Pioneers," accessed November 23, 2022, <https://www.aplib.org/biographical-sketches-of-the-pioneers/>; Ellen G. White Estate, "Pathways Of The Pioneers Stories," accessed January 4, 2023, <https://whiteestate.org/resources/pioneers/>; <https://adventistdigitallibrary.org>; Yohanes Verdianto, "Reasons Of How Adventist Pioneers Accepted The Truth About Sabbath (1844-1863)," *Abstract Proceedings International Scholars Conference* 7, no. 1 (October 2019): 1908-1926, doi:10.35974/isc.v7i1.865; Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Footprints Of The Pioneers* (Washington: Review And Herald Publishing Association, 1947); And Trevor O'Reggio, "Slavery, Prophecy, And The American Nation As Seen By The Adventist Pioneers, 1854-1865," *Journal Of The Adventist Theological Society* 17, No. 2 (Autumn 2006): 135–158.

¹⁶⁵ Frantzen, "Young Adventist Pioneers;" "Memorable Pioneers," Adventist Archives, accessed January 13, 2023, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/play-web>; Adventist Pioneer Library, "Biographical Sketches."

Ellen Harmon struggled tremendously with her faith and emotions as she could not reconcile the idea of a loving God and an eternally burning hell.¹⁶⁶

Her family first heard William Miller's preaching in 1840. They often traveled to various church meetings, as many believers during that time were prone to do. Young Ellen journeyed through a three-phase conversion process, starting with obtaining deliverance and forgiveness at age fourteen during a Methodist camp meeting. The teenager was baptized on June 26, 1842, though still fearful of God and doubtful of her salvation and readiness for the second coming of Christ. A dream she had about Jesus sometime afterward seemed to reassure her of God's love and acceptance. However, her ultimate breakthrough experience came when her mother took her to visit Levi Stockman, a Methodist Adventist minister. Recounting the life-changing engagement years later, she expressed:

My views of the Father were changed. I now looked upon Him as a kind and tender parent, rather than a stern tyrant compelling men to a blind obedience. My heart went out towards Him in a deep and fervent love. Obedience to His will seemed a joy; it was a pleasure to be in His service.¹⁶⁷

On one of her trips in February 1845, she met James Springer White, the Millerite preacher who believed she had the gifting of a prophet. Their frequent encounters during ministry-related activities led to their marriage the following year, on August 30, 1846. He was twenty-five years old, and she was eighteen. Their early marriage was not easy. While they

¹⁶⁶ O'Reggio, "Slavery, Prophecy, And The American Nation," 154; "Ellen G. White," *Ellen G. White Estate*, Accessed January 12, 2023, <https://whiteestate.org/resources/pioneers/ewhite>; Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Origin And History Of Seventh-Day Adventists*, Vol. 1 (Washington: Review And Herald Publishing Association, 1961), 58-61, 64; Adventist Pioneer Library, "Biographical Sketches;" Merlin D. Burt, editor, *Understanding Ellen White: The Life And Work Of The Most Influential Voice In Adventist History* (Silver Spring: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2015), Ellen G. White Estate eBook, i, x; See also his research paper, "Ellen G. Harmon's Three-Step Conversion Between 1836 And 1843 and The Harmon Family Methodist Experience" (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1998).

¹⁶⁷ Burt, *Understanding Ellen White*, x, xi; Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1915), 34, 35; E.G. White, "Life Sketches Original Manuscript" (Silver Spring: Ellen G. White Estate, n.d.), 43; Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 65.

seem to enjoy working closely together to spread the present truth for their time, they faced poverty, criticism, sickness, and the pain of losing two of their four sons – Herbert, just a few weeks old, and later Henry at age sixteen. The demands of the ministry were so great that they often had to leave the young ones with colleagues for extended periods. Yet they raised their other sons, Edson and William, to become Adventist ministers.¹⁶⁸

Ellen and James White were radical in some of their positions. They were part of and championed many reform movements of the day. Especially when she believed she had the Lord's message (testimony). She also passionately spoke against slavery and Black oppression in the United States. For example, she was forthright in calling slavery a sin and a blot on America when she decried, “God is punishing the North, that they have so long suffered the accursed sin of slavery to exist; for in the sight of heaven it is a sin of the darkest dye.”¹⁶⁹ Moreover, she claimed, “God saw the foul blot of slavery upon this land, he marked the sufferings that were endured by the colored people.”¹⁷⁰

E. G. White even had a testimony to bear to the country concerning reparations for the evils against Blacks and those who felt they had no obligations to help because they did not enslave people. Regarding the formers, she said, “The American nation owes a debt of love to the colored race, and God has ordained that they should make restitution for the wrong they have done them in the past.”¹⁷¹ Furthermore, “Those who have taken no active part in

¹⁶⁸ Adventist Pioneer Library, “Biographical Sketches;” E.G. White Estate, “Ellen G. White.” The Ellen G. White Estate has various offices and centers around the world which provide Ellen White resources and a plethora of other historic research materials. They promote Adventist heritage and oversee official historic Adventist sites including: the childhood home of Joseph Bates (Fairhaven, MA); Hiram Edson’s farm (Port Gibson, NY); William Miller’s estate (Whitehall, NY); and the Adventist Village (Battle Creek, MI). See Burt, *Understanding Ellen White*, 239.

¹⁶⁹ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1958), 2:359; O’Reggio, “Slavery, Prophecy, and the American Nation,” 156.

¹⁷⁰ Ellen G. White, “An Example in History,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 17 December 1895, 801-802; O’Reggio, “Slavery, Prophecy, and the American Nation,” 156.

¹⁷¹ Ellen G. White, “Am I My Brother’s Keeper,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 21 January 1896, 33; O’Reggio, “Slavery, Prophecy, and the American Nation,” 156.

enforcing slavery upon the colored people are not relieved from the responsibility of making special efforts to remove, as far as possible, the sure result of their enslavement.”¹⁷²

White’s pronouncements were equally explicit in admonishing the church and its members:

When the laws of men conflict with the word and law of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be. The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey; and we must abide the consequences of violating this law. The slave is not the property of any man. God is his rightful master, and man has no right to take God’s workmanship into his hands and claim him as his own.¹⁷³

She went as far as recommending disfellowship for those who held to unbiblical pro-slavery views:

Your views of slavery cannot harmonize with the sacred, important truths for this time. You must yield your views or the truth. Both cannot be cherished in the same heart, for they are at war with each other. . . . But notwithstanding all the light given, you have given publicity to your sentiments. Unless you undo what you have done, it will be the duty of God’s people to publicly withdraw their sympathy and fellowship from you, in order to save the impression which must go out in regard to us as a people. We must let it be known that we have no such ones in our fellowship and will not walk with them in church capacity.¹⁷⁴

Ellen White experienced her first of roughly two thousand visions (and dreams) in December 1844 in Portland, Maine. James and other leading men spent considerable time in Bible study hashing out fundamental beliefs, to which, it appears, Ellen would go into vision and confirm their understanding and findings. For example, this happened concerning the subject of the Sabbath. White “saw the Ten Commandments” in heaven, with the fourth especially highlighted.¹⁷⁵ It was also the case when developing the sanctuary doctrine in 1847

¹⁷² White, “Am I My Brother’s Keeper,” 33; O’Reggio, “Slavery, Prophecy, and the American Nation,” 156.

¹⁷³ Ellen G. White, *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1 (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1949), 72. See also E.G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1855), 201.

¹⁷⁴ White, *Testimonies*, 1:359; O’Reggio, “Slavery, Prophecy, and the American Nation,” 157.

¹⁷⁵ Ellen G. White, *To Be Like Jesus*, (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2004), 159.

and her health vision in 1863 at Otsego, Michigan.¹⁷⁶ After the episode, they began to consider, teach, and espouse a vegetarian and vegan lifestyle. This process of visionary confirmation served as a pattern for future questions on doctrinal positions and issues. While some leaders were skeptical of her “gift,” others, like Joseph Bates, eventually accepted it – having witnessed her in vision firsthand. However, they remained careful to conduct their own Bible studies while creating room for White’s dreams and visions.¹⁷⁷

White’s spiritual and visionary experiences shaped the trajectory of her life and legacy. Much of her revelations became the basis for her writings and played a significant role in synthesizing SDA doctrines, theology, and religious practices. She died at age eighty-seven in St. Helena, California, in 1915. Some members and non-SDAs still question the legitimacy of White's visions and writings. Still, her intellectual works remain an indispensable part of Adventism and a source of inspiration, study, and guidance for many SDAs worldwide.¹⁷⁸ At the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas, the global SDA Church voted on this official statement regarding E. G. White:

We reaffirm our conviction that her writings are divinely inspired, truly Christ-centered, and Bible-based. ... We commit ourselves to study the writings of Ellen G. White prayerfully and with hearts willing to follow the counsels and instructions we find there. ... We encourage the continued development of both worldwide and local strategies to foster the circulation of her writings inside and outside the church. The study of these writings is a powerful means to strengthen and prepare His people for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1915), 100-103; Ellen G. White, *Testimony Study on Diet and Food* (Loma Linda: College of Medical Evangelists, 1926), 8.10.

¹⁷⁷ White Estate, “Ellen G. White;” Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 58-60.

¹⁷⁸ Ekkehardt Mueller, “The End-Time Remnant and the Gift of Prophecy,” *Biblical Research Institute of Seventh-day Adventists*, (2013): 3, 4; Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 76-78.

¹⁷⁹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G White,” Adventist.org, last modified July 7, 2015, <https://www.adventist.org/official-statements/statement-of-confidence-in-the-writings-of-ellen-g-white>.

James White

As a co-founder of the SDA Church, James Springer White's contributions are beyond substantial. He gave his life to the cause, and his name is easily recognizable in almost all Adventist circles. White was an energetic evangelist, missionary, author, editor, publisher, educator, and administrator. He provided courageous leadership at pivotal moments on the journey to becoming a denomination – from the early Millerite Movement to Sabbatarian Adventism and, in the long run, to the organized General Conference of SDA. He served three terms as General Conference president and was crucial in establishing the Review and Herald and the Pacific Publishing Association. Hailed as the “first great apostle of the Seventh-day Adventist cause,” the prolific writer produced numerous articles, periodicals, books, and other spiritual materials. His teachings are essential to Adventist theology and continue to be read and studied globally. James White died at age sixty in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1881, but his legacy lives on in his extensive impact throughout the SDA world Church.¹⁸⁰

James Springer White was born in Palmyra, Maine, in 1821 – the fifth of nine children. As a youth, he could not attend school because of eye problems. White was baptized in 1836 at the age of fifteen. Later, with his vision restored, White became a teacher but would realize his full potential in the ministry.¹⁸¹ When his mother introduced him to the Millerite message, he readily embraced it and began to herald the Second Advent doctrine. White's evangelistic preaching garnered one thousand people to the movement. The Christian Church ordained him to the gospel ministry the same year.¹⁸²

After the Great Disappointment of 1844, James and Ellen worked closely together to

¹⁸⁰ Adventist Pioneer Library, “Biographical Sketches.”

¹⁸¹ Adventist Pioneer Library, “Biographical Sketches.”

¹⁸² Andrew Gordon Mustard, “James White and the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Organization, 1844-1881,” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 1987), 9; Adventist Pioneer Library, “Biographical Sketches.”

inspire and uplift the scattered and hopeless flock. A Justice of the Peace married them in 1846 in Portland, Maine. Their means were scant, so they relied on family and friends for much of their lodging. As prominent co-founders, the SDA Church often portrays their lives as problem-free and all-spiritual. However, their marriage was not picture-perfect with the demands of ministry, traveling, speaking, sickness, and death. Yet, hard though their early beginnings were, Ellen highly esteemed her husband. She saw him as “the best man that ever trod shoe leather.”¹⁸³ The Whites endured marital problems along the way, like normal couples, but their commitment to God, the Adventist cause, and each other was strong enough to keep them together for thirty-five years.¹⁸⁴

Much like Joshua V. Himes’ strategic use of the printing press, James White also used it to help grow the Church, communicate with the members, and spread the teachings of the faith. At the encouragement of his wife’s vision in November 1848, James started printing and publishing *The Present Truth* in 1849.¹⁸⁵ In 1850, leaders renamed it *The Review and Herald*.¹⁸⁶ As his management abilities matured, White frequently advocated for church organization, but some resisted because, to them, it was akin to Babylon. Additionally, if they were expecting Jesus to return, it did not make sense to be organized like the other churches. Based again on his wife’s vision since the 1850s to organize, he persevered to make it happen.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Adventist Pioneer Library, "The Best Man that Ever Trod Shoe Leather," *Lest We Forget* 5, no. 2 (1995), 4; Adventist Pioneer Library, "Biographical Sketches."

¹⁸⁴ Gerson Cardoso Rodrigues, "'The Best Man That Ever Trod Shoe Leather' and His 'Crown of Glory': The Personal Relationship of James and Ellen White, 1845-1881" (2022), *Dissertations*, 1765, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/1765>.

¹⁸⁵ Adventist Pioneer Library, "Biographical Sketches of the Pioneers."

¹⁸⁶ It is the flagship journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and one of the oldest religious magazines in North America. It is now called the *Adventist Review* and is published weekly, with a paid circulation of nearly 30,000 as of January 2023. James White was also editor of the *Youth's Instructor* (1852) and *Signs of the Times* (1874). See Adventist Review, "About the Adventist Review," last modified January 11, 2022, <https://adventistreview.org/about>.

¹⁸⁷ White Estate, "James White."

When the General Conference was officially organized in 1863, White was asked to serve as its first president but prudently declined. He did not want to give credence to suspicions that he craved power, hence his push for organization. Instead, John Byington was elected the first president, though White would still become the denomination's second president, in addition to serving on two other terms.¹⁸⁸

When Ellen White had other visions to start the first SDA college and health institution in Battle Creek, James would be the main one to help bring them to fruition. The couple accomplished much together and could have done much more had James White not been a workaholic. Historians believe that his death was premature due to overwork. He suffered several strokes before his untimely passing in 1881. His wife carried on the vision, mission, and movement for thirty-four more years before passing in 1915.¹⁸⁹

Joseph Bates

Joseph Bates, another co-founder of the SDA Church, was born on July 8, 1792, in Rochester, Plymouth County, Massachusetts. He is credited with persuading James White and Ellen G. White of the validity of the seventh-day Sabbath and was the oldest of the pioneers. In 1807, at age fifteen, Bates began his adventurous career as a sailor with his first job as a cabin boy on the *Fanny*, commanded by Captain Elias Terry – sailing from New Bedford to New York, then to London.¹⁹⁰ Bates worked hard to become captain of a merchant ship. He was also a prisoner of war until the end of the British War of 1812.¹⁹¹ During one of his journeys, Bates

¹⁸⁸ Mustard, “James White,” 10-11; White Estate, “James White.”

¹⁸⁹ Mustard, “James White,” 11; White Estate, “James White;” and Adventist Pioneer Library, “Biographical Sketches.”

¹⁹⁰ Joseph Bates and James White, ed., *The Early Life and Later Experience and Labors of Joseph Bates* (Battle Creek: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1877), 18.

¹⁹¹ Gary Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 33.

experienced a religious awakening while reading a Bible that his wife, the former Prudence Nye, packed for him.¹⁹² Shortly after, he became active in various social movements, including establishing one of the earliest temperance societies. He transformed his ship into a temperance vessel after giving up wine and tobacco around 1821.¹⁹³

In 1824, Bates became a Christian and, three years later, was a member of the Fairhaven Christian Church, which his wife attended. After accumulating his fortune (at least \$10,000), he kept his promise to Prudence and retired from being a sea captain in 1828. The now thirty-six-year-old Bates dedicated his life to farming, health and temperance reform, antislavery movements, preaching, and home missionary work.¹⁹⁴ He became a believer in Father Miller's Second Advent teachings and an evangelist for the movement. Bates actively participated in the first and sixth Millerite General Conferences, serving as a committee member (1840) and chairperson (1842). His conviction in the Millerite doctrine was so strong that Bates sold his home and other property to finance the Millerite cause and as preparation for the millennial reign of Christ.¹⁹⁵

After reading Thomas M. Preble's tract in the spring of 1845, Bates followed in the footsteps of Frederick Wheeler and embraced observing the Seventh-day Sabbath. Bates quickly became known as the apostle of the Sabbath and penned several pamphlets on the subject, including *The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign* (1846; 1847) and *A Vindication of the Seventh Day Sabbath and the Commandments of God* (1848).¹⁹⁶ He also articulated

¹⁹² Adventist Pioneer Library, "Mrs. Bates – A Prudent Wife," and "Story and Timeline of Bates," *Lest We Forget* 1, no. 3 (1991), 1, 4.

¹⁹³ Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 33-34.

¹⁹⁴ Adventist Pioneer Library, "Story and Timeline of Bates," 4; Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 34.

¹⁹⁵ Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 34; Adventist Pioneer Library, "Health Reforming Sea Captain Becomes Sabbath Reforming Adventist" *Lest We Forget* 1, no. 3 (1991), 5.

¹⁹⁶ Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 34; Adventist Pioneer Library, "Reflections on the Sabbath and Temperance" *Lest We Forget* 1, no. 3 (1991), 2, 5.

Adventist theology about the Sabbath's connection to the three angels' messages (Rev 14:6-12) and believed in Hiram Edson's Sanctuary doctrine. James and Ellen White accepted the Sabbath doctrine after reading Bates' tract. Between 1848 and 1850, they joined Bates and others to hold Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences to solidify the theological tenets of Sabbatarian Adventists.¹⁹⁷

Joseph Bates and the Whites worked unitedly for the thriving Sabbatarian Adventists, though he did not readily accept Ellen White's prophetic gift. After witnessing one of her visions, she relayed seeing the planets and other things he could relate to from his life as a sailor, and he believed her visions were from God. In 1847, Bates contributed to the publication of *A Word to the "Little Flock"* by sanctioning the visionary gift of Ellen White.¹⁹⁸ He was fully in favor of church organization and helped to choose the name "Seventh-day Adventist" in 1860. Bates also helped to create the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 1861, serving as its first local president. He died on March 19, 1872, in Battle Creek, Michigan.¹⁹⁹

John Byington

John Byington was the first president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He paved the way for the extensive SDA educational system by establishing the first school in his home at Bucks Bridge, New York. He was heavily involved in the abolitionist movement, even at the national level – taking active roles in the Liberty Party and supporting its successors, the Free Soul Party and the Republican Party. The Byingtons highly

¹⁹⁷ Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 34.

¹⁹⁸ Adventist Pioneer Library, "Biographical Sketches of the Pioneers;" Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 34.

¹⁹⁹ Ellen G. White Estate, "Pathways of the Pioneers: Joseph Bates," accessed November 22, 2022, <https://whiteestate.org/resources/pioneers/jbates/>; Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 34.

regarded Sojourner Truth and Will Locket and assisted escaped enslaved people en route to Canada on the Underground Railroad.²⁰⁰

Born October 8, 1798, in Hinesburg, Vermont, he was the sixth of ten children. His mother was Lucy (Hinsdale) Byington (1759–1852), and his father, Justus Byington (1763–1839), was a Methodist Episcopal pastor who fought in the American Revolutionary War.²⁰¹ Byington’s baptism at age seventeen set him apart to be credentialed as a lay preacher and later ordained by the Methodist Church. He married Mary Priscilla Ferris (1803–1829) on October 15, 1823. They had two daughters, Julia (1824) and Caroline (1826). Unfortunately, Julia died shortly after birth, and Mary died in 1829. Byington decided to remarry and, on January 25, 1830, married Catharine Newton, a school teacher. They had six children: Laura (1831), John Fletcher (1832), Martha (1834), Teresa (1837), Luther Lee (1838), and William Wilberforce (1840).²⁰²

The farmer-preacher was truly a builder. About 1837, after relocating to New York, Byington assisted in the construction of a Methodist Church in Buck's Bridge. He was intensely active in the abolitionist struggle, resulting in a split within the Methodist Church. He then became a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Morley, where he also assisted in constructing the church building and parsonage.²⁰³

Unlike most pioneers who accepted the Millerite doctrine, Byington did not become a

²⁰⁰ Will Locket was a colored slave. See Adventist Pioneer Library, “John Byington’s Family,” *Lest We Forget* 2, no. 1 (1992), 2, 8; and Brian E. Strayer, “Byington, John (1798–1887),” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, January 29, 2020, accessed January 20, 2023. <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=H92D>.

²⁰¹ Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 222; Department of Education, *Lessons in Denominational History* (Washington: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1944), 180; Strayer, “Byington.”

²⁰² Adventist Pioneer Library, “Biographical Sketches;” Gilbert M. Valentine, “Personal Diaries and the Study of Adventist History: Filling out the Context of Adventist Events and Communities,” in *Journal of Adventist Archives*, 1, ed., Roy K. Kline (Silver Spring: General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists, 2021), 58-69; Strayer, “Byington.”

²⁰³ Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 51.

believer nor a follower of Millerism. However, his exposure in 1844 prompted him to begin researching the prophecies. In 1852, after the death of his daughters, Laura and Teresa, H. W. Lawrence presented the Byingtons with a copy of the *Review and Herald* featuring articles on the Seventh-day Sabbath. They accepted the message and were baptized on July third as Sabbatarian Adventists, along with their children, Martha and Fletcher. Afterward, John Byington again assisted in constructing another church, this time, an Adventist church close to his home. In 1858, James and Ellen White invited the Byington family to relocate to Battle Creek. He purchased a farm in the area and became a self-supporting minister while building up the work in the state.²⁰⁴

Three years before the General Conference of SDA was formed, Byington played a crucial role in incorporating the SDA Publishing Association, organizing over twenty congregations, and creating the Michigan Conference of SDA. In 1863, at age sixty-five, Byington accepted the nomination to serve as the SDA denomination's first president. During his tenure, he distinguished himself as an “old-school” pastor – a shepherd in the truest sense. After his second one-year term, Byington returned to farming and laboring for the cause of the Church. He declared, “I must feed the lambs of the flock,” and continued to visit believers throughout the Michigan Conference of SDA faithfully.²⁰⁵

When Joseph Bates died in 1872, Byington was now the oldest Adventist minister in the SDA Church. He spent his later years as a busy Christian performing charitable activities, farming, participating in Church functions, Bible study, visitation, and part-time preaching. Occasionally, he accepted speaking invitations from Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist

²⁰⁴ Strayer, “Byington;” Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 52.

²⁰⁵ Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 52; and Adventist Pioneer Library, “Biographical Sketches.”

churches. His thirty-five years of SDA ministry ceased with his death on January 7, 1887. He was eighty-eight years old and was buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery in Battle Creek, next to his wife Catherine, who died on February 22, 1885.²⁰⁶

John Nevins Andrews

John Nevins Andrews (J. N. Andrews) was born on July 22, 1829, in Portland, Maine, and is credited as the first Seventh-day Adventist missionary to travel overseas. He was a founding leader of the denomination and served in various key positions. Some included a drafter of the constitution and bylaws for the GC of SDA, evangelist, local and General Conference president, editor of the *Review and Herald*, and a member of several high-level committees. Andrews was also seen as a scholar and helped to develop Adventist doctrines during its formative years. The SDA's leading academic institution bears his name. A bronze statue, "Legacy of Leadership," of Andrews and his children, stands prominently on the University campus as a monument to their missional service and impact.²⁰⁷

In February 1843, the "youthful but stalwart believer" and his family converted to the Millerite Movement and endured the Great Disappointment of 1844. Like Bates, Andrews became a Sabbatarian Adventist the following year after reading T. M. Preble's case for the Seventh-day Sabbath. In 1850, the twenty-one-year-old began his itinerant ministry in New England and was ordained to the gospel ministry in 1853 by Elder James White.²⁰⁸ By age

²⁰⁶ Strayer, "Byington."

²⁰⁷ Andrews University (AU) is located in Berrien Springs, Michigan. The university is also home of the SDA Theological Seminary and publishes *Andrews University Seminary Studies* and *Journal of Research on Christian Education*. It is also the sponsor of Andrews University Press. See Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 20-21; Gilbert M. Valentine, "Andrews, John Nevins (1829–1883)," and *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, August 20, 2020, accessed January 23, 2023, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=C8VX>.

²⁰⁸ Marlene Steinweg, "In Defense of the Truth," *Lest We Forget* 6, no. 1 (1996), 1, 4; Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 20; Valentine, "Andrews, John Nevins;" Adventist Pioneer Library, "Biographical Sketches;" and Ellen G. White Estate, "Pathways of the Pioneers: John N. Andrews," accessed January 4, 2023. <https://whiteestate.org/resources/pioneers/jandrews/>.

twenty-six, Andrews was the leading Adventist scholar, apologist, and systematic proponent of doctrine. One of his most notable accomplishments was deciphering the two-horned beast of Revelation as representing the United States of America. He also shifted Sabbath-keeping Adventists' practice of keeping the Sabbath from 6:00 p.m., Friday to 6:00 p.m., Saturday by interpreting the biblical Sabbath day as lasting from sunset on Friday to sundown on Saturday.²⁰⁹

J. N. Andrews married his childhood friend, Angeline Stevens (1824–1872), on October 29, 1856, in Waukon, Iowa. They had four children: Charles Melville (born 1857), Mary Frances (born 1861), their third (born 1863) died four days after birth, and Carrie Matilda (born 1864) but died in 1865 of dysentery. Their union brought some tensions with the Whites, further exacerbated by Uriah Smith's marriage to Angeline's sister just six months later. They later resolved their misunderstandings. Like others, Andrews did not wholeheartedly embrace Ellen White's "prophetic gift" early on. While he believed in the charismatic manifestations of the Spirit, his issue was reconciling that Adventists seemingly confined the prophetic expression to only Ellen White. Andrews found this contrary to the revelation in passages like 1 Cor 14:29 (and the like). He understood that other believers in the body of Christ could also manifest that gift. In due course, he came to terms with the reality and affirmed her ministry role.²¹⁰

In 1859, after struggling with a four-year stint of ill health, he led out in a Bible study of "Systematic Benevolence," which the Church would adopt to support ministers in the gospel work. That year, the first edition of his masterpiece, *The History of the Sabbath and the First*

²⁰⁹ Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 20; Valentine, "Andrews, John Nevins;" and Frantzen, "Young Adventist Pioneers."

²¹⁰ See Adventist Pioneer Library, "Time Line," *Lest We Forget* 6, no. 1 (1996), 5; and Valentine, "Andrews, John Nevins."

Day of the Week, was also published by Battle Creek Steam Press. In addition, the leaders voted that Andrews should assist John N. Loughborough in tent evangelism throughout Michigan.²¹¹ According to Frantzen, “Between the ages of 31 and 35, Andrews chaired the committee that suggested a plan of organization for church’s publishing house in Battle Creek, Michigan, and lobbied during the Civil War for Adventist draftees to be able to receive noncombatant designation.”²¹²

In June of 1862, Andrews moved from Waukon to New York to join the evangelistic work there and helped to form the New York Conference of SDA. After serving as the third president of the General Conference from 1867 to May 18, 1869, he continued holding various positions in the upper echelons of the Church, including editor of the *Review and Herald* from 1869 to 1870.²¹³ When his wife, Angeline, died of a stroke in 1872, he and his two surviving children, Charles and Mary, were the first official Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to travel to Europe in 1874. In 1876, Andrews established a publishing house in Switzerland and the French publication *Les Signes des Temps* (Signs of the Times). Mary died of tuberculosis in 1879, and J. N. Andrews also died of tuberculosis in 1883 in Basel, Switzerland, at age fifty-four.²¹⁴

Hiram Edson

Born in New York on December 30, 1806, Hiram Edson was an SDA minister, a visionary evangelist, and a farmer who helped formulate the SDA sanctuary and investigative judgment doctrines. Edson also served as an editor and publisher for the *Review and Herald*

²¹¹ White Estate, “John N. Andrews;” and Valentine, “Andrews, John Nevins.”

²¹² Frantzen, “Young Adventist Pioneers.”

²¹³ Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 20.

²¹⁴ J. N. Andrews was also buried in Basel, Switzerland. See Valentine, “Andrews, John Nevins;” White Estate, “John N. Andrews;” and Francis Foster, “Andrews and His Family: Wholly Dedicated to the Lord,” *Lest We Forget* 6, no. 1 (1996), 6-7.

and other Adventist publications. He became a Methodist minister but accepted the Millerite apocalyptic doctrine in 1839. When Christ did not return according to Miller's first prediction in 1843, Edson embraced Samuel Snow's version of why Jesus did not come according to Miller's date but that Christ would certainly come on October 22, 1844. When that prediction also failed, it was devastating for Millerite followers.²¹⁵ Edson gave this painful account of their emotional anguish at the time:

“We looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled 12 at midnight. The day had then passed, and our disappointment became a certainty. Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. . . . We wept, and wept, till the day dawn.”²¹⁶

Trying to make sense of what happened, Edson and other Adventists had a spiritual enlightenment in which he saw a “great light” that led them to understand the reason for the bitter disappointment. This discovery is perhaps what Hiram Edson is best known for in Adventism. According to Edson, on October 23, 1844, while walking through a cornfield in Port Gibson, New York, on their way home from a worship service, he received a vision that answered their enigma as to why Jesus did not physically return to earth, as they had firmly believed.²¹⁷ It gave them a plausible explanation for the Great Disappointment. Edson thought it was a message from God revealing the true meaning of the events of October 22, 1844, and a

²¹⁵ Brian E. Strayer, "Edson, Hiram (1806–1882)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, October 17, 2022, accessed January 23, 2023, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=BJIN>; and Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 85.

²¹⁶ James R. Nix, “Seventh-day Adventism—A Unique Prophetic Movement,” *E.G. White Estate*, accessed December 1, 2022, https://whiteestate.org/resources/nix/unique_movement.html.

²¹⁷ Owen Russell Loomis Crosier (1820 to 1913), a Millerite preacher, was present with Edson the morning following the abysmal disappointment when Edson had the vision. This revelation clarified where Millerites went wrong in their predictions. It showed that they had the correct date but the wrong event. Christ did not return to cleanse the earth on October 22, 1844, but rather, He started a new phase of His High Priest ministry in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 8-9). Edson, Crosier, and Dr. Franklin B. Hahn delved deeper into the study of the cleansing of the sanctuary and published their findings in the *Day-Star Extra* on February 7, 1846. Joseph Bates, along with James and Ellen White accepted and endorsed the doctrine as “true light.” Crosier, once a Sabbatarian Adventist, did not make any other major contributions to the SDA Church besides the development of the sanctuary message. He eventually gave up both Sabbath-keeping and his views of the sanctuary. See Adventist Pioneer Library, “Biographical Sketches;” and Strayer, “Edson, Hiram.”

deeper understanding of Christ's work in the end times. As a result, new Adventist teachings emerged. Namely, the sanctuary message and “The Investigative Judgment.”²¹⁸ The former teaches the typological ceremonies of the Mosaic Tabernacle to explain the plan of salvation. Based on their understanding of Daniel’s time prophecies, the latter holds that Christ began a judgment process in heaven in 1844, culminating in His return to earth later.²¹⁹

Leading Adventists like Joseph Bates and James and Ellen White found Edson’s exposition solid, and Edson accepted the Sabbath doctrine. He sold his property, including two farms, to support the publishing work and help James White to acquire a printing press.²²⁰ Edson published many of his theories and positions. For example, in 1849, he contended that Jews scattered around the world would return to Palestine before Christ’s second coming. The next year, he penned another tract, *The Time of the End*, where he postulated that the Second Advent would occur on May 19, 1850. In 1856, Edson advanced his unique interpretation of the 2520-year prophecy (723 BC - 1798 AD) in “The Times of the Gentiles.”²²¹ Though ordained by the New York-Pennsylvania Conference in 1870, his ministerial credentials were not renewed in 1875 primarily because of a controversy between Edson and the Review publishing house. It resulted due to one of his manuscripts on prophecy they judged as

²¹⁸ The SDA Church is the only known (or prominent) protestant denomination that espouses these particular doctrines as fundamental beliefs. See Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 85.

²¹⁹ The 2,300 days; 1,260 days, and 1,290 days (Dan 8:14; 9:24-27; and 12:7-12). Strayer discovered and reported Edson’s theology as “speculative” and that in May 1845, Edson sent a letter to the *Jubilee Standard* (pp. 90-91), claiming that though the 2300-day prophecy (Dan 8:14) ended on October 22, 1844, the 1335-day prophecy (Dan 12:12) would end in August 1845 with God’s final judgment and Christ’s second coming. See Strayer, “Edson, Hiram.”

²²⁰ Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 85.

²²¹ See Strayer, “Edson, Hiram” in Hiram Edson, *An Exposition of Scripture Prophecy; Showing the Final Return of the Jews in 850* (Canandaigua: Office of the *Ontario Messenger*, 1849); Hiram Edson, *The Time of the End; Its Beginning, Progressive Events, and Final Termination* (Auburn: Henry Oliphant, 1849); and Hiram Edson, “The Times of the Gentiles and the Deliverance and Restoration of the Remnant of Israel from the Seven Times, or 2520 Years of Assyrian or Pagan and Papal Captivity Considered,” *ARH* (throughout January – February 1856).

biblically flawed. He died at age seventy-five in Palermo, New York, on January 8, 1882, and was buried near the Roosevelt SDA Church he helped to build.²²²

Uriah Smith

Uriah Smith is a go-to source for SDAs regarding Bible prophecy. He was an educator, author, editor, poet, and inventor and is perhaps best remembered for his book, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*. He was only twelve when his family drank the bitter cup of the 1844 Great Disappointment. Smith became a Sabbatarian Adventist in 1852 and published a thirty-five thousand-word poem called “The Warning Voice of Time and Prophecy” the following year.²²³ He was the first secretary of the General Conference of SDA and the first Bible instructor at Battle Creek College.²²⁴

Smith, the youngest of four children, was born on May 2, 1832, and grew up in West Wilton, New Hampshire.²²⁵ In his early teens, Smith had a sore on one of his legs that became precipitously worse without adequate treatment. The leg was amputated, but Smith found a way to create and patent his artificial limb when he was thirty-one.²²⁶ Smith was highly educated for his time, having had the privilege of attending the academy at Hancock (1845 and 1846) and Phillips Exeter Academy from 1848 to 1851, with plans to attend Harvard College afterward. Smith was optimistic about becoming a successful man. However, when he accepted the Sabbath and sanctuary doctrines in 1852 (undoubtedly influenced by his sister, Annie, and his mother), he abandoned worldly pursuits and took up the gospel work. He even declined a lucrative three-year contract offer on the faculty of a newly established academy in Mount

²²² Strayer, “Edson, Hiram.”

²²³ E. G. White Estate, “Uriah Smith,” accessed January 4, 2023, <https://whiteestate.org/resources/pioneers/usmith/>.

²²⁴ Adventist Pioneer Library, “Biographical Sketches.”

²²⁵ Stella Parker Peterson, “A Spiritual Giant,” *Lest We Forget* 7, no. 1 (1997): 4.

²²⁶ Frantzen, “Young Adventist Pioneers.”

Vernon. The salary was \$1,000 a year with room and board.²²⁷

The printing press was central to the promulgation of Adventist doctrines and missions. Uriah Smith's contributions to the success of early SDA publishing were remarkable.²²⁸ After his poem, "The Warning Voice of Time and Prophecy," began running a few months in the *Review and Herald*, the magazine hired the twenty-one-year-old Smith on May 3, 1853. In 1855, he became the editor of the *Review and Herald* at age twenty-three – a post he held for thirty-five years. He also functioned in other capacities as a proofreader, business manager, and bookkeeper throughout the years. The demands for youthful energy to participate in the growing ministry of Adventism was a great and necessary help to the other aging leaders. However, this was not without cost. In 1869, Smith had to leave the publishing work because of health problems. When he came back, he left again in 1873 because of conflicts with James White but managed to return yet again a few months later. His total service in publishing was at least fifty years.²²⁹

Smith also helped to convey Seventh-day Adventists' doctrinal positions in a structured manner for both members and would-be Adventists. In 1872, he summarized Adventist fundamental beliefs, which grew into the twenty-eight fundamental beliefs the Church espouses today. However, his work in this arena did not negate some of his theological positions contrary to mainstream Adventism. For example, Smith did not believe in the Trinity. He thought it was unbiblical. Sometimes, he also doubted Ellen White's authority and, for a time, resisted the message of "righteousness by faith" advocated by Ellet J. Waggoner and

²²⁷ White Estate, "Uriah Smith;" Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 276; Peterson, "A Spiritual Giant," 4-5.

²²⁸ Department of Education, "Lessons in Denominational History," 293. In mid-1857, Smith married Harriet M. Stevens, the sister-in-law of John N. Andrews. They had five children. See Peterson, "A Spiritual Giant," 5; and Valentine, "Andrews, John Nevins."

²²⁹ Peterson, "A Spiritual Giant," 5; Frantzen, "Young Adventist Pioneers;" Land, *Historical Dictionary of Seventh-day Adventists*, 276.

Alonzo T. Jones.²³⁰ Concerned about Smith's (and other SDA leaders') opposition to this doctrine, Ellen White wrote a twelve-page appeal letter to elder Smith on December 31, 1890, to warn him about the dangers of maintaining his hostile position. After prayerful labor and counsel, "he fell on the Rock and was broken."²³¹

According to the E. G. White Estate, the last words Smith put to pen were to the 1903 General Conference session. They captured his missional heart and longing for the second Advent, for which he spent his life. "I am with you in the endeavor to send forth in this generation this gospel of the kingdom for a witness to all nations," he said. "And when this is completed, it will be the signal for the coronation of our coming King." His commitment to the gospel commission never abated. On March 6, 1903, Smith died of a paralytic stroke on his way to work at the *Review and Herald*. He was seventy-one years old.²³²

A Brief Overview of NAPS

The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 1978 by Anthony Paul, a renowned botanist, research scientist, and former professor of Biology and the chair of the Department of Biological Sciences at Oakwood College (now Oakwood University).²³³ His mentor was Professor Mary Inez Lang Booth. She was heavily involved in prison fellowship work to instill hope and restoration in prisoners, families, and communities affected by crime and incarceration.²³⁴ In his time as a student, Paul worked with Professor Booth. For over forty years, she was a music professor at Oakwood College (also chair of the Music Department for two terms), "a record in service at

²³⁰ Land, *Historical Dictionary of Seventh-day Adventists*, 276-277.

²³¹ Marlene Steinweg, "Broken on the Rock: Uriah Smith – Pioneer SDA Author and Editor," *Lest We Forget* 7, no. 1 (1997): 1. See also E.G. White, "Letter 40, 1890," *1888 Material*, 790-801.

²³² Peterson, "A Spiritual Giant," 6; and White Estate, "Uriah Smith."

²³³ Oakwood College, "Interview with Dr. Anthony Paul, Founder and National Director of NAPS," *Oakwood College Magazine* (Spring/Summer 2003): 15.

²³⁴ Oakwood College, "Dr. Anthony Paul, Founder and National Director," 16.

one school unequaled by any other music teacher at an Adventist college or university.”²³⁵ She also served inmates throughout Huntsville jails.

As a community leader, Booth recruited student volunteers to hold a worship service for the prisoners. “Each service featured musical selections, a sermonette, a word of affirmation from Booth, testimonials from prisoners, religious literature, snacks, and personal visitations.”²³⁶ Paul found inspiration from his mentor’s dedication to advocating for prisoners’ rights and helping develop healthy reintegration plans that enabled incarcerated persons to transition to a wholesome life with family after serving in prison. He was motivated to help save lives, relieve suffering, and sustain human dignity during crises and disasters.²³⁷

NAPS’ mission embraced this ethos. It was to improve food security and education among the suffering populations and mitigate hunger, disease, and poverty, nationally and internationally, irrespective of nationality, religion, or race.²³⁸ Fulfilling this mandate led to NAPS incorporating humanitarian support and educational assistance in agricultural technology, healthcare services, emergency relief, and spiritual and social comfort in their outreach efforts. That decision also carved out a unique niche for NAPS in providing aid to the most disadvantaged and poverty-stricken communities in the U.S. and across the globe. Since its establishment, NAPS volunteers, primarily college students, have served thousands of vulnerable individuals.²³⁹ With ever-increasing needs came more considerable challenges for NAPS. In response to these colossal trials, the organization has instituted branches in major

²³⁵ Dan Shultz, "Booth, Mary Inez Lang (1913–2010)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*. November 02, 2021. Accessed November 29, 2022. <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=BIC9>.

²³⁶ Benjamin Baker, “Mary Inez Booth,” *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, accessed November 28, 2022, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-4125>.

²³⁷ Oakwood College, “Dr. Anthony Paul, Founder and National Director,” 16.

²³⁸ “About NAPS,” National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, accessed October 31, 2021, <https://www.napsoc.org/about-naps>.

²³⁹ National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, *NAPS Ministry Brochure*. Huntsville, AL: NAPS, 2005.

cities in the United States and worldwide.

The Oakwood Connection

Since its establishment in 1978, NAPS volunteers have offered help and support to millions of needy persons in the United States and internationally in impoverished urban and rural areas. Advancing NAPS' mission would not have been possible without its army of volunteers – students who have become agriculturists, dentists, doctors, social workers, pastors, teachers, and other professionals in various fields. Most NAPS volunteers were students at Oakwood College (OU). Still, other university students could partake in NAPS activities, including students from Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California, Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University) in Takoma Park, Maryland, Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, Tennessee State University in Nashville, and Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Massachusetts. Students from these institutions volunteer their time to provide food, clothing, and shelter to needy people.

Given that NAPS was both formed and based at OU, the historical institution has played a vital role in advancing NAPS' work. Besides providing the highest number of volunteers, OU also served as a critical base for the ministry as it allowed for an office and communication facilities. NAPS volunteers comprised around five percent of the overall student population at OU. They accounted for about thirty percent of students' total academic accolades.

Oakwood Industrial School opened its doors to educate Blacks on November 16, 1896, with a humble student body of only sixteen students, one principal, and three teachers on a

former three-hundred-and-sixty-acre slave plantation in Huntsville, Alabama.²⁴⁰ It was a significant move for the SDA denomination, given the times of their day. Church leaders may have been encouraged to make the dream of educating Southern enslaved people a reality, with hindsight affirmation from key pioneer Ellen G. White, who believed God gave her instruction and vision that “this is the Lord’s institution “... “This is the Lord’s land...” and that “The Lord led in . . . [its] establishment.” Therefore, “It was God’s purpose that the school should be located near Huntsville.”²⁴¹

In 1895, leading Black SDA pioneer Charles M. Kinney recommended the Beasley estate as the site for the Oakwood School. Former general and United States president Andrew Jackson periodically visited this plantation – belonging to Peter Blow, for relaxation. It was this same plantation where “Sam” lived and worked as a slave of Peter Blow from 1819 to 1821. “Later Sam would change his name to Dred Scott and petition for personal freedom before the Missouri Supreme Court, a move that precipitated the famous Dred Scott decision of 1857 and eventually led to the Civil War.”²⁴² Yet, a place tainted with Black suffering would be used to educate their descendants – and educate them for eternity. That industrial school grew into what is now Oakwood University.²⁴³ It continues to equip, primarily Black Adventists, for a myriad of private and public service sector vocations and the “ministry.” Still, it is also making strides in educating people of color and Latin American heritage.

²⁴⁰ Mervyn A. Warren, *Oakwood! A Vision Splendid Continues: 1896-2010* (Huntsville: Oakwood University, 2010), 4, 9.

²⁴¹ Ellen G. White, “The Huntsville School,” *Special Testimonies, Series B*, No. 12; Letter 313, 1904 (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1909).

²⁴² Leslie N. Pollard, Samuel London, Mervyn A. Warren, Cheryl A. Galley, Lela Gooding, Nigel Barham, and Simone Wells, “Oakwood University” in *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, (2021). Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=AFWD>. Baker, Benjamin, ed., *A Place Called Oakwood: Inspired Counsel a Comprehensive Compilation of Ellen G. White Statements on the Oakwood Educational Institution*. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, (2007), v-vii.

²⁴³ After several names changes along the way. Before adopting the name Oakwood, the school was also commonly called the Huntsville School. See Baker, *A Place Called Oakwood*, ii, v.

NAPS' Journey to Global Ministry

In an interview with *Oakwood College Magazine*, Paul described NAPS' early beginnings in the 1970s. Paul explained that as a student at Oakwood College in the 1970s, the plight of the people of Ethiopia, who were facing severe hunger, touched him deeply. It prompted him to understand how Black students in the United States could offer support.²⁴⁴ He mobilized a few friends to raise funds to build a well in Ethiopia.

Paul was referring to Ethiopia's famine crisis during 1973-85. Between 1972 and 1975, approximately 200,000 persons died of starvation in Ethiopia's Northern provinces of Tigre and Wollo. Most affected were tenant farmers and marginalized herders who suffered from land alienation by the Haile Selassie's Government.²⁴⁵ From 1983 to 1985, Ethiopia suffered its worst famine in a century due to drought and insect plagues. The famine affected more than seven million people (out of the country's 40 million people) and led to over one million deaths, while approximately 2.5 million persons were internally displaced.²⁴⁶ As one of the worst humanitarian crises of the twentieth century, the famine prompted a global response to offer relief and save as many lives as possible.

The International community condemned how the Ethiopian government dealt with the famine. The government's response to the crisis was to move large numbers of marginalized herders and farmers from the affected regions in the North and transport them to the southern part of the country. Approximately 600,000 persons were uprooted from their farms and home villages by armed forces and resettled in the South.²⁴⁷ The country's government also withheld

²⁴⁴ Oakwood College, "Dr. Anthony Paul, Founder and National Director," 15.

²⁴⁵ Alemayehu Engida, "Ethiopia in the Image of the West in the 1980s," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 1, no. 2 (2004): 114.

²⁴⁶ Kristin Urbach, "Famine as a Human Rights Violation: The Case of Ethiopia and the Great Famine of the 1980s," *Interdisc. J. Hum. Rts. L.* 1 (2006): 27.

²⁴⁷ Tanja Mülle R, "'The Ethiopian Famine' Revisited: Band Aid and the Antipolitics of Celebrity Humanitarian Action", *Disasters* 37, no. 1 (2013): 61-69.

food shipments to rebel areas. The crisis attracted international attention in a landmark B.B.C. report, which sparked the attention of a wider global community, including the United Nations, government representatives, human rights activists, media personalities, humanitarian agencies, celebrities, and students.²⁴⁸ Paul and his group were among the students who fundraised to help individuals affected by the crisis. Their response to the famine marked the beginning of NAPS.

Even though the group formed by Paul to help the Ethiopian people did not become NAPS, it continued to engage in humanitarian relief efforts to support people who needed help. For instance, Paul explained that in the early 1980s, five members came together to help elderly persons in rural Alabama repair roofs. Though Paul joined the Federation of Southern Cooperatives after graduation to assist Black farmers in their business operations, he later returned to teach at Oakwood, reviving the relief group and named it *Love Despite*. The group aimed to help elderly and homeless individuals living under bridges near Oakwood College's campus by offering them food and blankets.²⁴⁹ In 1984, the group expanded its services to other urban areas such as Mississippi, Greenville, Alabama, and Hurtsboro.

Over the years, NAPS has developed into one of the unique relief agencies in the United States and worldwide. Other than providing humanitarian aid, the organization also aimed to advance the work of the Church and guide young people to stay in school, stop violence, and get off drugs. Yet it was not until 1993 that the group was registered as a nonprofit relief organization in Alabama. The new name was the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS), and it established a new board of directors. Upon graduation, some students affiliated with NAPS during their enrollment went back to their hometowns to

²⁴⁸ Suzanne Franks, "How Famine Captured the Headlines," *Media History* 12, no. 3 (2006): 291-312.

²⁴⁹ Oakwood College, "Dr. Anthony Paul, Founder and National Director," 15.

open branches of NAPS. Then followed the establishment of chapters in South Bend, Indiana, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City.²⁵⁰

After its registration in 1993, NAPS went global in 1996. The agency's initial international mission was in Haiti. Since its independence in 1804, Haiti has undergone cycles of constitutional crises, repression, and foreign intervention that have left the country reeling. Political instability, disease outbreaks, poverty, and natural disasters have left most of the country's citizens suffering.²⁵¹ The country experienced its worst crisis in 1991 when its first democratically elected president, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was overthrown by the military. Hobbled by political instability and natural disasters, Haiti ranks among the poorest nations in the world. Over half of its citizens live below the World Bank's poverty line. The country's condition has led to a broad array of humanitarian needs that have attracted the attention of numerous humanitarian agencies, including NAPS.

Paul explained that NAPS conducted its first international mission in Haiti in 1996. The deplorable conditions of most citizens moved the organization's members to accept an invitation to provide humanitarian aid to the country. Most households had no connection to water services, and many experienced inadequate housing and unsanitary living conditions. Also, most school children lack sufficient resources, including books and desks. Seeing the needs of the Haitians encouraged members of the agency to put in the extra effort needed to help as many people as possible. Although the organization had no funds, it promised to construct a school that would cost over \$50,000. Paul clarified that members of the agency struggled to raise funds, but eventually, they "saw the hand of God at work" when Faye

²⁵⁰ Oakwood College, "Dr. Anthony Paul, Founder and National Director," 16.

²⁵¹ Jean-Germain Gros, *State Failure, Underdevelopment, and Foreign Intervention in Haiti* (Routledge, 2012): 67-217.

Bradley came to their aid.²⁵² Since conducting its first international mission to Haiti, NAPS has made numerous humanitarian visits to different countries.

In the early 1990s, NAPS extended its vision to encompass the basic human needs of food, clothing, education, and shelter, as evidenced by the organization's broad engagement in humanitarian activities in the U.S. and across the globe.²⁵³ One of the organization's signature programs developed over the years is the feeding program that seeks to provide food to needy people in the United States and disadvantaged children in different countries. Another ministry endeavor that became a pivotal outreach for NAPS has relieved suffering among children and older persons. In the mission undertaken, NAPS volunteers encourage the young people they meet to become involved in outreach to continue the humanitarian work.

The organization also provides medical assistance to persons impacted by disasters, epidemics, conflict, or exclusion from health services. Hundreds of health professionals and logistic support accompany NAPS on all its missions. NAPS is guided by medical ethics and the principles of neutrality, independence, and impartiality in its medical missionary operations. NAPS also has a children's program, the most extensive ministry for the organization.²⁵⁴ The program includes Bible lessons, arts and crafts, skits, puppet shows, and other activities intended to help children to become active members of society. Still, another program undertaken by NAPS is providing educational programs to disadvantaged people in foreign countries. In the majority of the countries the organization serves, there is always a need for improving education. To help address the need, NAPS makes provisions for teaching the Bible, language, and computer literacy, among other miscellaneous subjects. Further,

²⁵² Oakwood College, "Dr. Anthony Paul, Founder and National Director," 16.

²⁵³ National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, *NAPS Ministry Brochure*.

²⁵⁴ *NAPS Ministry Brochure*.

sharing the Gospel lies at the core of the NAPS' mission. Consequently, the organization seeks not only to prevent physical and spiritual starvation.

In conclusion, this chapter meticulously unraveled the threads that weave NAPS' narrative, highlighting its far-reaching roots. Nestled within the historical tapestry of religious movements and social justice struggles, the fertile ground from which NAPS sprouted may be traced back to the Millerite movement, where Black Adventists played a pivotal, yet often overlooked, role. Despite facing prejudice and discrimination, they persevered and undergirded the foundation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church with its distinct doctrines like Sabbath-keeping. Nevertheless, even within this denomination, Black Adventists continued to face segregation, prompting the creation of "Regional Conferences" tailored to address their specific needs. One of these necessities was education, which led to the establishment of Oakwood University. This institution served as the foundation for the growth of NAPS, which in turn fostered a substantial volunteer base.

Inspired by his mentor's work supporting prisoners, Anthony Paul, then a student at Oakwood College, mobilized fellow students to provide relief efforts, planting the seeds of what would become NAPS. Initially focused on aiding marginalized communities near Oakwood's campus, NAPS officially registered as a non-profit in 1993, expanding its reach across the US and venturing into international missions starting with Haiti in 1996.

Understanding this historical context of NAPS is paramount to appreciating its evangelistic methodologies covered in Chapter Three and grasping its theology of evangelism explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS NAPS' THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM?

Now that we have situated NAPS contextually and considered their historical journey within the SDA story, this chapter seeks to understand the fundamental theology of NAPS' methodologies – the *why* behind their *how*. While evangelism and theology are intricately interwoven, their methods may yield essential best practices for evangelism in the local church. However, knowing what and how to do evangelistic ministry needs to be balanced with why it is being done. C. E. Autrey remarked, “There can be no effective and permanent evangelism without theology.” Alvin Reid takes this notion further, stating, “One cannot adequately practice evangelism apart from a firm biblical base that is rooted in history and founded on a clear theology.” Thus, “theology is incomplete without a view toward evangelism” and “there is a need to keep evangelism and theology together.”²⁵⁵

Keeping them together has not been easy in the realm of academia. As Thomas P. Johnston revealed in his dissertation, various fallacies have been perpetuated to relegate evangelism to the fields of humanities or anthropology. Johnson's premise harmonizes with Reid's and Autrey's “that evangelism is closely related to theology and is a legitimate part of theology.” Nonetheless, religious scholars were given the impression that evangelism is non-theological and non-academic since whole theologies were written with no seminal discussion of evangelism. However, the various branches of theology could not provide robust theological education and, at the same time, continue to delegitimize the field of evangelism.²⁵⁶

To define a theology of evangelism, Johnston warns not to rehash it as systematic theology because that fails to capture the practical nature of a theology of evangelism.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Cited in Yoon, “An Analysis of D. James Kennedy's Theology,” 71.

²⁵⁶ Thomas P. Johnston, “The Work of an Evangelist: The Evangelistic Theology and Methodology of Billy Graham,” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001), 49, 53.

²⁵⁷ Johnston, “The Work of an Evangelist,” 52.

Badham defines theology basically as the act of thinking about God.²⁵⁸ In his thesis, at the behest of the Board of Missions of the Church in Wales, he noted two schools of thought surrounding theology. Including St. Anselm’s view, for whom theology was ‘faith seeking understanding.’ For Peter Abelard, an understanding was first necessary before belief.²⁵⁹ John R. W. Stott supposed theology and evangelism find their essence in the evangel. His faith was rooted in evangelicalism –the theological meaning and the activity of spreading the good news.²⁶⁰

Before providing his concrete definition of evangelism theology, Johnston reminds scholars of its cross-sectional aspects: systematic theology, a theology of mission, the practicum of evangelism, and the divergent theologies of evangelism. Then he expounds, “A theology of evangelism will be defined as follows: the study of God’s revelation, the Bible, which specifically relates to the mandate of preaching the gospel or evangelism.”²⁶¹ Therefore, a biblical theology of evangelism must begin with a clear comprehension of the *euaggélion*, human nature, the need for salvation, and how God’s grace attains it through faith in Jesus Christ.²⁶² A theology of evangelism also consists of communicating the Gospel, the role of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8), and discipling new believers to grow in their faith. Kenneth Chafin seems to concur, stressing the significance of proclaiming the “proper gospel message” – the

²⁵⁸ Paul Badham, “What is Theology?” *Theology*, 99, no. 788 (1996): 101, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040571X9609900203>.

²⁵⁹ Badham, “What is Theology?” 101.

²⁶⁰ Stott referred to this as the Trinitarian Gospel. Cited in Choi, “An Analysis of John R. W. Stott’s Theology,” 62. See also John Stott, *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity, Integrity, and Faithfulness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 17-29.

²⁶¹ Johnston, “The Work of an Evangelist,” 54.

²⁶² εὐαγγέλιον (Strong’s number 2098) is gospel. It describes *what* is to be proclaimed (Mark 1:1, 14–15). εὐαγγελίζω (euaggelizó) is to announce or proclaim the gospel— the *activity* of declaring glad tidings (Rom 10:15). See Biblestudytools.com, “Euaggelion Meaning in Bible - New Testament Greek Lexicon - New American Standard,” accessed March 13, 2023, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/euaggelion.html>; and Bible Hub, “Strong's Greek: 2097,” accessed March 13, 2023, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2097.htm>.

account of God’s reconciliation of humanity through Christ. The proper gospel message, he believed, was the story that Jesus’ Apostles told, the same message that early Christians told, and “it is the only message that God promises to use with his Holy Spirit to bring about the salvation” of humanity.²⁶³

Enshrined in a theology of evangelism is also implied that God uses believers to help in His work of transformation and redemption through the regenerating work of His word and the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13, 14; 5:26, 27). Their part is generally accompanied by a sense of urgency to reach as many people as possible. However, Christ’s followers’ evangelistic activities are to carry out the Great Commission, not only in words but also in deeds and truth – serving and ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of those being reached with the Gospel. This model is to be accomplished without prejudice against any people group, as there can be no good news without an understanding of God’s love for all, and His salvation is without partiality.²⁶⁴ Since God is orderly and leads by example, He is actively engaged in His mission (*Missio Dei*) to spread His message and love to His creation. As people respond to His love and grace through faith, they experience salvation and character transformation – being restored into His image and commissioned to do likewise. God, then, is to be the source of all evangelistic endeavors, and it is His sovereign right and plan to promulgate His Gospel to all the world through the restored lives of believers.²⁶⁵ This principle was perfectly reflected in the

²⁶³ Cited in Jinho Choi, “A Critical Investigation of Kenneth Chafin’s Evangelistic Theology and Practice within Southern Baptist Evangelism (1957-1972),” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021), 233-234. He also quoted Chafin as saying, “There is but one Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. There is but one response of faith that brings people unto a right relationship with God.” See also Kenneth L. Chafin, “Evangelism and the Child,” *Review & Expositor* 60, no. 2 (Spring 1963): 10.

²⁶⁴ See 1 John 3:18; Jas 2:4-9, 14-18; and Deut 1:17; 10:17; 16:19.

²⁶⁵ See Gen 1-3; Isa 54, 58, 61; Matt 25; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8-14; 4:29-33; 6; John 3, 15; and 1 John 3, 4. *Missio Dei* also emphasizes the significance of Christians partnering with God in His evangelism (or any aspect of mission or ministry), humbly recognizing and acknowledging their dependency on Him because it is His work and power that transforms and redeems those who are lost. Pachau made the notion that is probably “the most influential and enduring concept, which to some extent has subsumed other biblical concepts of mission” and that “Christian mission should be understood as Christian participation in the mission of God.” To

life and focused ministry of the Son of God. Jesus Christ came to do His Father's will – to seek and save the lost, preach the Gospel of His kingdom, minister to sinners and call them to repentance, and give His life a ransom for many.²⁶⁶

An organization's evangelism theology then provides a framework for comprehending its purpose (why) and method (how) of evangelism. Parachurch agencies that neglect to clearly understand this tend to shy away from a ministry or church's core mission and values – a phenomenon labeled missional drift. Mission drift can strike churches or ministries off guard like an iceberg. Before long, they casually engage in evangelism, disregard spiritual disciplines, lose focus and visionary zeal, and breed internal conflicts and divisiveness.²⁶⁷ NAPS leaders must then be proactive in assessing cultural influences, shifting priorities, leadership changes, ministry priorities, and values, promoting open communication, and investing in the development of members to prevent missional drift. Failure to do so can have several detrimental effects on the organization and its members. One of the most significant effects is a loss of concentrated purpose and core mission – rendering the ministry less effective at achieving its evangelistic objectives and devolving into a wholly humanitarian agency.²⁶⁸

A further effect of mission drift is a decline in member passion and engagement. Volunteers may become disillusioned and disenchanted if NAPS falls prey to departing from its core values. A cascading effect may follow, reducing attendance, baptisms, and financial

fulfill this calling otherwise can eventually lead to self-sufficiency, burn-out, legalism, neglect, negligence, and ultimately, missional drift. See Lalsangkima Pachuau, "Missiology in a Pluralistic World: The Place of Mission Study in Theological Education," *International Review of Mission* 89, no. 355 (2000): 513-644, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2000.tb00243.x>.

²⁶⁶ See John 4:34-38; 5:30; 6:39; 16:15; Luke 19:10; Mark 2:17; Matt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; and Mark 10:45.

²⁶⁷ Kambayanne Kombaté, "Dealing with Mission Drift in Parachurch Agencies: An Analysis of Holistic Mission Of Christian NGOs/NPOs," (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2021), iv, 16-17.

²⁶⁸ See Kombaté, "Dealing with Mission Drift," 42-44.

support – decreasing their impact in target communities. Furthermore, it can damage the ministry’s reputation and unity, causing factions with divergent views on the organization’s theology and direction and losing members, staff, and donors.²⁶⁹ For this section, NAPS’ evangelism theology will refer to their beliefs, principles, and practices regarding the gospel proclamation. We will principally uncover their perceptions of soteriology, eschatology, Christology, ecclesiology, and remnant theology. These views are analyzed within an Adventist milieu since NAPS is a supporting ministry of the SDA Church, and their volunteers are primarily SDAs. When these are ascertained, we can better understand NAPS’ theology of evangelism and extrapolate whether there are any frameworks regarding why and how they implement evangelistic strategies.

A distinction must be made here between missions and evangelism. The objective of both is to proclaim the Gospel. Both are also established on the principle that it is the duty and calling of all Christians to share this good news of God’s love and salvation. Nevertheless, there are subtle distinctions between missions and evangelism. Missions can refer to any effort to share the Gospel with people in other nations, as well as efforts to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of people in those regions. Missions typically involve long-term commitments to a specific location or group of people.

On the other hand, evangelism is more focused on sharing the Gospel with individuals and leading them to faith in Jesus. Evangelism is more flexible and can involve various methods and approaches for sharing the Gospel with individuals and groups. Missions and evangelism are important aspects of NAPS’ outreach ministry and sometimes share similar

²⁶⁹ See Kombaté, “Dealing with Mission Drift,” 37-44; Jeffery Dean Abbett, “The Exclusive Missional Nature of the Church,” (DEdMin, diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022), 54, 76; and Michael J. Sherrill, *On Becoming A Missional Church In Japan* (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Mission Network, 2007), 3.

characteristics that necessitate interchangeable use. Though there may be a significant overlap of two terms in NAPS' work, this research primarily investigates their evangelism methodologies.

Champions of SDA Theology

The SDA Church strongly believes Bible prophecy is essential to its understanding of the mission and purpose of the church. Much of Adventists' theology and practice of evangelism is evident in their Daniel and Revelation prophecy seminars and Bible studies – which are perhaps the top ways the church draws converts into its ranks. However, their theology was not birthed in a vacuum. Multiple influential figures, especially the early Millerites and Sabbatarian Adventist pioneers, played a major role in developing and explaining SDA theology and doctrines. James White, Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, Ellen G. White, and Uriah Smith, among others, were chief in formulating and clarifying the SDA Church's teachings and helped to shape its beliefs and practices. Though only a few may try to debate it, to a large extent - no one has more effect on the Church's fundamental beliefs than co-founder and prophetess Ellen G. White. Her prophetic messages are significant components of their evangelism theology. Her writings are regarded as divinely inspired and cover various topics such as health and wellness, education, spirituality, evangelism, family life, and end-time prophecy.²⁷⁰

White's visions provided counsel and clarification for developing key doctrinal statements and practices. As such, Adventists turn to her writings for counsel and inspiration

²⁷⁰ SDA Fundamental Belief number 18 (The Gift of Prophecy) states, "The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we [SDAs] believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested" (Num 12:6; 2 Chron 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim 3:16, 17; Heb 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9). See SDA Church, "What Adventists Believe About the Prophetic Gift."

for their daily lives. In addition, SDAs consider Whites' writings to be a "continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the Church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction."²⁷¹ The Adventist Theological Society (ATS) believes that White's writings "possess more than pastoral authority and that in them God has spoken as He did through prophets and apostles of old, to instruct His people concerning His will and the course He would have His people pursue." They equally admit, "the Bible alone is the only foundation of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine" and that "Ellen White's writings, while subject to and judged by the Scriptures, are an invaluable tool for illuminating Scripture and confirming church teaching."²⁷²

Scholars and lay members of the denomination see her works as consistent with the Bible and are used to explain and support the teachings of the Bible. Yet there is disagreement among the four camps on whether their "remnant church" could exist without the prophetic ministry (and writings) of Ellen White. Some argue that it would not exist without White's writings and visions, which are too deeply ingrained in the church's doctrines and practices to be abrogated. Others contend that the SDA Church would have continued to exist without White's matriarchal role because its core beliefs are based [directly] on the Bible, and her writings are only tangential insights into the teachings of the Bible. The former regards White as the Lord's messenger – on par with other biblical prophets.²⁷³ The latter group believes that the teachings of the Bible are adequate to guide the church and that White's writings are supplemental, at best, to the Bible.

²⁷¹ Ministerial Association of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005), 247.

²⁷² See Section 2 (f) of ATS' constitution. Adventist Theological Society, "Constitution," accessed February 6, 2023, <https://www.atsjats.org/constitution>.

²⁷³ Ministerial Association, *SDAs Believe*, 247, 255-258.

Whether the SDA Church could exist without the prophetic work of Ellen G. White is a matter of perspective and interpretation. A third group, not outright anti-Ellen White, is concerned that the SDA Church can be seen as fanatical because of the stigma often attached to churches claiming they have a “prophet.” The public is generally suspicious of prophets they see on TV who prophesy many things they find not in harmony with the Bible or that never come to pass. Some have even mistaken SDAs for Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses because of similarities in how they function – another strike for this group’s reticence concerning the prophetic bandwagon. There is an indirect relationship between these denominations. They are occasionally considered non-mainstream or non-traditional Christian denominations with eccentric beliefs and practices that distinguish them from traditional Christian protestant churches. All three are indigenous religious groups spawned during the nineteenth century’s excitement surrounding William Miller’s revelations about the return of Jesus. When Father Miller’s predictions repeatedly failed, these splintered factions emerged with unconventional interpretations of the unsuccessful prophecies and a renewed understanding of various Bible topics of interest.²⁷⁴

The relationship between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS]) is primarily based on their biblical and prophetic beliefs. SDAs and Mormons believe in the Bible and additional texts and revelations that provide *extra* insight into God’s will and purposes. The SDA Church and Jehovah’s Witnesses are connected primarily by their beliefs regarding Christ’s second coming and the end of the world. SDAs and Jehovah’s Witnesses both believe in the imminent return of Jesus, which will

²⁷⁴ Gerald N. Grob, review of *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, by Ronald L. Numbers, *The New England Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1977): 361–63, <https://doi.org/10.2307/364186>. See also J. Gordon Melton, “Jehovah’s Witness,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last updated March 21, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Jehovahs-Witnesses>.

be accompanied by major changes in the world and the end of the current era. Mormonism's prophet Joseph Smith (1805-1844) and Adventism's Ellen G. White are key figures in the founding and development of their corresponding religious sects.²⁷⁵ However, they differ in the nature and scope of their revelations and the significance of their respective writings. They are similar in the following ways:

- Both were considered to be prophets, and both received revelations from God.
- Both authored numerous religious texts that are regarded as authoritative by their followers.
- Both contributed significantly to the development and expansion of their respective denominations.
- Other religious groups persecuted and opposed both because of their peculiar teachings and beliefs.
- White and Smith confronted racial discrimination during their era's "religious pluralism" and social reform movements and condemned slavery in their writings.²⁷⁶

They were dissimilar in that:

- Joseph Smith received revelations concerning restoring the true church of Jesus Christ. In contrast, Ellen G. White received revelations concerning the end of the world and the second coming of Jesus.

²⁷⁵ See R. L. Bushman, "Joseph Smith," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, April 7, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Joseph-Smith-American-religious-leader-1805-1844>; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith," accessed April 13, 2023, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics/joseph-smith/testimony>; and *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," accessed April 13, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Church-of-Jesus-Christ-of-Latter-day-Saints>.

²⁷⁶ See Newell G. Bringhurst, "Four American Prophets Confront Slavery: Joseph Smith, William Miller, Ellen G. White and Mary Baker Eddy," *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 26 (2006): 120–41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43200238>.

- Joseph Smith wrote extensively about restoring the true church, the nature of God, and the afterlife. In contrast, Ellen G. White primarily wrote about preparation for the end, the second coming of Jesus, and the significance of living a righteous life.
- In the Mormon Church, Joseph Smith’s writings are not only authoritative but are also considered scripture. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen G. White’s writings are regarded as authoritative but are not considered scripture.²⁷⁷

Still, another class believes the Bible’s teachings (alone) are sufficient to guide the Adventist Church without White’s writings.²⁷⁸ The issue for this fourth band of SDAs and outside interrogators appears to be contradictions in the denomination’s stance on EGW’s pen of inspiration. On the one hand, her writings “speak with prophetic authority” and imply binding upon church members because she is regarded as a prophet. On the other hand, they claim the reformers’ motto of *sola scriptura* and that White’s writings are “not a substitute for Scripture” and “cannot be placed on the same level.”²⁷⁹ Yet, ignoring or not referring to her writings is a rarity among SDAs, which sometimes brings scorn and the fear of being labeled

²⁷⁷ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ (Mormonism) belief #4 states, “The scriptures also include The Book of Mormon—a collection of writings from ancient Christians who traveled from Jerusalem to the Americas during biblical times. It isn’t always easy for us to read the scriptures, but as we make an effort to do so, God will bless us with insights and inspiration that will help us become better followers of Jesus Christ.” To them, the Book of Mormon is “a second witness to the Bible’s teachings,” and, “like the Bible, was written by Jesus’s followers. It teaches His gospel and testifies of Him.” See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Beliefs Overview: The Scriptures,” accessed April 13, 2023, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/comeuntochrist/believe/overview-series/scriptures>; “The Book of Mormon,” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, accessed April 13, 2023, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/comeuntochrist/believe/book-of-mormon>; and “Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* accessed April 13, 2023, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/comeuntochrist/believe/book-of-mormon/who-wrote-the-book-of-mormon>.

²⁷⁸ Commenting on SDA Fundamental Belief number 18 (*The Gift of Prophecy*), Wilona Karimbadi cautioned that the “Bible, as the definitive Word of God, will always be the number-one standard by which everything should be held up – something Ellen White repeatedly emphasized in her work.” See Wilona Karimbadi, “Rooted in our Collective Heart: The What and Why of Who We Are,” *Adventist Review* 200, no. 2 (February 2023), 37.

²⁷⁹ See Seventh-day Adventist Church, “What Adventists Believe About the Prophetic Gift,” [Adventist.org](https://www.adventist.org/gift-of-prophecy), last modified August 4, 2019, <https://www.adventist.org/gift-of-prophecy>; and Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 258.

as not a *true* Seventh-day Adventist. Suggestions such as “continuing authority” and “still relevant today” have troubled this sector (and the previous) of Adventists – having observed that acceptance (or non-acceptance) of White’s prophetic gifts is equivalent to a “Test of Fellowship” (membership).²⁸⁰

Numerous responses have been made to this “Test” claim, and it appears, at least on the surface, that the Church does not make a belief in nor acceptance of White’s writings a test of church membership. According to the GSEM534 course outline (Issues in Ellen White Studies) at Andrews University, this is not a recent issue in Adventism. It has “been raised since the earliest days of the SDA church.” In part, the ideology stems from “suggestive language” in the past that one must accept White’s gifts, as noted by the baptismal vow in the early SDA *Church Manual*.²⁸¹ Francis D. Nichol (1897-1966), a recognized church leader and editor of the (Adventist) Review and Herald for over twenty years, was a chief spokesperson for making it a test. In response to the question, “Should a person be taken into the Church who does not accept Mrs. White as God’s special messenger to the remnant church?” Nichols unequivocally answered, “We believe that the Adventist Ministry, in general, would quickly answer, No.” There could be no other feasible answer from a true SDA to him. He adds, because “such a

²⁸⁰ See EllenWhite.org, “Is the Inspiration of Ellen White a Test of Fellowship? (“Ellen G. White a Test for Membership?”),” *Ellen G. White Estate*, accessed April 12, 2023, <https://ellenwhite.org/faq/65>; E. G. White Estate, “The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Understanding of Ellen White's Authority,” accessed April 12, 2023, <https://whiteestate.org/legacy/issues-scripsda-html>; and “Can I Be an Adventist If I Don’t Believe in Ellen White?,” AskAnAdventistFriend.com, last modified February 27, 2023, <https://www.askanadventistfriend.com/ellen-white/can-i-be-an-adventist-if-i-dont-believe-in-ellen-white/>.

²⁸¹ Coon conjectures that this “purely “Suggestive Outline for Examination” appeared in the first edition of the [SDA] *Church Manual* in 1932 (pp. 75-78), suggesting 21 enumerated questions to be asked” of a baptism candidate. Section 18 read: “Do you believe the Bible doctrine of “spiritual gifts” in the church, and do you believe in the gift of the Spirit of prophecy which has been manifested in the remnant church through the ministry and writings of Mrs. E. G. White? (P. 78).” To be clear, that was a recommended statement, not an officially voted baptismal vow. However, it remained unchanged in the second edition of the *Church Manual* (1940) but not in the third edition (1942) and all subsequent editions, which present an official “Baptismal Vow” where no mention is made of Ellen White. See Roger W. Coon, “Belief in Ellen G. White as a Prophet: Should It Be Made a Test of SDA “Fellowship”?,” *Andrews University*, accessed April 12, 2023, <https://www.andrews.edu/~fortind/EGWFellowship.htm>.

belief in Mrs. White is one of the articles of faith, why would anyone wish to belong to our church if he did not accept Mrs. White?” His posture was to “delay baptizing a person until he understands and accepts Mrs. White.”²⁸²

Nichol’s position is one among several within Adventist circles, including conservatives. Surprisingly, this was not the position of the early Adventist pioneers, including James and Ellen White, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, G. I. Butler, and George A. Irwin – who were more balanced in their outlook.²⁸³ Roger Coon presented several conclusions that NAPS also shares. Foremost being, as Ellen White cautioned, a belief in her prophetic gift should not and is not a test of fellowship in the Adventist Church. Additionally, the SDA church’s current “Baptismal Vow” only requires baptismal candidates to assert belief in the fundamental doctrine of spiritual gifts, specifically, the gift of prophecy being an identifying mark of the SDA remnant church. Ellen White’s prophetic gift is still highly regarded, believed, and taught in SDA institutions. However, Coon affirms, “No church member, no congregation, nor any conference has any right to establish tests of fellowship other than those adopted by the world church in session.” Nor, in his opinion, “should it ever be made a test.”²⁸⁴

NAPS carries the balanced perspectives of the pioneers and Coon, as evidenced by their voracious reading and respect for White’s writings. During their morning meetings and training sessions on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays (sometimes for four hours), and Saturdays, devotional messages are frequently given from various Ellen White books. Some of her materials are also committed to memory and put to songs. Yet, their evangelistic preaching seldom, if ever, mentions Ellen White. At the same time, their lifestyle and other Bible studies,

²⁸² See Francis D. Nichol, *Why I believe in Mrs. E. G. White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1964), 106.

²⁸³ Coon, “Belief in Ellen G. White as a Prophet.”

²⁸⁴ Coon, “Belief in Ellen G. White as a Prophet.”

based on Adventists' doctrines, are influenced by White's theological persuasions in many ways. There is at least one Bible study lesson on the gift of prophecy, but the emphasis is not to validate Ellen White as a true prophet of the SDA Church.

Adventism and Evangelism

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a distinctive theology of evangelism based on its interpretation of Bible prophecy and the church's missional identity. The current SDA *Church Manual*, which provides guidelines regarding the functions of local churches, underlines the chief concern of church officers. The board must have "an active discipleship plan in place, which includes both the spiritual nurture of the church and the work of planning and fostering evangelism" (in all its phases). Furthermore, "The gospel commission of Jesus tells us that making disciples, which includes baptizing and teaching, is the church's primary function (Matt 28:18-20). It is, therefore, also the board's primary function, which serves as the chief committee of the church."²⁸⁵

The SDA Church has also been cautious to distance itself from any creed, per se. In a nutshell, their theology of evangelism is embedded in (and guided by) twenty-eight fundamental beliefs, which "constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture" and pervade Adventists' way of life.²⁸⁶ However, these fundamental beliefs, often revised, are the messages presented in any aspect of their evangelistic undertakings, including NAPS.⁷ The SDAs' twenty-eight fundamentals can also be arranged into six classifications of doctrine: God, man, salvation, the church, daily Christian life, and

²⁸⁵ Secretariat General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 19th ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2015), 129.

²⁸⁶ See Choi, "An Analysis of John R. W. Stott's Theology of Evangelism," 124; and Ministerial Association of the GC of SDAs, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, v.

last-day events.²⁸⁷ Seeing people as created in God’s image and valuable in His eyes, Adventists view themselves as part of God’s ultimate goal to bring all people into a saving relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ. As such, evangelism is central to their mission and message. When a person is saved by grace, the Holy Spirit transforms them and empowers them to live a life that reflects Jesus’ love and kindness. The transformation is evident in how they treat others, serve others, and live a God-pleasing life. These *good works* are a natural response to salvation yet not the way to earn salvation (Eph 2:8-10). The following section clusters these categorizations under soteriology, eschatology, Christology, ecclesiology, and remnant theology.

Soteriology and Eschatology

Soteriology and eschatology significantly impact and inform churches and auxiliary ministries’ missions and evangelism practices. Both provide the theological bedrock and strategy for evangelistic work, ensuring the organization adheres to its biblical mandate to proclaim the Gospel to the nations. Fred Sanders, professor of theology at Biola University, in his book, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology*, gave notice of the perils of misrepresenting a correct understanding of soteriology, confirming the gravity of the subject.²⁸⁸ Soteriology is the theological discipline concerned with the study of salvation – what salvation is, how it is obtained, and why it is necessary for humanity.²⁸⁹ In Christianity’s vernacular, soteriology typically refers to the study of how God redeems humans from sin and death and

²⁸⁷ Seventh-day Adventist Church, “What do Seventh-day Adventists Really Believe? Official Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” Adventist.org, last modified April 29, 2019. <https://www.adventist.org/beliefs>.

²⁸⁸ Chris Gibson, “Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 65, no. 2 (06, 2022): 394, <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/fountain-salvation-trinity-soteriology/docview/2760580877/se-2>.

²⁸⁹ “Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology [review] / Martin F. Hanna, Darius W. Jankiewicz, and John W. Reeve, eds.,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 58.1 (2020): 124, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/auss/vol58/iss1/13>.

restores them to a right relationship with Himself. The central tenet of soteriology is that salvation is a gift (grace) from God, bestowed through faith in Christ and His death on the cross to atone for sin – thus providing a means of reconciliation (redemption) with God.

The goals and methods of missions and evangelism are guided by soteriology and provide a deeper understanding of why these activities are crucial to the *euaggelistés*.²⁹⁰ Soteriology is closely related to evangelism because evangelistic efforts are frequently motivated by a desire to proclaim salvation with others, typically through preaching, teaching, or other forms of witnessing. In this sense, soteriology serves as the theological foundation for evangelism, providing an understanding of *what* people must hear to be saved. Ricky C. Nelson was persuaded that the connection between soteriology and evangelism guaranteed evangelism that was richer, more enduring, and more accountable to divine Revelation.²⁹¹ For Adventists, this aligns with their missional philosophy of taking the three angels' messages of Rev 14:6-12 to the world. They consider this urgent proclamation of the everlasting Gospel and preparation for the second coming of Jesus Christ to be their primary kingdom assignment. Adventists believe this is the final message for planet Earth and is the cornerstone of its missional and evangelism practices.²⁹²

According to Respondent #9, the relationship between NAPS' soteriology and evangelism is fundamental to their theological worldview. He observed that NAPS asserts that

²⁹⁰ εὐαγγελιστής (euaggelistés), Strong's number 2099 is an evangelist — the person who is preaching good news (Acts 21:8 and Eph. 4:11). See Bible Hub, "Strong's Greek: 2099," accessed March 13, 2023, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2099.htm>; and Easton's Bible Dictionary, "Evangelist," BibleGateway.com, accessed March 13, 2023, <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/eastons-bible-dictionary/Evangelist>.

²⁹¹ Ricky Charles Nelson, "The Relationship Between Soteriology and Evangelistic Methodology in the Ministries of Asahel Nettleton and Charles G. Finney," (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, 1997) ii, 1.

²⁹² Mark Findley, "Three Cosmic Messages," *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* (Nampa: ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, April-June 2023), 14, 22-28. See also the Church's fundamental belief # 13 (The Remnant and Its Mission), Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Seventh-day Adventist Belief About the Remnant in the Bible," Adventist.org, last modified August 4, 2019, <https://www.adventist.org/remnant-and-its-mission>.

a person's understanding of missions is intrinsically linked to their understanding of salvation. He says, "According to NAPS, a person who claims to be saved but lacks the desire to save others is not truly saved." Furthermore, "a person who is not an active missionary is nonetheless a mission field." Such belief is the foundation of NAPS' theology of evangelism, which is based on its understanding of soteriology. While this viewpoint emphasizes the significance of actively seeking to spread the Good News, the culture of NAPS inadvertently conveys that a person's salvation is at risk if they do not engage in missionary work. Consequently, the mission of NAPS is driven by the standard SDA layperson's understanding of soteriology.²⁹³

Like many denominations and even the early Church (Acts 15), Adventists have had ongoing debates about salvation and its parameters. One of their hallmark discussions on righteousness by faith was the 1888 General Conference in Minneapolis. The 1888 debacle remains a major reference point for SDA deliberations surrounding the Gospel, arguments about Christian perfection, and other soteriological matters.²⁹⁴ Within the rank and file of Adventism, there is lingering pressure to synchronize the Apostle Paul's erudition on salvation by faith alone and James' petition for works to express the faith believers espouse. This tension is aggravated by the segment of Adventists holding to perfectionism, legalism, and puritanical theologies. Hence, pastors often find many congregants lacking the joy and assurance of salvation.²⁹⁵

In a fairly recent volume by the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, nineteen scholars collectively presented "the most comprehensive

²⁹³ Interview with Respondent #12 (a pastor) on September 11, 2022.

²⁹⁴ Andrews University Seminary Studies, "Contours of Adventist Soteriology [review]," 124.

²⁹⁵ Andrews University Seminary Studies, "Contours of Adventist Soteriology [review]," 126.

treatment of this topic to be published in the Adventist world.”²⁹⁶ While outsiders and some factions of SDAs question the denomination’s seeming lack of clear teaching and embrace of grace and the Gospel, these scholars presented sound biblical claims concerning God’s plan in Christ and the sin problem, as well as salvation in Christ, grace for believers, and the Christian’s assurance. They uphold that Adventists’ soteriological foundations rest on the Protestant ideals of *sola gratia et fides* and *solī Deo gloria* – that salvation is a gift from God through faith and cannot be earned or deserved.²⁹⁷ Moreover, Adventists’ soteriological foundations are rooted in Arminian soteriology versus Calvinism. Both theological traditions have been the subject of much tension, debate, and discussion in Christian history. They continue to be important topics in theology today.²⁹⁸

Arminian theology emphasizes human accountability and free will in salvation, whereas Calvinism emphasizes God’s sovereignty and predestination. Arminianism is a branch of protestant and evangelical theology originally advanced by the Dutch theologian Jacobus (Jacob) Arminius (1560-1609) in the Reformed Netherlands during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. His unorthodox teaching was distinguished by its emphasis on human responsibility and free will in salvation. It impacted the Second Great Awakening when denominational shifts occurred and are still alive worldwide, especially among Methodists, Pentecostals, Anabaptists, and Free-Will Baptists. According to Mikko Satama, “Methodism is the most significant Arminian denomination in the world.”²⁹⁹ One of its five key tenets asserts

²⁹⁶ According to the book’s description. See Martin F. Hanna, Darius W. Jankiewicz, and John W. Reeve, *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2018).

²⁹⁷ Martin Hanna, Darius Jankiewicz, and John Reeve, “Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology,” *Booklists* 7 (2018), accessed March 21, 2023, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/booklists-books/7>. See also *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, “Contours of Adventist Soteriology [review],” 125.

²⁹⁸ Mikko Satama, “Aspects of Arminian Soteriology in Methodist-Lutheran Ecumenical Dialogues in 20th and 21st Century,” (Master’s thesis, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, 2009), 4-5.

²⁹⁹ Satama, “Aspects of Arminian Soteriology,” 4, 17.

that while God initiates and makes salvation available to everyone – individuals can accept or reject it. As a result, the individual may also choose to walk away from God after obtaining salvation – becoming an apostate.³⁰⁰

Calvinism (Reformed theology) is a branch of protestant theology developed by John Calvin in the sixteenth century and took center stage as the theological tradition during the Revivalism era. Calvinists emphasize God’s sovereignty and the total depravity of humanity and assert that God has predestined certain individuals for salvation and that those individuals are incapable of resisting God’s grace. Calvinism also teaches the significance of faith alone in salvation, and good works are viewed as evidence of a person’s faith rather than a means of salvation. Satama notes that evangelicalism contains both Calvinist and Arminian traditions, but there have been recent allegations that Arminianism is not evangelical theology. The controversial dialogues continue amid the difficulties bringing both camps to the table for moderation and Christian alliance over dogmatism.³⁰¹

NAPS’ evangelism theology is also connected to its adoption of Arminian soteriology, which asserts that God offers salvation to all people without charge and that individuals are free to accept or reject Christ’s grace. As a result, this theological perspective proves consistent with NAPS’ belief that everyone deserves a fair opportunity for salvation. It guides their evangelism strategy to reach the greatest number of people possible.³⁰² Because NAPS operates within the doctrinal purview of Black Adventism, it is not surprising they mirror SDA

³⁰⁰ See Nelson, “The Relationship Between Soteriology and Evangelistic Methodology,” 7; and Satama, “Aspects of Arminian Soteriology,” 11, 41, 46.

³⁰¹ See Brian P. Roden, “Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation,” (Graduate Research Paper [THE 800/THE 532 – Systematic Theology II], Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Little Rock, AR, 2016), 1-12; Roger Olson, “Arminianism and Adventism: Arminian Theology as Evangelical Theology,” *Memory, Meaning, and Life* (2010), accessed April 11, 2023, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu.mml/>; and Satama, “Aspects of Arminian Soteriology,” 4-5, 43-44, 46.

³⁰² Interview with Responded #12.

Arminian soteriological lenses, which fashioned the stage for the Great Controversy doctrine. Perhaps the Arminian hue of soteriology has its tentacles from the deep trenches of the 1800s as most of the original Sabbath-keeping Adventists came from the established churches of the day – Ellen White herself, a former member of the Methodist Church. Whether other SDA forerunners altered their Calvinist positions to Arminianism, like Charles Finney, is not researched or is unimportant to SDAs.³⁰³ Interestingly though, Woodrow Whidden, in his paper, “Calvin, Arminius, Wesley, and Seventh-day Adventism: Could There Have Been Adventism Without Wesley and Arminius?”, presented at the 2010 Arminianism and Adventism Symposium at Andrews University, contended that John Calvin had a larger effect on Ellen White than Martin Luther, though she wrote more about Luther than Calvin.³⁰⁴

Eschatology, the doctrine of the last things – studies the end of the world and humanity.³⁰⁵ It informs an organization’s understanding of last-day events and their implications for mission and evangelistic work. For example, groups with a premillennial view of eschatology may view their engagement in evangelism as hastening Christ’s return. They may also perceive the end times as a time of judgment, accentuating the significance of widely sharing the Gospel with a sense of urgency. Therefore, SDAs’ soteriological and eschatological persuasions influence NAPS’ practice of evangelism.

NAPS believes that its missionary efforts could either delay or hasten the return of Jesus Christ. For instance, NAPS greatly stresses the implication of personal faith in salvation

³⁰³ See Hanna, et al., *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology*, 4; and Nelson, “The Relationship Between Soteriology and Evangelistic Methodology,” 7-8.

³⁰⁴ Woodrow Whidden, “Arminianism and Adventism: Could There Have Been Adventism Without Wesley and Arminius?,” *Memory, Meaning, and Life* (2010), accessed April 11, 2023, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu.mml/>. For a synopsis of the scholarly papers presented at the 2010 Arminianism and Adventism Symposium, see the *Memory, Meaning, and Life* blog at <http://www.memorymeaningfaith.org/blog/arminianism-and-adventism-symposium/>.

³⁰⁵ Richard Landes, “Eschatology,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 3, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/eschatology>.

and prioritizes personal evangelism and one-on-one interactions. Their belief in the SDA Church's missional focus also motivates them to emphasize the corporate aspects of evangelism, relief work, church planting, and community outreach. In addition, because NAPS' evangelism practice is influenced by its Adventist view of eschatology, they are compelled to preach the Gospel to as many people as possible before the world ends. Accordingly, their evangelistic fervor is directly related to the *Parousia*.³⁰⁶ Their volunteers are strongly motivated by the anticipation of Christ's return and the advent of a new era devoid of the ills and troubles of this world (Rev 21:1-5; 22:1-6).³⁰⁷

Christology and Ecclesiology

Christology is a branch of theology concerned with the doctrine of Christ – all about Jesus, His person, and ministry – to explore “in what ways sinful human beings can emulate the various elements of his life and activity.”³⁰⁸ This branch of study is an essential Christian faith component closely related to soteriology, ecclesiology, and other theological disciplines.³⁰⁹ It was the central foundation of John Stott's theology and focuses on understanding who Jesus is, His incarnation and resurrection, what He did, His divinity and humanity, and why He is important to the redemption narrative. Stott pits Christ as “the center of Christianity, and therefore both the Christian faith and the Christian life, if they are to be authentic, must be focused on Christ.”³¹⁰ In missions and evangelism, Christology is

³⁰⁶ Parousia πα ρούσι α (παρουσία, G4242, *presence*, then *coming* or *arrival*). The second coming of Christ See BibleGateway.com, “Parousia - Encyclopedia of The Bible,” accessed April 11, 2023, <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Parousia>.

³⁰⁷ Interview with Respondent #12.

³⁰⁸ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 15.

³⁰⁹ Campbellsville University, “Foundations of Christology: A Look at Scripture,” *CU Online*, last modified February 22, 2023, <https://online.campbellsville.edu/ministry/christology>. See also Hans J. Hillerbrand and Matt Stefon, “Christology,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 30, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christology>; and Hanna, et al., *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology*, 175.

³¹⁰ Cited in Choi, “John R. W. Stott's Theology of Evangelism,” 124.

indispensable because it provides the theological basis for the gospel proclamation. The doctrine of salvation must remain centered on Jesus Christ, and His atoning work on Calvary is the heart of the Church's message. Without Christ, there is no message; without a message, there is no need for evangelism or evangelism. According to McNabb and DeVito, "a Christology of religions is extremely practical for evangelism" as it helps to resolve the problem of how to evangelize people of other "faiths." Christology then must inform missions and evangelism by shaping how the Gospel is communicated, including viewing other religions through a Christocentric interpretation.³¹¹

The SDA Church's evangelism theology is also based on the belief that Jesus' death and resurrection provide the basis for salvation and that people can be reconciled to God through Jesus. Their practice of evangelism, therefore, emphasizes personal relationships and the proclamation of Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice. They posit the Old Testament sanctuary and its services reveal God's plan of salvation. Thus, Christ, they teach, is presently in the heavenly Sanctuary, preparing a place for the redeemed and administering the Investigative judgment.³¹² In connection with prophecy, particularly Daniel and Revelation, SDAs present these as proofs for the birth of their denomination and emergence as God's peculiar people.³¹³

³¹¹ Tyler Dalton McNabb and Michael DeVito, "A Christology of Religions and a Theology of Evangelism," *Religions* 13, no. 10 (2022): 926, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13100926>.

³¹² The constitution of the Adventist Theological Society (ATS) contains several affirmations including there is a "real sanctuary in heaven and the pre-advent judgment of believers beginning in 1844, based upon the historicist view of prophecy and the year-day principle as taught in Scripture." See Section 2. (e), ATS, "Constitution."

³¹³ SDA Fundamental Belief number 24 teaches that Christ is in the sanctuary in heaven ministering on behalf of believers, making available to them the benefits of His atoning sacrifice on the cross. "At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and, began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in

Since Christ's ministry was also marked by compassion and concern for individuals' physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, their evangelistic approach must also be holistic – meeting people's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs and sharing the message of salvation. As noted by Ellen G. White, "Christ took upon Himself humanity, that He might reach humanity. Divinity needed humanity, which required both the divine and the human to bring salvation to the world. Divinity needed humanity, that humanity might afford a communication channel between God and man."³¹⁴ SDAs employ various methods to accomplish this reality, including door-to-door evangelism, public evangelistic meetings, health seminars, media and technology, and academic and healthcare institutions.³¹⁵

NAPS embraces a robust understanding of Christ's divinity and emphasizes salvation through Christ. Interview Respondent #12 contends that the Christological beliefs of the NAPS significantly inform its missiological and evangelical framework. He observed that NAPS' high Christological conception of evangelism views Jesus as the ultimate model, example, and method. Thus, His evangelistic techniques, methods, understanding, and approach are deemed worthy of study and imitation – commonly baptized "Christ's Method." It is widely used and referenced when teaching Adventist evangelism or preaching about missionary work. The principle is taken from Ellen White's statement, "Christ's method alone will give true success

the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent" (Lev 16; Num 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; Dan 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Heb 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Rev. 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:11, 12). See Seventh-day Adventist Church, "What Adventists Believe About Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary," *Adventist.org*, last modified August 4, 2019, <https://www.adventist.org/christs-ministry-in-the-heavenly-sanctuary>.

³¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, 296.

³¹⁵ See SDA Church, "Mission Statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *Adventist.org*, last modified October 15, 2018, <https://www.adventist.org/official-statements/mission-statement-of-the-seventh-day-adventist-church>.

in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me.”³¹⁶ It encapsulates the substance of this strategy, which emphasizes people’s compassionate and sympathetic engagement in a manner that ultimately leads to discipleship. This emphasis on Christology has significantly attracted and retained a large segment of NAPS volunteers. The enhanced appeal, especially to Seventh-day Adventist students, was the opportunity NAPS afforded them to exercise their faith concretely – what they believed to be following in Christ’s footsteps.³¹⁷ However, NAPS and Adventists also tend to underscore the necessity of the individual’s role in the process. Focusing on Christ’s humanity can highlight God’s compassion and love for all people. Understanding Christ’s work, including His death and resurrection, can aid in conveying the message of eternal life in a meaningful and relevant manner to people of all cultures and backgrounds.

Ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, studies the church’s nature, structure, and purpose. It investigates the church’s role in the world and its relationship with God and humanity. This academic discipline includes the church’s responsibility to share the Gospel and make disciples, as well as its obligation to care for the needs of others and live out its faith in practical ways. From the Greek ἐκκλησίᾱ, *ekklēsiā* (ecclesia in Latin) captures several meanings such as “assembly, communion, church, congregation, gathering, and *called out ones*.” Ishola lectured that ‘Ekklesia’ “is not limited to just a Christian or theological usage, it is used of any called out assembly whether for sacred purpose or otherwise.”³¹⁸ However, to

³¹⁶ Ellen Gould White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1905), 143.

³¹⁷ Interview with Respondent #12.

³¹⁸ See H.T.K Ishola, “CRS 826: Ecclesiology,” (Department of Religious Studies, Course Syllabus, National Open University of Nigeria, 2012), 9-11.

keep a God-centered focus, Sherrill admonished, “The church is not the end purpose of the Gospel, but the means of the Gospel for witnessing to a hurting world. A missional ecclesiology must be biblical, historical, eschatological, and contextual.”³¹⁹ Therefore, Ecclesiology is essential to evangelism because it offers a theology of the church by clarifying what it is and what it is meant to accomplish (*missiones ecclesiarum*).³²⁰ It should guide believers’ practices, including worship, fellowship, and service, and how they can support the development of the church’s evangelism strategies.

While Stefan Höschele argues that “a comprehensive historical analysis of early Adventist ecclesiology does not yet exist,” twenty-first-century Adventism has refined its understanding of the Church’s role in their fundamental beliefs (particularly numbers eleven through seventeen).³²¹ E. G. White had a plain theology of the church. She frequently echoed the sentiment that the Church was organized for missionary purposes and the Lord desired to see His people developing relevant strategies to present the truth to all classes.³²² No other

³¹⁹ Sherrill, *On Becoming A Missional Church*, 4.

³²⁰ Elliston, *Missiological Research Design*, 204.

³²¹ Stefan Höschele, “The Remnant Concept in Early Adventism: From Apocalyptic Antisectarianism to an Eschatological Denominational Ecclesiology,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 51, no. 2 (Andrews University Press, 2013): 267-300. Fundamental Belief #11. Growing in Christ (as new believers experience salvation they are expected to grow up into Christ, have a devotional life of personal and corporate worship and participate in the mission of the Church. They are called to follow Christ's example by compassionately ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity). #12. The Church. #13 The Remnant and its Mission. #14. Unity in the Body of Christ (Though comprising of many members from all nations, kindred, tongue, and people, all members in the body of Christ are equal in Him. They share the same faith and hope and reach out in one witness as God is one. #15. Baptism (This is the means by which people become members of the church and symbolize their union with Christ, forgiveness of sins, and reception of the Holy Spirit). #16. The Lord’s supper (Adventists see communion as an expression of faith in Jesus, with self-examination, repentance, and confession preceding participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus. The service is open to all believing Christians and they also practice foot-washing to signify renewed cleansing, humility, and love). #17. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries (God gifts all members of His church abilities and ministries needed to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. It is through these giftings of the Spirit that SDAs fulfill the Great Commission in a multifaceted way using faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity). See SDA Church, “What Do Seventh Day Adventists Really Believe?”

³²² E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1901), 29.

entity was as precious to God as His church; she penned, it was “the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts.” Her ecclesiology was evident in postulating that “the church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the Gospel to the world.” “The church is God’s fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him, who has bought mankind with the blood of His only begotten Son.” ... “The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church, will eventually be made manifest, even to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places,” the final and full display of the love of God (Eph 3:10).”³²³

NAPS seems to share an initial focus espoused by D. James Kennedy, who saw evangelism as the primary function of each church and every member. For Kennedy, the Christian’s missional mandate to evangelize those who have not heard is spelled out and summarized by Christ in the Great Commission.³²⁴ Jesus specified that it was the believers’ duty and sacred responsibility to go and “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, [and] teaching them to observe all things” that He commanded (Matt 28:19-20). The evangelistic mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ is embedded in God’s love for all people and His desire for lost humanity to be restored to a saving relationship with Him – their Creator.³²⁵

Both NAPS and Adventists see Fundamental Belief number twelve (The Church) as crucial to missions and evangelism because it is through the church that they experience

³²³ E. G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 11, 9, 12.

³²⁴ Several Bible passages support this belief, but the chief text regarding the Great Commission is found in Matt 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15. See Yoon, “D. James Kennedy’s Theology,” 71.

³²⁵ See Jer 31:3; John 3:16; 2 Cor 5:18-20; and Col 1:21.

missiones ecclesiarum.³²⁶ This chapter presents their strong sense of identity in several ways: “In a very special sense, Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining the wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of such great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.”³²⁷ When NAPS conducts evangelistic campaigns, and converts are baptized, they join the local SDA Church and begin to meet for worship, fellowship, instruction in the word, a celebration of the Lord’s Supper, service to humanity, and proclaiming the Gospel.³²⁸ This symbiotic relationship allows NAPS to function to its strengths and return to its primary mission. The local church bears the main responsibility to disciple new believers while carrying out its unique functions of teaching (Col 3:16), nurturing (Gal 6:1-2), communion (1 Cor 11:26), intercessory prayers (Jas 5:16), and evangelism (Matt 28:19-20).³²⁹

On the other hand, Respondent #12 upholds that the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation has a detailed understanding of ecclesiology, which differs from the established SDA Church. He ascribes a “flawed ecclesiology” to the traditional Adventist evangelistic structures against which NAPS rebels. For him, NAPS’ approach to evangelism has departed from the weaknesses and faults they’ve observed in the outmoded SDA evangelism methodologies. First, NAPS disputes that evangelism is the responsibility of a

³²⁶ In summary, this belief sees the church as a community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and join together for worship, fellowship, instruction in the Word, celebration of the Lord’s Supper, service to humanity, and worldwide proclamation of the gospel. It derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word revealed in the Scriptures. See Seventh-day Adventist Church, “What Adventists Believe About the Church (Body of All Believers),” Adventist.org, last modified August 4, 2019, <https://www.adventist.org/the-church>.

³²⁷ E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, 19.

³²⁸ SDA Church, “What Adventists Believe About the Church.”

³²⁹ SDA Church, “What Adventists Believe About the Church.”

limited group of specialists, such as Bible workers and pastors. Instead, they advocate for democratizing evangelistic duties. The organization believes everyone should be involved in evangelism, regardless of their chosen field of study. It, therefore, encourages volunteers, males, and females, from a variety of academic disciplines to participate in every facet of its missionary work. Second, NAPS aims to deliver evangelism with care and compassion, in contrast to what it perceives as the traditional church's clinical and impersonal approach. The organization's slogan, "We don't just send relief – we hand-deliver it with love and care," exemplifies this approach.³³⁰

In addition to departing from traditional evangelistic church structures, NAPS prioritizes the Sabbath as a day of service instead of a day of worship alone. They see this as a better Christological orientation based on Christ's teachings to use the Sabbath as a time for doing good (Matt 12:1-8, 10-13; 25:34-45; Luke 13:15; John 5:5-11, 16-18; and Isaiah 58). A belief in and acceptance of the Seventh-day Sabbath is non-negotiable for SDAs. They hail the Sabbath as an ongoing sign and the seal of God's special end-time people. This ideology, therefore, gives Sabbath observance a central focus in SDA mission and evangelism.³³¹ Yet, for the most part, the day is spent at church or sleeping with little to no community outreach. Lastly, NAPS engages in short-term international missions in a manner distinct from standard Seventh-day Adventist practices. NAPS stays in villages for up to six weeks, allowing for the

³³⁰ Interview with Respondent #12. See also NAPS, "About Us."

³³¹ SDA Fundamental Belief number 20 (The Sabbath), in part, states, "The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts" (Gen 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Lev 23:32; Deut. 5:12-15; Isa 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Ezek. 20:12, 20; Matt 12:1-12; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:16; Heb 4:1-11). See Seventh-day Adventist Church, "What Adventists Believe About the Sabbath," Adventist.org, last modified August 4, 2019, <https://www.adventist.org/the-sabbath>.

development of deeper relationships within the local community versus the evangelists who spend two weeks and have limited contact with the people. The mingling practice has yielded superior results in both baptism quantity and quality.

The Great Controversy Motif and Remnant Theology

SDA Fundamental beliefs numbers eight and thirteen (the Great Controversy and the Remnant and its mission) are also peculiarly Adventist. Christ and Satan are the main characters, with the former being the protagonist and the latter the antagonist (respectively). The Great Controversy theme, championed by Ellen White, is Adventism's way of describing the spiritual battle, a conflict they claim is over the character of God and His sovereign rule. Her book, by the same name, is the most widely distributed piece of witnessing literature by the worldwide SDA Church. 1905, White wrote, "The Great Controversy should be widely circulated. It contains the story of the past, the present, and the future. Its outline of the closing scenes of this earth's history bears a powerful testimony on behalf of the truth. I am more anxious to see a wide circulation for this book than for any others I have written, for in *The Great Controversy*, the last warning message to the world is given more distinctly than in any of my other books." Four years before her death, she expressed her life's values and sentiments in this premise, stating, "The book, *The Great Controversy*, I appreciate above silver and gold, and I greatly desire that it shall come before the people. While writing the manuscript of *The Great Controversy*, I was often conscious of the presence of the angels of God. And many times, the scenes I wrote were presented to me anew in visions of the night so that they were fresh and vivid in my mind."³³²

³³² E. G. White, *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1953), 127-128. See also the original documents in their entirety at the E.G. White Estate: Letter 281, which Ellen White wrote to a Brother and Sister Kress (October 10, 1905), and Letter 56, which she addressed to F. M. Wilcox, then editor of the *Review and Herald*, July 25, 1911.

White's emphasis on this book further demonstrates the denomination's support and belief in her authoritative writings and visionary encounters. In 2012, the president of the General Conference of SDA Church, Ted Wilson, announced a bold goal of distributing 162 million copies of *The Great Controversy* book.³³³ Again, in 2021, Wilson announced another audacious objective at one of the largest international conventions for lay ministries in Adventism. This time, to distribute one billion copies of the book between 2023 and 2024, in what the Church called "The Great Controversy Project 2.0." He tweeted that he believes "every word" in *The Great Controversy*.³³⁴

SDA scholar Nicholas Miller states, "The Great Controversy is more than a conflict over God's character. It is first and fundamentally a conflict over leadership: who gets to govern the universe?" He postulates that the "Governmental Theory of Atonement (akin to Arminian theology), first proposed by Hugo Grotius in the early seventeenth century, contains key concepts incorporated into the Great Controversy motif."³³⁵ The General Conference of SDA pens this unique doctrine as one where:

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan

³³³ Adventist Today, "General Conference President Announces Plans to Distribute 162 Million Copies of Great Controversy," last modified January 5, 2012, <https://atoday.org/general-conference-president-announces-plans-to-distribute-the-great-controversy>.

³³⁴ Wilson, mostly seen as a staunch conservative in SDA circles, announced the project at the Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) event in Orlando, Florida. On the homepage of the project's website (<https://greatcontroversyproject.org>), the two-year distribution goal is stated as part of the mission and vision of the SDA Church – "in preparation for Jesus' return." See Ted Wilson (@pastortedwilson), "'The Great Controversy' is a marvelous book. I believe every word in this book. I support it and I promote it—the full and complete book. #ASIORlando21," *Twitter*, August 7, 2021, <https://twitter.com/pastortedwilson/status/1424046938681483271>; Ted Wilson (@pastortedwilson), "We're planning two years of massive distribution of millions upon millions of the full, large 'Great Controversy,'" in 2023 and 2024. It has already been voted and is called, The Great Controversy Project 2.0. We are talking about distributing up to 1 billion copies. #ASIORlando21," *Twitter*, August 7, 2021, <https://twitter.com/pastortedwilson/status/1424047278222946306>; and Jammie Karlman, "Ted Wilson Announces GC Plans to Distribute 1 Billion Copies of 'The Great Controversy,'" *Adventist Today*, last modified August 13, 2021, <https://atoday.org/ted-wilson-announces-gc-plans-to-distribute-1-billion-copies-of-the-great-controversy>.

³³⁵ *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, "Contours of Adventist Soteriology [review]," 128. The book is arranged corresponding with the five tenets of Arminianism: Conditional Election, Unlimited Atonement, Total Depravity, Resistible Grace, and Christian Assurance/Sanctification. See Hanna, Jankiewicz, and Reeve, "Salvation," *Booklists*, 7 (2018).

regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the global flood, as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1-11. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated (Gen 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa 14:12-14; Ezek 28:12-18; Rom 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor 4:9; Heb 1:14; 1 Pet 5:8; 2 Pet 3:6; Rev 12:4-9).³³⁶

The Great Controversy theme is part of the wider understanding of SDA Remnant Theology understanding. Höschele states, "Among Seventh-day Adventists, the remnant motif has been of central importance for ecclesiology in general and their self-understanding in particular."³³⁷ He reported that E. G. White "developed the first aspects of a remnant ecclesiology in which a Sabbatarian group identity was paramount. At the same time, she did not make Sabbatarianism an entirely exclusive soteriological criterion."³³⁸ "While the term remnant was only one among several descriptions used by the Millerites to explain their experience and self-understanding, it proved to be the most resilient term after 1844."³³⁹ However, it was not until the 1850s that "Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology developed through a growing "church" self-understanding, a more systematic explanation of the eschatological remnant, and an incipient use of the term "remnant church." They combined Sabbath-keeping and Ellen White's prophetic gift "into an ecclesiological viable concept."³⁴⁰ To them, these two traits are synonymous with a faithful remnant of Christians who obey the Ten Commandments and observe the Sabbath. The remnant will also have the spirit of

³³⁶ Seventh-day Adventist Church, "The Great Controversy and God's Love for Humanity," Adventist.org, last modified August 4, 2019, <https://www.adventist.org/the-great-controversy>.

³³⁷ Höschele, "The Remnant Concept in Early Adventism," 270.

³³⁸ Höschele, "The Remnant Concept in Early Adventism," 280.

³³⁹ Höschele, "The Remnant Concept in Early Adventism," 297.

³⁴⁰ Höschele, "The Remnant Concept in Early Adventism," 292.

prophecy (Rev 12:17; 19:10). Adventists claim most mainstream denominations could not fit these traits because they do not have the testimony of Jesus and keep Sunday holy (the first day of the week). In contrast, SDAs keep the original Sabbath on Saturday (the seventh day).

In the Bible, “remnant” refers to a small band of committed believers who remain faithful to God despite their difficulties and persecution. This term frequently appears in the Old Testament and is commonly used to describe God’s devoted followers during times of national crisis or judgment.³⁴¹ Similar usages of the remnant are found in Revelation, an important study for Adventists. John’s Revelation describes a faithful remnant of believers who endure adversity and remain steadfast in their faith despite persecution and tribulation.³⁴² In Revelation 12, the remnant is portrayed as a woman who gave birth and is pursued by a dragon. The dragon symbolizes Satan’s efforts to destroy the Church and its members. The woman represents the Church, while the child represents Christ.

Nevertheless, God protects the woman and her child, and the remnant remains faithful to God despite persecution. In Rev 14:1-12, the remnant follows the Lamb and the sin and deception of the world have not defiled them. These servants are regarded as devoted believers who herald the everlasting Gospel in the end times and will be rewarded with eternal life. They patiently endure to the end while remaining obedient to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

SDAs view themselves as fulfilling this biblical remnant by pointing to several identifying marks of God’s end-time remnant. They coin this fundamental understanding as:

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the

³⁴¹ “Remnant” is found 91 times in the KJV – 85 times in the Old Testament and 6 times in the New Testament (though alluded to in other passages where the phrase is not explicitly mentioned). See Bible Gateway, “Keyword Search: Remnant,” BibleGateway.com, accessed March 14, 2023, <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=remnant&version=KJV>.

³⁴² See Rev. 11:13 and 12:17.

last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness.³⁴³

J. N. Andrews, one of the architects of Adventist doctrines, opined that of all their doctrines, there were three central pillars – first, the Gospel revealed in the Sanctuary in the context of the 2,300 days [prophecy] and the “Great Disappointment” of October 22, 1844, and the controversy between Christ and Satan. Second, the Gospel in the three angel’s messages, and third, the Gospel in the law of God.³⁴⁴ Similarly, James R. Nix also proposed three distinct characteristics of SDAs’ uniqueness in the cosmic end-time showdown. He boldly asserts, “No other church claims these identifying characteristics, but we Adventists have seen them as defining us from even before our official founding in the early 1860s.” His claims may seem exclusive, but Nix believes that Adventists are the “only people” who find their prophetic roots, or history, foretold in Revelation 10. He added SDAs are also “the only people” who find their prophetic identity demarcated in Revelation 12. Finally, to Nix, Adventists are “the only people” whose prophetic message and mission are specified in Revelation 14.³⁴⁵

SDAs have been teaching and living a remnant ideology since the 1800s. To them, Christ instructed John on the isle of Patmos that these loyal saints would be differentiated from all other churches and religious assemblies because “their history would follow an unusual, but

³⁴³ Passages used to teach this fundamental belief include Dan 7:9-14; Isa 1:9; 11:11; Jer 23:3; Micah 2:12; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Pet 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Pet 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; and 18:1-4. The ATS again affirms the identification of the SDA Church as “the remnant movement called by God to proclaim the three angels’ messages of Rev. 14:6-13, which prepare the world for the soon return of Christ.” See ATS, “Constitution,” Section 2 (g); and SDA Church, “Seventh-day Adventist Belief About the Remnant.”

³⁴⁴ Ray Foster, “A Gift to the World: John Nevins Andrews, His Work and its Value,” *Lest We Forget* 6, no. 2 (1996): 2.

³⁴⁵ Nix, “Seventh-day Adventism—A Unique Prophetic Movement.” See also Ellen G. White Estate, “James R. Nix,” *EllenWhite.Org*, accessed April 14, 2023, <https://ellenwhite.org/people/1>.

fore-ordained pattern. Two precise characteristics would identify them, and they would have a special, unique message to proclaim to the world.” Nix believes that only Seventh-day Adventists fit these criteria exactly, but it is not a cause for boasting; on the contrary, they should be humble and honored.³⁴⁶ As God’s special “end-time Church,” they are tasked with a divine call and mission to disseminate the everlasting Gospel (Rev 14:6-12) and prepare people for Christ’s return. These three angels’ messages dominate Adventist preaching, teaching, seminars, and iconic representations. Seventh-day Adventists also bear distinction as set apart from the corruption and sin of the world and its influences. They believe they are commanded to live a holy, healthy, and righteous life in all they do, eat, drink, or wear (1 Cor 10:31) as they prepare for the Second Coming of Christ.³⁴⁷

The remnant motif is also tied to the SDA doctrine about the Investigative Judgment doctrine, which teaches that Jesus Christ is currently engaged in the process of judgment that includes a review of the lives of every person who has ever lived. According to this doctrine, Jesus is reviewing the life histories of every individual to determine the status of their relationship with God – and whether they will be saved or lost. They use a variety of Bible passages to support this teaching, especially Daniel 7-8.³⁴⁸ According to SDA theology, the

³⁴⁶ Nix, “Seventh-day Adventism—A Unique Prophetic Movement.”

³⁴⁷ As seen in their baptismal vow number 10 and Fundamental Belief number 22 (Christian Behavior). The latter states, “For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well” (Gen 7:2; Exod 20:15; Lev 11:1-47; Ps 106:3; Rom 12:1, 2; 1 Cor 6:19, 20; 10:31; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 10:5; Eph 5:1-21; Phil 2:4; 4:8; 1 Tim 2:9, 10; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Pet 3:1-4; 1 John 2:6; 3 John 2).” See Seventh-day Adventist Church, “What Adventists Believe About Christian Behavior,” Adventist.org, last modified August 4, 2019, <https://www.adventist.org/christian-behavior>.

³⁴⁸ For example, Dan 7:9–14, where the scene of judgment in heaven described “the Ancient of Days” is seated to judge. Seventh-day Adventists interpret this passage as describing the role of Jesus Christ in the

2,300 days correspond to 2,300 literal years – indicating that the Investigative judgment began specifically in the year 1844 and probation will close with the advent of Christ. The remnant will then be rewarded, and the wicked will be destroyed. Another frequently cited passage is Rev 14:6-7, in which the first angel (of the three) heralds a message for all people that the time for judgment has arrived. SDAs believe they are special emissaries of this urgent message, which the remnant must share to ripen the earth for the final harvest (Rev 14:14-20).

NAPS' theology of evangelism then, from an Adventist perspective, emphasizes the importance of preparing for the second coming of Jesus Christ, the need for personal righteousness, the observance of the Sabbath, and sharing the everlasting Gospel with as many people as possible through a well-adjusted approach to evangelism. The fundamental beliefs of the SDA church are NAPS' core doctrines and practices, which are highly influenced and supplemented by the writings of Ellen G. White. An ongoing task of their evangelism theology is to balance being saved by grace and demonstrating good deeds. Realizing that salvation is a gift from God that cannot be earned or deserved, character transformation should be expressed in the fruit of the spirit. Understanding this theological equilibrium is essential for effective evangelism because a warped view of the Gospel, over time, creates a shipwreck of faith and inadvertently leads to mission drift. To combat this pitfall, NAPS must not lose sight of a biblical theology of evangelism. They must remain aligned with their mission and values by understanding, refining, and communicating their soteriology, eschatology, Christology, ecclesiology, and unique remnant identity as Black Adventists.

To summarize, this chapter provided an overview of NAPS' theological framework, establishing a connection between their beliefs, their evangelistic practices (which will be the

main focus of the next chapter), and their distinct identity. Despite over forty years to develop, NAPS' theology is augmented by the contextual integration of the SDA Church's fundamental beliefs and Ellen G. White's writings. Yet, at the heart of NAPS' evangelism lies a robust understanding of Christ's divinity and His central role in redemption, emphasizing "Christ's Method" of compassion and fostering relationships. It also resonates with volunteers who see it as a practical way to emulate Christ's teachings while highlighting potential challenges and areas for ongoing reflection to ensure NAPS' theology remains aligned with its mission and values. Maintaining a balanced understanding of grace and good works remains crucial for effective evangelism and avoiding mission drift.

Two influential SDA doctrines, the Great Controversy Motif and Remnant Theology, heavily shape NAPS' understanding of its mission and identity. They view themselves as entrusted with proclaiming the three angels' messages – sharing the final warning message before Christ's return and living a holy life. NAPS acknowledges the church's crucial role in mission and evangelism, identifying themselves as part of the remnant church. However, they carve out their unique path in several ways. They advocate for democratized evangelism, embracing anyone regardless of their profession, and prioritize the Sabbath as a day of service, extending beyond solely worship. Additionally, their international missions involve longer-term missions and building deeper connections within communities. With this understanding of NAPS' theology of evangelism ("why"), Chapter Three will examine "how" NAPS evangelizes.

CHAPTER 3: WHAT IS NAPS' PRACTICE OF EVANGELISM?

The previous chapter sought to understand NAPS' theological worldview, focusing particularly on the lens through which it interprets the gospel and the corresponding vision of evangelism. The primary aim of this chapter is to answer the next research question: What is NAPS' practice of evangelism? By evaluating NAPS' evangelism practices, the researcher sought to determine how they carry out their activities in disseminating the good news. The exploration helped unearth how NAPS' perception of the gospel shaped and mirrored its approach to evangelism in all its forms.

The student conducted a documentary study of primary sources to establish NAPS' contextual and historical narrative by examining relevant historical documents, personal documents, ministry communication documents, and promotional and evangelistic materials. Twenty-five NAPS volunteers completed a questionnaire. Fourteen key leaders were also interviewed, including current and former volunteers, current staff, and current board members with comprehensive knowledge of the organization. Specifically, their answers to questions in the survey and interview about the spiritual disciplines or practices of NAPS volunteers and leaders sought to explore various NAPS evangelism practices.

This chapter's investigation will help to determine the 'how' and 'what' of NAPS' evangelistic methodologies and whether a strategic framework exists for global and domestic evangelism. The aim is to offer an extensive understanding of this crucial aspect of NAPS' mission and activities by dissecting the strategies, influence, theological underpinnings, impediments, and opportunities associated with their evangelistic practices. By doing so, the academic community may gain insight into how NAPS embodies its commitment to service

and evangelism and the societal implications of such actions.³⁴⁹

Foundations of NAPS' Practice of Evangelism

NAPS is emerging as a leading voice in the fight against spiritual and physical hunger, poverty, and illness. Founded in 1978 at Oakwood University, the ministry allowed Black Seventh-day Adventist students to tangibly participate in the Church's vision of serving humanity via evangelism and community service. Since its establishment, the organization's many programs and projects have had a profound impact on millions around the globe. Headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama, NAPS' dedication to helping others was encapsulated in a 'Christ's method alone' approach to service-based ministry – prioritizing all people's well-being.³⁵⁰ That firm stance has informed the organization's diverse approach to its evangelistic purposes, resulting in various activities targeting different facets of poverty and suffering.

This section delves into the underpinnings of NAPS' evangelistic practices. The organization's SDA roots make evangelism integral to its missional mandate. The primary objective is to explore, frame, and scrutinize NAPS' evangelistic practices to comprehend their role and impact on the ministry's larger goals. The investigation extends to various evangelistic approaches NAPS employs, ranging from foreign missions to intimate Bible study sessions. The study will explore the intersection of these evangelistic practices with other focus areas of NAPS and their alignment with the organization's mission.³⁵¹ The intent is to illuminate the extent of NAPS' commitment to spreading the Gospel by providing a comprehensive

³⁴⁹ Maayan Kreitzman, Mollie Chapman, Keefe O. Keeley, and Kai MA Chan, "Local Knowledge and Relational Values of Midwestern Woody Perennial Polyculture Farmers Can Inform Tree-crop Policies," *People and Nature* 4, no. 1 (2022): 180-200; <https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10275>.

³⁵⁰ White, *The Ministry of Health and Healing*, 143. See also Jennifer Thomson and Sophie Whiting, "Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans in Anti-gender Governments: The Cases of Brazil and Poland," *European Journal of International Security* 7, no. 4 (2022): 531-50, doi:10.1017/eis.2022.21.

³⁵¹ Kevin D. Dougherty, Perry L. Glanzer, Jessica A. Robinson, Juliette L. Ratchford, and Sarah A. Schnitker, "Baylor Faith and Character Study: Methods and Preliminary Findings," *Christian Higher Education* 21, no. 3 (2022): 168-190.

understanding of its evangelistic methods.

This section also considers NAPS' diverse channels and tactics in its evangelistic mission, including traditional means such as conducting in-home Bible studies and literature distribution to innovative measures like establishing lifestyle centers and running mobile clinics. The efficacy of these strategies will be better assessed in the next chapters but are here highlighted to understand NAPS' evangelistic practices within the larger Seventh-day Adventist community and the smaller Black SDA milieu. Concurrently, it will probe the opportunities that have surfaced from NAPS' inventive evangelism methods amid the hurdles the organization has encountered and surmounted in its mission to be the hands and feet of Jesus.³⁵² As a result, the chapter promises a multifaceted insight into the research question, illuminating its complexity and consequent impact.

A cursory Overview of NAPS' Evangelism Methodologies

NAPS' chief goal is to spread the Gospel "by any means necessary."³⁵³ Their evangelism strategies hang on two broad methods – proclamation and demonstration. To proclaim and demonstrate God's love and salvation, NAPS' commitment to service, evangelism, and compassion is evidenced by its multidimensional approaches to combating poverty and deprivation in many communities worldwide. Whereas it is sometimes perceived that NAPS' rigorous evangelistic activities resemble a 'works-based' theology, other

³⁵² Addressed in Figures 17-19.

³⁵³ A common phrase mentioned by interviewees, including the president of NAPS, regarding the ministry's mindset towards soul-winning activities. These words, "We want freedom by any means necessary. We want justice by any means necessary. We want equality by any means necessary," are attributed to Malcolm X during the last year of his life. See Malcolm X, *By Any Means Necessary: Malcolm X speeches & writings* (NY: Pathfinder, 1992) [original from Indiana University]; Walter D. Myers, *Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary (Scholastic Focus)* (New York: Scholastic, 2019); and BlackPast, "(1964) Malcolm X's Speech at the Founding Rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity," Blackpast. last modified September 23, 2019, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1964-malcolm-x-s-speech-founding-rally-organization-afro-american-unity>.

evangelists of yesteryear warned about inhibiting the Goodnews to proclamation only. Overly obsessing with demonstration, “without sound theological content, evangelism soon degenerates into sentimentalism, emotionalism, and gimmicks.”

On the other hand, D. James Kennedy, for example, translated his evangelistic proclamation into evangelistic demonstration. He said, “Evangelism is the proclamation of the good news in words, as well as the manifestation of this good news in deeds, with the purpose of reconciling men and women to God.”³⁵⁴ NAPS’ practice of evangelism personifies Kennedy’s view and includes:

- Personal outreach [witnessing].
- Door-to-door and hut-to-hut Bible studies.
- Public evangelism campaigns or crusades.
- Canvassing – distributing Christian literature while fundraising.
- Ministering to the “least of these” in at-risk and neglected communities in the United States and Africa.³⁵⁵

Their dedication to service is equally demonstrated by the organization’s engagement in yearly short-term mission trips in the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa. They have provided humanitarian aid in times of crisis and natural disasters – like the California wildfires, earthquake in Haiti, tsunami in Sri Lanka, and hurricanes that have ravaged the United States. Marches against the Alabama lottery, immigration laws, HIV/AIDS, and violence have all been organized with the help of NAPS as a platform for social justice activism. Its dedication to creating a more just and caring society is further demonstrated by motivational talks given to

³⁵⁴ David S. Dockery, “A Theological Foundation for Evangelism,” in *Evangelism in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Thom S. Rainer (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers 1989), 8, as cited by Yoon, 171.

³⁵⁵ Especially in Southern African countries. See “About Us,” NAPS, <https://www.napsoc.org/what-we-do>.

young people in schools, churches, and juvenile correctional facilities. Local cities and state beneficiaries of NAPS' efforts and crisis intervention have expressed gratitude to the organization's various accolades from governmental and non-governmental organizations. NAPS' message and mission have also been amplified by media attention from newspapers, magazines, and talk shows to CNN, 3ABN, and the Adventist Review – expanding the ministry's global reach and effect.³⁵⁶

NAPS has also made significant strides in lifestyle improvement and education for low-income and underserved populations through the establishment of the Abundant Life Wellness Institute (ALWI), the Global Evangelism and Medical Missionary School (GEMMS), and the NAPS Abundant Life Academy (NALA). ALWI provides holistic health services focused on cultivating natural therapies and preventative medicine. The organization also hosts free community health fairs and operates a mobile medical and dentist clinic – essential for areas without sufficient medical facilities. GEMMS and NALA are testaments to NAPS' dedication to education by providing its members and impoverished neighborhoods with access to various educational opportunities, from pre-Kindergarten through adult vocational education, including medical missionary and evangelism training.³⁵⁷

To NAPS, those initiatives—from disaster relief and medical missions to education and training programs, were at the heart of Christ's model of service and a source of inspiration.³⁵⁸ As a means to an end, their methods seem to have the same overarching goals: to declare Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as the hope for transforming lives, to mitigate human

³⁵⁶ See NAPS Accolade booklet (1993 – 2009); and Mark R. Teasdale, "Forming Saints in a Digital Context," *Great Commission Research Journal* 14, no. 2 (2022): 65-84, accessed June 24, 2023, <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/gcrj/vol14/iss2/5>.

³⁵⁷ National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, "COVID: A Call to Serve – Tornado Warning – Medical Missionary Training," *NAPS News*, n.d., 9-13.

³⁵⁸ White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 143.

suffering and the cycle of poverty, and to promote the kingdom of God. However, some of their efforts are not considered extraneous to their evangelistic undertakings but are fundamental to the ministry's accomplishments. NAPS incorporates other evangelistic outreach projects- programs for children, health ministries, and food programs—into their mission trips and service opportunities. The organization's objective for using these strategies is to reach the next generation with the gospel by motivating and inspiring them to embrace the love and doctrines of Christ and His church through practical means.

The Development of Volunteering at NAPS: Demonstrating God's Handiwork

For the past forty years, NAPS has honed the art of sharing the love of Christ through service. They have carved out a unique niche in their evangelistic undertakings in that they can balance both declaration and demonstration of the gospel's missional mandate. Whereas, it appears, other evangelical or Adventist ministries do one or the other well, NAPS has developed a good blend of both preaching and practical service – proven in just about whatever they do.³⁵⁹ NAPS aims to represent Christ's love by displaying the gospel's real-world implications via their service to the community, feeding programs, and answers to social concerns, including HIV/AIDS and violence. As a result, they have had more than twenty-three thousand baptisms in different parts of the world and established thirteen foreign branches.

Anthony Paul, president of NAPS, while speaking to FACES magazine, explained how he incorporated outreach and research lessons in his classes so that he could help his students learn to engage in community outreach programs. He indicated that although most students had

³⁵⁹ John Stott made the argument that evangelicals are often overly pious but feeble in praxis. He admonished the necessity of converting theological reflection into actions. John Stott, "Tasks Which Awaits Us," epilogue to *Essays in Evangelical Social Ethics*, ed. D. F. Wright (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 181, as cited by Choi, "An Analysis of John R. W. Stott's Theology of Evangelism and Practice of Evangelism," 168. See also NAPS Accolade booklet (1993 – 2009).

limited skills, they quickly realized the “tricks of the trade” and “through God’s grace, it all comes together.”³⁶⁰ Paul elaborated on the organization’s process to prepare students before each mission. For instance, students were offered language and cultural training before visiting Haiti and Sudan. Language training makes it easier for the volunteers to speak with locals and connect with communities. It also enables them to create rapport and establish healthy relationships, which are critical in understanding and addressing the needs of the locals.³⁶¹

Cross-cultural training improves intercultural communication, awareness, and understanding. It helps student volunteers understand cultural differences and communication styles that will likely be effective for their assignment abroad. As Paul highlighted, the primary purpose of cross-cultural training is to provide volunteers with competencies that enable them to interact effectively with persons from foreign cultures, taking into account their customs and cultural values.³⁶² It also ensures effective communication with the locals, minimizing the likelihood of misunderstandings arising from a lack of understanding of their behaviors or misinterpretations of gestures, body language, or words.³⁶³

Several volunteers who worked with NAPS over the years have also narrated their experiences with the ministry, indicating that engaging in humanitarian activities has helped them to understand the importance of helping others. These exceptional students answered the call to ministry and committed themselves to be an example of Christ’s love wherever they went. In their haste to help others suffering worldwide, they have sometimes placed their lives in danger for helping others. At a time when many young people were preoccupied with their

³⁶⁰ Face Files, “N.A.P.S.,” 21.

³⁶¹ Face Files, “N.A.P.S.,” 21, 22.

³⁶² Face Files, “N.A.P.S.,” 22.

³⁶³ Donna Sheets Leigh, “A Short-term Mission Trip Training Program with an Emphasis on Cross-Cultural Training and Reentry for Covenant Church in Winterville, North Carolina,” (DMin diss, Regent University, 2010), 112-345.

own lives and the problems they faced, NAPS student volunteers chose to do the opposite. They continued to serve the world by offering help – “hand-delivering it with love and care,” as the NAPS tagline stated. Lakicia Foster, a longtime NAPS member, believed that “we live in a generation where it could be exceedingly difficult to serve the Lord. I want to encourage any young person to err on the side of the Lord if they will make any choices in their life. Serving the Lord is not only incredibly gratifying, but it profoundly transforms life.”

Marlo Jackson, a then senior from Colorado, who was featured in Faces Magazine, stated that she had been a member of NAPS for years and had experienced life-changing events that inspired her to make the world better by volunteering her money, energy, and time to support the less fortunate.³⁶⁴ Jackson stated that her focus on life had changed after working with disadvantaged persons, feeding people in need under bridges in her town and the streets of poverty-stricken nations such as Sudan and Haiti. Their humanitarian work enabled her to understand better the importance of helping those in need, which not only makes a difference in the lives of others but also boosts one’s inner peace, self-esteem, and happiness. When Marlo Jackson returned from a life-changing Sudan mission experience, she went home for summer break and presented to her home church about the mission trip. Immediately following the presentation, she talked with Wöl Bol Wöl, a refugee living in northern Kenya when NAPS ministered in southern Sudan. Wöl explained to Jackson that he had learned about their goal of compassion and relief through reading about it in the papers. It had a profound impact on his life.

After he arrived in the United States, Wöl prayed to God to guide him to a church that adhered to the teachings that he had discovered in the Bible. He believed God answered his

³⁶⁴ Marlo Jackson is now Marlo Paul, a physician and director of ALWI and NAPS’ health ministries. See Face Files, “N.A.P.S.,” 22.

petition by directing him to the Parkhill Seventh-day Adventist Church in Denver, Colorado. Fortunately, that Church, in conjunction with Jackson and Paul, was instrumental in his acceptance to Oakwood University to study theology. After graduating from OU, he continued his education at Andrews University. He translated the entire Bible into the Dinka language, the language of most of his people.

Sabrina Thomas, then a senior from Ohio, concurred with Jackson that being involved in humanitarian activities was a life-changing experience. Thomas, who went on a mission trip to Haiti, was overwhelmed by the fact that her efforts had made such a remarkable difference in the lives of needy people. She explained that even though the language barrier contributed to challenges in communication, “the language of love was able to transcend all.”³⁶⁵ She clarified that many people they engaged with in their mission were starving emotionally and physically. However, their hungry souls and bodies found nourishment in the spiritual bread NAPS volunteers provided.

In another commentary, Edward Martin, a senior from Washington, D.C., described his experience as the “greatest fulfillment of life.” Martin explained that NAPS volunteers embodied the Scriptures about helping others and showing them love. He indicated that participating in NAPS’ missions taught him the importance of reaching out to the less fortunate and sharing what he had with them. According to him, helping others enhanced one’s overall sense of purpose and identity and made one feel rewarded, empowered, and fulfilled.³⁶⁶ These narrations help us understand some of the reasons why NAPS does ministry the way they do.

One of the main activities of NAPS’ humanitarian work from the 1980s concerned mitigating hunger, disease, and poverty. For decades, the world has witnessed extreme

³⁶⁵ Face Files, “N.A.P.S.,” 23.

³⁶⁶ Face Files, “N.A.P.S.,” 23.

suffering – from the Ethiopian famine crisis to the distress in Sudan and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. NAPS and its student volunteers were committed to bringing relief to affected individuals at home and abroad – offering their services to the most vulnerable and the less fortunate. NAPS stood out from other humanitarian organizations because their primary focus was providing social services and evangelizing. Along with alleviating suffering and promoting human dignity, they consider evangelism a critical part of their mission. NAPS members believe sharing the good news of salvation and God’s love can help poverty-stricken people find hope and courage amid suffering.³⁶⁷

SDA Mission and Strategies: Tell the World, Total Member Involvement, and I Will Go

NAPS’ practice of evangelism is situated contextually within an Adventist framework, though differing in some respects. Evangelism is central to the Seventh-day Adventist faith and has a peculiar history within modern Protestantism. All Christians are commanded to go into the world and make disciples, heeding the call of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). With this authorization in mind, Adventists have developed programs like *Tell the World*, *Total Member Involvement*, and *I Will Go* to advance the Good News of the kingdom. *Tell the World* initiative was established to aid the SDA Church’s global evangelistic efforts. It is an all-encompassing method of missionary stratagem to reveal the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. The message of “Tell the World” is both straightforward and profound: all members of the Adventist Church are called to be witnesses for Christ in their everyday interactions with others. Members are inspired to proclaim the Gospel by sharing their testimonies, distributing Christian publications, planting new churches, and performing acts of service. The project also places a premium on intercessory prayer as a vital aspect of

³⁶⁷ Oakwood College, “Dr. Anthony Paul, Founder and National Director,” 17.

evangelization because of the transformational effect of prayer on the lives of believers and unbelievers alike.³⁶⁸

The Adventist mission strategy, *Total Member Involvement* (TMI's) goal to get every member involved in service and evangelism stems from the conviction that everyone has a contribution to the Church's mission.³⁶⁹ The idea behind this method is that everyone in the Church, regardless of age, gender, or social standing, has something special to offer in spreading the everlasting gospel. TMI increases the Church's influence and equips its members to put their faith into action. By taking this approach, the Church has inspired its followers to become more involved in its purpose and grow its membership.³⁷⁰

I Will Go is the most current Seventh-day Adventist Church strategic plan. It expands on the themes of personal dedication to the mission established in "Tell the World" and "TMI." It is more than a catchphrase. It is a commitment to serve God wherever He leads, whether next door or halfway across the world. Goals and measures of success in categories like mission, spiritual growth, leadership, and education are laid out in detail. The SDA denomination's emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and the call to service is reflected in these tactics.³⁷¹

³⁶⁸ Wendi Rogers, "World Church: 'Tell The World' Initiative Inspires Witness, Outreach," *Adventist News Network*, last modified March 7, 2006, <https://adventist.news/news/world-church-tell-the-world-initiative-inspires-witness-outreach>.

³⁶⁹ Gerard Damsteegt, "The Priesthood of All Believers," *Andrews University*, accessed May 26, 2023, https://www.andrews.edu/~damsteeg/priesthood_of_believers.pdf. See also Wendy Manzo, "Towards an Understanding of the Spontaneous Prophetic Artist in the Pentecostal Church," *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 23, no. 1 (2022): 34-58, <https://aps-journal.com/index.php/APS/article/view/9601>.

³⁷⁰ See Duane McKey, "Essential Keys to Total Member Involvement," *Adventist Review*, last modified August 6, 2016, <https://adventistreview.org/news/essential-keys-to-total-member-involvement>; Ministry, International Journal for Pastors, "Total Member Involvement - Ted Wilson and Duane McKey," YouTube, April 26, 2016, Educational Video, 00:27 to 24:30, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrllhgntg7zk>; and "What is Total Member Involvement?," Total Member Involvement, accessed October 18, 2023, <https://www.totalmemberinvolvement.org/about>.

³⁷¹ Rex Edwards, "Priesthood of Believers," *Biblical Research Institute*, last modified January 24, 2022, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/priesthood-of-believers>. See also Isabel Hofmeyr, "Dreams, Documents and 'Fetishes': African Christian Interpretations of *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32, no. 4 (2002): 440-456, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1581602>.

Each person committed to “I Will Go” is urged to respond as did the prophet Isaiah, “Here *am* I! Send me” (Isa 6:8), and to take calculated steps towards fulfilling the initiative’s purpose. Their faith will inspire a sense of urgency in their mission work to prepare a people for Christ’s immediate return. The Church’s holistic health message is congruent with its mission objectives and offers an additional platform to execute *I Will Go*.³⁷²

The combined *Tell the World*, *Total Member Involvement*, and *I Will Go* mission strategies of the SDA Church represent a dedication to active evangelism and service. They emphasize the importance of every member of the Church being involved in the major task of evangelism. These methods have created a solid basis for groups like NAPS to evangelize their respective settings effectively. The Adventist Church’s worldwide presence and the far-reaching influence of its numerous branches, including auxiliary ministries like NAPS, are clear indicators of the efficacy of these strategies.³⁷³

The Southern Work: Mission to Black America

Ellen G. White, the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s pioneering co-founder, has indelibly influenced the denomination's theological foundations and mission emphasis. Famous for her many books, she has been an invaluable resource for the Church in understanding its mission, especially regarding evangelization and social service. Concerning racial equality and social justice issues, her publication, *The Southern Work*, offers a profound understanding of

³⁷² See Andrew McChesney, “Adventist Church Presents New ‘I Will Go’ Strategic Plan,” Adventist Mission, accessed October 18, 2023, <https://www.adventistmission.org/adventist-church-presents-new-i-will-go-strategic-plan>; “The Objectives,” *I Will Go 2020*, last modified October 10, 2019, <https://www.iwillgo2020.org/the-objectives>; Seventh-day Adventist Church, “Is the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Strategic Focus Relevant to Members? Learn About I Will Go!,” YouTube, July 8, 2020, educational video, 00:01 to 04:57, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZn7Z6IooQg>; and Seventh-day Adventist Church, “Pr. Wilson Shares the New Strategic Plan of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” YouTube, July 10, 2020, educational video, 00:01 to 42:59, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BW38VDKtt40>.

³⁷³ General Conference of SDA, “Seventh-Day Adventist World Church Statistics,” *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*, updated February 14, 2022, <https://www.adventist.org>.

the Adventist perception of their mission. In *The Southern Work*, a collection of articles she wrote between 1891 and 1899, White's vision for evangelistic and educational work in the Southern United States is succinctly arranged.³⁷⁴ Although still plagued by racial conflict and inequality since the abolition of slavery, White made an unambiguous case for fair treatment of all people in those states. She urged the Church to dismantle the "wall of separation" built along racial lines and to extend Christ's love to people of all backgrounds.

The first article featured was her stirring appeal to church leaders in a message titled "Our Duty to the Colored People." White delivered a rallying cry to the SDA Church – pleading with them to minister to the ignored African Americans in the South. She scolds them for ignoring the plight of their Black brethren and emphasizes that their Christian obligation was to treat them with respect and kindness and to provide for them as they would any other group.³⁷⁵ In this collection of essays, White demonstrates her deep devotion to the causes of social justice and racial equality, which she considered fundamental to fulfilling the Gospel's mandate. So pointed were her statements that she went as far as stating:

God holds us accountable for our long neglect of doing our duty to our neighbors. He sees precious jewels that will shine out from among the colored race. Let the work be taken up determinedly, and let both the young and those of mature age be educated in essential branches. Take hold of this nation that has been in bondage, as the Lord Jesus Christ took hold of the Hebrew nation after they came forth from Egypt. . . . When the hearts of God's professed people are animated by the principle of the living faith that works by love and purifies the soul, there will be a response to these appeals.³⁷⁶

E.G. White also urged the importance of following Christ's example in serving Black people in the South by meeting their practical needs. She urged ministers and the laity to

³⁷⁴ E.G. White, *The Southern Work*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1901), iii, iv.

³⁷⁵ White, *The Southern Work*, 9-28.

³⁷⁶ Teresa Reeve, "The Hour Of His Judgment Has Come Part 1." Digital Commons @ Andrews University, accessed October 31, 2023, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/mml/23>; and White, *The Southern Work*, 9-28.

address people’s psychological, emotional, and spiritual well-being, noting that “Christ linked Himself in brotherhood to all nationalities. He made no distinction between the white race and the Black race in His plan of salvation. He bought the meanest of humanity with an infinite price. He notes when we leave the naked unclad, the poor unfed, the destitute unrelieved, the despised forsaken.”³⁷⁷ The church did not merely look on, talk, and plan without action. It was clear that she desired them to “actually” relieve the suffering of their colored brethren saddled under the weight of poverty instead of simply saying, “Be ye warmed and filled.”³⁷⁸ Therefore, in her view, the mission to Black America was not limited to evangelism (in a purely traditional sense) but also included educating, healing, repairing, and refining Black people in the Southern field. NAPS and a few other Adventist organizations adopt this approach as it propels them to offer diverse services to their communities.³⁷⁹

Considering the deep racial prejudice and segregation's historical and political climate of the time, White’s stance was radical. She insists that every person, regardless of their background or station, is of paramount significance to God and His followers. *The Southern Work* and “Our Duty to the Colored People,” to this day, continue to provide a practical theological and missiological framework for Adventist missions among people of color. NAPS’ commitment to aiding underserved communities via various programs can be linked to this bedrock of religious thought. They employ a holistic, multifaceted evangelistic methodology in their ministry endeavors – seamlessly merging preaching, teaching, healing, and social service—aligning with White’s theology of evangelism. Doing so seems to give a persuasive justification for an active, service-oriented evangelism that bridges the gap between

³⁷⁷ Reeve, “The Hour Of His Judgment Has Come Part 1.”

³⁷⁸ White, *The Southern Work*, 63, 64.

³⁷⁹ April Rae Gutierrez, “Embodied Spiritual Practices for Brown and Black Bodies Exploring Sabbath Rest” (PhD diss., Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2022) 8.

theory and praxis.³⁸⁰

NAPS also took E.G. White's charge that "the Southern field is to be thoroughly worked. As God has laid it upon us as a people, this burden has been kept before us for many years. And the question for each individual is, 'What am I to do?'"³⁸¹ As a direct response to this challenge, in 2010, NAPS held its first "Southern Work" summer missions to underprivileged communities in Alabama (Eutaw, Demopolis, Greensboro, Montgomery, and Elmore), Georgia (Athens), and Mississippi (Starkville).³⁸² The organization aimed to provide a platform for Southern churches to engage in evangelism and fulfill what they considered White's unfulfilled appeal in "Our Duty to the Colored People."

Since then, NAPS has been running medical clinics once a week in towns that make up the Southern Black Belt. Pap smears, medication for hypertension and diabetes, and treatment for acute illnesses such as urinary tract infections (UTIs) and upper respiratory infections are also provided (URIs). Laboratories are accessible to take blood samples and collect other specimens as required. Additionally, mobile clinics are set up monthly in inner-city neighborhoods and rural regions of Alabama and Mississippi to assist locals and migrant workers. Blood pressure checks, diabetes screenings, and breast exams are also available. While providing health education seminars and working in medical missions is paramount, the volunteers also tutor students and lead Bible studies. Only one of the five counties where NAPS works in the Southern fields has an Adventist church within its borders.³⁸³

The Morning Star

In *Mission to Black America*, Ronald D. Graybill illuminates the SDA Church's

³⁸⁰ Choi, "An Analysis of John R. W. Stott's Theology of Evangelism and Practice of Evangelism," 168.

³⁸¹ Ellen G. White, "Work in the South," *Field Tidings*, June 8, 1910, paragraph 4.

³⁸² "New NAPS Summer Mission Timelines," email sent on April 1, 2010, to pastors Ricks, Watson, and Mills outlining the dates for NAPS' mission in their areas (May – June 2010).

³⁸³ NAPS currently fills the role of shepherding the Eutaw SDA Church in Eutaw, Alabama.

mission to evangelize Blacks in the Southern United States through the efforts of James Edson White, using the Morning Star riverboat.³⁸⁴ Understanding the activities of organizations like NAPS is enriched by such contextual information. Graybill explores the origins that set the stage for the Adventist Church's outreach to African Americans. He delves into the post-Civil War undertakings of the early Church, shedding light on the numerous barriers it encountered due to prevalent prejudice and segregation.³⁸⁵ Graybill's analytical perspective probes the inception of ideas like *Tell the World*, *Total Member Involvement*, and *I Will Go* and their impact on the denomination's engagements within African American communities. The book's core underscores the imperative of contextualization and cultural sensitivity in missionary work. It emphasizes the central role of understanding and respecting the cultural identities of the served populations in intercultural studies and missiology.³⁸⁶

Mission to Black America is not merely a piece of recorded SDA history but a helpful resource for current missionaries. Graybill's research on the Adventist Church's outreach to African Americans sheds light on what informs NAPS' present-day evangelism, education, healthcare, and social service methods.³⁸⁷ The book follows Edson White, the second son of Ellen and James White, who was instrumental in spreading the message of Seventh-day

³⁸⁴ Referred by Adventists mainly as Edson White.

³⁸⁵ First printed in 1971 by Pacific Press Publishing Association. The current edition is dated February 2019. Ronald D. Graybill, PhD is an Adventist historian who has worked as a university professor, researcher, corporate communication specialist and editor. He was an associate secretary at the Ellen G. White estate for thirteen years and has contributed to writing Ellen White's biography, drafting the preamble to the SDA Statement of Fundamental Beliefs, and is the author of *E.G. White and Church Race Relations*. See Ronald D. Graybill, *Mission to Black America: The True Story of James Edson White and the Riverboat Morning Star*, (Westlake Village: Oak and Acorn Publishing), 2013.

³⁸⁶ Muhammad Irfan Syuhudi, Sitti Arafah Syamsurijal, Sabara Idham, Baso Marannu Basman, Abu Muslim, Muh Subair, Reslawati Nensia, Ahsanul Khalikin, Muhammad Nur Indo Santalia, and St Aflahah, "Islam-Christian, 'Kaka-Ade': The Way the Kokoda Community Cares for Religious Harmony in Sorong City," *Journal of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing* 6, no. 1 (2022): 1236-1247. <https://journalppw.com/index.php/jppw/article/view/1324>.

³⁸⁷ NAPS follows in the SDA tradition of self-supporting ministries and institutions. Edson White's *Morning Star* is generally seen as the forerunner of the concept which eventually gave rise to ASI (of which NAPS is also a member). See Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 266.

Adventism among African Americans in the South, primarily in Mississippi.³⁸⁸ His missionary effort on the Morning Star riverboat typified the SDA Church's commitment to gospel proclamation. At a time of heightened racial tension and entrenched anti-Black bigotry, he decided to take on this difficult assignment because he felt it was his Christian duty to help the oppressed people of the South.

Edson's vision and dedication to this task were largely shaped by his mother's writings, especially after he read her appeal to denominational leaders, "Our Duty to the Colored People," in 1891.³⁸⁹ Her straight testimony burned a flame in his heart to seek and save the lost as he read:

White men and white women should be qualifying themselves to work among the colored people. ... Christians... will not, cannot, live in luxury and self-indulgence while there are suffering ones around them. They cannot, by their practice, sanction any phase of oppression or injustice to the least child of humanity. ... The Black man's name is written in the book of life beside the white man's. All are one in Christ. Birth, station, nationality, or color cannot elevate or degrade men. ... Those who slight a brother because of his color are slighting Christ.³⁹⁰

Edson White's many goals aboard the Morning Star reflected his devotedness to Christ and addressing the needs of "the least of these." His efforts were fruitful despite confronting enormous obstacles, such as antagonism from locals and even criticism from inside his own Church. Along the Mississippi River, the boat stopped at different locations to host evangelistic meetings, educate Blacks, print and distribute literature, and lay a foundation for further missionary efforts. He helped spearhead institutions of higher learning, publishing houses, lifestyle sanitariums, and religious communities, where countless disadvantaged people might receive an education and spiritual and physical healing. His endeavors will continue to

³⁸⁸ Graybill, *Mission to Black America*, 155, 164.

³⁸⁹ Graybill, *Mission to Black America*, 15. See also, E.G. White, *The Southern Work*, 9-18.

³⁹⁰ White, *The Southern Work*, 16-17, 13. See also Graybill, *Mission to Black America*, 15.

invigorate the Adventist Church's activities among marginalized peoples and connection with underserved communities.³⁹¹ White's commitment to "practical Christianity" forms the crux of his work on the Morning Star – a concept that has influenced NAPS. His approach to missions encapsulates NAPS' holistic approach to evangelism, interweaving several pillars of service.

NAPS' Comprehensive Approach to Mission and Evangelism

Since NAPS' theology of evangelism was deeply rooted in the fundamental doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its longstanding commitment to serving African American communities, it is not surprising that the ministry adopts a comprehensive outreach strategy germane to the SDA's mission and vision. NAPS' evangelistic approaches mirror the Adventist Church's global outreach initiatives, "Tell the World," "Total Member Involvement," and "I Will Go" campaigns. NAPS' devotion to aiding vulnerable populations in society manifests in various activities, ranging from direct evangelism to extensive community engagement initiatives like HIV education and marches.³⁹² In NAPS' perspective, evangelism is more than a single endeavor—it is an encompassing approach to ministry that attends to individuals' emotional "well-being and material needs." They believe that disseminating Christ's love goes beyond verbal communication. It extends into concrete measures like catering to people's health necessities, equipping them for self-sustainability,

³⁹¹ "Edson White: His Conversion And Work," Lineage Journey, accessed October 18, 2023, <https://lineagejourney.com/read/edson-white-his-conversion-and-work>; "The Morningstar," Lineage Journey, accessed October 18, 2023. <https://lineagejourney.com/read/the-morningstar>; Lineage Journey, "Edson White: His Work & Conversion | Episode 42 | Season 2 |," YouTube, April 17, 2019, Educational Video, 0:17 To 04:25, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nnxvfxjvda>; Lineage Journey, "The Morning Star | Episode 43 | Season 2 |," YouTube, April 24, 2019, Educational Video, 0:19 To 05:04, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynadahmlu6k>; Heidie L. Raine, "A Sickly Sabbatarian," *Cedarville Review* 22, No. 1 (2022): 23, <https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cedarvillereview/vol22/iss1/23>.

³⁹² Miguel A. Muñoz-Laboy, Laura Murray, Natalie Wittlin, Jonathan Garcia, Veriano Terto Jr., and Richard G. Parker, "Beyond Faith-based Organizations: Using Comparative Institutional Ethnography to Understand Religious Responses to HIV and AIDS in Brazil," *American Journal of Public Health* 101, no. 6 (2011): 972-978, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2010.300081.

and striving to transform wider societal structures.³⁹³

Mission trips and campaigns, from small-scale domestic endeavors to large-scale international ones in the Caribbean and Africa, are central to NAPS' evangelistic activities. Public evangelism, Bible studies, and the distribution of Christian publications are all examples of such direct evangelism. The focus is on one-on-one interaction and open discussion to introduce people to Christianity in a mutually enriching and life-altering way. In keeping with their all-encompassing philosophy, NAPS runs food programs and aids in disaster relief. They help communities after fires, earthquakes, and mass shootings. NAPS considers this work indispensable to their evangelistic endeavors as an expression of Christ's love in the world.³⁹⁴

Medical Missionary Work: The Abundant Life Wellness Institute (ALWI)

As a way of meeting tangible urgent needs and as a potent instrument for evangelism, Adventists consider medical missionary work a concrete embodiment of Christ's healing ministry and gospel work.³⁹⁵ NAPS' holistic approach to outreach and evangelism also includes health and wellness. Inspired yet again by the Adventist Church's long history of incorporating medical evangelism as the right arm of the gospel, NAPS constructed the Abundant Life Wellness Institute (ALWI) in Sawyerville, Alabama.³⁹⁶ The center is an arm of

³⁹³ Andrew E. Kim, "Religious Influences on Personal and Societal Well-being," *Social Indicators Research* 62, (2003): 149-170, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022641100109>.

³⁹⁴ See NAPS Accolade book (1993-2006), 1-19.

³⁹⁵ See Matt 4:23-25; 8:2-16; 9:1-8, 18-34; 10:1; 12:9-14; 14:34-36; 15:21-31. Also based on E.G. White's admonitions such as, "I can see in the Lord's providence that the medical missionary work is to be a great entering wedge, whereby the diseased soul may be reached;" and "Physical healing is bound up with the gospel commission. In the work of the gospel, teaching and healing are never to be separated;" make this an imperative of SDAs. (*Evangelism*, 513; *Christian Service*, 133).

³⁹⁶ "Our Method" SDA Church, accessed August 10, 2022, www.adventist.org/official-statements/mission-statement-of-the-seventh-day-adventist-church. "The right arm of the gospel" is often heard by SDAs to motivate church members to adopt health-related programs in their evangelism activities. It is generally followed by some authoritative Ellen White's quotes such as, "The medical missionary work is the right hand of the gospel. It is necessary to the advancement of the cause of God. As through it men and women are led to see the importance of right habits of living, the saving power of the truth will be made known" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, 59).

NAPS, with its nonprofit status, and provides wellness programs and health services to the community based on the philosophy of “living life abundantly.” The Institute is one of the many ways NAPS promotes healthy living among those most vulnerable to lifestyle diseases. It hosts free community health expos (fairs) and free dental clinics to help individuals achieve optimum health through a Christ-centered approach encompassing mind, body, and spirit. ALWI’s promulgation of hope and healing stresses a balanced lifestyle and natural therapies to alleviate illness. NAPS also operates several other programs, including a food and clothing bank on this rural campus.³⁹⁷

ALWI, now a flagship initiative, began with a “provocation” given by pastor Auldwin Humphrey, NAPS’ first Chairman of the Board. In his directive to NAPS, elder Humphrey opined, “the work in helping to improve the quality of life for the descendants of freed slaves was unfinished and that NAPS should endeavor to serve the forgotten in the Black Belt region of the southern United States.”³⁹⁸ Having accepted Humphrey’s charge to build ALWI and witnessed God’s leading and provision in the cause, NAPS founded two other clinics. The enlightenment regarding the impoverished conditions in health and education in the Black Belt birthed the model for ALWI. With doors opened for services, the Institute continuously works to improve rural healthcare and education and to train youth missionaries.³⁹⁹

The rural clinics are the organization’s dedication to its mission and ALWI’s cause. The clinics provide free medical care to those in need in the southern field with a team of

³⁹⁷ “The Southern Outpost,” email sent from the president to NAPS staff and the chairman of the board on August 4, 2013. Before being renamed ALWI, the original vision for NAPS’ health work in the South was called the Southern Medical Missionary Outpost (SMMO). NAPS used 3 John 1:2 and John 10:10b for biblical justification for ALWI. See “Updated: NAPS Southern Work Activity Report for ASI (FINAL),” email sent from NAPS’ project manager on April 18, 2013.

³⁹⁸ “About ALWI,” NAPS, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.abundantlifeway.org/about>.

³⁹⁹ “About ALWI.” See also, “NAPS in Action” *3ABN Today Live* (TDY1220002), 14:44, Posted by Three Angels Broadcasting Network, January 14, 2022, https://youtu.be/_gkxfrxvaw.

passionate volunteers willing to help others. Their services support the most underserved – providing for their basic needs so they can focus on other aspects of their lives. In addition to preventing starvation, NAPS promotes the SDA’s health message through nutrition education. The ministry offers courses and programs about the importance of good nutrition, physical activity, and how to make healthy choices. Some resources include lectures, group studies, books, and audio-visual resources.

The institute’s committed health experts and volunteers provide essential health information during their health expos, a major aspect of their medical mission work. These activities are generally organized with local communities and churches to reach people without immediate access to medical care. The health expos deliver free health tests, screenings, consultations, healthy food samples, and instructional materials.⁴⁰⁰ Since NAPS values prevention over treatment, it has funded numerous health awareness initiatives. Seminars and workshops on nutrition, stress management, and natural cures are frequently held. NAPS is also doing important work by addressing a neglected area of health care: dental hygiene. Often combined with health expos, dental clinics offer much-needed dental care accessible in areas where it is scarce. An impressive mobile medical and dental unit is often parked in an open area where residents gather to receive no-cost dental services ranging from checkups and cleanings to extensive work. The mobile clinics make visits to different neighborhoods to increase their exposure.

Incorporating spiritual care into the medical missionary work is something that NAPS appears cautiously mindful to implement – a way to remind themselves they are not secular health organizations and are motivated by a spiritual purpose. Each interaction, whether a

⁴⁰⁰ “About ALWI,” and National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, “Abundant Life Wellness Institute (ALWI),” *NAPS News*, n.d., 12.

consultation at the ALWI, a health screening at an expo, a dental procedure, or a presentation at a health conference, is viewed as a chance to communicate the Gospel. It expresses the group's belief that a person needs to be healed physically, emotionally, and spiritually.⁴⁰¹

Education and Training

NAPS has an expansive view of evangelism that “evangelizes” and strongly emphasizes teaching and learning. GEMMS and NALA are two of the organization's primary educational pillars to achieve this goal. NAPS' commitment to these organizations demonstrates its faith in the transformative potential of learning. They give people a solid foundation in the Christian faith and the tools they need to further their development. NAPS' educational offerings serve as a springboard for evangelization, creating a safe space for students to explore Christianity from multiple perspectives.⁴⁰² NAPS places a premium on education and training because it is convinced of the transformative power of biblical knowledge.

NAPS' dedication to preparing future generations of medical missionaries and Bible workers is exemplified by GEMMS. Also located on the Sawyerville campus, GEMMS offers medical missionary training and preparation to proclaim the Word of God in underserved areas in the United States and other countries. All aspects of conventional health education are taught alongside a solid spiritual grounding in GEMMS' comprehensive and innovative curriculum. The training program features instruction in evangelism, biblical studies, prophecy, anatomy, physiology, nutrition, natural remedies, medical care, carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, and farming skills, depending on which tract a student chooses. The goal is to produce rounded

⁴⁰¹ See NAPS, *Annual Report* (Huntsville: National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, 2020), 18; About ALWI;” and “Abundant Life Wellness Institute,” *NAPS News*, 12.

⁴⁰² See “Medical Missionary Training,” *NAPS News*, 9-13; “Medical Missionary School,” NAPS, accessed November 22, 2022, <https://www.napsoc.org/gemms>; and NAPS Newsletters after 2015.

missionaries capable of caring for people’s physical and spiritual needs as they serve. Students learn to be frontline workers in their communities, where they share the Gospel and provide essential health services. In addition, GEMMS is not confined to the confines of the classroom. As a result, students are more likely to practice what they have learned in the actual world. Students can learn by participating in health fairs, disaster response efforts, and various mission trips where they can put their newfound knowledge to use.⁴⁰³

NALA caters to a younger demographic than GEMMS. Pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade students receive an excellent education at a private Christian institution. The Academy is committed to a form of education that promotes the well-being of the whole student, including their mental, emotional, and physical health. NALA’s curriculum combines regular academic subjects with a strong Christian worldview.⁴⁰⁴ Teaching children the Bible at a young age helps them to develop their faith and character. The Adventists’ *8 Laws of Health* are integrated into the curriculum, and the school promotes physical activity and healthy eating.⁴⁰⁵ Students at NALA are also taught the value of service and empathy in a setting created to encourage a sense of community, citizenship, and cooperation. NALA’s emphasis on service and mission activity extends beyond the classroom, mirroring NAPS’ core values.⁴⁰⁶

Crusades, Bible Studies, Canvassing, Community Service, and Feeding Programs

Evangelistic campaigns, crusades, Bible studies, canvassing, community service, and feeding programs are all used to further NAPS’ goal of spreading the Gospel and relieving the suffering of the poor and hungry. They conduct these outreach efforts regularly in the US and

⁴⁰³ “Medical Missionary School,” <https://www.napsoc.org/gemms>.

⁴⁰⁴ “About NALA,” NAPS, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.napsoc.org/nala>.

⁴⁰⁵ The eight laws are: Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust [in God]. See www.newstart.com.

⁴⁰⁶ National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, “NAPS Abundant Life Academy,” *NAPS News*, n.d., 9.

abroad as part of their strategic evangelism plans. Distinct SDA doctrines and prophecy studies are presented and preached during public and open-air meetings. They also combine music, personal testimonials, skits, and informative health talks at these events to create an inviting and informative spiritual environment. The crusades and other activities seek to do more than just spread the Gospel by encouraging people to get out and serve their communities. NAPS' Bible studies are integral to their mission to spread the Gospel. These investigations can be a small group study, a one-on-one session, or even a full-fledged classroom. The purpose is to learn more about God and His Word and to inspire people to develop a closer connection with Jesus. They strengthen faith, bring people closer together, and equip them with Bible knowledge.⁴⁰⁷

NAPS still uses the time-honored strategy of door-to-door canvassing to spread the Gospel. Door-to-door distribution of Christian and Adventist health material is a common activity for NAPS volunteers. This method makes it easier to become acquainted with the neighborhood and makes it possible to tailor your conversations to their unique interests and requirements. The Christian principle of 'love thy neighbor' is reflected in NAPS' evangelistic approach by focusing on service to the community. NAPS shows the love of Christ by helping the needy in concrete ways. These good deeds include everything from disaster aid and mentoring programs to neighborhood clean-ups and assistance with home repairs. In addition to alleviating suffering in the here and now, acts of service like these foster greater intimacy and pave the way for profound spiritual discussions. Given its mandate to fight hunger, NAPS places special emphasis on feeding programs. These programs feed people who might otherwise go hungry. However, the feeding programs' goals are broader than only alleviating

⁴⁰⁷ See *NAPS Ministry Brochure*; and "About NAPS."

food insecurity. Volunteers offer more than just food when they feed one another; they share Christ's love, compassion, and hope. Eating together is a powerful way to bond and find spiritual solace.⁴⁰⁸

Through these varied evangelistic strategies, NAPS seeks to minister to the people it serves by providing for their physical and spiritual needs. The group's mission is to put faith into action by serving others and loving those in need. NAPS strives to exemplify the teachings of Jesus Christ, who commanded His disciples to feed the hungry, help the needy, and tell the good news, and this is reflected in all of their evangelistic efforts, including meetings, Bible studies, canvassing, community service, and feeding programs. By serving those in need and disseminating the Christian message in this way, NAPS demonstrates what it means to put faith into action.⁴⁰⁹

Short-term Missions

Short-term missions are an integral aspect of NAPS' evangelistic strategy and are frequently the impetus for life-altering spiritual growth in both the missionaries and the people they serve. Spring and summer mission trips allow volunteers to put their whole hearts into proclaiming and demonstrating the Gospel, frequently leading to several baptisms, distributing thousands of Christian books and magazines, and building local communities of faith.⁴¹⁰ Spring missions are generally shorter when students have just under a two-week break from school. The ministry generally picks one or two cities where the ministry and student volunteers enter to canvass, present their mission projects to churches and businesses, and minister to youth at detention centers. The same activities are repeated in the fall when schools

⁴⁰⁸ *NAPS Newsletter*, Fall 2007, 1-3; *NAPS Ministry Brochure*; and "About NAPS."

⁴⁰⁹ NAPS Accolade book (1993-2006), 1-19; and NAPS Accolade book (1993-2009).

⁴¹⁰ See mission report stats from NAPS' annual board meetings (2010-2016).

break for Christmas. Fall missions last about three weeks, allowing for added outreach programs and fundraising at more churches and businesses.

Summer mission trips are the most intensive, lasting about six to eight weeks. Many young adults, particularly college students, use their summer vacation break to go on a short-term mission trip at home or abroad. To serve the locals' needs, NAPS hosted everything from building projects and health clinics to Bible study groups and evangelistic campaigns. Baptisms are an important spiritual effect of these summer trips because they show that people respond to the evangelistic message.⁴¹¹

The volunteers often report feeling more connected to God and reenergizing to serve others after a short-term mission trip. They grew spiritually and expanded their worldview by participating in hands-on ministry work where they experienced God's love firsthand. There are also substantial benefits for the communities that these missions serve. Whether it's a new community center, establishing new churches, training local leaders to carry on the work, or launching community development programs.⁴¹² This practical demonstration of affection has changed people's hearts and minds in preparation for hearing the Gospel. Moreover, the results of these missions continued to have an impact far after the short-term mission ended and NAPS left the area.

Domestic and Global Missions

For almost four decades, NAPS has been a material and spiritual sustenance source for

⁴¹¹ Baptism is an important indicator of NAPS' missionary success because it represents lives changed by God and who have publicly confessed faith and acceptance of Christ's love. The number of baptisms during summer mission trips range from a few dozens to hundreds and even a thousand (Malawi and Mozambique 2008 mission trip). See Rom 6:3-7; 10:9-13; SDA Fundamental Beliefs #9 and #10; and NAPS' mission reports from their annual board meetings (2010-2016).

⁴¹² For example, the HIV/AIDS Training Center in Choma, Zambia and churches planted in places like Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Botswana, Mozambique, Liberia, Suriname, and Guyana. See NAPS' mission reports from their annual board meetings (2010-2016).

impoverished people. An extensive survey and interview process with NAPS missionaries examined its influence and the efficacy of its mission approach. The domestic missions' responses showed widespread support for NAPS' holistic approach to aid. Volunteers on these missions have expressed a deep satisfaction from meeting material and spiritual. The volunteers' dedication to learning about and meeting the local community's needs was a shining example of the importance placed on community integration. This method has helped NAPS build trusting relationships with the people it serves.⁴¹³

In contrast, international operations posed new difficulties and opened up new possibilities. Due to language and cultural obstacles, volunteers had to be flexible and rely significantly on local volunteers. Despite these obstacles, the global mission results showed great accomplishment, with many communities being transformed and many more being baptized.⁴¹⁴

A combination of sharing the Gospel with acts of service was seen as very effective by respondents to the survey. The communities NAPS worked in were profoundly affected by the organization's distinctive "service evangelism" strategy, which consists of showing Christ's love through concrete acts of service. Community service, medical clinics, Bible study, and evangelical gatherings were the most often mentioned evangelistic techniques. People who might not have been exposed to Christianity otherwise were reached effectively through these means. Medical missionary work's potential to meet immediate health needs and provide opportunities for spiritual discussions has been widely praised. High rates of baptisms and professions of faith were cited as evidence that these missionary efforts were fruitful.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹³ See Figures 4, 6, and 16.

⁴¹⁴ Generally, more than domestic US missions. See NAPS' baptism reports in their annual board meeting manuals (2010-2016).

⁴¹⁵ Figures 10, 14-16; and NAPS mission reports from their annual board meeting manuals (2010-2016).

However, the effects of NAPS went far beyond these numerical indicators to include the organization's impact on community transformation, improved living conditions, and the emergence of long-term local leadership.⁴¹⁶

Youth and Civic Engagements

NAPS is strongly committed to working with young people, valuing them as present and future assets. Inspiring talks at schools, churches, and juvenile detention facilities make up much of their plan to engage youth in community service and hands-on ministry. At the same time, NAPS has demonstrated its dedication to social justice by participating in several marches and civic campaigns – doing so with the utmost regard and compassion when interacting with young people. This section comprehensively analyzes the function and implications of these actions, which have far-reaching effects. Since young people face many challenges, NAPS offers a safe space to share their experiences, learn from their peers, and find new ways to approach intractable problems. The concept relies heavily on motivational speeches delivered in juvenile correctional facilities. Volunteers from NAPS preach the Gospel of salvation and change. They hope to motivate young people to improve their situation by stressing their ability to change their future. Health, education, and character development are frequent topics of school-based talks. They encourage students to do their best, take personal responsibility, and stress the value of choosing healthy lifestyle options. On the other side, NAPS uses churches as a setting to discuss religious topics, inspire young people to develop a close relationship with God, and dedicate their lives to helping others.⁴¹⁷

The encouraging and empowering presentations touch youth deeply and frequently lead to dramatic shifts in their perspectives, practices, and goals, or to be baptized. Moreover,

⁴¹⁶ Figures 10, 14-16.

⁴¹⁷ Tavis Smiley, *The Covenant in Action* (Carlsbad: Hay House, 2006), 20-24.

NAPS' involvement with the youth is a dramatic demonstration of their dedication to holistic transformation, which includes fostering their emotional, social, and spiritual development. In addition to working with young people, NAPS has consistently shown its solidarity with the oppressed through its activism for social justice, racial equality, and the rights of the marginalized. They have participated in nonviolent protest marches and rallied support for worthy causes.⁴¹⁸ The effects of NAPS' participation in these demonstrations and campaigns are far-reaching.

Combating Gang Violence in Los Angeles, California

The city of Los Angeles witnessed a steady increase in gang-related violence since the Rodney King Riots in 1992. Nearing 2000, NAPS pursued a call to embrace peace instead of war and that all people have a right to be free from hunger. To combat the violence and drug problems, NAPS used its unique approach to peacebuilding by engaging with gang members and addressing the root causes of the violence. They organized and conducted a march for a drug-free LA and a march against Paramount Pictures and their contribution to the problem of depicting violence on TV.⁴¹⁹

As positive as the desire to make a difference was, trying to accomplish that objective was challenging. One of the challenges NAPS faced was a lack of funding. As a small organization, they did not have the same resources as other peacebuilding organizations. Another challenge NAPS faced was resistance from some gang members who were not interested in peace and saw NAPS' work as a threat to their power. Despite these difficulties, NAPS successfully reduced gang violence and provided food and resources to gang-impacted

⁴¹⁸ Smiley, *The Covenant in Action*, 20.

⁴¹⁹ See Darla Price, "NAPS History Timeline," NAPS (n.d.) 4; and Smiley, *The Covenant in Action*, 22.

communities.⁴²⁰

Anti-Lottery March in Alabama

On March 12, 1999, NAPS held a march on the Alabama state capitol in Montgomery. The protest's objective was the state's new anti-lottery law, passed in March of that year. The protesters marched against having the lottery in Alabama and were concerned about its impact on the state's economy and educational system. NAPS felt that the law unfairly targeted the poor and would increase poverty and starvation in the state. Over 200 people attended the Peaceful March with coverage by the local news stations, and the Associated Press picked up the story. The effort got the attention of the state's legislators, the media, and the Alabama legislature, which approved a Bill (HB19) that would have effectively ended the lottery in the state.⁴²¹

The House of Representatives and the Senate approved the Bill, but the governor never signed it. This Bill would have made selling or advertising lottery tickets in the state illegal. Possessing or using lottery tickets would have made it a crime, but it was never enacted, and the lottery continues to operate in Alabama. While this lottery march may seem to have been a failed effort, the state began to change how it ran the lottery. The change did not impact the state's budget. The state also began to invest more money into the education system, and the change did not negatively impact the state's education system.⁴²²

Humanitarian Aid, Disaster Response, and Media Influence

In addition to its primary missions of evangelism and education, NAPS also lends a helping hand during natural disasters and humanitarian crises. What follows is an in-depth look

⁴²⁰ Price, "NAPS History Timeline," 4.

⁴²¹ Price, "NAPS History Timeline," 4.

⁴²² Price, "NAPS History Timeline," 1.

at NAPS' response to such events. The fact that NAPS is active in rendering humanitarian aid in times of disasters yet again demonstrates the extent of their dedication to ministering to relevant needs. Their proactive and compassionate response has been consistent whenever there are devastating hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, shootings, or other tragedies. They act quickly to provide emergency aid by providing food, clothing, water, basic shelter, and medical care.⁴²³

NAPS has responded to and provided aid in the aftermath of high-profile disasters like the 1999 famine in southern Sudan, the New York 9/11 terrorist attack, the 2004 Sri Lanka tsunami, California wildfires, hurricanes Katrina, Harvey, and Gustave, the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Sandy Hook and Virginia Tech shootings, and tornadoes in Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Oklahoma. Through all this, NAPS volunteers still go on numerous mission trips and have witnessed God's hand at work in the lives of people facing untold suffering.⁴²⁴

The Twin Towers, which once stood for everything that the USA valued, were brought to their knees on September 11, 2001 – covering the bodies of thousands at the financial capital of the world.⁴²⁵ According to Ashley Batiste, it was like a horror novel that came to fruition. Debris floated everywhere throughout New York City. The smoke was so thick it was almost impossible to see one's arm stretched out in front of them. Brave firefighters and law enforcement officers gallantly streamed to the disaster scene, doing what they could to save lives, but unfortunately, many also lost their lives. Filled with tears, families and friends came in droves, anxiously searching for their loved ones in the reverberating anguish and pain

⁴²³ "About NAPS."

⁴²⁴ NAPS, "Our Mission," accessed October 31, 2021, <https://www.napsoc.org/about-us-more>.

⁴²⁵ Ashley Batiste, "Responding to the Call of Ministry," *Adventist Review*, October 17, 2012, accessed November 7, 2022, <https://adventistreview.org/2012-1529/2012-1529-18>.

emanating from the rubble and dust. They hang pictures of the missing from anywhere they could if only someone would notice a familiar face and bring good news.⁴²⁶

NAPS student volunteers traveled for over twenty-four hours to Ground Zero to bring hope and cheer where they could. They brought a marching band with musical instruments, hugs, love, and *peace Above the Storm* booklets to give what they had to shock-ridden residents of New Yorkers. Patriotic notes like the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” “America the Beautiful,” and “The Star Spangled Banner” to soothing songs like “When the Saints Go Marching In,” “God Bless America,” and “Amazing Grace” now permeated the air, as reassuring embraces spread from person to person and stranger to stranger.⁴²⁷ That day, NAPS’ ministry was like fresh manna falling on hurting hearts who desperately needed something to fill their dryness. The disaster and humanitarian aid provided by NAPS has often been essential in helping affected areas recover and return to regular life. These efforts demonstrate NAPS’ commitment to going where the need is highest and helping people.

The effect of the media on NAPS’ catastrophe response is like that of the organization itself. NAPS has received extensive coverage from many media outlets, from which they have benefited greatly from positive attention. The coverage allowed NAPS to publicize information about its goals and accomplishments to a wider audience, expanding its reach and impact. Stories about the work of NAPS have been disseminated to an international audience via print media, broadcast media, and the Internet. Because of this, people are more likely to learn about and get involved in NAPS’ efforts to solve the problems they face. It has increased the organization’s capacity to help people by raising awareness, recruiting volunteers, and

⁴²⁶ “Responding to the Call of Ministry.”

⁴²⁷ “Special Feature: Students Bring Comfort to Devastated City,” *Oakwood College Archives*. (Huntsville: Oakwood College, n.d.).

augmenting donated resources. In addition, NAPS' efforts have also been validated, and their reputation has been bolstered thanks to the media's coverage of their work. As a result, opportunities for cooperation and synergy have arisen, strengthening their ability to achieve their goals. The public may now see the immediate results of their donations thanks to media coverage that has increased trust and accountability.⁴²⁸ However, with increased media exposure comes the duty of regulating public perception and preventing misunderstandings of the organization's goals. NAPS manages this by remaining focused on its objective and service goals.

Shootings in the US – NAPS Responds

Just before dawn on Monday, April 23, 2007, fifteen NAPS student volunteers from Oakwood College arrived at Virginia Polytechnic University (Virginia Tech) in Blacksburg, Virginia. They situated themselves at the flag memorial ceremony at West Ambler Johnston Hall at 7:15 a.m., where thirty-three people were shot and killed on campus just a week before. The group proceeded to the drill field in total silence, but once there, they spoke with students and faculty who expressed appreciation for their presence.⁴²⁹ The band performed songs such as the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* and *American the Beautiful*. Harvey Kennedy, a sophomore majoring in biology, played *It Is Well With My Soul* and *Amazing Grace* on the violin.

Next, the group marched to the bell tower in front of Burriss Hall, where flowers, poems, and pictures of each individual killed in the attack decorated the scene. The ceremony was overpowering regarding attendance, feelings expressed, and solace offered as hundreds of

⁴²⁸ See NAPS Accolade books (1993-2006 and 1993-2009); and Guyana Trusted Television Headline News, "National Association for the Prevention of Starvation Completes Mission," *YouTube*, June 5, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcS-DXD9ysM>.

⁴²⁹ WHNT News dubbed the Virginia Tech shooting which took place on Monday, April 16, 2006, as the worst shooting massacre in U.S. history. See emailed article, "Oakwood Students Helping Console Students at Virginia Tech" WHNT News, n.d., <http://www.whnt.com/global/story.asp?s=6413641>; and NAPS 'Volunteer Activity Report for the year 2007.

people wearing orange shirts packed the drill field. Following the event's conclusion, members of NAPS made their way around the campus, passing by all the different residence halls. Along the way, they made periodic stops to perform for students and conversed with them outside the dorms. When students at Virginia Tech found out that Oakwood students had traveled ten hours from Huntsville to Blacksburg one week before their final exams, they were amazed at NAPS' commitment to being with them during their time of need. The continuous outpouring of appreciation from those with whom NAPS students met was overwhelming.⁴³⁰

Tsunamis, Hurricanes, Earthquakes, and Tornadoes

In 2004, a devastating tsunami occurred in the Indian Ocean and hit the nation of Sri Lanka, leaving behind the stench of decaying bodies. Despite the challenges NAPS faced as a Christian organization attempting to enter Sri Lanka, they eventually entered the country one month later. NAPS worked from early morning to late night, reported Anthony Paul and ten student volunteers who made the mission trip. Paul noted, "NAPS had the only chainsaw in the region." As a result, people called on NAPS "from one job to another to remove trees that were obstructing their travel or endangering their homes or other buildings." NAPS also helped clean up the wreckage, supported those recovering from loss, staged puppet shows for children, built houses for families, and even financed a wedding for a couple. The ceremony and NAPS activities were reported by Sri Lanka's national newspaper and broadcast on television. People observed and appreciated the earnestness with which these volunteers worked despite the unpleasant conditions. Ministering to need through this kind of service made it easier and more palatable for some villagers to ask volunteers about their faith, request Bible studies, and attend

⁴³⁰ See "The NAPS Banner Displayed on the VT Drillfield," VTechWorks, accessed November 9, 2023, <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/11487?show=full>; *NAPS Newsletter*, Fall 2007, 1, 2; and "Hand-delivering Relief with Love," 6-7.

NAPS' 5:30 a.m. worship services.⁴³¹

One year after the devastation caused by the tsunami in Sri Lanka, NAPS was one of the first organizations to arrive on-site in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina's devastating impact on New Orleans and surrounding areas. They reached the day following the storm – collaborating with other entities like the Red Cross to remove trees, assist those trapped in their homes, and provide supplies to charitable organizations. They were able to help and provide individuals with a glimpse of hope by presenting the good news of the Gospel. Reflecting on the event, Lakicia Foster, a member of NAPS since 2003, said that it was “really a blessing” that were not only the physical aspects of their lives restored but also the spiritual aspects. “It was nice to see people give their life to Christ,” she said satisfyingly.⁴³²

NAPS has also teamed up with other disaster responders in the aftermaths of tornadoes that pummeled its states, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Oklahoma. On April 24, 2010, when a devastating tornado struck small town Yazoo City, a small team of NAPS volunteers were already in Mississippi and was quickly moved to help. Reinforcements from Huntsville headquarters deployed to the area within a few hours, arriving in four vans to clear debris from fallen houses and minister to families with encouraging words and hugs.⁴³³

In April 2011, when a tornado devastated North Alabama, NAPS again donned their working garb, grabbed their gloves and chainsaws, and went to bring relief – NAPS style. Though the OU campus was not severely damaged, not too far away, about ten miles, parts of the Anderson Hills subdivision looked like a war zone, as if bombs had dropped on the houses. NAPS went from home to home to bring comfort, cut trees, remove debris, and sing. This

⁴³¹ Victor S. Pile, Jr., “NAPS in Sri Lanka: Oakwood College Students Bring Hope and Help to Tsunami Victims,” *Adventist Review* (April 21, 2005): 18, 19.

⁴³² Batiste, “Responding to the Call of Ministry.”

⁴³³ NAPS Staff, “Tornado Relief Yazoo City,” *NAPS News*, Fall 2010, 18.

pattern of disaster response would be repeated in Tennessee and Oklahoma when destructive tornadoes raged over them.⁴³⁴

The 2010 Earthquake in Haiti

A 7.0 magnitude earthquake smacked Haiti to its core on January 12, 2010, leaving thousands without a home, food, or medical aid and hopeless, with death all around. After the devastation, NAPS mobilized a team of twenty-two volunteers, including the president, Anthony Paul, four medical doctors, and a dental surgeon. Jeffery Pascal, a member of NAPS and Haitian by birth, felt a personal connection to the issue because his father was a resident of Haiti. Since Pascal's father had not been in touch with him since the earthquake, it was natural for him to travel with NAPS to Haiti. While there, NAPS provided medical care, supplies, food, and love to the disaster victims. By the time they arrived, people were already leaving the country because of the dangerous conditions on the ground.

Pascal served with NAPS by translating for the team while supporting medical staff, patients, and survivors at the Adventist Hospital in Diquini. Despite all the people and the commotion, he could discern a tap on his shoulder, but when he turned around to see who it was, he was astounded to discover a familiar face— his father's. They were full of joy and other emotions as they embraced one another. Pascal had been in the dark regarding his father's whereabouts until now, yet God had protected him and brought them back together unexpectedly.⁴³⁵

Medical services were not the only relief NAPS provided during this short-term

⁴³⁴ Oakwood University, "NAPS Brings Tornado Relief," 2011, 2. See also Connor Board's article, "Madison Country First Responders Remember the April 2011 'Super Outbreak' on the 10 Year Anniversary," *Fox54*, April 27, 2021, <https://www.rocketcitynow.com/article/news/local/madison-county-alabama-first-responders-remember-april-27-2011-super-tornado-outbreak-harvest/525-cd8f6678-77ba-49a0-a4a0-103cafde9d10>.

⁴³⁵ NAPS Staff, "We Don't Just Send Relief... Haiti Earthquake Relief," 6-9. See also Batiste, "Responding to the Call of Ministry."

mission trip. As more people expressed their desire to know about God’s love and His words, NAPS led a daily Bible study and evangelistic campaign. They also conducted children’s programs six times a day, teaching about morality, health, and Bible lessons. Despite the conditions in Haiti, NAPS baptized thirty-three people due to their evangelistic endeavors.⁴³⁶

Affiliations and Collaborations: Expanding the Sphere of Influence

A group’s effectiveness and reach are greatly impacted by the number and quality of its affiliations and collaborations. NAPS thrived by incorporating team science principles as they sought opportunities to help other churches and ministries improve their outreach efforts. The group’s ability to render aid was bolstered by its collaborative partnerships with other organizations and expanded its influence.⁴³⁷ The more relationships NAPS created and cultivated, the more they could demonstrate the gospel in deeds of love, help meet tangible needs, and lift people out of poverty. They were also conscious of gracefully negotiating the intricacies and challenges of collaboration without compromising their integrity or dedication to service.

However, NAPS did not confine their relationships singularly to SDA churches and ministries like Adventist Laymen Services and Industries (ASI) and Maratha Volunteers International. They also collaborated with numerous churches of other denominations and non-denominational entities, universities, the federal government, and other nonprofit charities like Feed the Children and Convoy of Hope. NAPS could more effectively accomplish its mission

⁴³⁶ National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, “Our Missions” and “NAPS Around the World,” accessed October 31, 2021, <https://www.napsoc.org>.

⁴³⁷ Roz D. Lasker, Elisa S. Weiss, and Rebecca Miller, “Partnership Synergy: A Practical Framework for Studying and Strengthening the Collaborative Advantage,” *The Milbank Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (2001): 179-205, doi:10.1111/1468-0009.00203. See summary of Team Science by National Research Council, *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Team Science* (Washington: National Academies Press, 2015), 1-8, <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/19007/chapter/2>.

thanks to the opportunities presented by these strategic affiliations.⁴³⁸ Through these crucial alliances and connections, NAPS was able to effectively extend its reach, strengthen its ability to mitigate hunger and poverty, and spread the love of Christ to a wider audience.

Their partnership with local Seventh-day Adventist churches, organizations, and conferences around the world has been vital to the acceptance and longevity of their evangelistic and charity work within the denomination. Oakwood University also had a close relationship with NAPS, allowing students to participate in mission and service projects. The constant influx of student volunteers each year meant NAPS could adequately execute its missional objectives. NAPS has drawn on wider resources and knowledge because of its partnerships with other nonprofits and charitable organizations. Together with these entities, NAPS has been able to help more people, complete more ambitious initiatives, and make a greater difference. The combined efforts of these groups are stronger than the sum of their parts.⁴³⁹

For instance, their efforts to improve health through collaboration with healthcare professionals have benefited greatly from this partnership. Through these associations, NAPS has gained access to more resources, expertise, and abilities, allowing them to provide a higher standard of care in their medical mission work. They have also enabled NAPS to provide services like dental clinics and health fairs, which would be difficult to implement without support and donations.⁴⁴⁰

NAPS' disaster response and humanitarian aid efforts have also benefited from the

⁴³⁸ Jonathon N. Cummings and Sara Kiesler, "Collaborative Research Across Disciplinary and Organizational Boundaries," *Social Studies of Science* 35, no. 5 (2005): 703-722, doi:10.1177/0306312705055535.

⁴³⁹ See Preface and Chapter 1 of Paul W. Mattessich and Kirsten M. Johnson, *Collaboration: What Makes It Work* (Minnesota: Fieldstone Alliance, 2018), <https://ced.sog.unc.edu/2019/04/collaboration-what-makes-it-work>.

⁴⁴⁰ See list of accolades in the Appendices.

organization's collaborations with government agencies and foreign organizations. Through these partnerships, NAPS obtained permission to operate in disaster-stricken areas and places with complicated socio-political dynamics, as well as logistical support and resources. They made sure NAPS' work fit within larger alleviation strategies to safeguard the greatest possible impact. The mutually beneficial nature of these connections also required careful management. NAPS had to ensure that partnering would not conflict with their purpose of helping the poor and advancing the gospel. It necessitated exercising caution when selecting associates and meticulousness while overseeing their interactions. NAPS placed a premium on creating a domino effect whereby their efforts benefit communities outside their immediate zone of influence.⁴⁴¹ While learning from other groups, NAPS also had opportunities to encourage other organizations to adopt a similar service attitude by detailing their dedication to holistic outreach.

A Year of Dedication (YOD): Challenges and Trials

With a mission grounded in the Christian ethos of love and compassion, NAPS embodies dedication and volunteerism in service. Many volunteers who have worked with NAPS over the years have narrated their experiences with the ministry, indicating that engaging in humanitarian activities has helped them to understand the importance of serving others. NAPS began with college students enthusiastic about devoting time to relieve physical and spiritual suffering worldwide. The Year of Dedication (YOD) program was a long time coming. Following years of God's blessing and impact, leaders, whether through influence or actions, challenged volunteers to a greater degree of devotion. That call was answered for fourteen years, whereby a group of students dedicated a year of full-time service as NAPS

⁴⁴¹ Russell M. Linden, *Working Across Boundaries: Making Collaboration Work in Government and Nonprofit Organizations* (New York: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 3-29.

missionaries. While they put their academic pursuits and occupations on hold for a year, they did not leave the classroom entirely. Their commitment was a different kind of learning – service learning, continuous evangelism, and ministering to the poor, hungry, and sick.⁴⁴²

The effects of this pledge were significant. During this “year off,” volunteers gave their all to the organization’s mission and to serve the kingdom of God. Volunteers helped the organization expand its work in evangelism, education, healthcare, and humanitarian aid by contributing thousands of hours. This devotion created an atmosphere of selflessness, motivating others to pitch in and join the following year. Participants gained a wealth of experience, confidence, and leadership as they ministered to the love of God in tangible ways through canvassing, literature distribution, community service projects, and short-term mission trips outside the United States. Some of the YOD Projects have included (but are not limited to) the construction of houses and churches, disaster relief, feeding programs, HIV/AIDS awareness, marches, medical, educational, and empowerment presentations at churches, Juvenile Detention facilities, and schools.⁴⁴³

NAPS’ close connection with Oakwood University was mutually beneficial and invaluable to the ministry’s achievements. OU has contributed educational materials and a regular stream of committed volunteers. NAPS has also indirectly been a recruiting agent that brought prospective students to the university. However, there have been difficulties in this partnership that have tested both organizations. NAPS occupied office space in the biology department at OU, conducted worship, training, and other student-led programs on campus, and utilized parking space for its fleet of vehicles. While the missional activities of NAPS

⁴⁴² NAPS, “Year of Dedication,” accessed November 18, 2022, <https://www.napsoc.org/year-of-dedication>.

⁴⁴³ NAPS Staff, “A Year of Dedication;” *NAPS News*, Fall 2007, 3; and *NAPS News*, Fall 2010, 12.

made the university “look good,” especially when featured in the News and other media outlets, there was a stirring uneasiness about their relationship.

Oakwood University sometimes used volunteer hours and evangelistic activities from NAPS for accreditation purposes. NAPS would sometimes be summoned to answer questions about their activities to satisfy questions and calls the university received or that the board may have had. The perceptions about NAPS’ independent nonprofit and financial status, the number of vehicles owned, and their governance seemed greater than reality. The tensions were acerbated during the YOD program as this posed a threat to OU’s accreditation numbers, financial aid packages, and the growing concerns about students finishing their academic pursuits and graduation. NAPS provided documentation showing that students in the YOD program and regular NAPS volunteers did not adversely affect their academic standing.⁴⁴⁴

Conversely, NAPS student volunteers maintained excellent grades, won academic awards, and gained acceptance into graduate programs and medical schools – often gaining an edge due to their extra-curricular involvement in NAPS programs. Ultimately, NAPS could no longer operate on OU’s campus and found office spaces near the university. In time, though, their entire operations moved to their campus further away in Sawyerville, Alabama.⁴⁴⁵

Although these difficulties were serious and time-consuming, they also presented invaluable growth possibilities. NAPS reflected on its procedures, made appropriate adjustments, and strengthened the ministry’s capability to adapt to changing circumstances and expand into new territory. Some volunteers see this rift between NAPS and OU as a call to heal

⁴⁴⁴ Price, “NAPS History Timeline,” 6, 7. See also MP3 audio file in Project Pollard folder titled, “2012-10-01 Post-Pollard Mtg with Students,” (Length 01:00:15).

⁴⁴⁵ OU’s official desist letter to NAPS stated, “Oakwood hereby terminates NAPS’s tenancy, if any, with respect to the Campus, and demand that NAPS permanently vacate the Campus within ten (10) days of the date of this notice.” See Price, “NAPS History Timeline,” 7; Assorted YOD files in “YOD – Past and Present,” located in NAPS Office Affairs digital folder; and “YOD Package for Office of Spiritual Life,” email sent to NAPS staff on September 10, 2009, and August 11, 2011.

the divide and would like to see NAPS working with OU again, especially to maintain the youthful volunteer spirit that imbibed the work. Others think that NAPS has matured enough to venture into a new direction. The challenges are now integral to the organization's development and history – sparking a renewed culture of service and compassion beyond its walls. These milestones form a foundation on which NAPS may forge ahead in its mission to propagate the gospel in new ways.

Reaching the African Diaspora

Though based in the US, NAPS sought to live up to its mission by serving domestically and globally because cheerfulness and compassionate care transcend borders, cities, and nations. The same outworking love they brought to America's at-risk and underserved towns was the same they shared internationally – in more than twenty countries where people of African descent call home. Whether feeding children or actively working to prevent HIV/AIDS and violence, NAPS and its fourteen branches or chapters worldwide endeavored to live out their ethos tangibly, “we don't just send relief; we hand-deliver it with love and care.” These branches represented seventeen nations: Guyana, Haiti, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Ethiopia, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, Liberia, Suriname, and Zambia.⁴⁴⁶

The Ministry of NAPS was not just responsible for responding to national disasters. They also offered love, support, and hope to secluded and little-known corners of the globe. One of these remote areas was Karnataka, India, home to a particular group of people of mixed African and Indian ancestry. They reside in rural regions of India, and their dark skin and African lineage are scarcely known globally. They are among the most politically and economically oppressed groups people groups – dubbed as *Harijan* or “untouchables,” the

⁴⁴⁶ NAPS formed its first overseas branch in Guyana. See “NAPS History Timeline,” 1-9; NAPS, 2, 3; and NAPS Global.

lowest within India's caste system – shunned by society because of their African ancestry. Their isolation shut them out of many opportunities to further their education, and they faced tremendous discrimination from others at local schools. These castaways could see that they were not the only people who looked the way they did because NAPS volunteers gave the African-Indian people a glimpse of others who looked like them.⁴⁴⁷

In the summer of 2005, after completing their humanitarian relief work in Sri Lanka, NAPS was deployed to India to serve the African Indians.⁴⁴⁸ Shortly after, a contingency from the U.S. united their efforts and conducted an evangelistic campaign. They led out with children's programs, nightly preaching, and in-home visitations, resulting in one hundred sixty-three baptisms. NAPS purchased sixteen acres of land and established a school just for the *Harijans* in their community so they would not have to worry about being derided or harmed while pursuing an education. A plan was also established to build three churches within the surrounding region.⁴⁴⁹

March for the People of South Sudan

When the 1999 famine exacerbated conditions for the people of southern Sudan, it was a call to action for NAPS. The situation made children orphaned during the Sudanese conflict between the predominantly Muslim North and the mostly Christian South. They were now nomads trying to flee from the fighting at the front lines. It was at this point that NAPS offered assistance. In response to the civil war and famine affecting the region, they organized a march in Washington, D.C., at the Capitol on behalf of the people of South Sudan.⁴⁵⁰ The March was a way to raise awareness about the situation and to call on the international community to take

⁴⁴⁷ Sanique Antonio, "NAPS Making a Difference," *ASI Magazine* (Spring 2007), 28, 29. See also Batiste, "Responding to the Call of Ministry."

⁴⁴⁸ NAPS had responded to the tsunami that struck Sri Lanka.

⁴⁴⁹ See Sanique Antonio, "NAPS Making a Difference;" and "Responding to the Call of Ministry."

⁴⁵⁰ "NAPS Timeline," 3.

action. NAPS also used the march to evangelize and share the Gospel with those attending.

The protest was significant because it united individuals and organizations committed to stopping the violence and starvation occurring in that country. It was a final straw, of sorts, to pressure the authorities to act. The bold initiative was also an expression of solidarity with the Southern Sudanese and a platform for prominent voices to stand and shout. Through moments like these, NAPS continued to make a difference in the world, but the situation in South Sudan had deteriorated to the point that NAPS felt it was necessary to take more drastic action.⁴⁵¹

NAPS decided to conduct a short-term mission trip to provide aid to the region. Marlo Jackson was a member of the delegation supplying relief. She explained that at the time, being a junior at Oakwood College, her goal was to become a physician. After forming a friendship with Phillip, an elderly community member who was the closest to being a doctor (though he had no official medical training), Jackson realized that being a physician alone was not an option. Assisting the less fortunate must also be a part of using her gifts and abilities.⁴⁵²

Jackson found the motivation to help the underprivileged people of southern Sudan because Phillip was a model to emulate. He not only inspired her but others in the group as well. He was earnest in his efforts to preach the faith to those fighting on the conflict's front lines and assisted with the physical care of the people who lived in his village. It was the catalyst for NAPS to assist them with palpable things like flashlights, batteries, water bottles, tents, food, and Bibles.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ "NAPS Timeline," 3.

⁴⁵² Batiste, "Responding to the Call of Ministry."

⁴⁵³ Batiste, "Responding to the Call of Ministry."

The Effectiveness of NAPS' Approach to Evangelism

The effectiveness of NAPS' evangelistic strategy was assessed through a comprehensive review of data gathered from various sources, including surveys, interviews, and mission reports. Central to the mission of NAPS, a Christian organization dedicated to service and evangelism, is to "Preach the Gospel always, and if necessary use words."⁴⁵⁴ It is as if they are driven by a similar flame which propelled the early disciples who could not help but speak of what they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20) and the Apostle Paul who felt a necessity was laid upon him and woe was he if he did not preach the gospel (1 Cor 9:16). Or, like the prophet Jeremiah who declared, "If I say, 'I will not mention Him, or speak any more in His name,' there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot."⁴⁵⁵

Direct preaching, community service, medical missions, educational projects, and disaster relief are all components of the organization's diverse evangelism strategy, including disaster assistance. This all-encompassing strategy, which addresses the spiritual needs of the people and their physical and societal demands, exemplifies the holistic nature of Christ's mission by addressing the people's spiritual, physical, and societal needs.⁴⁵⁶ Conversations with individuals with previous experience working with NAPS give extremely useful information on the efficacy of this strategy. Feedback from these sources suggests a high level of appreciation for the organization's work, with many respondents expressing a deeper grasp

⁴⁵⁴ A quote principally attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi. Though Darleen Pryds argues there is no scholarly evidence to support the claim and that the origin of the phrase's use is uncertain fact. See Darleen Pryds, "Franciscan Lay Women and the Charism to Preach," In *Franciscans and Preaching*, edited by Timothy Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 41-57, accessed November 8, 2023, doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004231306_004; and "Tidings, September-October 1999," *Tidings* (1999), 303, <https://crossworks.holycross.edu/dca001-tidi-ky-1960/303>.

⁴⁵⁵ Jer 20:9 (ESV).

⁴⁵⁶ For examples of Jesus meeting social, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs, see John 2-6 and Matt 4:23-25; 8-10; 12; 14; 15.

of Christian beliefs and a closer connection with Christ due to their encounters with NAPS.⁴⁵⁷

A high degree of involvement and receptivity to their mission is indicated by the large number of individuals who attend their evangelistic meetings, participate in their Bible studies, and get assistance through their community programs. In addition, the number of baptisms that took place as a direct result of their participation in summer missions is strong evidence of the effectiveness of their efforts to spread the Gospel. The findings demonstrate that NAPS' medical missionary work is an important component of their overall strategy for evangelism, and their results demonstrate great progress in this particular domain as well.⁴⁵⁸

It has extended its reach to diverse populations through various initiatives like the Abundant Life Wellness Institute (ALWI), health expos, dental clinics, and educational programs. Besides meeting essential medical needs, these programs also serve as platforms for spreading the Gospel, reflecting biblical principles of evangelism.⁴⁵⁹ Their educational endeavors, such as the GEMMS and NALA, have also proven fruitful forums for advancing the everlasting gospel. Not only do these programs provide participants with information and skills, but they also allow participants to share Christ in the marketplace and common spheres of life. The number of people who participated in these programs and the comments they got are two indicators that point to the approach's overall success.

In addition, NAPS' participation in disaster and humanitarian relief efforts has created opportunities for evangelism in regions that catastrophes have impacted. NAPS has been able to exhibit the love of Christ in action by being there during times of need and offering support in a practical sense. It has resulted in a tremendous effect and paved the way for spreading the

⁴⁵⁷ See Figures 12-16.

⁴⁵⁸ See Figures 12-16.

⁴⁵⁹ See ALWI and GEMMS missionary reports in NAPS' Annual Board Meeting Manuals (2016-2022).

gospel. The publicity that NAPS and its mission have received in the media has also been important in disseminating its evangelical message to a larger audience. The organization's good representation and work in various media venues increased its visibility and credibility, leading to a rise in the number of possibilities for evangelism.

However, the success of evangelism is not just determined by the number of people reached. A key component is making a big difference in people's lives and the areas they call home. In this regard, the testimonies of lives that have been transformed, the thankfulness shown by communities, and the acknowledgment gained from government agencies and towns are possibly the most powerful signs of the efficacy of NAPS' methods of evangelism.⁴⁶⁰ The information gathered gives credence to the idea that NAPS' multifaceted and results-driven evangelism strategy has been fruitful in the United States and Africa. Though there is always space for growth and adaptation to new circumstances, the current strategies NAPS takes to evangelism are a convincing paradigm for Christian ministries and local churches to implement in their service and outreach.⁴⁶¹

Recognition and Accolades from Government and Cities

Since its formation in 1978, NAPS has been at the forefront of undertaking the challenging mission of preventing starvation, reducing poverty, and spreading the love of Christ through various initiatives and programs worldwide. Owing to the substantial societal impact of these initiatives, its dedication to providing exceptional service has not gone unnoticed, which has resulted in the organization receiving recognition and praise from various government agencies and communities in the United States. The fact that the government has recognized NAPS is evidence of the enormous effect the organization has had in tackling

⁴⁶⁰ See the list of accolades in Appendix G through Appendix P.

⁴⁶¹ See list of Church letters in Appendix Q through Appendix AA.

problems facing communities. Churches, conferences, divisions, mayors, cities, congressmen, and individuals have expressed their appreciation towards NAPS for their noteworthy contributions differently. Some of these honors have become formal awards. In contrast, others have been invited to participate in high-level talks and federations, which indicate NAPS' experience and insights in solving hunger, poverty, and juvenile social issues.⁴⁶²

The frontline of NAPS' operations in municipalities across America that have had a positive impact at the community level have been acknowledged with accolades by the cities of New York, Dallas, Atlanta, Vicksburg, Radcliff, and others. These attestations carry a special significance, proving that the work that NAPS does is meaningful to the communities that it serves. Other recognitions, such as mayoral proclamations, commended their efforts, community service awards, and partnerships with city departments to further specific initiatives and letters from churches, highlight the organization's effectiveness in grassroots engagement, address immediate community needs, and foster a culture of empathy and service. One noteworthy illustration of this is the acknowledgment that NAPS received from the city of Huntsville, Alabama, which was the location of the organization's headquarters. The Mayor's Office recognized the significant contributions that NAPS has made to the city, particularly its efforts in combating hunger and poverty. The appreciation, and others like it, also emphasize the transformative influence of NAPS' work and compassion in underserved communities.⁴⁶³

While not laboring for the spotlight, their light on a hill was not hidden. Therefore, the organization's visibility heightened due to these honors, resulting in the ministry receiving further assistance and partnerships. NAPS could now more efficiently marshal resources, engage with a wider network of partners, and amplify the impact of its work. As a result, these

⁴⁶² See Appendix AB through AF.

⁴⁶³ See full list of accolades in Appendices.

awards from local municipalities and churches legitimize NAPS' work and spur its next efforts. However, despite the significance of these honors, they are not the fundamental driving force for NAPS' work. The organization's mission is founded on a profound sense of compassion and service, propelled by the Christian ethic of showing love and concern for all God's children.

In conclusion, this chapter explored the theological foundations and approaches of NAPS' evangelism within the SDA setting and its global influence on communities. NAPS regards evangelism as a diverse ministry proclaiming and demonstrating God's love. Their distinctive approach combines service endeavors such as disaster relief and medical missions with conventional techniques like Bible studies and public evangelism campaigns. NAPS prioritizes providing services to minority communities in the United States and the African diaspora. Their "Southern Work" initiative is a prime example of their dedication, including medical services, educational programs, and preaching opportunities. NAPS draws inspiration from church-wide efforts such as "Tell the World" and "Total Member Involvement." It promotes volunteer participation and nurtures a comprehensive approach to evangelism. This all-encompassing method aims to cater to individuals' and communities' spiritual and material needs, effectively bridging the divide between theoretical concepts and practical implementation.

Evidently, their theology of evangelism drives their practice of evangelism and is likened to heeding John Stott's caution to evangelicals, "Knowledge of Scripture can never be an end in itself. We are called to 'believe' the truth and 'do' or 'obey' it."⁴⁶⁴ A holistic perspective of mission and evangelism is at the heart of NAPS' methods. The organization

⁴⁶⁴ Choi, "An Analysis of John R. W. Stott's Theology of Evangelism and Practice of Evangelism," 168.

seeks to address the spiritual, physical, and social needs of the people that it serves. The research of NAPS' practices and strategies revealed, among other key aspects, that the organization takes a comprehensive strategy – proclamation and demonstration, which is both productive and influential.⁴⁶⁵

Established in 1978, NAPS volunteers frequently face challenges to accomplish their objectives in helping people in dire straits. Trials have not deterred them from aiding affected communities or hand-delivering love, hope, and encouragement to those facing hardships. NAPS' singular devotion to this cause has been evident in the various mission projects undertaken, including personal and public evangelism, medical missionary work, response to natural disasters, humanitarian relief in times of crises, educational programs, and more. Their medical missionary work has offered a platform for evangelism while addressing vital health needs. This platform has been made possible by programs like ALWI, health expos, and dental clinics.

In a similar vein, the participation of NAPS in educational projects such as the GEMMS and NALA has provided individuals with chances to share Christian beliefs and values while also empowering them with the skills and knowledge to do so. NAPS' initiatives in disaster relief and humanitarian aid have mirrored the principles of sacrificial love and kindness. Their contribution during difficult times has had a profound evangelistic effect, demonstrating Christian love in deed and truth.⁴⁶⁶ In the next Chapter, the researcher will share the results of the study's findings from documents reviewed, questionnaires completed, and face-to-face and video interviews.

⁴⁶⁵ "Who is NAPS?: Into All the World..." *NAPS News*, n.d., 2.

⁴⁶⁶ See 2 Cor 5:14-15; 1 John 3:16-18; Jas 2:14-18; and *NAPS News*, n.d., 2-14.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE DATA

The primary aim of this Chapter is to present the results of the study's qualitative data. The researcher conducted a documentary study of primary sources to establish NAPS' contextual and historical narrative by examining relevant historical documents, personal documents, ministry communication documents, and promotional and evangelistic materials. Evaluation shown in this chapter helps determine whether NAPS' evangelistic strategies can be applied greatly and whether or not a strategic framework exists for global and domestic evangelism.

Twenty-five NAPS participants completed questionnaires and online surveys via SurveyMonkey, and the results were analyzed using NVivo software.⁴⁶⁷ Fourteen NAPS leaders were interviewed, including current and former volunteers, current staff, and current board members with comprehensive knowledge of the organization. The researcher selected these participants as they were in an excellent position to deliver accurate answers to the survey and interview questions. All the audio and video files were transcribed. The study used thematic analysis to promote efficiency in analyzing qualitative data.⁴⁶⁸ The thematic analysis also offers a theoretically flexible and accessible approach to analyzing qualitative data; hence,

⁴⁶⁷ SurveyMonkey, owned by Momentive.ai, is “a global leader in *survey* software.” It is widely used by researchers and businesses to assess customers and get participants input. It was the survey software of choice for this study because of its simplicity and popularity. According to Capterra – the world's leading software reviews and selection platform, SurveyMonkey is “trusted by 98% of the Fortune 500 and used in more than 335,000 organizations worldwide.” NVivo, a qualitative and mixed methods analysis software owned by Lumivero, enables researchers to efficiently import, organize, examine, code, and collaborate on their data to get more profound insights from their qualitative data quickly. See SurveyMonkey, “How SurveyMonkey Works: Get Started for Free,” accessed January 31, 2023, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/take-a-tour>; Momentive, “About Us,” accessed January 31, 2023, <https://www.momentive.ai/en/about>; Capterra, “SurveyMonkey Alternatives,” accessed January 31, 2023, <https://www.capterra.com/p/253516/SurveyMonkey/alternatives>; Capterra, “Our Story,” accessed January 31, 2023, <https://www.capterra.com/our-story>; and “NVivo,” Lumivero, last modified October 11, 2023, <https://lumivero.com/products/nvivo>.

⁴⁶⁸ Thematic analysis is among the widely used method in psychology for qualitative data. See Ashley Castleberry and Amanda Nolen, “Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Research Data: Is it as Easy as it Sounds?” *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning* 10, no. 6 (2018): 807-815, doi:10.1016/j.cptl.2018.03.019; and Jessica Nina Lester, Yonjoo Cho, and Chad R. Lochmiller, “Learning to Do Qualitative Data Analysis: A Starting Point,” *Human Resource Development Review* 19, no. 1 (2020): 94-106, doi:10.1177/1534484320903890.

it was the choice for this research. This study's thematic analysis sought to investigate the information provided to research, identify, and report any forms of repeated patterns.⁴⁶⁹ The method involves interpreting information provided, constructing themes, and selecting codes that help locate answers to the research questions. The questions on the survey and interview instruments were sequenced in such a way as to provide answers to each research question.⁴⁷⁰ Emerging themes addressed this paper's topic by answering all the research questions and represented the aim of NAPS' methodological and historical approach to evangelism and contribution to the SDA Church.

Findings

This section systematically presents the results in two distinct subsections: the participants' demographic and responses to the qualitative interview questions. The first subsection encompasses the distribution of age, gender, career, and response rates.

Demographic Results

Age

The results reveal that only one respondent was between eighteen and twenty-five, and one was over sixty. No participants were between ages 50-59, while almost thirty-one percent of respondents were between ages twenty-six and thirty-four, and roughly thirty-six percent were between 35-39. The rest were between the ages of 40 and 49.⁴⁷¹ The main cluster age group was 26-49, which resembles the age and generational cohort distribution among SDAs

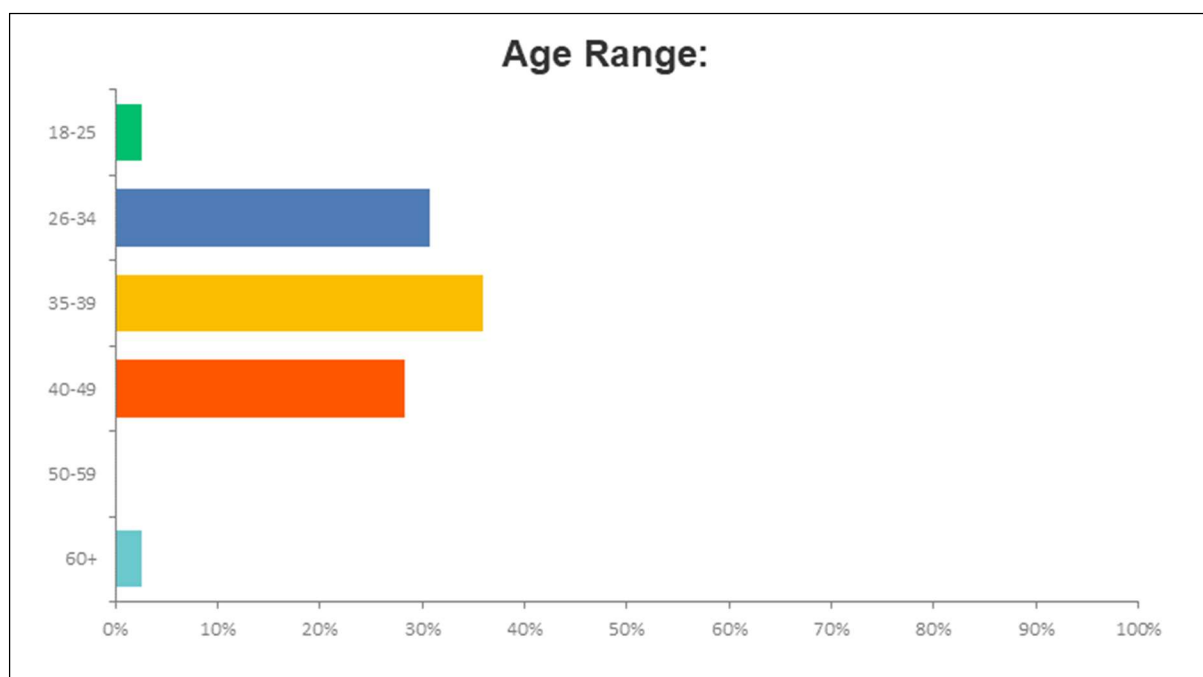
⁴⁶⁹ Braun and Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis," 77-101.

⁴⁷⁰ On the NAPS Volunteer and Staff Questionnaire research instrument, Questions 1-3 provided demographic data while Questions 4-6 answered RQ1 and RQ4. Questions 7-8 addressed the second research question while Question 9 provided answers for RQ 3. Questions 10 and 11 gave insights for RQ4 and Questions 12-15 addressed the last research question. On the NAPS Leaders Interview research instrument, Questions 1-3 primarily provided demographic data; Questions 4-7 addressed RQ1 and RQ4; Questions 8-10 answered RQ2; Questions 11-13 addressed RQ3; Questions 14-16 answered RQ4 and Questions 17-24 addressed RQ5 and RQ3. These latter questions did the same as Survey questions 12-15 but were meant for a bit more in-depth feedback in an interview setting.

⁴⁷¹ 28.2%. See Figure 1 and SurveyMonkey summary, 1.

by Pew Research Center’s “Religious Landscape Study.” It also aligns with Reimer and Wilkinson’s discovery, suggesting a strong representation of young adults in evangelical organizations. They observed that evangelicals do better at holding on to their young people and mobile members than other denominations.⁴⁷² By contrast, Simpson already noted that the SDA Church is not doing a good job retaining younger populations, which is a missed opportunity to tap into this age group’s eagerness to engage in volunteer activities and desire for social impact.⁴⁷³

Figure 1. Participants’ Age Range



Gender and Career Distribution

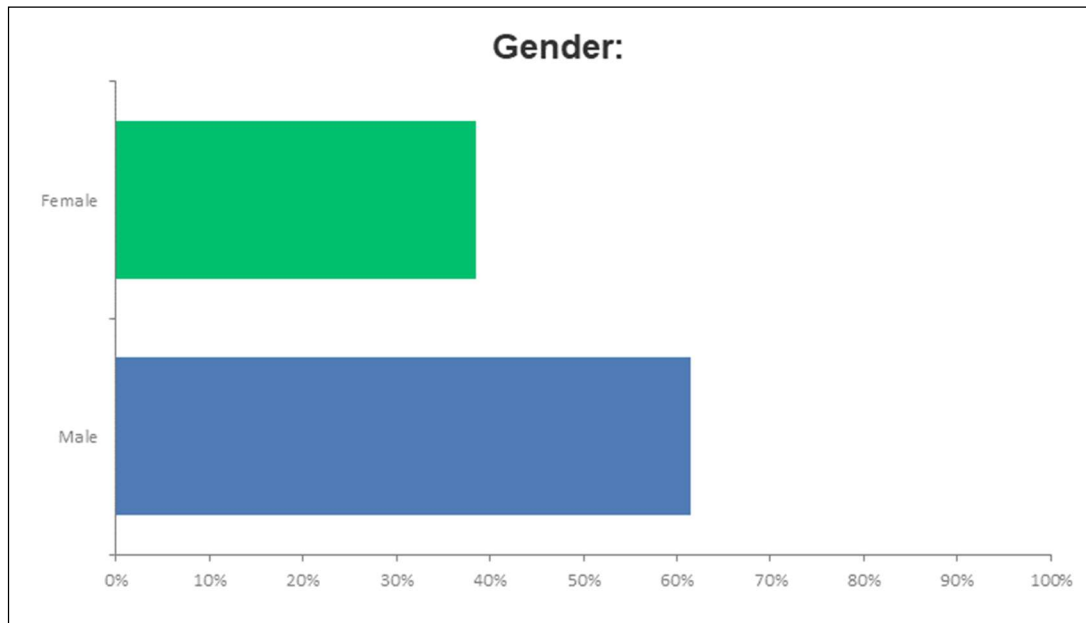
Figure 2 shows that 61.5% of the participants were males and 38.5% females, unlike Pew Research’s findings on gender composition among SDAs (46% males and 54%

⁴⁷² Sam Reimer and Michael Wilkinson, “A Demographic Look at Evangelical Congregations,” *Church and Faith Trends* 3, no. 2 (August 2010), 1-21.

⁴⁷³ Simpson, “Younger Church, Aging Leadership (Part One).”

females).⁴⁷⁴ Based on the researcher’s eleven years of pastoring five SDA congregations and twenty-two years as a member, that statistic seems to be the general trend in Adventism, where women outnumber men.⁴⁷⁵

Figure 2. Participants’ Gender Composition



The findings also reveal that all participants possessed at least a tertiary-level education, with almost forty-three percent having a bachelor’s degree, twenty-eight percent with a master’s degree, and twenty-three percent having earned doctoral degrees. Most respondents were also teachers, followed by doctors and allied health professionals.⁴⁷⁶ This distribution highlights the participants’ diverse professional backgrounds, indicating a mix of educational attainment levels and occupational roles within the sample group and confirming

⁴⁷⁴ SurveyMonkey summary, 2. See also Pew Research Center, “Religious Landscape Study: Seventh-day Adventists.”

⁴⁷⁵ Exploring the potential reasons for the observed gender disparity in the study is most likely due to the Data Collection method in the Introduction for how respondents were recruited and participated in the research since overall, most NAPS volunteers are females. Once IRB approval was granted and the research invitation posted, any NAPS volunteer could participate on a first-come first-served basis. See also Pew Research Center, “Religious Landscape Study.”

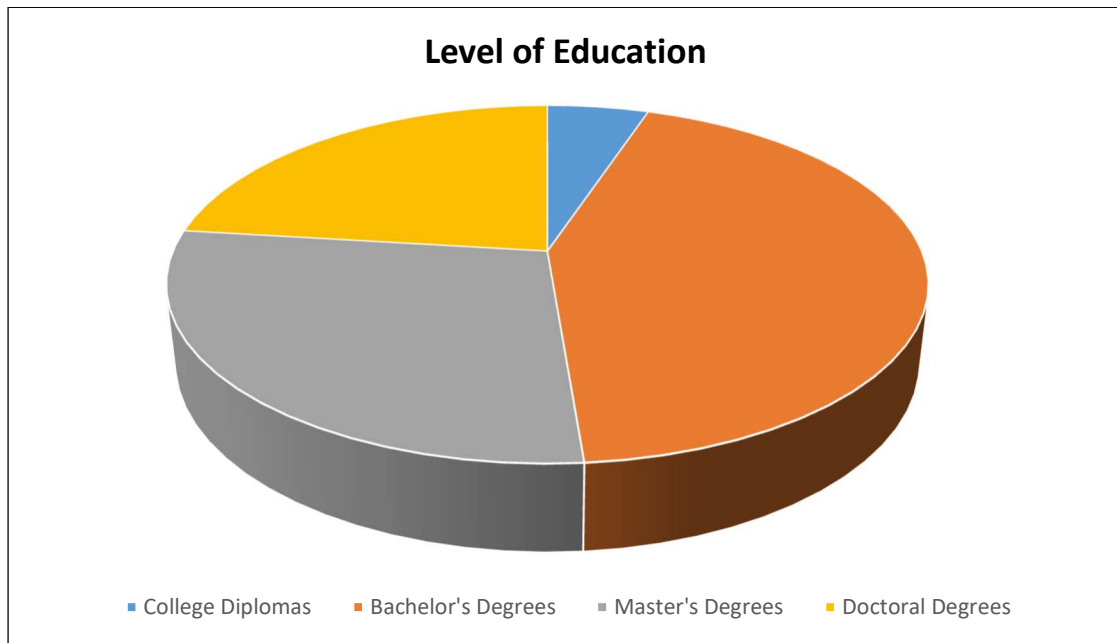
⁴⁷⁶ SurveyMonkey Summary, 2-4.

Jones and Giles' findings that higher education institutions afford volunteer opportunities for students to engage in community outreach.⁴⁷⁷ Unsurprisingly, participants attaining a college education is often a prerequisite for many professional careers and is highly emphasized within Adventism and the Black community. As Susan Harrington noted, African Americans choose these careers that benefit minority communities and "have supported the cultural values of the Afrocentric perspective, which are vital to the maturation of African American youth."⁴⁷⁸

Figure 3. Participants' Level of Education

⁴⁷⁷ Jennifer A. Jones and Elaine H. Giles, "Higher Education Outreach via Student Organizations: Students Leading the Way," *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 26, no. 3 (2022): 99-115.

⁴⁷⁸ Susan G. Harrington, "The Factors Affecting the Career Choices of African Americans and Three Career Counseling Suggestions," (Paper presented at the Annual Mid-South Educational Research Association Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 4, 1998). See also Mackie Bobo, Bertina L. Hildreth, and Beth Durodoye, "Changing Patterns in Career Choices Among African-American, Hispanic, and Anglo Children" *Professional School Counseling* 1, no. 4 (1998): 37-42. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42731821>; Madonna G. Constantine, Marie L. Miville, Anika K. Warren, Kathy A. Gainor, and Ma'at E. Lewis-Coles. "Religion, Spirituality, and Career Development in African American College Students: A Qualitative Inquiry," *The Career Development Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2006), 227-241. doi:10.1002/j.2161-0045.2006.tb00154.x; and Samuel P. Campbell, "Identifying Factors that Affect Higher Educational Achievements of Jamaican Seventh-day Adventists," (PhD diss., Capella University, 2011).



Qualitative Results

(SQ 1) How Long Have You Been a Part of NAPS and in What Capacity?

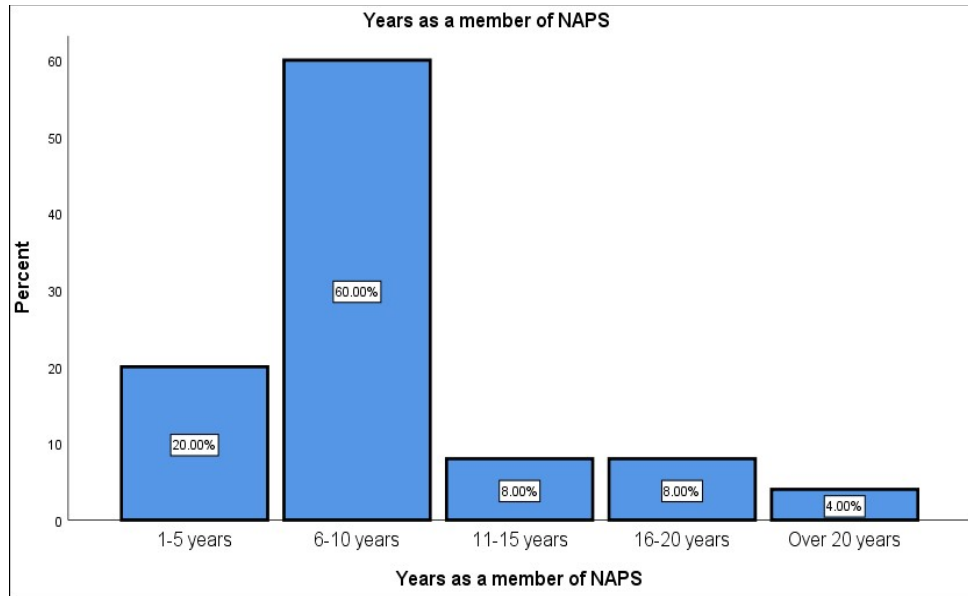
The results show that most participants (60%) had been NAPS members for 6 to 10 years, followed by those who had been members for five years or less (20%). 8% had been part of the NAPS organization for 11 to 20 years. Only one respondent (4%) said they had been a member for over 25 years.⁴⁷⁹ This finding suggests a relatively stable membership base. It aligns with research by Wilson and Musick, who argued that volunteer organizations often experience higher retention rates among educated members and those involved for several years.⁴⁸⁰ However, the connection between longevity of membership is not limited to

⁴⁷⁹ See Figure 4. For instance, respondent #2 joined NAPS in 2000 while Participant #1 had been part of NAPS for about six years and started as an undergrad student missionary. Then upon graduating, became a full-time NAPS staff. Interviewee #3 is still connected to NAPS after seventeen years but for the first three years was content to be lend a helping hand as needed.

⁴⁸⁰ Cited by Arthur A. Stukas, Mark Snyder, and E. Gil Clary, "Volunteerism and Community Involvement: Antecedents, Experiences, and Consequences for the Person and the Situation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Prosocial Behavior*, eds. D. A. Schroeder and W. Graziano (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 25-29, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195399813.013.012. See also María L. Vecina et al., "The Subjective Index of Benefits in Volunteering (SIBiV): An Instrument to Manage Satisfaction and Permanence in Non-Profit Organizations," *Current Psychology* 41, no. 11 (2021): 7968-7979, doi:10.1007/s12144-020-01224-y.

proximity to higher education institutions as evidenced by the next question dealing with motivations for joining NAPS.

Figure 4. Duration of NAPS Membership

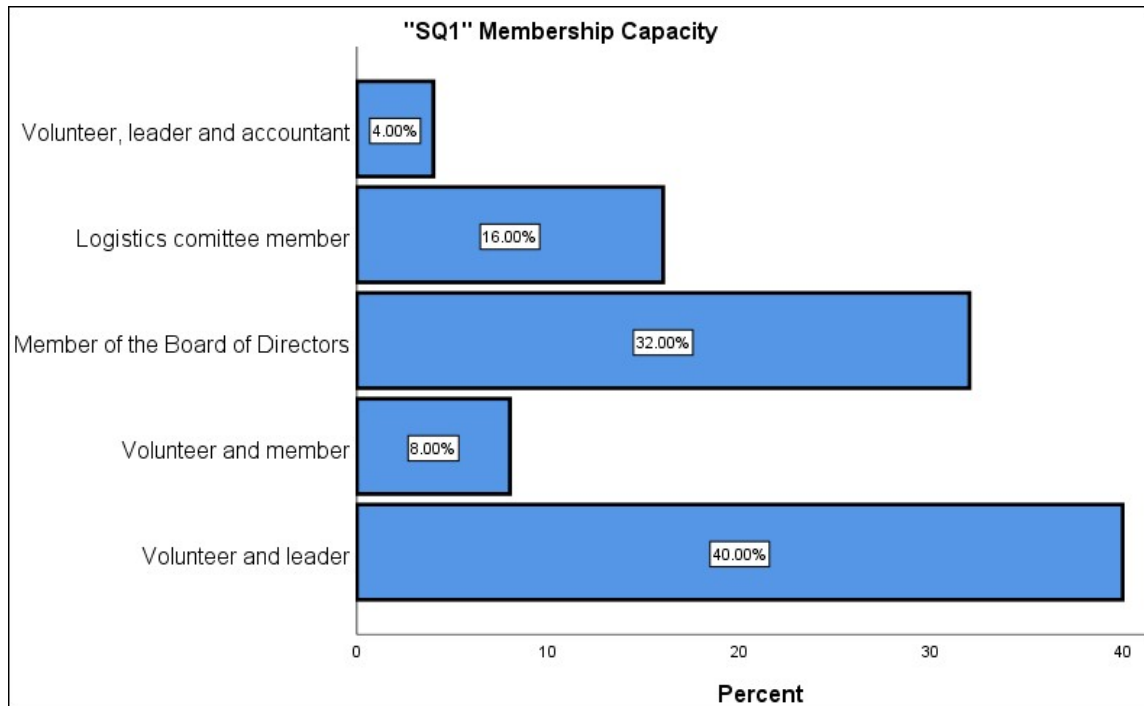


Additionally, insights were gained into the various capacities in which individuals engaged with NAPS, including roles as volunteers and leaders (40%), directors and board members (32%), and senior logistics personnel (16%). Few participants (4%) said they served as accountants besides their regular duties. For instance, participant #1 revealed that they became a member of NAPS eight years ago and served in logistics, team building, and director positions. Another respondent said, “I joined NAPS 6 years ago as a teacher,” Participant #2 joined eight years ago as a volunteer in the food and medical committee. Then, upon graduating, worked as a donor relations assistant. These qualitative findings are in Figure 5 and provide further context into the ministry’s diverse volunteer roles and breadth of participant engagement.⁴⁸¹ They were consistent with the broader understanding of volunteer

⁴⁸¹ As Interviewee #5, a fairly recent NAPS member for only two years revealed, “I’ve had the opportunity to work in various roles. Currently, I’m involved in hospitality and teaching. It’s a challenging yet fulfilling experience, and I enjoy the diversity of my responsibilities within the organization.” See also

organizations, where volunteers contribute significantly to their success and leadership teams.⁴⁸²

Figure 5. NAPS Membership Capacity



(SQ 2) Explain Why and How You Decided to Be a Part of NAPS

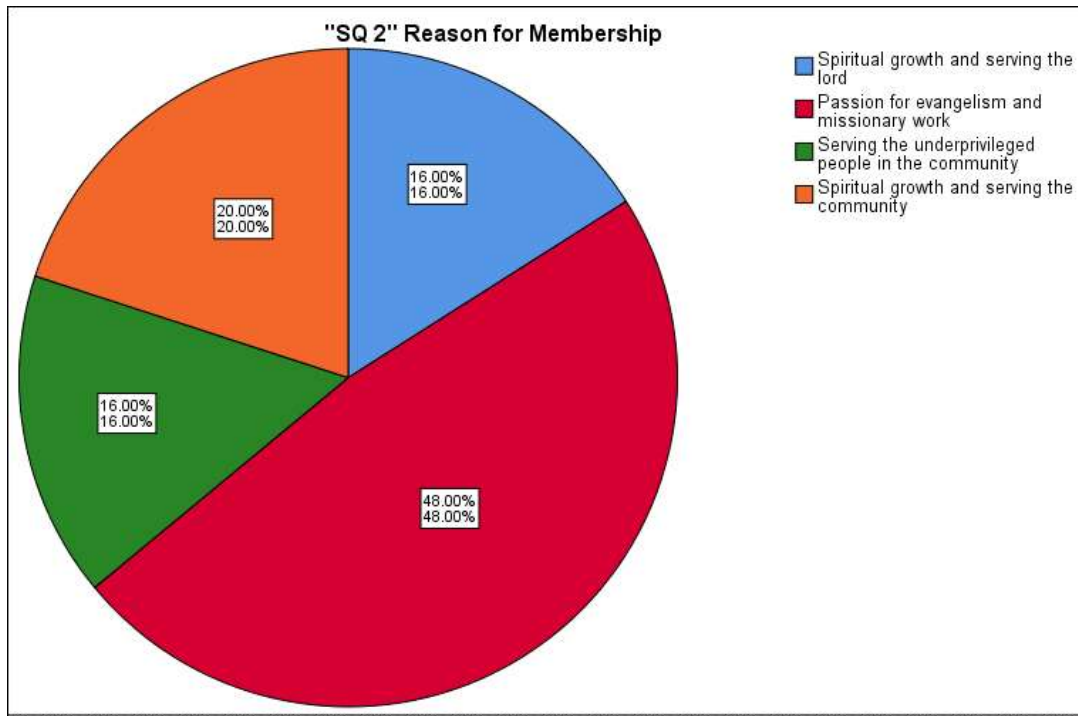
Examining participants’ motivations for joining NAPS revealed various driving factors behind volunteers’ decision to be part of the organization. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) expressed joining NAPS to fulfill their passion for evangelism and missionary work. In contrast, others cited aspirations for spiritual growth and community service (20%), helping underprivileged individuals (16%), and spiritual growth through serving Jesus Christ (16%).⁴⁸³

⁴⁸² Quinita Morrow, “Strategies Nonprofit Organizational Leaders use to Retain Volunteers,” (DBA diss., Walden University, 2019), 1, 27-31, 79, 80. See also Hyejin Bang, “Leader–Member Exchange in Nonprofit Sport Organizations,” *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 22, no. 1 (2011): 85-105, doi:10.1002/nml.20042; Jean A. Grube and Jane A. Piliavin, “Role Identity, Organizational Experiences, and Volunteer Performance,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 26, no. 9 (2000): 1108-1119, doi:10.1177/01461672002611007; and S. Farmer, “Changing the Focus on Volunteering: An Investigation of Volunteers’ Multiple Contributions to a Charitable Organization,” *Journal of Management* 27, no. 2 (2001): 191-211, doi:10.1016/s0149-2063(00)00095-7.

⁴⁸³ See Figure 6. Interviewee #5 got involved because it was a united movement of like-minded young people doing gospel work coupled with the desire to make difference in Africa. Interviewee #2

These motivations underscore the diverse personal values and beliefs that attracted individuals to NAPS and highlight the organization’s appeal across a range of mission-driven objectives. They represent the myriad motives for involvement in NPOs and NGOs – including the innate craving for altruism, helping others, or spiritual growth.⁴⁸⁴

Figure 6. Motivation for NAPS Membership



The finding found that sixty percent of respondents joined NAPS after attending group meetings, Bible study sessions, and missions, and the remaining forty percent joined through other NAPS members, such as friends, family, and professors.⁴⁸⁵ Resonating with Asghar's

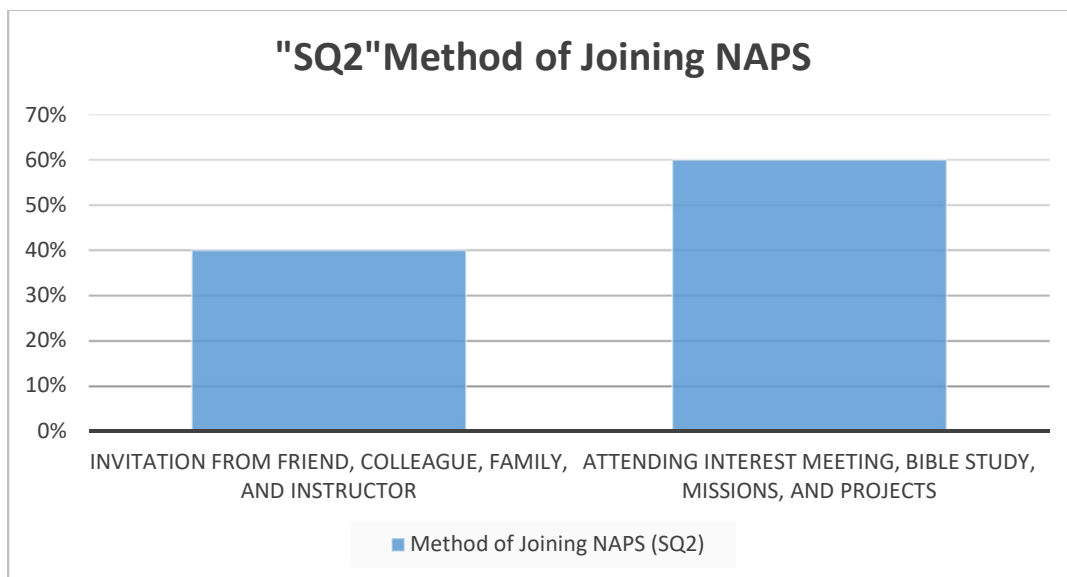
and #4 were inspired to join after watching a video of NAPS feeding hungry people and ministering to people who were suffering. Still another decided to join because it was a wholistic ministry. Not only did it meet the physical needs of people but also the spiritual (Participant #19).

⁴⁸⁴ Hanan Asghar, “The Volunteer Functions Inventory: Examination of Dimension, Scale Reliability and Correlates,” *International Journal of Innovative and Applied Research* 3, no. 4 (2015): 52-64. See also the comparative study of Rhonda S. Bell et al., “Spirituality in Higher Education: A Comparison of a Faith-Based and a Secular Organization,” *Academy of Management Proceedings* 2012, no. 1 (2012): 2-4, 40-42, doi:10.5465/ambpp.2012.14914abstract.

⁴⁸⁵ See Figure 7. Interviewee #7 felt NAPS was intentional, almost stealthy, in its “By any means necessary” approach to initiate conversations and engage volunteers using Bible studies, teaching students to play instruments, creating a welcoming atmosphere, and providing food at worship services.

research on the multifaceted nature of motivations for volunteering, this insight adds to recruiting through personal connections and social networks.⁴⁸⁶ While religious beliefs play a significant role, the qualitative data provides context, showcasing how NAPS was an avenue through which volunteers discovered a sense of purpose and introduced others to the organization. That social recruiting element is a fundamental discipleship strategy similar to the friendship evangelism model where Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to experience Jesus, and Philip found Nathanael, bidding him to “come and see.”⁴⁸⁷

Figure 7. Mode of Joining NAPS



(SQ 3) What Evangelism Campaigns Have You Done With NAPS in the USA or Overseas? Where and Why Did You Participate?

The results show that forty percent of respondents participated in NAPS’ evangelistic missions in the USA and Africa, particularly Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, and Botswana

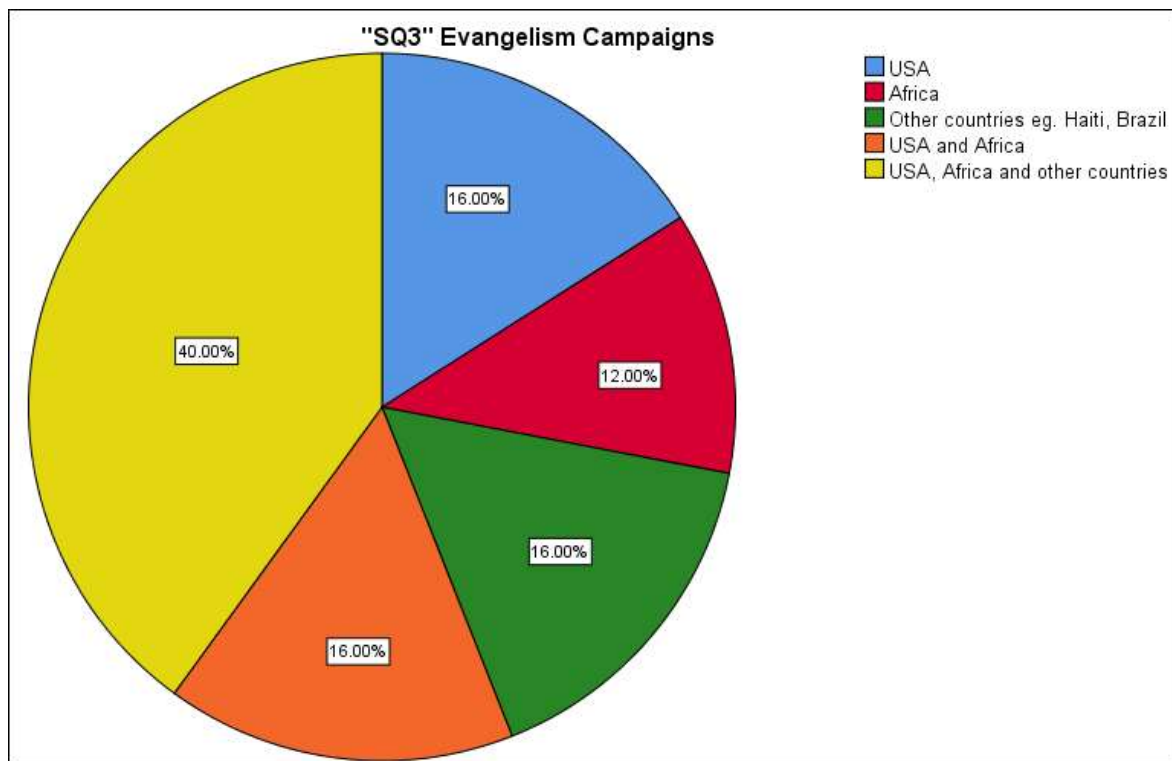
The first respondent was introduced to NAPS when a volunteer visited their Church, and they became friends. However, there was reluctance to join at first because of parental pressure to do so versus making that choice for himself. Interviewee #6 and Participants #3, #23, #6, and #21 were also invited to join by friends (professors also invited the latter two).

⁴⁸⁶ Asghar, “The Volunteer Functions Inventory,” 52-54.

⁴⁸⁷ See John 1:40-46 and Laura L. Varela, “Volunteer Followership in Nonprofit Organizations,” *Academic Research International* 4, no. 5 (September 2013): 267-276.

– highlighting the organization’s global reach and focus on international missionary work. Sixteen percent engaged in campaigns based only in the US, twelve percent in Africa alone, and another sixteen percent participated in other countries like Brazil, Haiti, Guyana, the Philippines, and Madagascar.⁴⁸⁸ These transnational evangelism and service activities expand Hammond’s list of missional assignments where Black Adventists have served and are serving.⁴⁸⁹ They also paint a more positive picture than Pelt’s disheartening lament over the lack of Black missionaries involved in global missions.⁴⁹⁰

Figure 8. Regions of NAPS Evangelism



(SQ 4) What Does NAPS’ Slogan, “We Don’t Just Send Relief, We Hand-Deliver It with Love and Care,” Mean To You Personally, and How Does It Guide NAPS’ Evangelistic and Missional Practices?

Only eight percent of participants said they were unsure or had never contemplated the

⁴⁸⁸ See Figure 8.

⁴⁸⁹ Hammond, *Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color*, 433-436.

⁴⁹⁰ Pelt, “Wanted: Black Missionaries?”

meaning of NAPS' slogan. However, forty percent said the slogan meant engaging in evangelistic and missionary work driven by the passion for loving and helping underserved members of underprivileged communities. Closely related was thirty-six percent of the respondents stating that ministry was a personal commitment to helping others meet physical and non-physical needs. Another sixteen percent held that the slogan aimed to inspire people to spread Christian doctrine, principles, and values.⁴⁹¹ The interpretation by most participants that NAPS emphasized personal involvement, building relationships, and meeting physical and spiritual needs – going beyond sending resources only, accentuates the growing emphasis on holistic approaches to mission work within religious organizations. Their explanation acknowledges the interconnectedness of physical and spiritual well-being and the importance of blending gospel proclamation with gospel demonstration – a recurring ideal in the works of Padilla.⁴⁹²

In contrast, proponents such as Hamilton Moore and Paul Barreca argue against integrating socio-economic development programs and social actions as if they were anathema to New Testament churches and neutering of terms like mission, evangelism, and *Missio Dei*, defined at Lausanne in 1974.⁴⁹³ No doubt great care must be taken not to lose sight of the pure gospel, but it is evident from Scripture the necessity to demonstrate love in action and NAPS has found a balanced approach to evangelize with words and deeds.⁴⁹⁴ Participant #7 noted that

⁴⁹¹ See Figure 9.

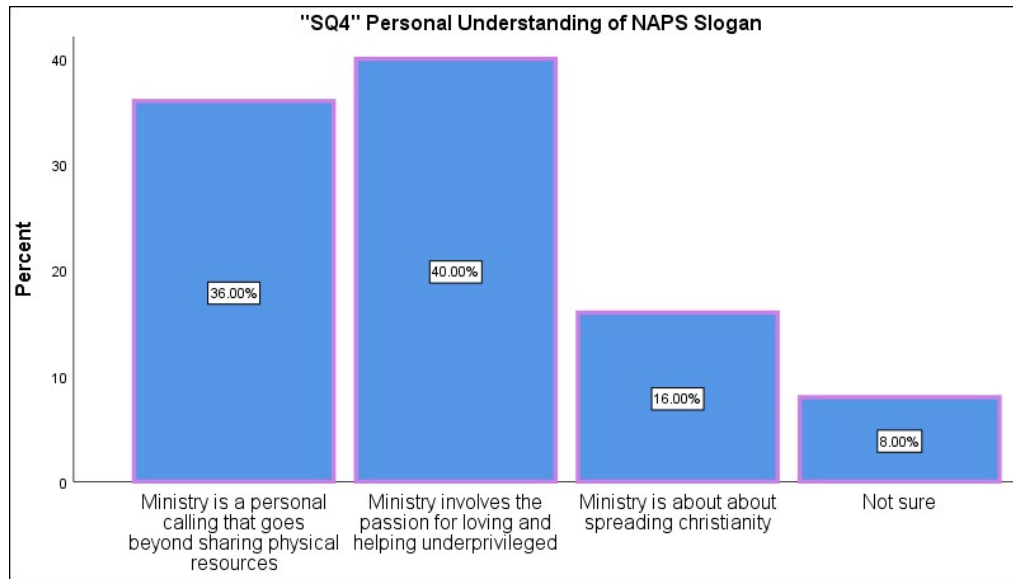
⁴⁹² C. René Padilla, et al., *What Is Integral Mission?* 1517 Media, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1v08zkz>. See also Rebecca Waweru, "Integral Mission: An Overview of Four Models and Its Role in Development," *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (February 2015): 13-18.

⁴⁹³ See Paul Barreca, "Integral Mission: Is Social Action Part of the Gospel?," *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 24, no. 1 (2020): 61-90; and Hamilton Moore, "Defining the Mission of God: Paul's Understanding of Mission in the Churches of Ephesus and Crete as Reflected in the Letters to 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus," *The Journal of Ministry and Biblical Research* 1, no. 2 (February 2019): 6-8.

⁴⁹⁴ See 1 John 3:18; Mark 12:31; John 15:13; Jas 1:27; 2:14-26; Matt 5:16; 25:35-46; 4:23; 9:35; Luke 4:17-21; Isa 58:6-10; Acts 10:37-39; and Pro 19:17.

sometimes, people will see Christ only through our actions. Therefore, “We Don’t Just Send Relief” removes the temptation to rely on others to meet practical needs, serve by proxy only, or not to help at all. Interviewee #2 held that the slogan calls for personal involvement and that simply sending money and feeling good about it is not enough.

Figure 9. Perceived Meaning of NAPS’ Slogan



(SQ 5) Explain How NAPS Has Impacted Your Life, Education, Career, and/or Ministry?

The observation that most participants reported NAPS had a positive impact on them is commensurate with research on the potential benefits of volunteering, including personal growth, skill development, and a stronger sense of purpose.⁴⁹⁵ Thirty-six percent of the participants testified that joining the organization influenced their ministries, while another 32% were impacted personally. Sixteen percent purported it affected their career choices, and 16% said joining helped to improve their academics.⁴⁹⁶ NAPS also provided the experience of working with the underserved, being in leadership positions, making decisions, and assessing

⁴⁹⁵ See María L. Vecina et al., “The Subjective Index of Benefits in Volunteering,” 7968-7979; and Asghar, “The Volunteer Functions Inventory,” 52-54.

⁴⁹⁶ See Figure 10.

outreach activities' effectiveness, translating into their education and career advancement.⁴⁹⁷

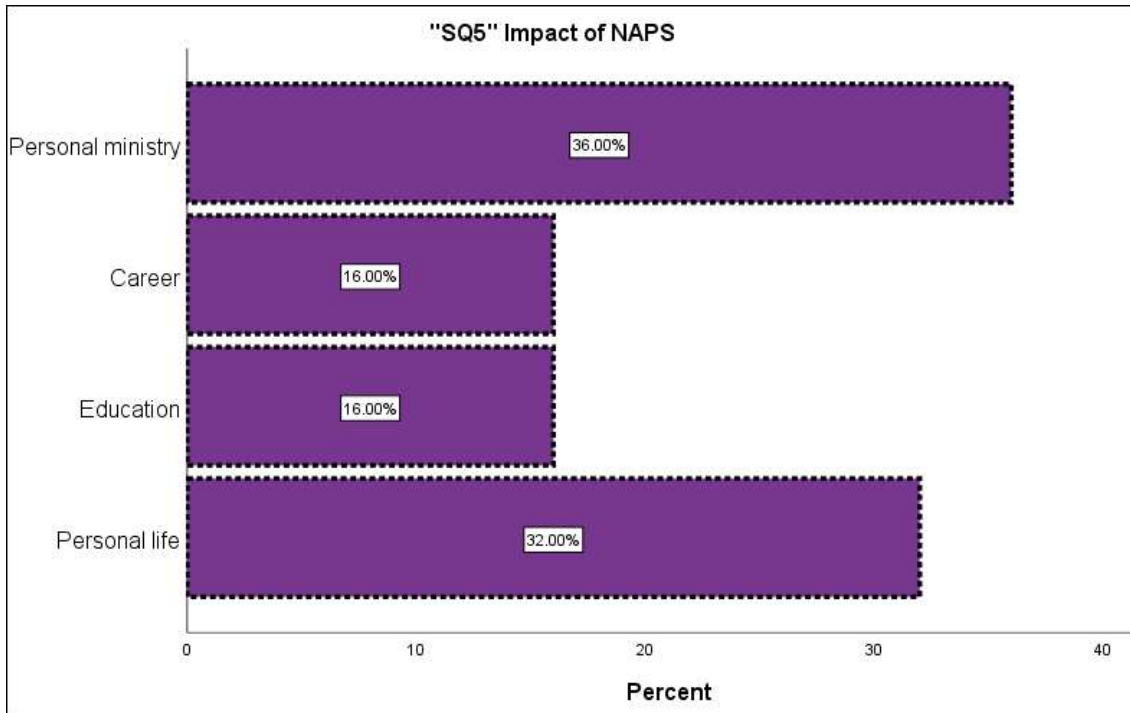
It is equally crucial to acknowledge the experiences of participants who reported positive and negative effects, highlighting the need for the organization to foster healthy and supportive environments for volunteers. Participants #16, #18, and #25 disclosed that NAPS also negatively impacted their lives. On the positive side, they gained invaluable experience working for God, made life-long friends, honed their leadership, conflict resolution, and public speaking skills, fueled their passion for ministry, witnessed people's lives changed, and how giving Bible studies led to baptisms. Negatively, they witnessed and experienced being taken advantage of because of their young, impressionable minds, partiality among leadership, deep burnout, slowed academic progress, perpetuation of fear and works-based spirituality, and unhealthy beliefs and mindsets, which led to needing therapy post-NAPS.⁴⁹⁸ Wilson and Musick examine these kinds of issues relating to volunteerism, and NAPS' leadership will do well to address these conditions constructively.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁷ SurveyMonkey Summary, 9-11.

⁴⁹⁸ SurveyMonkey Summary, 9-11.

⁴⁹⁹ John Wilson and Marc Musick, "The Effects of Volunteering on the Volunteer," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 62, no. 4 (1999): 141, doi:10.2307/1192270. See also Hiromi Taniguchi and Leonard D. Thomas, "The Influences of Religious Attitudes on Volunteering," *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 22, no. 2 (2010): 335-355, doi:10.1007/s11266-010-9158-0.

Figure 10. Perceived Influence of NAPS



(SQ 6) In Your Own Words, How Would You Define NAPS' Mission and Vision?

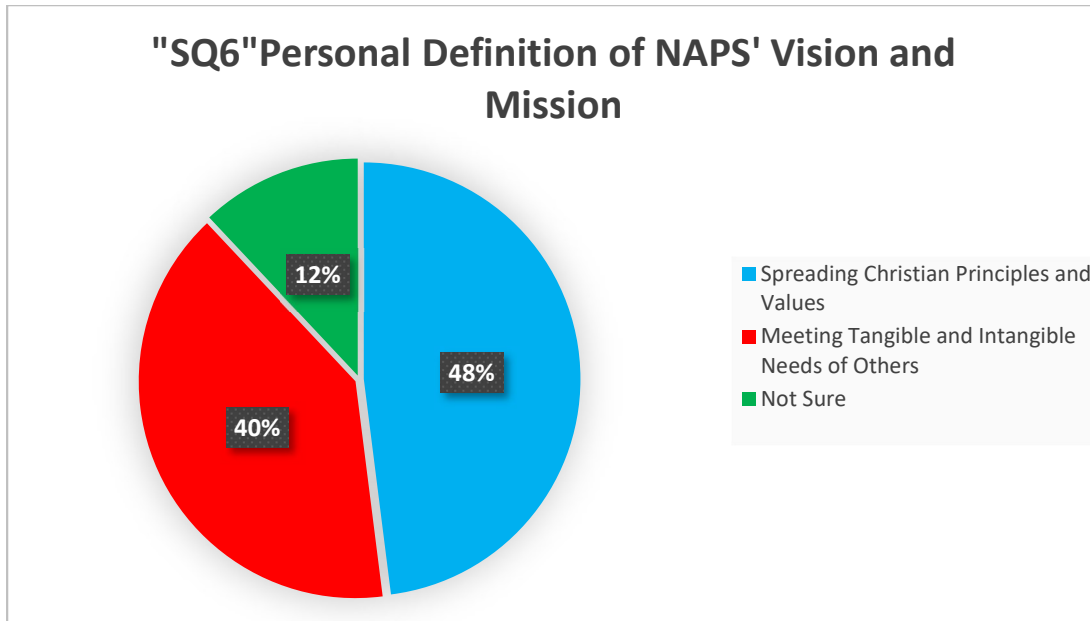
While twelve percent of the participants were unsure how to define NAPS' mission and vision in their own words, most participants (88%) could. Of those, forty-eight percent defined the mission and vision as spreading Christian principles and values, but forty percent described it as meeting the tangible and intangible needs of others.⁵⁰⁰ NAPS' stated goals and broader objectives are similar to religious service organizations like Youth With A Mission (YWAM), Compassion International, Feed the Children, Lott Carey, and Reconciliation Ministries Network.⁵⁰¹ The data offers diverse perspectives on how participants interpret these goals,

⁵⁰⁰ Including hunger, educational resources, medical and dental services, children programs, and building projects (Participants #1, #23, and #5). See Figure 11.

⁵⁰¹ See Youth With A Mission, "Who We Are," last modified February 26, 2021, <https://ywam.org/about-us>; Compassion International, "Ministry Mission Statement," accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.compassion.com/mission-statement.htm>; Feed the Children, "About Us," accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.feedthechildren.org/about>; Lott Carey, "ABOUT," accessed

highlighting the potential for individual interpretations and lived experiences to shape an understanding of the organization’s mission and vision.⁵⁰²

Figure 11. Perceived Meaning of NAPS Vision and Mission



(SQ 7) What Beliefs Do you think have most Influenced the Way NAPS Does Evangelism? What Principles, Leaders, or Pioneers come to mind when you think about who has Influenced the Shaping?

The results identified various influences that shaped NAPS’ evangelism, including its volunteers (28%), the founder and president (32%), Jesus’ life and teachings (16%), Ellen G. White (16%), William Miller and others (4%), which highlight the complex interplay of religious beliefs, leadership figures, and organizational history in shaping evangelistic practices.⁵⁰³ Research on the multifaceted nature of influences on religious organizations,

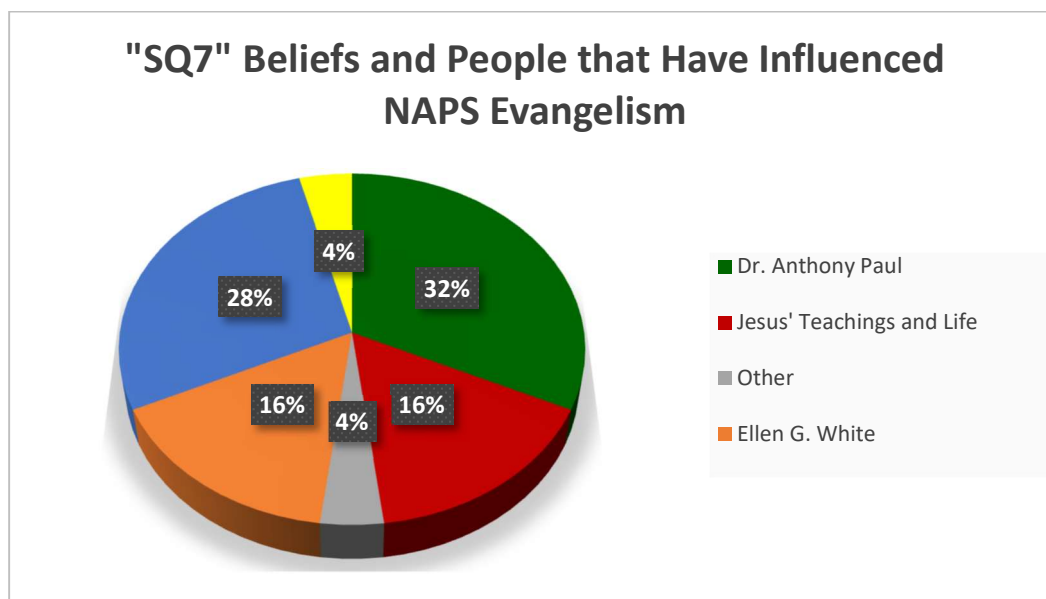
February 28, 2024, <https://lottcarey.org/about>; and Jim Sutherland, “About RMNi,” Reconciliation Ministries Network, Inc., accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.rmni.org/home/about-us.html>.

⁵⁰² See “4.3 The Roles of Mission, Vision, and Values – Principles of Management,” University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, last modified October 27, 2015, <https://open.lib.umn.edu/principlesmanagement/chapter/4-3-the-roles-of-mission-vision-and-values>.

⁵⁰³ See Figure 12. Participant #21 cited Jesus’ golden rule principle and Interviewee #3 note Jesus’ command to make disciples is what shaped NAPS’ evangelism. Participant #20 also mentioned ideologies such righteousness by works, guilt-tripping, and SDA church dogma as influencing evangelism methodologies.

acknowledging the roles of founders, theological frameworks, and social contexts, supports this phenomenon.⁵⁰⁴ The qualitative data provides further insights into participants' perspectives on these influences, offering valuable information for understanding the evolution and ongoing development of NAPS' evangelistic approach.

Figure 12. Beliefs and People that Have Influenced NAPS Evangelism



(SQ 8) What Spiritual Disciplines Or Practices Are Crucial To NAPS Volunteers And Leaders?

Most participants (36%) outlined prayer and personal devotion as effective practices crucial to NAPS leaders and volunteers. Twenty percent of the participants indicated that teamwork, routine group meetings, and testimonies were vital activities. Twelve percent of respondents stated that conducting Bible studies was essential. Other cited disciplines were

⁵⁰⁴ See Edgar H. Schein, "The Role of the Founder in Creating Organizational Culture," *Organizational Dynamics* 12, no. 1 (1983), 13-28. doi:10.1016/0090-2616(83)90023-2; Heather A. Haveman and Mukti V. Khaire, "Survival Beyond Succession? The Contingent Impact of Founder Succession on Organizational Failure," *Journal of Business Venturing* 19, no. 3 (2004), 437-463. doi:10.1016/s0883-9026(03)00039-9; Richard N. Pitt and Patrick Washington, "Differences Between Founder-Led and Non-Founder-Led Congregations: A Research Note," *Review of Religious Research* 62, no. 1 (2020), 67-82. doi:10.1007/s13644-019-00390-1; and University of Pennsylvania, "Faith and Organizations Project," *School of Social Policy and Practice*, last modified April 13, 2022. <https://sp2.upenn.edu/research/faith-organizations-project/#reports>.

humanity, conformity, resilience, and patience (8%), faith (8%), waking up early and seeking God (8%), integrity (4%), and honesty (4%).⁵⁰⁵

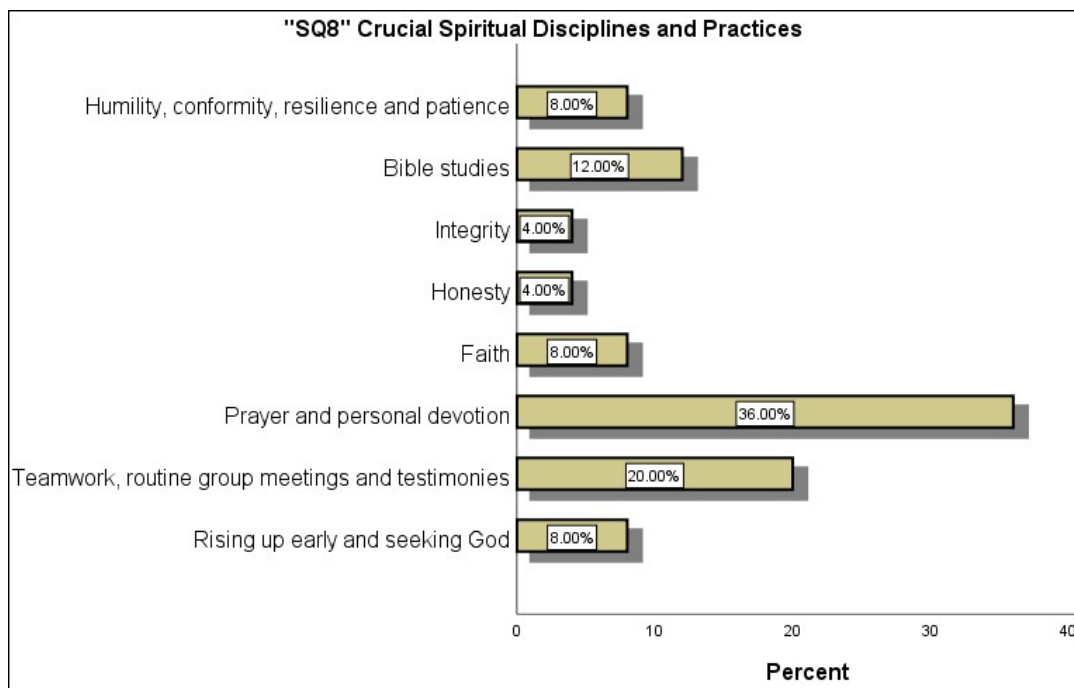
While there should not be an exhaustive list of spiritual disciplines, these disciplines cited are in harmony with research on the importance of spiritual Christian disciplines, as investigated by Hurley and Calhoun, who also observed consistent key habits from the life of Christ that all believers could practice. Hurley, however, sought to remain as close to the Canon as possible and narrowed his list to eight key disciplines, while Calhoun is more extensive in her list of practices.⁵⁰⁶ The emphasis on prayer, devotion, and Bible study resonates with established understandings of spiritual practices within Christian communities.⁵⁰⁷ Additionally, the references to teamwork, group meetings, and testimonies highlight the importance of social connection and shared experiences within NAPS.

⁵⁰⁵ See Figure 13.

⁵⁰⁶ Baxter S. Hurley, "Practicing Like Jesus: A Study of Christian Spiritual Disciplines," (DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2013), 27-64; Adele A. Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 11, 13-16, 301-303, 339. SDAs are generally suspicious of the term "spiritual formation" but here we mean those spiritual disciplines as exemplified in the life of Jesus and common to Christianity and not to other religions as included by Carr-Chellman and Kroth (for example). See Davin J. Carr-Chellman and Michael Kroth, "The Spiritual Disciplines as Practices of Transformation," *Religion and Theology*, 2020, 293-307, doi:10.4018/978-1-7998-2457-2.ch018.

⁵⁰⁷ As expressed by Participant #20, Interviewee #1, and uniquely captured by Interviewee #4, who said, "In my understanding, everything ultimately boils down to love. ... When we genuinely love God, it naturally manifests in how we treat and love those around us." The annotated bibliography by Chancey and Bruner is a helpful resource to address the ongoing need to foster Christian disciplines in ways that are jointly spiritually formative. See Dudley Chancey and Ron Bruner, "A Reader's Guide to Intergenerational Ministry and Faith Formation," *Discernment: Theology and the Practice of Ministry* 3, no. 2, article 4 (2017), <https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/discernment/vol3/iss2/4>; and Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2014), 1-20, 287-290.

Figure 13. Significant Spiritual Disciplines and Practices



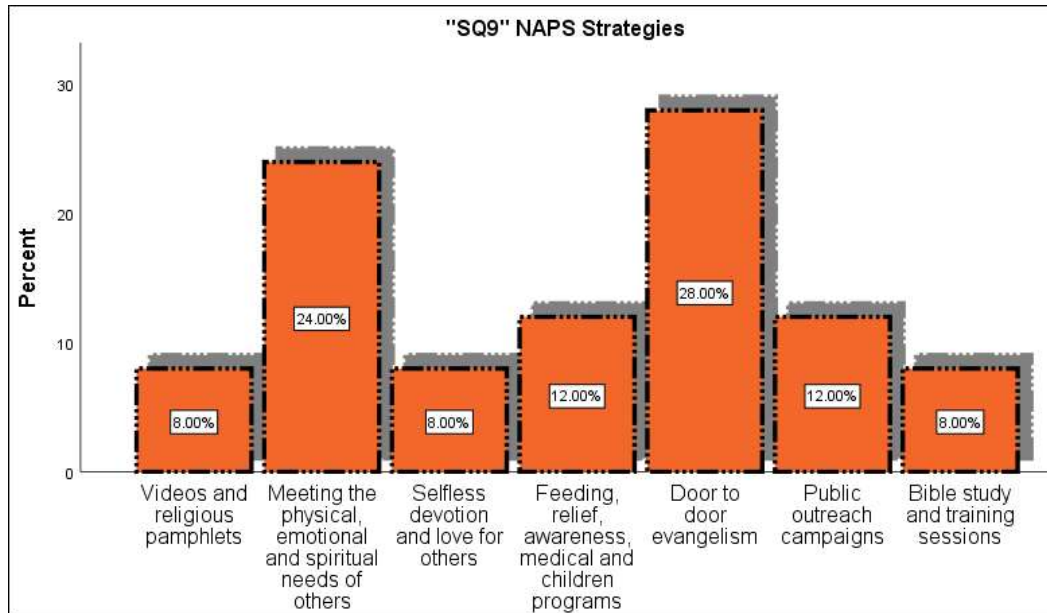
(SQ 9) What Strategies Does NAPS Use in Evangelism?

All participants noted that NAPS utilizes various strategies in evangelism, including door-to-door outreach (28%), meeting physical, emotional, and spiritual needs (24%), public outreach campaigns (12%), feeding programs, awareness campaigns, medical programs, and children’s programs (12%). Three sets of participants, each eight percent, pointed out that NAPS’ method of evangelism should be videos and religious pamphlets, selfless devotion and love for others strategy, and Bible study and training sessions, respectively.⁵⁰⁸ NAPS’ strategies reflect the manifold nature of contemporary evangelism, encompassing direct outreach, social service, media-based approaches, and relational methods, which Byrd, president of the South West Region Conference of SDA, urges to be employed to maximize

⁵⁰⁸ See Figure 14. Interviewees #3 and #6 shared detailed insights into the children program activities in low-income communities which include skits, Bible stories, scripture songs, Bible memorization, providing food, take them to natural settings or retreat sites, introducing them to colleges and other opportunities. This approach allowed volunteers to form role-model relationships with the kids – like being big brothers or sisters to them.

church growth and to abandon ineffective practices, which he sometimes refers to as “Eight Track Ministry.”⁵⁰⁹

Figure 14. NAPS’ Evangelistic Techniques



(SQ 10) Do you think NAPS has made a Significant Contribution to the SDA Church?

Most respondents (92%) believed that NAPS has significantly contributed to the Seventh-day Adventist church through baptisms, spreading the gospel, training leaders, and empowering individuals.⁵¹⁰ However, some concerns were raised regarding the anti-establishment sentiment and its impact on the institutional relationship.⁵¹¹ This result is

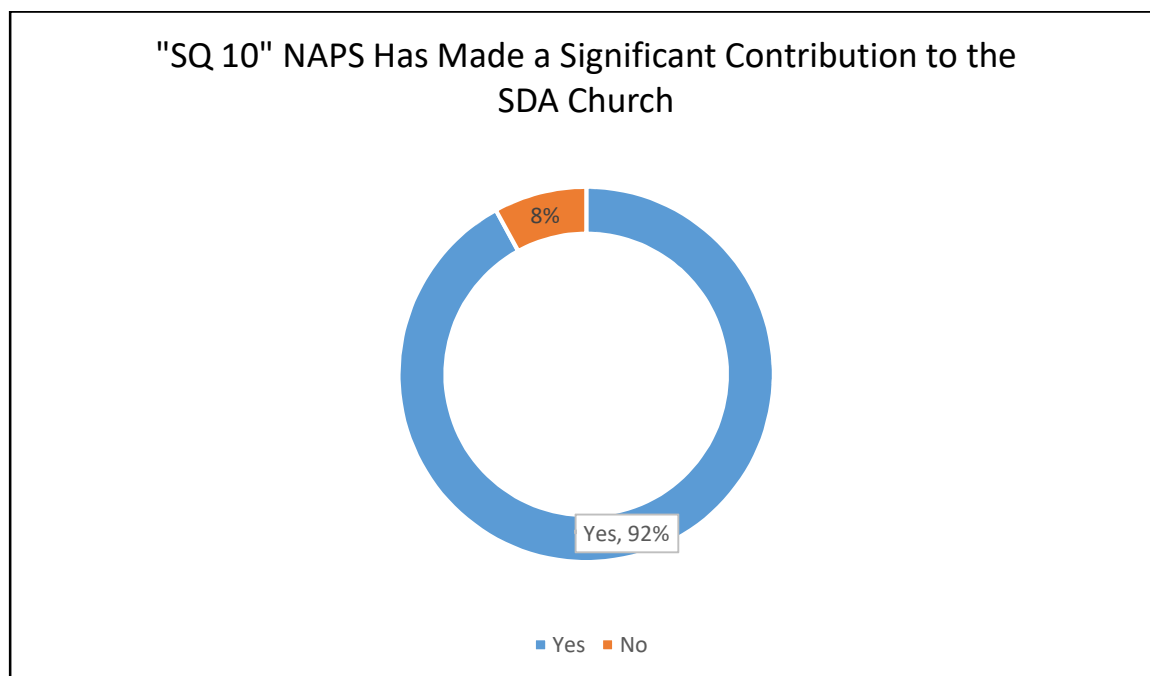
⁵⁰⁹ Carlton P. Byrd, *Contemporary Evangelism for 21st Century* (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2018), 11-16, 112-124.

⁵¹⁰ According NAPS’ Annual Board Meeting manuals from 2008-2020, NAPS has distributed over 275,000 pieces of Christian literature, trained over 10,000 youth and young adults in evangelism and missionary operations, and engaged in over 500,000 volunteer hours as a result of all their outreach programs. At the time of this writing, their current estimated baptism totals from nineteen countries was 23,836. See also the baptism excel document from NAPS’ evangelism director and the annual baptism reports in their Board Meeting manuals from 2008-2020. While interviewee #4 indicated, NAPS has made a significant impact not only in terms of adding new members to the church but also in providing a sense of purpose and direction for young people, #1 opined, “the true power and impact of NAPS on Adventism may not necessarily be measured by the sheer number of baptisms or church growth. Instead, I believe it lies in the training and equipping of church leaders. NAPS focuses on empowering individuals to become leaders in their communities, guiding and serving others in a meaningful way.”

⁵¹¹ Participants #5 and #20.

complex. While NAPS' contributions to evangelism and leadership development resonate with studies on the role of volunteer organizations within local congregations and denominations, the tension with the established church structure requires further exploration in the context of power dynamics and institutional relationships within faith-based organizations.⁵¹²

Figure 15. NAPS' Contribution to the SDA Church



(SQ 11) How and What Has NAPS Contributed To Black Adventism?

The resulting percentages for this question reinforce the need and continued quest to include Black contributions and voices to the missiological discourse. The works of Carol Hammond, Dewitt S. Williams, and Benjamin Baker have already

⁵¹² See Ram A. Cnaan, Siniša Zrinščak, et al., "Volunteering in Religious Congregations and Faith-Based Associations," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Volunteering, Civic Participation, and Nonprofit Associations*, 2016, 472-494. doi:10.1007/978-1-137-26317-9_23; Augustine Enofe, and Pesi Amaria, "The Role of the Church Denomination in Financial Accountability Among Religious Organizations," *International Journal of Business, Accounting and Finance* 5, no. 2 (2011): 87+. Gale Academic OneFile (accessed February 29, 2024). <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A335188951/AONE?u=anon~1f7b2516&sid=googleScholar&xid=e307e5e6>; and Christopher P. Scheitle, *Beyond the Congregation: The World of Christian Nonprofits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19-58, 113-136.

shown how Black Adventists missionaries can do great work for the Lord and benefit their denomination.⁵¹³ Eighty-eight percent of participants (88%) responded that NAPS has positively contributed to Black Adventism by empowering Black communities religiously (52%).⁵¹⁴ Another thirty-six percent also reported NAPS helped to overcome the “White Savior” narrative (36%).⁵¹⁵ Interviewee #2, in agreement with the results, asserted that it is evident that the Black church experiences substantial growth when individuals take on missions beyond the local context. The International Mission Board (IMB) likewise has recognized the global influence of Black culture on music, fashion, and cuisine and is proactively sending Black missionaries to the mission field.⁵¹⁶

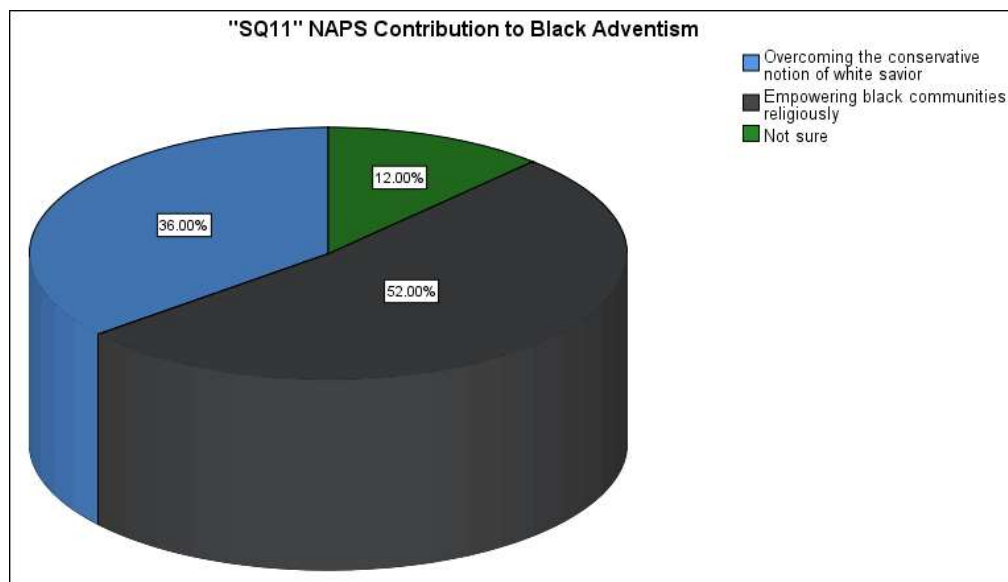
⁵¹³ See Literature Review, Bibliography, and above.

⁵¹⁴ Interviewee #7 testified, “I remember attending an event last year where they had a Parade of Nations, showcasing the number of Adventists in each country. I was impressed to see that NAPS had a significant presence in several countries, especially Zambia. While it’s difficult to quantify the exact impact of NAPS on those numbers, I do know that Zambia had a substantial increase in baptisms and interviews during that period. NAPS had invested a lot of resources in Zambia, including frequent visits, training of branches, and the establishment of new branches. As a result, Zambia now has a strong Adventist presence, and I believe NAPS played a crucial role in that growth. This is just one example, but I truly believe that NAPS has made a significant impact on black Adventism worldwide, and it’s a reality that we can see and experience.”

⁵¹⁵ See Figure 16. The “White Savior” narrative refers to the characterization of a Caucasian individual as the redeemer, champion, deliverer, or freedom fighter for people belonging to non-white racial or ethnic groups. The concept connotes a proclivity to white superiority and preference when addressing challenges affecting non-white communities or the obligation of whites to assist or uplift the downtrodden, oppressed, suffering, or otherwise inferior groups. To learn more about white saviorism, its characteristics and effects, consults the works by Brittany A. Aronson, “The White Savior Industrial Complex: A Cultural Studies Analysis of a Teacher Educator, Savior Film, and Future Teachers,” *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis* 6, no. 3 (2017), doi:10.31274/jctp-180810-83; Felix Willuweit, “De-constructing the ‘White Saviour Syndrome’: A Manifestation of Neo-Imperialism,” *E-International Relations*, last modified July 13, 2020, <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/07/13/de-constructing-the-white-saviour-syndrome-a-manifestation-of-neo-imperialism>; Amy C. Finnegan, “Growing Up White Saviors,” *Journal of Applied Social Science* 16, no. 3 (2022), 617-636, doi:10.1177/19367244221082023; Michael Walzer, “The Politics of Rescue,” *Social Research* 62, no. 1 (1995): 53–66, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40971076>; Joel Wainwright, *Decolonizing Development: Colonial Power and the Maya* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2011); James Arnett, “Colonizing, Decolonizing: Bad-faith Liberalism and African Space Colonialism in Doris Lessing’s Screenplay *The White Princess*,” *Journal of Screenwriting* 10, no. 1 (2019), 81-95; doi:10.1386/josc.10.1.81_1; and Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

⁵¹⁶ “Black Church Missions,” IMB, last modified December 20, 2022, <https://www.imb.org/black-church-missions>.

Figure 16. NAPS' Contribution to Black Adventism



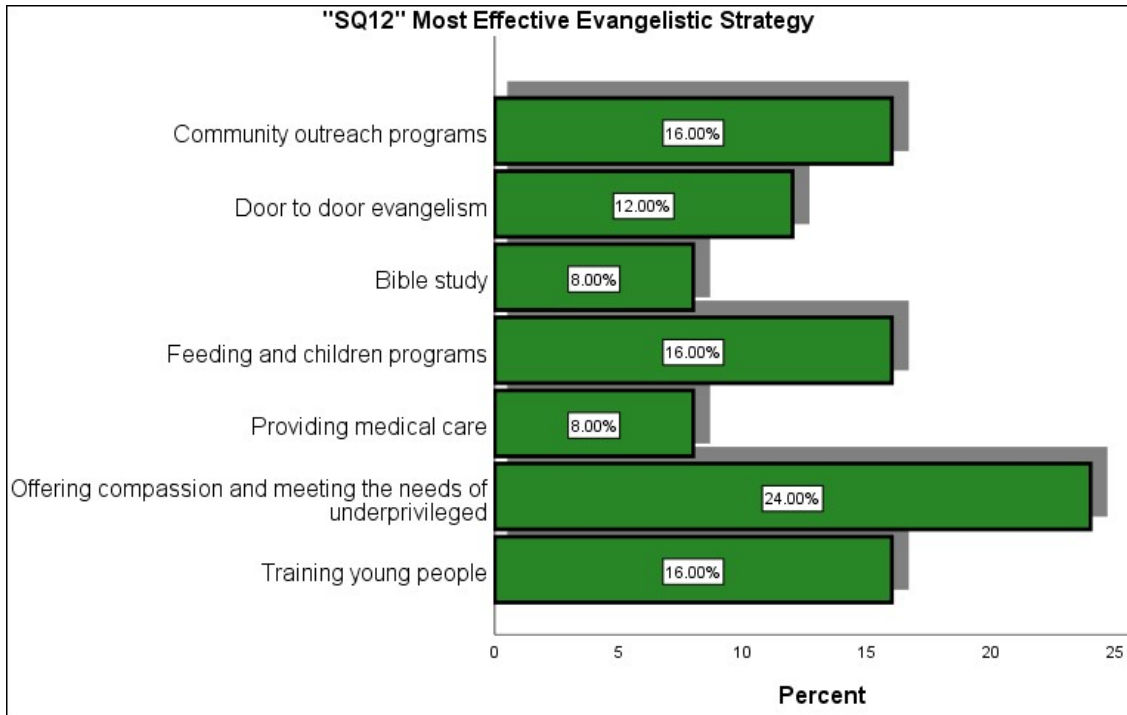
(SQ 12) Which of NAPS' Evangelistic Strategies Do You Think is Most Effective?

According to twenty-four percent of respondents, offering compassion and meeting the needs of the underprivileged was a powerful strategy. Three sets of respondents, each 16%, stated that the most potent methods were community outreach programs, feeding and children programs, and training young people. Twelve percent indicated that door-to-door evangelism was an efficient strategy. Two groups of participants, each eight percent, stated that Bible study and medical care were the most effective strategies.⁵¹⁷ These strategies that address practical needs alongside spiritual outreach resonate with studies highlighting the effectiveness of compassion-based approaches and the growing emphasis on holistic approaches to mission work that integrate service and evangelism.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁷ See Figure 17. For instance, participant #18 suggested the most effective strategy was training and empowering the volunteers. Interviewee #3 and Participants #6, and #4 favored children programs the most effective evangelistic strategy, with the latter adding door-to-door outreach and [public] evangelistic campaigns.

⁵¹⁸ Ringma prefers the term “integral” to describe missional activity instead of “holistic” because that word, to him, “is not helpful in reflecting the biblical vision of God's concern for all of life and the restoration of all things, and the church's role in bringing God's shalom to all of life.” See Charles Ringma, “Holistic Ministry and Mission: A Call for Reconceptualization,” *Missiology: An International Review* 32, no. 4 (2004): 431-448,

Figure 17. NAPS' Most Effective Evangelistic Strategy



(SQ 13) Which of NAPS' Evangelistic Strategy Do You Think Is Least Effective?

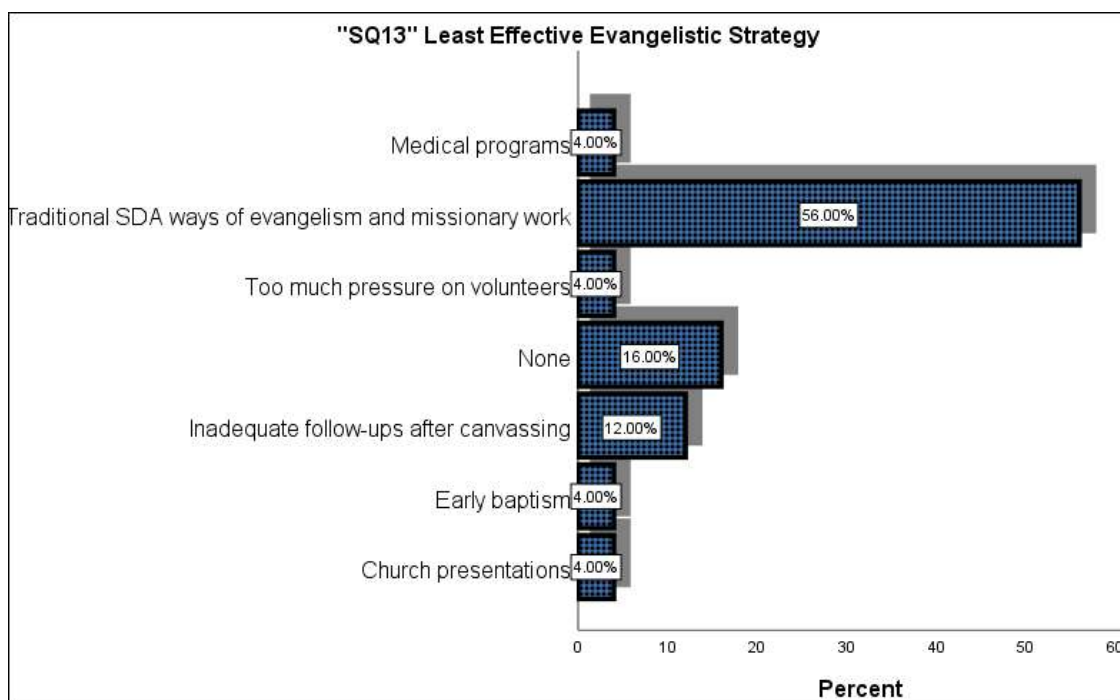
Interestingly, more than half of the participants pointed out that the least effective strategy is adopting traditional SDA methods of evangelism and missionary work. Yet, sixteen percent of the respondents stated that none of the strategies was least effective in promoting evangelism. Twelve percent noted that inadequate follow-up after canvassing was the least effective strategy. Four sets of respondents, each four percent, pointed out that the least effective evangelistic strategies were the medical program, too much pressure on volunteers, early baptism, and Church presentations, respectively.⁵¹⁹ The results offered valuable

doi:10.1177/009182960403200403. See also Byrd, *Contemporary Evangelism*, 102-120; Ezekiel Adeyemi Oyinloye, "Health and Social Ministries: A Holistic Approach to Ministering in Contemporary Society," *Professional Dissertations DMin*. 264, (2014), 21-47, <https://dx.doi.org/10.32597/dmin/264/>, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/264/>; Padilla, *What Is Integral Mission?* 1517; Waweru, "Integral Mission," 13-18; Hartwell, "Integral Mission;" and Evvy H. Campbell, "Holistic Ministry and the Incident at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3:1-26)," in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, eds. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004), 37-44.

⁵¹⁹ See Figure 18.

information into the perceived limitations of certain approaches. The critiques of traditional methods and pressure on volunteers are part of four decades of discussions on effective evangelism strategies. They beg to look closer at Byrd’s call to abandon ineffective evangelistic practices because, as Tite Tienou warned at the Wheaton Consultation in 1983, social transformation “will likely not take place through a dead evangelism.”⁵²⁰ The follow-up and program effectiveness concerns (12%) of volunteers could be an area for NAPS’ leadership to consider their implementation and evaluation processes and adjust accordingly.⁵²¹

Figure 18. NAPS’ Least Effective Evangelistic Strategy



⁵²⁰ Participant #18 warned not to take these concern lightly because a forced sense of spirituality among volunteers does not create long-lasting believers and has led some to walk away from the faith. Interviewee #2 also revealed that when individuals have multiple responsibilities, their effectiveness can be compromised due to too much pressure on volunteers and divided attention. Optimal use of human resources is essential and finding ways to increase manpower can enhance effectiveness in evangelism. See Byrd, *Contemporary Evangelism*, 12; and James W. Gustafson, “The Church and Holistic Ministry in Culture,” *Tokyo Christian University Journal* 84, no. 1 (2004): 80-85, <https://core.ac.uk/reader/230600085> (82-90).

⁵²¹ Some, like Participant #1, felt that if the ministry did not revisit or follow up after providing training or soul-winning efforts, to reinforce and show ongoing support, it could be difficult for the recipients to fully benefit from it.

(SQ 14) What Improvements Can NAPS Currently Make In Any Area of Ministry?

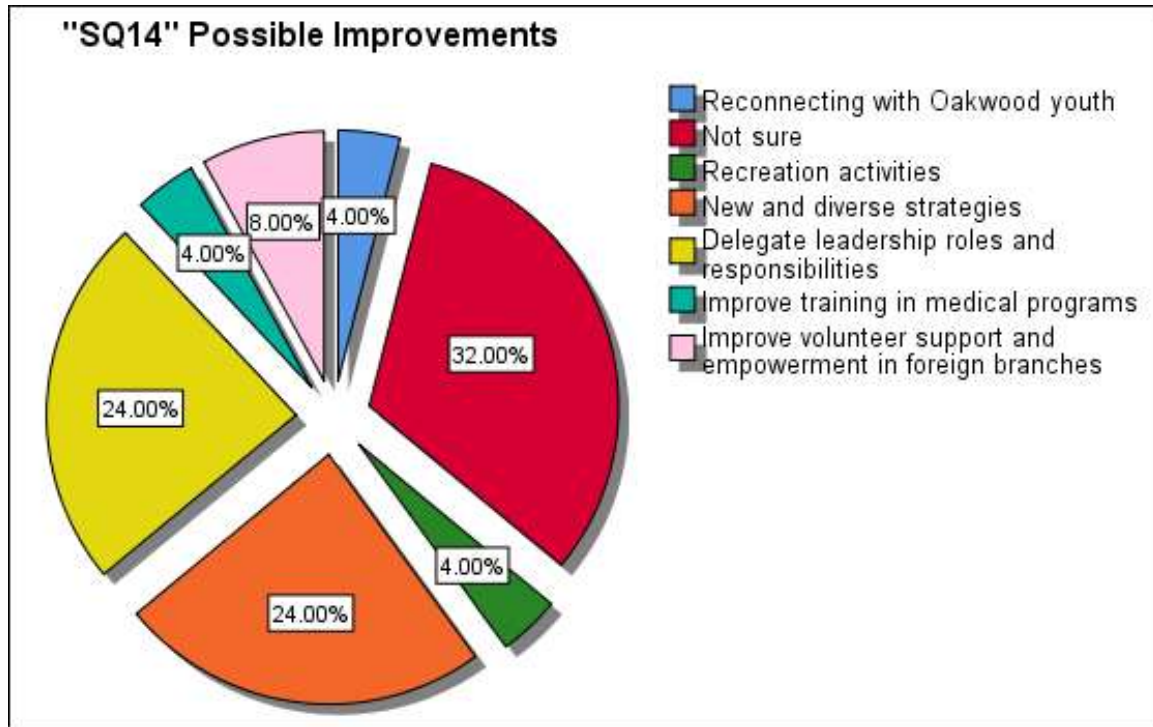
Possible suggestions for ministry improvement included diversifying strategies (24%), delegating leadership and responsibilities (24%), improving volunteer support and empowering the foreign NAPS branches (8), reconnecting with Oakwood youths, enhancing training, and enhancing recreational activities (4% each). Thirty-two percent of the participants were unsure about what improvements should be made.⁵²²

The suggestions highlight the need for NAPS to address potential areas of stagnation, diversify its approaches, and take Kotter's research to heart about the importance of continuous organizational improvement, adaptation, and change.⁵²³ For instance, Respondent #2 was advised to remain open-minded and embrace contemporary practices, such as digital evangelism, instead of solely relying on traditional strategies. It is important to adapt and stay relevant in our approach to reaching a wider audience.

⁵²² See Figure 19.

⁵²³ John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), 3-34. See also Phapruek Ussahawanitchakit, "Organizational Adaptation, Transformational Leadership, Continuous Improvement, and Firm Sustainability: Evidence from Thailand," *International Journal of Business Research* 11, no. 1 (2011): 1; Stephen E. Cross, "A Model to Guide Organizational Adaptation," *2013 International Conference on Engineering, Technology and Innovation (ICE) & IEEE International Technology Management Conference*, June 2013, 1-11, doi:10.1109/itmc.2013.7352653; and Gerald A. Emison, "Pragmatism, Adaptation, and Total Quality Management: Philosophy and Science in the Service of Managing Continuous Improvement," *Journal of Management in Engineering* 20, no. 2 (March 2004): 56-61, [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)0742-597X\(2004\)20:2\(56\)](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)0742-597X(2004)20:2(56)).

Figure 19. Possible Improvements for NAPS to Make



(SQ 15) What Advice would you give NAPS as it Looks to the Next 10 Years?

All of the respondents offered various recommendations for NAPS to enhance its future performance, including suggested succession planning by recruiting new and young leaders (28%), continued focusing on Black underprivileged communities (24%), and empowering NAPS leaders and volunteers through training and adequate funding (16%). Another sixteen percent mentioned digital evangelism strategies, and twelve percent suggested empowering and supporting overseas volunteers. Finally, four percent of the respondents recommended improving medical programs.⁵²⁴ Once again, these recommendations undergird the research on the importance of strategic planning and adaptation for organizational sustainability and improvement, which is crucial for ensuring long-term viability and addressing leadership

⁵²⁴ See Figure 20.

transitions.⁵²⁵

Focusing on underserved communities sides with calls for mission work that prioritizes social justice and empowers marginalized groups.⁵²⁶ Volunteer empowerment is essential for motivating, retaining, and maximizing the impact of volunteers.⁵²⁷ Digital evangelism reflects the growing trend of religious organizations leveraging technology for outreach and engagement.⁵²⁸ Supporting foreign branches addresses challenges related to cross-cultural work and volunteer well-being.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁵ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 169-185, 3-34; Ussahawanitchakit, "Organizational Adaptation," 1; Cross, "A Model to Guide Organizational Adaptation," 1-11; and Emison, "Pragmatism, Adaptation, and Total Quality Management," 56-61.

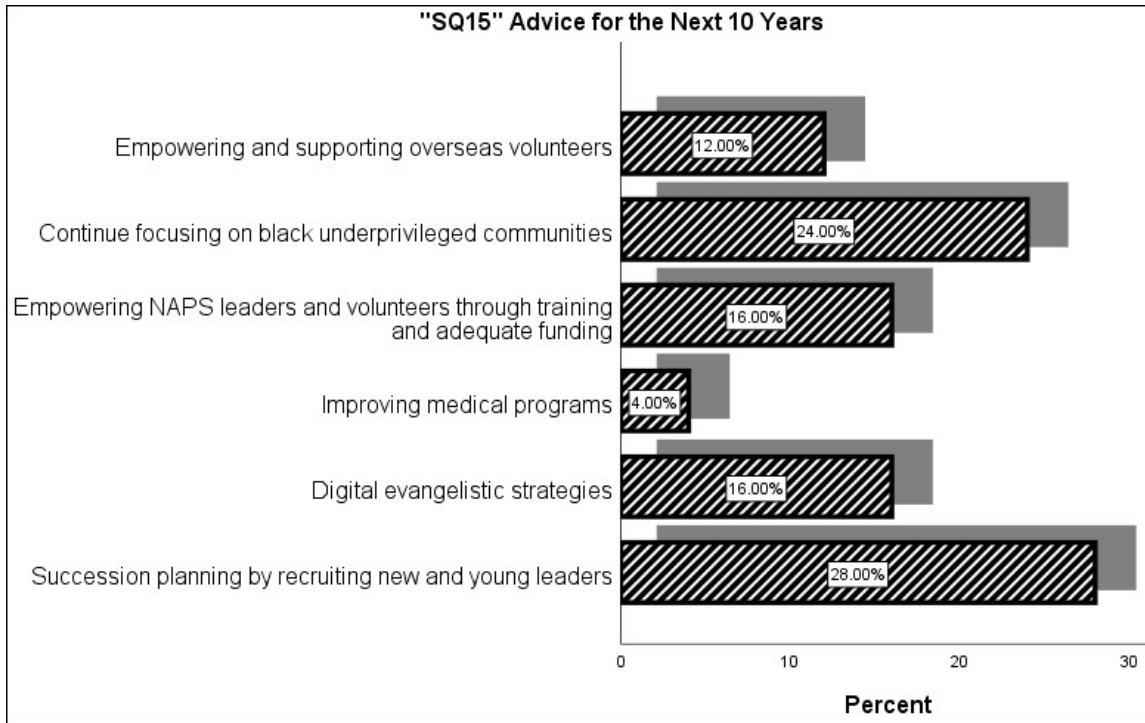
⁵²⁶ White, *The Southern Work*, iii, iv, 9-28. See also works by Ma, "Missiology: Evangelization, Holistic Ministry, and Social Justice;" Jonathan A. Thompson, *The Enduring Legacy of Ellen G. White and Social Justice* (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2017); and Alexander Umole, "Preach Freedom: The Praxis of Social Justice Advocacy as Effective Holistic Ministry in Pentecostal Churches in the South of the United States," (DMIN diss., George Fox University, 2021), 31-56, 67-76.

⁵²⁷ Morrow, "Strategies Nonprofit Organizational Leaders use to Retain Volunteers," 27-31, 79, 80; Grube and Piliavin, "Role Identity, Organizational Experiences, and Volunteer Performance," 1108-1119; and Simpson, "Younger Church, Aging Leadership."

⁵²⁸ Teasdale, "Forming Saints in a Digital Context," 65-67, 72-76; Jamie Domm, *Digital Discipleship and Evangelism* (Lincoln: AdventSource, 2020), 3-14, 157-170; Caleb J. Lines, "The Great Digital Commission: Embracing Social Media for Church Growth and Transformation," (DMin diss., Duke University, 2020), iv, 15-49, 68-74, 82-111; and Philemon O. Amanze and Chigemezi N. Wogu, "Internet Evangelism: An Effective Method for Soul-winning in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry* 11 (2015): 149-170, doi:10.21806/aamm.2015.11.08.

⁵²⁹ See Nancy J. Adler and Zeynep Aycan, "Cross-cultural Interaction: What We Know and What We Need to Know," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 5 (2018): 307-333, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych032117-104528>; Peggy A. Thoits and Lyndi N. Hewitt, "Volunteer Work and Well-Being," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* (2001): 115-131, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3090173>; Frithjof Arp, "For Success in a Cross-Cultural Environment, Choose Foreign Executives Wisely," *Global Business and Organizational Excellence* 32, no. 1 (2012): 40-50, <https://doi.org/10.1002/joe.21462>; Rita Bennett, Anne Aston, and Tracy Colquhoun, "Cross-cultural Training: A Critical Step in Ensuring the Success of International Assignments," *Human Resource Management* 39, no. 2-3 (2000): 239-250, [https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-050X\(200022/23\)39:2/3%3C239::AID-HRM12%3E3.0.CO;2-J](https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-050X(200022/23)39:2/3%3C239::AID-HRM12%3E3.0.CO;2-J); Tagreed Issa Kawar, "Cross-cultural Differences in Management," *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 3, no. 6 (2012): 105-111; and Joanna Stuart, Daiga Kamerāde, et al., "The Impacts of Volunteering on the Subjective Wellbeing of Volunteers: A Rapid Evidence Assessment." *What Works Centre for Wellbeing* (2020), 10, 11, 19-51.

Figure 20. Advice for the Next 10 Years



Conclusion and Transition to the Next Chapter

Overall, the qualitative results presented in this chapter resonate with existing literature on volunteer organizations, religious service, and mission work. The data collected from participants provided insights regarding their NAPS membership, roles within the organization, motivations for joining, perceptions of NAPS’ mission and vision, the impact of NAPS on their lives, effective and least effective evangelistic strategies, and suggestions for improvement. The observation about the continued focus on Black underprivileged communities highlights the complex and evolving nature of race, religion, and power dynamics within NAPS and the broader Adventist community. While some findings align with established trends, further research is needed to understand these dynamics fully and inform culturally relevant and equitable approaches. NAPS can develop informed strategies to navigate the future and

continue its work in the coming decade.

The next chapter discusses the results from the reviewed literature, and analysis of survey and interview responses are conceptualized before summarizing and concluding the study. Results conceptualization involves describing emerging themes to determine whether the findings answer the research questions of this paper.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The rationale and need for the study revolved around assessing the theological and methodological approach of the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation to evangelism. The researcher aimed to document NAPS' contributions to the narrative of African American involvement in evangelism within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The study accentuated the importance of documenting and preserving the legacy of contributions and inspiring missional engagement among Black Adventist believers. By conducting this study, the researcher aimed to benefit church leaders, organizations like the North American Evangelism Institute (NADEI), Adventist Frontier Missions, Regional Conferences (RCs), pastors, and missiologists. The research also aimed to provide content for researchers and inspire Black Christian youth to make a difference in God's missional cause in the world.

Moreover, the study aimed to address gaps in understanding regarding Black Adventists' involvement in missions, evangelism, and intercultural studies. It highlighted the lack of information about NAPS' contributions in existing repositories of Black Adventist history and publications. This research sought to address that void and contribute to the body of knowledge available. Additionally, it recognized the scarcity of doctoral research on the presence of Black Adventist ministries and organizations in global missions and evangelism. The dissertation aimed to add to the narrative of African American contributions to the Christian mission, explicitly focusing on NAPS' contributions to the SDA Church's missionary activities. Doing so sought to provide a foundation for future scholars to build upon and reinforce the understanding that the gospel's mandate is for all disciples.

The study had a limited scope, focusing specifically on NAPS and its impact on the SDA Church. It did not address Black contributions to Christianity but concentrated on NAPS' contribution to the SDA denomination. Geographically, the research focused on NAPS'

operations in the United States within the North American Division (NAD) and in selected Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) countries. The investigation dates were confined to NAPS' formation from 1978 to 2021, with a specific analysis of NAPS' missiological approaches from 1999 to 2019.

Regarding the methodology, a qualitative case study was chosen to analyze NAPS' theology and practice of evangelism to understand its contribution to the SDA Church and whether its strategies are relevant to be implemented in the local church setting. This methodology was deemed appropriate for understanding the complex reality and meaning of actions within the context. It aimed to produce in-depth and illustrative information to comprehend various dimensions of the research problem.

Chapter 5 builds upon the aligned results and existing literature presented in Chapter 4 and provides a deeper analysis and interpretation of those results. It explores the implications of the findings for NAPS as an organization and its future directions. The discussion addresses positioning the findings and identifying key themes and trends. Based on the analysis, recommendations are provided to enhance NAPS' effectiveness in evangelism and ministry. Finally, the chapter summarizes the key findings, discusses their significance, and sets the stage to present a comprehensive conclusion to this study in Chapter Six.

Research Summary

The researcher sought to unearth the various evangelistic strategies NAPS uses that have proven successful in North America and Southern Africa – with hopes of applying the findings to ministry in local churches and providing notable references in the annals of Black Adventism. As identified by the study, NAPS has positively contributed to Seventh-day Adventism. The primary focus was on the following research questions to analyze NAPS'

theology and practice of evangelism:

1. What is the history of NAPS, and how did it become a global ministry? (RQ1)
2. What is NAPS' theology of evangelism? (RQ2)
3. What is NAPS' practice of evangelism? (RQ3)
4. In what ways has NAPS contributed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Black Adventist mission? (RQ4)
5. What suggested best practices for evangelism can be implemented moving forward? (RQ5)

The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation has a central task of providing credible and straightforward ways of evangelism, which aims to foster evangelistic practices that positively impact individuals in minority communities. The origin of the NAPS organization dates back to 1978, after the end of President Gerald Ford's short tenure, who advocated for people to find ways of volunteering to combat poverty in the United States.⁵³⁰ Notably, his successor, Jimmy Carter, developed a strategy aimed at helping the government deal with environmental hazards, energy crises, and other issues that affected the country negatively.⁵³¹ These activities surrounded the development of NAPS, whose core function was to create a ministry to serve people in need in society.

⁵³⁰ Ford was sworn in as the 38th President of the United States on August 9, 1974. His presidency ended on January 20, 1977, when Jimmy Carter was sworn in as the 39th President of the United States. See The White House, "Gerald R. Ford," last modified January 18, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/gerald-r-ford/>; "Social Programs," *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum*, accessed March 15, 2023, <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/factbook/social.htm>; Encyclopedia Britannica, "Gerald Ford," December 22, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gerald-Ford>; and Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum, "President and Mrs. Ford," accessed February 13, 2023, <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/biography.aspx>.

⁵³¹ GovInfo, "A Tribute to President Jimmy Carter," last modified May 23, 2016, <https://www.govinfo.gov/features/president-carter>.

Key Findings

The analysis of the results provides several key findings. Firstly, the demographic data suggest that NAPS members had a substantial long-term commitment and involvement within the organization, with most serving for six to ten years and a steady number serving for up to five years and from eleven to twenty years. Longevity of service is critical for NGOs, training leaders, and passing on organizational values. Notwithstanding, every organization has challenges with retention. Therefore, NAPS should be alert to both continuous recruitment and keeping talent. Participant #7 rightly observed,

We should focus on a strategy that revolves around recruiting and retaining permanent volunteers. Lately, we've been facing a problem with a high turnover of volunteers. Once they are trained, they tend to leave after about a year. If we can concentrate on finding ways to bring people in and keep them engaged, it would greatly enhance our effectiveness. It seems like this issue is not unique to us but a global trend.⁵³²

Longevity of service also seems to impact organizational roles and implies that NAPS allows diverse functions to allow volunteers to flourish. Most participants held positions of leadership emphasizing their active engagement and dedication. Some ascended to leadership as directors and board members, highlighting their involvement in decision-making and organizational governance. Still others occupied departmental positions in the logistics and various committees, indicating their responsibility for overseeing operational aspects of the ministry.⁵³³

Based on the study's findings, NAPS may be more evangelically aligned, where most participants were young professionals and college students seeking personal growth, service, and contribution opportunities. A considerable majority participated in group meetings, Bible

⁵³² See GCNARC, *Discipling, Nurturing, and Reclaiming*,” iii-viii; Morrow, “Strategies Nonprofit Organizational Leaders use to Retain Volunteers,” 27-31, 79, 80; and Kotter, *Leading Change*, 146-149.

⁵³³ SQ 2. See also Grube and Piliavin, “Role Identity,” 1108-1119.

study sessions, and mission projects. They may have been the young people Wisbey envisioned: “no longer content with being pew warmers and going through the motions.”⁵³⁴ A commitment to service seems to be the driving motivation, among others, for why volunteers joined NAPS. They embraced the priesthood of all believers and were active during their membership with NAPS.⁵³⁵ They desired to fulfill their passion for evangelism, missionary work, spiritual growth, and serving the underserved. These motivations revealed their commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ, communal development, and making a difference among the marginalized.

The involvement of participants in NAPS’ evangelistic missions and projects was also diverse. They participated in evangelistic campaigns in America and overseas in countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Madagascar, Botswana, Brazil, Haiti, Guyana, and the Philippines. The data propose the global scope of NAPS’s efforts to spread the everlasting gospel while living up to its slogan: *We Don’t Just Send Relief; We Hand-deliver it with Love and Care*. There were varied understandings of its mission and purpose, including uncertainty, as some volunteers seem not to have deeply contemplated the slogan’s meaning. Perhaps greater work is possible if NAPS ministry leaders improve their communication skills.

Kotter stated that a great vision can be purposeful even if only a few key people understand it. However, “the real power of a vision is unleashed only when most of those involved in an enterprise or an activity have a common understanding of its goals and directions.”⁵³⁶ Nevertheless, there was a general sense among participants that the slogan signified engaging in evangelistic and missionary work driven by a passion for helping

⁵³⁴ Wisbey, “Involving Young People in Mission,” 214-215.

⁵³⁵ Damsteegt, “The Priesthood of All Believers.” See also Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; and 1 Pet 2:9.

⁵³⁶ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 87.

underprivileged communities. More positive was that a majority could describe NAPS' mission and vision in their own words. They accentuated spreading Christian principles and meeting tangible and intangible needs, underscoring its holistic approach to ministry.

The impact of NAPS was not only external but internal as well, with a large majority reporting the ministry had a positive influence on their personal lives. From becoming more missional, growing professionally, academically, and spiritually, to choosing careers in service-related fields. These transformational revelations may have led some to believe that everyone connected to the ministry, including the president and founder, played a vital role in shaping its evangelism methods.⁵³⁷ The opinions surrounding the effective practices for NAPS leaders and volunteers centered around prayer, personal devotion, teamwork, routine group meetings, testimonies, and conducting Bible studies. These practices were essential to foster the transformations mentioned above.

With a heavily outward-focused evangelistic paradigm, most participants acknowledged NAPS' impact on the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Black Adventism. The positive contributions resulted from NAPS' diverse holistic evangelism strategies, some of which challenged the traditional SDA model. As Pedrito Maynard-Reid, vice president for spiritual life and mission and professor of biblical studies and missiology at Washington Adventist University, assessed:

If we correctly appropriate the biblical paradigm in the contemporary evangelistic enterprise, we must emphasize a holistic mission. Too often evangelical Christians limit their evangelism to "soul-winning" (i.e., converting people who verbally acknowledge Jesus as Lord and/or become members of the church), public proclamation of personal salvation, and a call to personal discipleship in which select sins are denounced. The wider social dimensions of

⁵³⁷ Esler, "Innovation." 1-8.

the gospel are not considered in depth.⁵³⁸

NAPS' approach then not only lines up with the SDA gold standard of "Christ's Method Alone" but goes a step further also to incorporate some of the many other lessons we may learn from His methods of labor. Jesus "did not follow merely one method; in various ways, He sought to gain the attention of the multitude; and then He proclaimed to them the truths of the gospel."⁵³⁹ Hence, the ministry uses community outreach programs, feeding and children programs, training young people, medical missionary evangelism, education, marches, disaster relief, and more.

Juggling these can be daunting, so respondents were not shy to propose improvement protocols. Some of these suggestions could serve as best practices moving forward, including delegating leadership roles and responsibilities, improving volunteer support and empowerment, reconnecting with OU, enhanced training in medical programs, succession planning, adopting technological strategies, and supporting overseas volunteers. In short, the analysis of the results highlights the long-term commitment of volunteers, their diverse motivations for joining, and the positive impact NAPS has had on their lives and communities. It also reveals the organization's global reach, varied evangelistic methodologies, and the importance of prayer, personal devotion, and teamwork.

Conceptualization of the Findings

The primary aim of a theology of evangelism is to illustrate evangelistic practices that benefit modern churches and society.⁵⁴⁰ According to this study, one hundred percent of

⁵³⁸ Pedrito Maynard-Reid, "Holistic Evangelism: The Case for a Broadened Evangelistic Approach," *Ministry Magazine*, last modified February 22, 2010, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2000/05/holistic-evangelism>.

⁵³⁹ White, *The Ministry of Health and Healing*, 143; and Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 123.

⁵⁴⁰ Colin Holmes and David Lindsay, "In Search of Christian Theological Research Methodology," *SAGE Open* 8, no. 4 (2018): 215824401880921, doi:10.1177/2158244018809214.

respondents joined NAPS to serve God or engage in missional activities. NAPS' charity work and preaching the Word of God were the primary interests of volunteers and what they envisioned to be following the ways of God.⁵⁴¹ The study also showed that some crucial things had to be done for evangelism to be meaningful. For instance, most respondents pointed out that NAPS' evangelism methodology entailed preaching and practical service activities. Helping the needy and less fortunate was a common practice for NAPS volunteers, demonstrating to nonbelievers the realistic nature of the gospel and evangelism.⁵⁴²

The findings revealed specific practices NAPS leaders and volunteers need to engage in to promote evangelism effectively. All respondents (100%) were aware of different approaches that NAPS leaders and volunteers needed to undertake to meet the core aim of their organization.⁵⁴³ Focusing on the essentials of prayer and personal devotion helped NAPS leaders and volunteers promote evangelistic activities, which are instrumental in uniting people from different ethnic backgrounds.⁵⁴⁴ The study identified that eighty-eight percent of the respondents believed that NAPS has significantly contributed to Black Adventist missions and the Seventh-day Adventist Church – domestically and in developing countries, supported by other literature.⁵⁴⁵

While NAPS may be similar to other humanitarian groups, it is considered different

⁵⁴¹ Yuri Cuellar De la Cruz and Stephen Robinson, "Answering the Call to Accessible Quality Health Care For All Using a New Model of Local Community Not-for-Profit Charity Clinics: A Return to Christ-Centered Care of The Past," *The Linacre Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (2017): 44-56, doi:10.1080/00243639.2016.1274631.

⁵⁴² Kevin Goodrich, "Foundations of Practical Spiritual Theology: Walter Hilton As a Case Study in Retrieval," *Open Theology* 7, no. 1 (2021): 91-101, doi:10.1515/opth-2020-0150.

⁵⁴³ Ames, Rosner and Erickson, "Worship, Faith, and Evangelism."

⁵⁴⁴ Bonn O. Jonyo, Caren Ouma, and Zachary Mosoti, "The Effect of Mission and Vision On Organizational Performance Within Private Universities in Kenya," *European Journal of Educational Sciences* 05, no. 02 (2018), doi:10.19044/ejes.v5no2a2.

⁵⁴⁵ Md. Nazrul Islam Mondal and Mahendran Shitan, "Relative Importance of Demographic, Socioeconomic and Health Factors on Life Expectancy in Low- and Lower-Middle-Income Countries," *Journal Of Epidemiology* 24, no. 2 (2014): 117-124, doi:10.2188/jea.je20130059.

because its primary aim was to carry out evangelistic activities. The NAPS message and mission were essential to spread the love of God in tangible ways, including combating the AIDS epidemic – a moral issue across the globe. NAPS leaders and volunteers believe that changing people’s hearts impacts their characters and deeds.⁵⁴⁶ The organization aligned its evangelistic practices with the gospel commission and vision of the SDA Church. With its unique approach, NAPS was an empowering force in Black Adventism and positively affected the religious landscape of the communities they served. A practical example of Adventism’s impact and success is Eri L. Barr, a Sabbatarian Adventist leader and the first Seventh-day Adventist minister of color.⁵⁴⁷ These activities led to the development of the SDA Church and Black Adventist missions. It was achieved through empowering Black communities’ desire for religious freedom and inclusion. This finding shows that NAPS has significantly contributed to the SDA and Black Adventist churches.

Every organization dreams of a better future.⁵⁴⁸ Like them, NAPS aspires to lead young people who will be agents of change and service in at-risk and underserved communities. Yet, they still desire to enhance the process of moving forward. The research indicated that succession planning by recruiting new and younger leaders was the main activity that NAPS needed to engage in to enhance its operation in the future.⁵⁴⁹ Secondly, focusing on Black underprivileged communities was equally important in helping the spread of evangelism in the future. The study also noted that NAPS should not ignore the impact of social media platforms.

⁵⁴⁶ Lahna I. Catalino, Sara B. Algoe, and Barbara L. Fredrickson, “Prioritizing Positivity: An Effective Approach to Pursuing Happiness?” *Emotion* 14, no. 6 (2014): 1155-1161, doi:10.1037/a0038029.

⁵⁴⁷ Baker, “Barr, Eri L.”

⁵⁴⁸ Fatma Sonmez Cakir and Zafer Adiguzel, “Analysis of Leader Effectiveness in Organization and Knowledge Sharing Behavior on Employees and Organization,” *SAGE Open* 10, no. 1 (2020): 215824402091463, doi:10.1177/2158244020914634.

⁵⁴⁹ Mark McFeeters, Mark Hammond, and Brian J. Taylor, “Christian Faith-Based Youth Work: Systematic Narrative Review,” *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 43, no. 4 (2021): 448-460, doi:10.1080/13617672.2021.1991645.

Technological advancements have reduced the world to a miniature village. Going into the future, one must incorporate technology into their plans, starting now.⁵⁵⁰ The results indicated that NAPS should use social media platforms to reach many young people who utilize these platforms. In addition, NAPS must partner with other global humanitarian organizations to ensure they reach more people. NAPS leaders should get regular updates about what is happening around the globe concerning missionary activities. This practice will help them formulate plans to overcome challenges and push for a better future. The study also recommended that NAPS leaders' evangelistic efforts be taught in schools so that young students can learn those methodologies early and begin to implement them in their personal lives.

Theme 1: Historical Narrative

A crucial aim of the study was to understand the historical narrative of the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation and how it became a global ministry.⁵⁵¹ NAPS is a nonprofit organization that started in 1978 but was legally registered in Alabama in 1993.⁵⁵² Its chief goal, in the beginning, was to mitigate poverty. Still, it eventually extended into education, humanitarian aid and emergency relief, agricultural technology, medical missions, and spiritual comfort. The organization operates independently without government intervention, political influences, or denominational restrictions.⁵⁵³ A defining moment for NAPS was finding a unique niche in blending preaching the Word of God with charitable pursuits.

⁵⁵⁰ Wayne Fife, "Creating the Moral Body: Missionaries and the Technology of Power in Early Papua New Guinea," *Ethnology* 40, no. 3 (2001): 251, doi:10.2307/3773968.

⁵⁵¹ Covers RQ1.

⁵⁵² Napsoc.Org, last modified 2022, <https://www.napsoc.org/what-we-do>.

⁵⁵³ Alfonzo Greene, Jr., "Regional Conferences," 218.

This study noticed the importance of an organization's historical narrative.⁵⁵⁴ NAPS's story is not in a vacuum but part of the larger SDA Church's history. The ministry's connection and operations at Oakwood University, an HBCU, a Black child of Adventism, proved strategic since NAPS could attract a constant influx of student volunteers. With an energetic and innovative youthful resource pool, NAPS extended its evangelistic services across the United States, attracting even more volunteers, resources, and professionals with a heart for missional activities. The organization's focus expanded beyond hunger and malnutrition to include spiritual and physical needs. Apart from performing charitable work, the organization launched evangelistic campaigns to win souls and establish churches. The move gradually led to global mission work as NAPS broadened its ministry activities, especially in Southern Africa and some parts of the Caribbean.

NAPS has continued expanding its reach with evangelistic missions and relief efforts conducted in Brazil, Haiti, Guyana, the Philippines, and Madagascar. They also actively provided aid to victims during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. In addition to its relief efforts, the organization has also been involved in community development projects, such as building schools and medical clinics in underprivileged areas. Furthermore, NAPS has prevented starvation and addressed underprivileged communities' physical and spiritual needs. The organization has received recognition for its work, including the 2010 Humanitarian Award from the NAACP.

The survey and interview responses provide valuable insights that support Theme 1:

⁵⁵⁴ See Michael Rowlinson, et al., "A Narrative of The Historic Turn in Organization Studies," *Handbook of Historical Methods for Management* (2023): 64-79; William M. Foster, Diego M. Coraiola, et al., "The Strategic Use of Historical Narratives: A Theoretical Framework," *Business History* 59, no. 8 (2017): 1176-1200, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00076791.2016.1224234>; and Michael J. Gill, et al., "Constructing Trustworthy Historical Narratives: Criteria, Principles and Techniques," *British Journal of Management* 29, no. 1 (2018): 191-205, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12262>.

Historical Narrative. Participants acknowledged the significance of NAPS in their responses, referring to its establishment and growth over time. They mentioned the importance of education and schools in keeping the church alive, emphasizing the role of NAPS in training individuals from a young age. This historical perspective highlights the foundation of NAPS as a student-led entity that champions service-based education, which has played a pivotal role in the development of the ministry.

Furthermore, participants discussed the global impact of NAPS, noting its influence beyond domestic boundaries. They referred to international missions and partnerships, highlighting how NAPS alums have established ministries in countries like Ghana. Their responses convey the expansion of NAPS as a global ministry, extending its impact beyond its initial establishment. The answers reflect how NAPS has reached diverse communities worldwide, contributing to the growth and spread of its message. In addition to its historical and global significance, participants also reflect on the evolution and adaptation of NAPS. They emphasize the need for improvements and changes to remain relevant today. Participants mentioned the importance of embracing contemporary practices, such as digital evangelism, to reach a wider audience effectively – highlighting the ability of NAPS to evolve and adapt its strategies over time, ensuring its message resonates with the changing needs and preferences of the ministry’s target audience.

Lastly, participants’ responses underscored the diversity within NAPS. They discussed the involvement of males and females and occasionally as others were willing to be involved from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Respondents mentioned including African-American (and Hispanic) youth in evangelistic campaigns, emphasizing the welcoming culture of NAPS. This ability to work in diverse communities strengthens NAPS’ global impact and

fosters an environment of inclusivity and collaboration.

The findings provide a comprehensive historical narrative of NAPS and its global impact as a ministry. Insights from participants and respondents shed light on how NAPS has developed to become a global agency with a rich history and a diverse community of volunteers. The discussions encompass the importance of education, the expansion of NAPS internationally, the need for adaptation, and the cultural diversity within the ministry. These results from the study collectively support Theme 1, offering a deeper understanding of the growth and transformation of NAPS as a global ministry.

Theme 2: Proclamation

Another research question sought to find out NAPS' theology of evangelism to understand the *why* before *how* they practice evangelism.⁵⁵⁵ The survey and interview questions relating to the spiritual disciplines or habits crucial to NAPS volunteers and leaders explored their theology, which can be defined as thinking (and talking) about God.⁵⁵⁶ NAPS leaders' and volunteers' actions of thinking and talking about God can be called proclamation in their act of evangelism – as uncovered by the survey responses on why and how the respondents decided to be part of NAPS. One common theme across the answers is that NAPS volunteers and leaders joined the ministry to proclaim the gospel – evangelizing.⁵⁵⁷ Based on the survey, most respondents joined NAPS to serve God or do good deeds in society. Many directed their efforts toward sharing the Good News and promoting evangelism. Other respondents noted that they decided to join NAPS because they thought it was the best thing they could do for God.

⁵⁵⁵ RQ2.

⁵⁵⁶ Badham, "What Is Theology?"

⁵⁵⁷ Or proclaiming the gospel evangelistically.

The respondents' views on joining NAPS indicate that NAPS' theology has significantly influenced their engagement in evangelism proclamation. One respondent's answer evidenced evangelism as a key objective of NAPS, noting that they decided to join NAPS because they loved evangelism and missionary work and that NAPS was the only platform that could allow them to give life to this passion. The study also revealed that some volunteers joined NAPS because they wanted to be part of a community that consistently thinks about God and enhances their spirituality through service. Evangelism not only involves spreading the Word of God, but it also involves performing good deeds for the community.⁵⁵⁸ Since NAPS' "good deeds" in the US and abroad were publicized in news articles, magazines, and local Churches, they were influential factors that swayed volunteers' decision to join the ministry.

As the findings suggest, NAPS augmented theology of evangelism provided a relevant outlet for young people, especially African American student missionaries, to develop professionally and spiritually. Additionally, the study indicated that it was through NAPS that most volunteers could get closer to Jesus. Most volunteers predominantly joined NAPS to follow or spread God's Word. For them, NAPS was a medium to gain skills in proclaiming the gospel – a place to learn about theory and practice, words and deeds.⁵⁵⁹

The participants' responses provide valuable insights that support Theme 2: Proclamation. Participants highlight the theological foundation and principles underpinning NAPS' evangelism approach through their comments and reflections. One prominent aspect that emerges from the participants' responses is the emphasis on the importance of reaching

⁵⁵⁸ Stephen A. Long, "Book Review: Sacramental Charity, Creditor Christology, and the Economy of Salvation in Luke's Gospel. By Anthony Giambrone," *Theological Studies* 79, no. 3 (2018): 681-683, doi:10.1177/0040563918786811a.

⁵⁵⁹ Pryds, "Franciscan Lay Women and the Charism to Preach," 41-57; and "Tidings", 303.

people for God. Participants express a firm conviction and passion for sharing their beliefs and spreading the Gospel. They view evangelism as a central mission of NAPS, aimed at conveying their faith to others so they may become believers.

The participants also discussed NAPS' evangelistic strategies. They recognized effective tactics needed to engage and persuade individuals to embrace their beliefs. There is an acknowledgment of the importance of having a well-defined strategy for evangelism, including children's programs, door-to-door visits, and collaboration with local churches. These strategies are effective ways to connect with people, especially young individuals, and create opportunities for them to explore and understand the faith, which supports NAPS' theology of evangelism and emphasizes the use of strategic approaches to communicate and engage with diverse audiences effectively.

Furthermore, participants reflected on the need for adaptation and innovation in evangelism. They recognized the importance of staying relevant and keeping pace with societal changes and advancements. Participants also mentioned the shift from traditional strategies to contemporary practices, such as digital evangelism, to reach a wider audience. Consequently, this highlights the flexibility and openness needed to communicate the gospel effectively in an ever-changing world.

Another significant aspect that emerged from the responses is recognizing the role of human resources in evangelism. Participants considered the need for efficient and effective utilization of human resources to maximize the impact of NAPS' evangelistic efforts. They emphasized the importance of recruiting and retaining dedicated volunteers and addressing the issue of volunteer turnover, which recognizes the significance of human resources and underscores the value of committed individuals in carrying out the mission of evangelism.

In summary, the participants' responses provided a comprehensive understanding of NAPS' theology of evangelism. Their comments highlight the core principles of reaching people for God, employing strategic approaches, adapting to societal changes, and valuing human resources. The participants' insights align with the theological foundation of NAPS and demonstrate how its theology of evangelism shapes the ministry's practices and approaches to spreading the Gospel.

Theme 3: Demonstration

The study also sought to answer the third research question about NAPS' evangelism practice by asking what is unique about their approach to evangelism, what strategies they use in domestic evangelism and global mission, and which method was most effective in both.⁵⁶⁰ A common theme from the study's responses was NAPS' demonstration of the gospel in how they practiced evangelism. They used different techniques to evangelize, establishing a symbiotic relationship between their theology of evangelism (proclamation) and practice of evangelism (demonstration).⁵⁶¹

In preparation for active outreach ministries, volunteers practiced certain spiritual disciplines, strengthening their demonstration of the gospel. One of the practices performed by NAPS leaders in evangelism is rising early. Though it may not seem related to evangelism, this practice was crucial to the ministry's success in evangelistic campaigns. The study indicated that NAPS leaders needed to wake up early to worship or read the Bible – a habit Jesus modeled in His life and ministry.⁵⁶² Notable Old Testament Characters such as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, and David rose early in the morning.⁵⁶³ This discipline helped

⁵⁶⁰ RQ3.

⁵⁶¹ Padilla, *What Is Integral Mission?* 1517; Waweru, "Integral Mission," 13-18; Hartwell, "Integral Mission;" and Campbell, "Holistic Ministry," 37-44.

⁵⁶² See Mark 1:35 and Luke 21:38.

⁵⁶³ See Gen 19:27; 22:3; Exod. 8:20; 9:13; 24:4; 34:4; Josh 3:1; 6:12; Judg. 7:1; 1 Sam 1 5:12; and 17:20.

NAPS leaders get to their daily activities on time and dedicate more time later in the day to evangelistic activities.

Respondents also noted that attending Friday evening services to read scriptures and Ellen White's writings motivated them in their outreach actions. They also liked that food was a part of these Friday gatherings – seeking to model the actions of the early Church in Acts 2:42, 46. Other spiritual practices include doctrinal discussions, assessments, and testimonies regarding personal prayer and faith. Among the above techniques, the data suggested that leaders and volunteers sought to practice the Christian graces of humility, the golden rule, integrity, kindness, tolerance, friendliness, and resilience.⁵⁶⁴

The data further revealed that NAPS volunteers demonstrated love for each other and people from different backgrounds in practical ways. They emulated hand-delivering the message of the gospel with love and care. Love was demonstrated in a multi-touch holistic fashion, including disaster relief, health and wellness education and intervention, children's programs, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, singing uplifting music, canvassing door-to-door and church-to-church, marches for worthy causes, constructing houses of worship and schools, as well as preaching and giving Bible studies. In a nutshell, most of the respondents in the survey noted that NAPS' evangelism practices revolve around service to God and service to people.⁵⁶⁵

The study's results from participants' responses strongly support Theme 3: Demonstration. Participants provided valuable insights into the specific demonstrative practices employed by NAPS in their evangelistic endeavors, shedding light on the holistic

⁵⁶⁴ Hurley, "Practicing Like Jesus," 27-64; Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 13-16, 301-303; and Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 1-20, 287-290.

⁵⁶⁵ Another way of saying love God and love your neighbor. See Lev 19:18; Matt 19: 19; 22:37-40; Gal 5:14.

aspects of the ministry. Another common practice that emerged from responses is using door-to-door canvassing as outreach. This practice was the primary means of fundraising and distributing Christian literature. It also granted volunteers a strategic reason to be engaged in various communities to interact and build relationships with those they encountered – good footing for sharing the Gospel.

The participants also highlighted the significance of organizing children’s programs as part of NAPS’ evangelistic efforts. They described their involvement in conducting programs catering to children and offering age-appropriate activities and teachings. Participants recognized the impact of reaching out to young people and instilling faith in them at an early age. This practice reflected NAPS’ commitment to nurturing children’s spiritual growth and cultivating a solid foundation of faith. Furthermore, teaching and involving children in ministry programs increase the likelihood that they will accept Christ sooner and be involved in outreach ministries as they age.⁵⁶⁶

Moreover, participants mentioned collaborating with local churches as a critical practice in NAPS’ evangelism. They discussed working closely with churches in the areas they visit, leveraging the support and resources of these churches to enhance their outreach. Participants emphasized the power of collective efforts and the value of engaging the local community in spreading the Gospel. This practice aligns with NAPS’ belief in unity and cooperation for effective evangelism.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁶ Suzetta Nutt, “Practicing Spiritual Disciplines with Children,” in *Along the Way: Conversations about Children and Faith*, eds. Ron Bruner and Dana Kennamer Pemberton, (ACU Press, 2015), 191–206, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv310vnr.15>; and Steven Bonner, “Understanding Childhood Spirituality,” in *Along the Way: Conversations about Children and Faith*, eds. Ron Bruner and Dana Kennamer Pemberton, (ACU Press, 2015), 31–44; <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv310vnr.5>.

⁵⁶⁷ See the section “Affiliations and Collaborations: Expanding the Sphere of Influence.” Lasker, et al., “Partnership Synergy,” 179-205; Cummings and Kiesler, “Collaborative Research,” 703-722; Mattessich and Johnson, *Collaboration*

Participants also solidified their position of demonstrating the gospel by any means necessary. This mentality hints at the centrality of the gospel and its importance in the life of believers. To fulfill the Great Commission and the end-time urgency of gospel proclamation and demonstration, members seem to be saying that even NAPS should abandon methods that do not work or that no longer work and instead embrace the times and methods conducive to evangelism success.⁵⁶⁸ Therefore, living up to that injunction means incorporating technology and digital platforms to extend the ministry's reach. They discuss using digital tools and social media to disseminate messages, share testimonies, and connect with a broader audience. Participants recognized the potential of digital evangelism in reaching individuals who may not have been accessible through traditional means. Accepting and implementing this improvement will demonstrate NAPS' willingness to adapt and utilize modern tools to evangelize for the sake of the kingdom of God.⁵⁶⁹

Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of ongoing training and equipping in NAPS' evangelism practices. They discussed the training they received to enhance their skills in sharing the Gospel, engaging in meaningful conversations, and addressing common questions and doubts. They appreciated the investment in personal growth and the emphasis on continuous learning. This evangelism practice reveals NAPS' commitment to equipping its members with the necessary knowledge and skills to remain effective at demonstrating the gospel in tangible and intangible ways.

In summary, the participants' responses provide valuable insights into NAPS' practice of evangelism – how they demonstrate the gospel evangelistically. The practices employed

⁵⁶⁸ See Matt 24:14; 28:18-20; Rev. 14:6; and Byrd, *Contemporary Evangelism*, 11, 12.

⁵⁶⁹ Teasdale, "Forming Saints in a Digital Context," 65-76; Domm, *Digital Discipleship and Evangelism*, 3-14; Lines, "The Great Digital Commission," 15-49, 68-74; and Amanze and Wogu, "Internet Evangelism," 149-170.

include door-to-door canvassing, children's programs, medical missionary programs and education, disaster relief efforts, collaboration with local churches and government agencies, utilization of technology, and ongoing training. Therefore, the participants' experiences and reflections support the understanding of NAPS' evangelism practices and illustrate how these practices contribute to the ministry's mission of sharing the gospel.

Theme 4: Contribution

The study's findings support Theme 4: Contribution. Participants offered valuable insights into the unique contributions of NAPS as a ministry and its impact on the SDA Church and the Black Adventist community. Most respondents affirmed that NAPS has contributed significantly to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Black Adventist missions.⁵⁷⁰ One respondent described the focus of the NAPS was to bring people to Christ and then plug them into the local churches. The SDA Church is a global movement, and the ministry of NAPS has also spanned globally, touching the largest demographic of the denomination's membership – Africa. Every child they hugged, every bowl of food given, every piece of literature distributed, and through the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel, added to the mission of the SDA Church.

On the contribution of NAPS to SDA missions, participants noted that NAPS' efforts to win souls holistically made it easier for them to contribute to Black Adventism since meeting social needs is almost an absolute for effective evangelism, especially in urban America. As suggested by the findings, NAPS' grassroots principles had benefited the ability of some Black SDA entities to operate independently in their local spheres of influence. Most participants agreed that NAPS has positively

⁵⁷⁰ RQ4.

contributed to the Mother Church and added over twenty-three thousand baptisms.

Conversely, a few participants were unsure if NAPS contributed to Black Adventism, perhaps silently acknowledging a decline in its perceived impact within the Black Adventist community.⁵⁷¹ This perception may necessitate further attention and investigation into the evolving dynamics of race, power, and representation within NAPS and the broader Black SDA community. Notwithstanding, while 12% of the participants had this uncertainty, they did not give a definitive “no” either. More volunteers were certain that NAPS empowered Black communities religiously and helped overcome the conservative notion of a “White Savior,” thus challenging the narrative about Black involvement in missions and evangelism.

Another important contribution NAPS made to Black Adventism was engaging and encouraging many Black SDA youths to participate in ministry. The mission of NAPS was to serve whosoever was in need. Still, its infancy originated at Oakwood University – creating a ripple effect among Black Adventist young people and developing them into community leaders. The findings show that NAPS is a positive example that Blacks can be equals and successfully engage the missional mandate of Christ – even if they are not widely known or fully studied. According to the research results, NAPS has exemplified Black excellence and unapologetically steered its efforts and resources in underserved and low-income communities that knew little about Adventism – domestically and internationally.

Furthermore, NAPS was influential in inspiring and motivating young people to believe they can succeed at evangelism and mission outreach. Respondents highlighted the impact of seeing fellow Black young people passionately sharing their faith and inviting others to explore Christianity and Adventism. NAPS provided a unique space where they could express their

⁵⁷¹ See Figure 16; and Byrd, *Contemporary Evangelism*, 11, 12.

beliefs and actively participate in holistic evangelism. This contribution is crucial in nurturing a new generation of leaders and evangelists within the Black Adventist community and the SDA Church.⁵⁷²

Another prominent contribution participants highlighted was NAPS' role in fostering diversity and inclusivity. NAPS provides a platform for African-American youth and individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to participate in evangelism and leadership roles. This practice contributes to the overall representation and empowerment of Black Adventists within the broader SDA denomination – connecting with another discovery, that NAPS helps to bridge the generational gap within the SDA Church. Participants acknowledged the significance of having a strong presence of young people actively involved in evangelistic campaigns and outreach initiatives. This involvement not only enhances the vibrancy of the church but also fosters intergenerational connections and collaborations. NAPS catalyzes dialogue, understanding, and collaboration between different age groups within the SDA community, ultimately strengthening the unity and cohesiveness of the church.⁵⁷³

Moreover, participants discussed the impact of NAPS' domestic evangelistic campaigns in reaching and connecting with individuals in local communities. They emphasize the importance of grassroots-level initiatives that directly engage with people's needs and concerns. Through door-to-door canvassing, community programs, and partnerships with local churches, NAPS contributes to the growth and expansion of the SDA Church by reaching individuals who may not have been traditionally exposed to Adventist beliefs. This localized approach helps to broaden the Church's reach and impact within diverse communities, including the Black Adventism subgroups.

⁵⁷² Wisbey, "Involving Young People in Mission," 214-215.

⁵⁷³ Chancey and Bruner, "A Reader's Guide to Intergenerational Ministry."

Additionally, participants acknowledged the role of NAPS in promoting cultural expression and celebrating the rich heritage of Black Adventism. They highlighted incorporating African American traditions, music, and worship styles in NAPS' programs and events. By embracing and celebrating cultural diversity, NAPS contributes to the overall cultural enrichment and inclusivity of the SDA Church. Thus fostering a sense of belonging and affirmation for minorities, who find their unique cultural identity represented and integrated within the broader Adventist society. These noteworthy contributions further emphasize embracing and supporting marginalized ministries within the larger SDA context.

Theme 5: Best Practices Moving Forward

Many of the NAPS volunteers and staff members supported the notion that there was room for improvement and that missions should invest in activities that will help to keep growing and stay relevant.⁵⁷⁴ All the respondents offered advice to enhance the ministry's future performance. NAPS should study the recommended improvements and consider succession planning by recruiting new and young leaders, continuing to serve underprivileged communities, and empowering volunteers through training and adequate funding. Innovative digital evangelism supported volunteers, refined medical outreach and autonomous foreign branches play into the historical narrative, proclamation, and gospel demonstration and contribute to the Church's mission.

For better performance in the future, respondents stated that the NAPS US headquarters should not neglect foreign missions and should be more transparent and accountable when carrying out ministry activities. This reminder is crucial to promote and maintain trust within and outside the organization. Other suggestions included focusing more on individual Bible

⁵⁷⁴ RQ5.

studies than public evangelic meetings, prioritizing children’s ministry as it has a more prolonged impact than the older generation, and teaming up with other global groups to enhance NAPS’ effect and reach.

Another best practice for the future is the ongoing necessity of training for missions and leadership. Training on communication, empathy, and cultural sensitivity in mission practices strengthens evangelistic impact.⁵⁷⁵ Ideally, training programs should not take long and include equipping overseas branch directors to manage NAPS’ evangelistic work strategically and independently.⁵⁷⁶ Training in this area is necessary since the technology was also recommended as a key best practice. Another pertinent enhancement participants emphasized was the importance of embracing digital platforms for mission endeavors because of their potential to reach a wider audience and connect with individuals in cyberspace. Participants discussed using social media, online resources, and virtual stages for sharing the gospel and engaging in meaningful conversations. This best practice also reflects the need for missions to adapt to the evolving technological landscape and leverage digital tools to expand their kingdom impact.

Yet, while NAPS should remain relevant with the times, they should not lose their unique touch in hand-delivering love and care because social media evangelism can only do so much. As volunteers age, graduate, start careers, and sever some relationships, NAPS should continually refine and adopt unique ways to attract more volunteers and donors. Participants stressed the significance of building meaningful relationships and connections with the

⁵⁷⁵ Some of this already take place. NAPS conducted training on Tuesdays and Thursdays that also included learning the host country’s language, songs, and mannerisms. Upon arriving in a new country for short-term mission trips, NAPS spends a few days with the host country’s trainees and leaders to cross train and learn about the culture.

⁵⁷⁶ Esler, “Innovation.” 1-8.

communities served. They emphasized the value of investing time and effort in understanding the communities' unique needs, culture, and context. NAPS could harness a strategic framework for evangelistic outreach and service by building trust and fostering genuine relationships.

Furthermore, participants underscored the value of collaborative partnerships and networking in mission work. They featured the benefits of working with local churches, organizations, and community leaders to maximize resources, knowledge, and expertise. This collaborative approach allows ministries to tap into local insights and establish a more sustainable and contextually relevant evangelism ethos. Participants also suggested mentoring and training leaders to ensure the long-term impact and sustainability of post-mission initiatives.

Another best practice highlighted was the need for flexibility and adaptability in mission praxis. Organizational leaders should be open to change and adjust their methodologies based on the specific needs and dynamics of the communities served. Learning from past experiences, being willing to experiment, and continuously evaluating and refining mission practices keep the ministry relevant and responsive to the evolving needs and challenges encountered in the field. In this regard, White's counsel still applies to NAPS leaders that "different methods are to be employed to save different ones" or that "The classes of people you meet with decide for you the way in which the work should be handled."⁵⁷⁷

The study's findings support Theme 5: Best Practices Moving Forward. The insights emphasized embracing technology, training, relationship building, collaboration, adaptability, and remaining true to their core holistic approaches. NAPS' evangelistic niche seems to be

⁵⁷⁷ White, *Evangelism*, 106.

addressing not only spiritual needs but also practical needs of communities. Volunteers should plan initiatives to combine evangelism with acts of service, such as healthcare, education, disaster relief, feeding programs, and social justice activities. This holistic methodology confirms that missions should comprehensively and meaningfully impact individuals' lives and communities. Implementing these best practices will enable NAPS to navigate future challenges and sustainably impact poor communities.⁵⁷⁸ The next Chapter concludes this study and includes the implications and recommendations for future research.

⁵⁷⁸ Gustafson, "The Church and Holistic Ministry in Culture," 80-85.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION: SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The primary purpose of this research was to analyze NAPS' historical and methodological approach to evangelism and how they contributed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Black Adventist missions. The researcher also sought to explore NAPS' evangelistic strategies using a qualitative case study methodology to ascertain their applicability in local churches and suggest best practices. The findings identified that both NAPS leaders and volunteers imbibed a gospel of proclamation and demonstration that sought to minister to the "least of these." The volunteers were mainly convinced to join the organization to serve God through practical and charitable outreach. To maintain the future success and growth of the organization, NAPS will need to keep recruiting and training the younger generation to support and participate in the ministry's holistic ventures.

As the researcher of this dissertation, I had a personal connection to the topic. My Afro-Caribbean heritage, membership in the Adventist church, and insider insights and viewpoints occasionally enabled me to comment on the findings regarding NAPS' theology and evangelism practice based on my firsthand observations. It might encourage my African American parishioners to continue the history of Black Adventist missionaries spreading the everlasting gospel in creative ways and grabbing hold of the global mission plow.

According to the survey, documentary analysis, and interviews, NAPS has succeeded in domestic and international evangelism. Regarding NAPS' methods of evangelism, the study concluded that a multifaceted approach worked best and that evangelism should touch various aspects of people's lives – "by any means necessary."⁵⁷⁹ The findings from the participants' responses provide a systematic and comprehensive understanding of NAPS' theology of

⁵⁷⁹ Malcolm X, *By Any Means Necessary*; and Myers, *Malcolm X*.

evangelism, practices employed in their evangelistic endeavors, and the best practices that missions can adopt in the future. The results established that NAPS has positively contributed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Black Adventism. The following summaries highlight the significance and implications of the study's conclusions in various aspects.

Firstly, NAPS' theology of evangelism emphasizes the core principles of reaching people for God, employing strategic, holistic methods, adapting to societal changes, and valuing human well-being. Their theology informs their practice of evangelism and aligns with the overarching fundamental beliefs of the SDA Church. This understanding has profound implications for practitioners, as it encourages them to stay rooted in a theological framework while being responsive to the evolving needs of the communities they serve.

Secondly, NAPS' evangelism practices provide valuable guidance for specialists seeking to impact individuals and communities positively. The diverse methods, such as door-to-door canvassing, children's programs, collaboration with other ministries and city officials, digital evangelism, and ministry training, reflect NAPS's multifaceted, holistic approach. These practices contribute to the ministry's proclamation and demonstration of the gospel while fostering meaningful connections with those they serve. Practitioners can use these insights to augment their evangelistic efforts and develop innovative strategies tailored to their respective contexts.

In addition, their contributions to the SDA Church and Black Adventism encompass thousands of souls baptized, fostering diversity and inclusivity, inspiring and motivating young people, bridging generational gaps, reaching local communities through grassroots evangelism and relief work, and celebrating cultural expressions. The recognition of NAPS' integral role in enriching the SDA Church and empowering the Black Adventist community underlines the

value of embracing and supporting similar ministries within the broader denomination.

Stakeholders within the SDA Church can use these insights to boost inclusivity, bridge gaps, and create opportunities for meaningful engagement.

Furthermore, the insights unearthed lend credence to utilizing technology, building relationships, fostering collaboration and adaptability, succession planning, and implementing holistic evangelism. These best practices provide valuable guidance for missions seeking to navigate the challenges of the future effectively. By incorporating them strategically, ministries can maximize their impact, engage diverse communities, and sustain meaningful transformation.

The influence of NAPS' purpose is also seen in the organization's participation and reaction to civic and social issues through marches and inspirational presentations delivered nationwide in schools, churches, and juvenile correctional facilities. The number of baptisms and the favorable responses received are indications that the organization's proactive engagement in community service, Bible studies, canvassing, feeding programs, and short-term missions have greatly helped the ministry's efforts to achieve its evangelistic goals. Further validation of NAPS' approach to evangelism is afforded by the fact that government bodies and cities have acknowledged and praised the group's efforts and effectiveness with accolades.⁵⁸⁰ The evangelical message that NAPS has been trying to spread to a wider audience has been significantly aided by the publicity they have gotten in the media, allowing it to widen its reach. These important factors demonstrate that NAPS' holistic, action-oriented evangelism warrants attention and application in local church evangelism, intercultural studies, and

⁵⁸⁰ See Appendix G to AF.

missiology.⁵⁸¹

NAPS has shown how to effectively negotiate cultural differences while spreading the gospel in culturally varied environments where the organization operates. Their method recognizes and honors the traditions and customs of the peoples with whom they collaborate, which helps cultivate faith in and receptivity to the gospel. The organization's comprehensive methodology is consistent with the missiological idea of "integral mission," which promotes incorporating into the Christian mission's spiritual and social aspects. This approach makes a persuasive argument for a more unified and comprehensive expression of missions within the discipline of missiology. Therefore, evangelism proclamation and socially responsible demonstration of the Gospel Commission must coexist without one (or the other) vying for supremacy.⁵⁸² NAPS' practice of integrating the entire community in their missionary endeavors is consistent with Adventism's 'Total Member Involvement' concept, emphasizing the significance of the priesthood of all believers and connecting each member in the *missiones ecclesiarum*.⁵⁸³

In addition, NAPS' practice of evangelism provides unique insights and lessons for the larger area of intercultural studies and missiology. Their hands-on tactics when tackling societal challenges like poverty, health, and education highlight the significance of social

⁵⁸¹ See Chapter 26 of Wonsuk Ma and Julie C. Ma, "Missiology: Evangelization, Holistic Ministry, and Social Justice," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (New York: Routledge, 2020); Byrd, *Contemporary Evangelism*, 102-120; Oyinloye, "Health and Social Ministries," 21-47; Padilla, *What Is Integral Mission?* 1517; Waweru, "Integral Mission," 13-18; Hartwell, "Integral Mission;" and Campbell, "Holistic Ministry," 37-44.

⁵⁸² Jay Hartwell noted that 'Integral Mission' was "further clarified at the 2001 meeting of the Micah Network in Oxford as 'the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel,' emphasizing that it is not simply the issue of evangelism and social involvement being done alongside each other but rather that 'our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life' and that 'our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.'" See Jay Hartwell, "Integral Mission," Lausanne Movement, last modified July 24, 2023, <https://lausanne.org/networks/issues/integral-mission>.

⁵⁸³ Elliston, *Missiological Research Design*, 204.

justice in evangelism and mission work. NAPS' evangelism framework should encourage missiologists and practitioners of evangelism to evaluate how social action might be integrated into their mission strategy. It challenges conventional paradigms and inspires new ways of approaching mission work by presenting a holistic, culturally sensitive, community-involved, and socially relevant evangelism model. Perhaps NAPS' practice of evangelism could illuminate the path towards more impactful methods of evangelism and mission, especially in communities of color. The broad array of activities undertaken by NAPS aligns with the principles described in First Corinthians 13, suggesting an expansive range of opportunities for future research. Such a study may yield significant findings in evangelism, intercultural studies, and missiology, potentially informing and enriching these practices.⁵⁸⁴

Another possible area of attention for additional research is young people's contribution to the mission of NAPS. While they actively include young people in their activities, investigating the impact of this involvement on both the youth participants and the communities they serve may reveal valuable insights. Doing so may shed light on the advantages and difficulties specific to volunteers' participation in mission and evangelism, giving suggestions for other organizations wishing to incorporate young people in mission work.

Finally, using digital technologies for evangelism is a burgeoning area of interest and exploration. However, the feedback collected indicates that this might be a potential area of improvement for NAPS. As such, the organization's use of media and technology for mission work could be examined in a subsequent research project to delve into its effectiveness, costs, reach, training required, and possible strategies for enhancement. The disaster and

⁵⁸⁴ Elliston, *Missiological Research Design*, 151-153.

humanitarian aid initiatives that NAPS provides may also be a topic for further investigation. It could be an in-depth study on the efficacy of their disaster response, their methods to integrate evangelism into these efforts, or the long-term impact on communities affected by the calamity. Such a study could provide other organizations involved in disaster relief with invaluable insights.⁵⁸⁵

In summary, the study offers comprehensive and valuable insights into NAPS' theology of evangelism, practices, contributions to the SDA Church and Black Adventism, and best practices for missions. The implications of these findings extend to practitioners, academic advancement, and relevant stakeholders, providing guidance for future mission endeavors, informing scholarly research, and empowering individuals and communities with the transformative message of the Gospel. By embracing and implementing these recommendations, the global missions movement can continue to grow and thrive, making a lasting and positive difference.

Implications of the Study

The study has provided a deeper understanding of the origin of NAPS and various practices that ministries and churches can undertake to enhance evangelism, minister to unreached and underserved peoples, and develop young people for leadership in the local Church, schools, and ministries. The research has various implications for different practitioners from other disciplines. This study may equip missionaries, pastors, evangelists, and laypeople with best practices to implement when promoting and conducting evangelistic activities. For instance, preaching the gospel should accompany various social activities or

⁵⁸⁵ See Danielle M. Hesse, "Disaster Preparedness and Response Among Religious Organizations," (Master's thesis, The University of Alabama, 2012), ii, iii; and Andrew J. Smith, "Local Christian Churches and Disaster Preparedness: Are they Prepared?," (Master's thesis, Arkansas Tech University, 2016), v.

charitable endeavors. Such actions are adaptable by other organizations pursuing similar interests as NAPS. The study also implied other humanitarian organizations, and missiologists may benefit from evaluating NAPS' evangelism modalities.

Implications to Practice

The findings of this study have meaningful implications for the practice of evangelism. It suggests practitioners can benefit from adopting similar practices and tailoring them to their contexts. There are multiple examples from which to choose that may impact evangelistic outcomes in the US and abroad. Incorporating young people eager to engage in God's mission in holistic evangelism enterprises also seems advantageous in their development and respective denominations. Furthermore, the research stresses the importance of adapting to societal changes and embracing technology. The participants' experiences and reflections demonstrate the value of leveraging digital platforms and utilizing innovative tools to reach a wider audience. It implies practitioners must stay updated with current trends and embrace technological advancements to effectively communicate the gospel's message in a rapidly evolving world.

Implications to Academic Advancement

The findings of this study contribute to the academic advancement of evangelism and mission studies. The participants' responses provide valuable firsthand insights into the theology and practices of NAPS, enriching the existing body of knowledge in this field. Scholars and researchers can analyze and build upon these findings to further explore the effectiveness of different evangelistic strategies, the impact of cultural diversity in mission work, and the role of technology in contemporary evangelism.

Moreover, the study's emphasis on the theology of evangelism and its practical

implications offers a framework for academic discourse and theological reflection. It invites scholars to delve deeper into the theological foundations of evangelism and examine how these principles inform and shape the practices of mission organizations. The study's findings can also inspire further research on the intersectionality of race, culture, and religious identity within the context of Adventist mission work.

Implications to Relevant Stakeholders

The findings of this study have implications for various stakeholders involved in evangelism and mission work. First and foremost, practitioners and mission organizations can benefit from the insights shared by the participants. The study offers practical guidance on effective strategies, collaboration with local churches, and the use of technology, empowering these stakeholders to optimize their efforts in reaching communities with the message of the Gospel.

Secondly, church leaders and denominational authorities can utilize the study's findings to inform their decision-making processes and resource allocation. Understanding the contributions and impact of NAPS on the SDA Church and Black Adventism can help leaders appreciate the importance of supporting and promoting diverse ministry initiatives within the broader Adventist community.

Lastly, the study's findings can also resonate with individuals passionate about evangelism and seeking to engage in meaningful mission work. The insights participants share can inspire and motivate aspiring missionaries to adopt best practices, foster inclusivity, and embrace cultural expressions as they embark on their mission journeys. Overall, the study's findings have practical, academic, and stakeholder implications that contribute to advancing evangelism practices, academic scholarship, and the collective efforts of relevant stakeholders in spreading the Gospel and making a positive impact in communities worldwide.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study broadly focused on NAPS' theology and practice of evangelism and presented the organization as warranting inclusion in the discourse surrounding Blacks in missions and evangelism. While applications could be drawn broadly, the focus remained on the original context of the study, and it was not an exhaustive study of the same. The sampling was limited numerically, theologically, denominationally, and geographically. Therefore, there is room for more research to evaluate specific aspects of NAPS' theology of evangelism. Future research could investigate particular NAPS evangelistic activities thoroughly. Scholars could narrow their research to establish how specific NAPS activities impact particular aspects of evangelism. Several areas warrant further investigation to advance the understanding of mission practices and academic scholarship.

Firstly, conducting comparative analyses between NAPS and similar ministries would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different evangelistic approaches. By examining various mission organizations' strategies, practices, and outcomes, researchers can identify best practices and better understand the factors contributing to successful evangelism efforts. Comparative studies could explore the cultural, contextual, and demographic factors that influence the effectiveness of different approaches, ultimately informing the development of more targeted and impactful mission strategies.

Secondly, longitudinal studies could assess the long-term impact of NAPS and similar ministries on individuals and communities – not just those receiving aid but also those giving it. It might entail monitoring individuals over several years and examining how their mental, physical, financial, and spiritual well-being have changed during that time. An in-depth examination of the methodology NAPS employs in its cultural engagement may be an additional promising subject for investigation. Understanding how NAPS navigates cultural

barriers while spreading the Gospel might bring useful insights to intercultural studies and missiology. Since NAPS is an organization that operates in a variety of cultural situations, conducting ethnographic research to investigate the organization's cultural adaptation and various techniques for developing intercultural understanding and respect may be the next logical study.⁵⁸⁶

In addition, cross-cultural studies focused on mission practices in diverse cultural contexts may enrich our understanding of how to engage and reach different communities effectively. Exploring the challenges, successes, and adaptations required when implementing mission strategies in diverse cultural settings can provide valuable insights into culturally sensitive approaches to evangelism. Since most of NAPS' foreign mission activities are in Africa, such a study is also needed to give voice to the African branches and highlight the unique contributions of other foreign volunteers. These studies could shed light on contextualization, intercultural communication, and developing culturally relevant practices that resonate with local and foreign countries where missions and ministries occur.

Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaborations between academia and mission organizations should be encouraged. By fostering partnerships between scholars and practitioners, real-world experiences can inform academic research, and mission organizations benefit from evidence-based insights. Such collaborations may lead to the development of innovative strategies, the refinement of existing practices, and the creation of a knowledge-sharing platform that facilitates continuous learning and improvement within the field of mission work. Lastly, the role of succession planning, staff, and volunteer burnout can be examined as it could impact volunteer longevity, spirituality, and the ministry's future and

⁵⁸⁶ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 90-95.

reputation within the SDA denominational hierarchy.

In conclusion, future studies should aim to deepen our understanding of mission practices, contribute to the academic advancement of the field, and provide practical recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and impact of mission organizations. By addressing these areas of research, we can further strengthen the global missions movement and empower communities with the transformative message of the Gospel.

APPENDIX A

BRAUN & CLARKE'S PHASES OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Table 1 Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

APPENDIX B

BRAUN & CLARKE’S 15-POINT CHECKLIST OF CRITERIA FOR GOOD THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Table 2 A 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis

Process	No.	Criteria
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for ‘accuracy’.
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
	4	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
Analysis	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
	7	Data have been analysed – interpreted, made sense of – rather than just paraphrased or described.
	8	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
Overall	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organized story about the data and topic.
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – ie, described method and reported analysis are consistent.
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
	15	The researcher is positioned as <i>active</i> in the research process; themes do not just ‘emerge’.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM FOR DISSERTATION RESEARCH STUDY

Program: Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies

Title: An Analysis of the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation's (NAPS) Theology and Practice of Evangelism

Researcher: Randrick Chance, BA Columbia College, MPM American Graduate University, PhD Candidate

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Edward L. Smither, PhD

Institution: Columbia International University, 7435 Monticello Road, Columbia, SC 29203

Randrick Chance is a Ph.D. candidate in the Intercultural Studies department at Columbia International University. You are invited to participate in a dissertation research study that will evaluate the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation's (NAPS) theology and practice of evangelism. Analyzing their strategies will help ascertain their contribution(s) to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and potential applications to local congregations. This research will benefit local church leaders, pastors, Black Christian youths, Regional Conferences, the North American Evangelism Institute (NADEI), Adventist Frontier Missions, and missiologists.

Your voluntary participation will include an interview of about 60 minutes, which may occur over several days and be conducted on Zoom or in person. Following my compilation of the interview, you will be asked to provide feedback on my summary of the interview findings to determine if it accurately reflects your perspectives and the intent of your interview responses. It will entail about 15-20 minutes of your time and may be handled via email, phone, or in person. The research study will be published; however, all participants' information will be treated ethically and with strict confidentiality. Your name or anything that could identify you will not be included in any study reports, and the information obtained, as well as the data and video recordings, are for the sole purpose of this dissertation study. All data and recordings will be saved as required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Columbia International University. Participants may also request a copy of this information and/or the findings from the study upon completion of the dissertation by notifying the researcher.

If you have any questions, please contact me at randrick.chance@ciu.edu or _____. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Roxi Snodgrass. She is the Columbia International University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-803-807-5051. Columbia International University's approval number for this study is _____.

- I understand that I have the right to withdraw or opt out of this research study at any time, even after the interview. My signature below indicates that the researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Your Name & Signature _____ **Date** _____

Name & Signature of Researcher _____ **Date** _____

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT – NAPS LEADERS INTERVIEW

Name:

Gender:

Age Range: 18-25 26-34 35-39 40-49 50-59
60+

Career/Job Title:

Education Level/Field of Study:

1. How long have you been a part of NAPS, and in what capacity?
2. Explain why and how you decided to be a part of NAPS.
3. What evangelism campaigns have you done with NAPS in the USA and/or overseas?
 - Where and why did you participate?
4. What does NAPS' slogan, "*We don't just send relief, we hand-deliver it with love and care,*" mean to you personally, and how does it guide NAPS' evangelistic and missional practices?
5. Explain how NAPS has impacted your life, education, career, and/or ministry.
6. In your own words, how would you define NAPS' mission and vision?
7. What do you know about the history of NAPS, why it was started, and how did it become a global ministry?
8. How would you define NAPS' theology of evangelism?
9. What beliefs do you think have most influenced the way NAPS does evangelism?
 - What principles, leaders, or pioneers come to mind when you think about who has influenced the shaping of those beliefs and the way NAPS does missions?
10. What spiritual disciplines or practices are crucial to NAPS volunteers and leaders?
 - Why do you think these are key practices for the ministry?
11. What is unique about NAPS' approach to evangelism?
12. What strategies does NAPS use in domestic evangelism?
13. What strategies does NAPS use in global missions?
14. Do you think NAPS has made a significant contribution to the SDA Church? (YES, NO)
 - If No, explain your answer.
 - If Yes, explain why and in what way(s).
15. How and what has NAPS contributed to Black Adventism?
16. How has NAPS influenced youth/young professionals?
 - How has NAPS impacted youth development and leadership?
17. Which domestic evangelistic strategy do you think is **most** effective in NAPS' approach?
18. Which domestic evangelistic strategy do you think is **least** effective in NAPS' approach?
19. What global mission strategy or practice is **most** effective in NAPS' approach to missions?
20. What global mission strategy or practice is **least** effective in NAPS' approach to missions?
21. What improvements can NAPS make in any area of ministry?
22. Where do you think/see NAPS (is) heading into the future?
23. What advice would you give NAPS as it looks to the next ten years?
24. What will be NAPS' enduring legacy?

APPENDIX E

ONLINE CONSENT FORM FOR DISSERTATION RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Prospective Participant,

This consent form requests your participation in a research study by Randrick Chance, a doctoral candidate at Columbia International University. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Edward Smither, Ph.D. This research aims to evaluate the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation's (NAPS) theology and practice of evangelism. Analyzing their strategies will help to ascertain their contributions to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and potential applications to local congregations.

- **Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is voluntary.
- **Explanation of Procedures:** You are asked to complete a survey, *An Analysis of the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation's (NAPS) Theology and Practice of Evangelism*. This online survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.
- **Confidentiality:** The survey data is anonymous and cannot be associated with one person. Minimal demographic information will be collected, but anonymity will be preserved.
- **Discomforts and Risks:** Risks from participation in this study are minimal. One potential risk is an accidental breach of confidentiality. As outlined above, various steps will be taken to maintain strict confidentiality.
- **Use of Research Data:** The information from this research will be used only for scientific and educational purposes. It may be presented at scientific meetings and/or published in professional journals or books or used for any other purposes that Columbia International University considers proper in the interest of education, knowledge, or research. As noted earlier, data will be analyzed and presented in the aggregate and all individual responses are anonymous.
- **Approval of Research:** This research project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Columbia International University.

If you have any questions, please contact Randrick Chance at:

- randrick.chance@ciu.edu and/or _____.

If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Roxi Snodgrass. She is the Columbia International University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-803-807-5051.

Clicking the link below to take the survey indicates your informed consent to participate in this survey:

[www.SurveyMonkey.com]

APPENDIX F

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT – NAPS VOLUNTEER AND STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Age Range: 18-25 26-34 35-39 40-49 50-59
60+

Gender:

Career/Job Title:

Education Level/Field of Study:

1. How long have you been a part of NAPS, and in what capacity?
2. Explain why and how you decided to be a part of NAPS.
3. What evangelism campaigns have you done with NAPS in the USA or overseas?
 - Where and why did you participate?
4. What does NAPS' slogan, "*We don't just send relief, we hand-deliver it with love and care,*" mean to you personally, and how does it guide NAPS' evangelistic and missional practices?
5. Explain how NAPS has impacted your life, education, career, and/or ministry.
6. In your own words, how would you define NAPS' mission and vision?
7. What beliefs do you think have most influenced the way NAPS does evangelism?
 - What principles, leaders, or pioneers come to mind when you think about who has influenced the shaping of those beliefs and the way NAPS does evangelism?
8. What spiritual disciplines or practices are crucial to NAPS volunteers and leaders?
9. What strategies does NAPS use in evangelism?
10. Do you think NAPS has made a significant contribution to the SDA Church? (YES __. NO __)
 - If No, explain your answer.
 - If Yes, explain why and in what way(s).
11. How and what has NAPS contributed to Black Adventism?
12. Which of NAPS' evangelistic strategies do you think is **most** effective?
13. Which of NAPS' evangelistic strategies do you think is **least** effective?
14. What improvements can NAPS currently make in any area of ministry?
15. What advice would you give NAPS as it looks to the next ten years?

APPENDIX G

Senate of Alabama



MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Resolution

COMMENDING THE OAKWOOD COLLEGE MARCHING BAND
OF HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA, FOR ITS HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

By Senator Butler

WHEREAS, it is with gratitude and appreciation that the members of the Oakwood College Marching Band of Huntsville, Alabama, are recognized for their exceptional humanitarian efforts during the tragic acts of terrorism in New York City on September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, founded in 1997 by its President, Dr. Anthony D. Paul, the Oakwood College Marching Band is a member of the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS), which focuses on humanitarian endeavors both in the United States and foreign countries, including Kenya, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Haiti, Costa Rica, Sudan, Jamaica, and Guyana in South Africa; and

WHEREAS, with three basses, three clarinets, three trumpets, three snares, a trombone, and two cymbals, the members of the Oakwood College Marching Band drove 24 hours to New York City to bring hope, peace, and goodwill to fellow Americans, while playing their musical renditions of "When the Saints Go Marching In," "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," and "America the Beautiful"; and

WHEREAS, the extremely talented members of the Oakwood College Marching Band have provided an impact, and filled voids much greater than at any time in recent memory, through its NAPS program and tradition of quality service for the relief of thousands of suffering individuals; and

WHEREAS, it is indeed appropriate and proper to commend individuals, most especially Dr. Paul and the members of the Oakwood Marching Band, whose gentle kindness, concern, and compassion for others have made our great State of Alabama and nation a better place for all; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That we hereby applaud the humanitarian efforts of the Oakwood College Marching Band in New York City on September 15, 2001.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Anthony D. Paul on behalf of the members of the Oakwood Marching Band for their successful past and promising future.



I hereby certify that the above is a true, correct and accurate copy of Resolution No. 01-238, filed with the Senate of Alabama on September 19, 2001.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "McDowell Lee".

McDowell Lee
Secretary of Senate

APPENDIX H



CONGRESSMAN BUD CRAMER
FIFTH DISTRICT
ALABAMA

WASHINGTON, D.C.

October 3, 2001

Dr. Anthony Paul
National Association for the Prevention of Starvation
Oakwood College, Box 196
Huntsville, Alabama 35896

Dear Dr. Paul:

I want to thank you and the group of Oakwood students for your courage and patriotism during this national tragedy. The story of your group's honorable trip to New York after the terrorist attacks has received national recognition. I am proud to represent a district that is home to such a wonderful organization and I believe you can serve as an example to us all.

The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation has taken the initiative to alleviate pain in this country and abroad in many ways, most recently by providing an uplifting wave of music to victims throughout New York. I admire your faith, perseverance, and compassion as you reached out to people who were physically and emotionally suffering after the attacks. NAPS was there to comfort those who lost loved ones and those who were tirelessly searching for the victims of this horrible tragedy.

Again, I thank you and commend you for the unselfish outpouring of support you all provided to New Yorkers. You have been heroes to thousands of Americans throughout the nation that have been affected by this tragedy.


Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Bud Cramer'.

Bud Cramer
Member of Congress

APPENDIX I

THE COUNCIL



CITY OF NEW YORK



Proclamation

Whereas: *The Council of the City of New York is pleased and proud to honor the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS) for its outstanding service to our City and mankind; and*

WHEREAS: *It is the tradition and custom of the New York City Council to honor the accomplishments of its finest citizens, and today we are delighted to recognize National Association for the Prevention of Starvation for its extraordinary contributions to the lives of people all over the world; and*

WHEREAS: *NAPS is a not-for-profit, volunteer relief organization that was founded in 1978 and registered in the state of Alabama in 1993. The organization is dedicated to averting hunger and starvation throughout the world. NAPS works on the development of the whole person – the social, cultural, health and educational aspects; and*

WHEREAS: *NAPS has established facilities to effectuate delivery of their services. These facilities include homes, schools, clinics, feeding centers and cultural centers. NAPS also provides materials and training in health, food production and food preservation; and*

WHEREAS: *The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation is prepared and willing to render its valuable services wherever the need arises. It was there to help Tsunami victims in Sri Lanka as well as provide disaster relief to the people of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Much of its work has been focused on the prevention of starvation around the world in countries such as Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Haiti, Guyana, Madagascar, Sudan and many African countries. Young people are an integral part of the NAPS organization and are well represented on the Board of Directors. On every NAPS mission, students inspire local young people to continue the mission after NAPS departs; and*

WHEREAS: *Today, we are particularly proud to honor NAPS for the fine work and success in helping to alleviate hunger and starvation throughout the world. It is commendable how so many young people are concerned about the human dignity of others and give so much of themselves to make a difference; and*

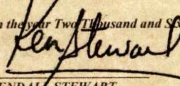
WHEREAS: *NAPS is an organization whose contributions have been truly exceptional. It has enriched the lives of so many people with humanitarian services and is worthy of the esteem of all New Yorkers; now, therefore*

BE IT KNOWN: *That the Council of the City of New York most gratefully honors*

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PREVENTION OF STARVATION**

for its outstanding service to the City and the country.

Signed this 8th day of December in the year Two Thousand and Six



KENDALL STEWART
Council Member, 45th District
Brooklyn

APPENDIX J

City of Boston
IN
CITY COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RESOLUTION

Offered By Boston City Councilor At-Large
SamYoon

- Whereas: The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS), registered in 1993 at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama is a non-profit volunteer relief organization committed to mitigate hunger, poverty, and disease in the United States and the world; and
- Whereas: NAPS built the first HIV/AIDS Training and Prevention Center in Zambia, Africa and constructed schools in Haiti, India, Guyana, Ethiopia, and Sudan; and
- Whereas: NAPS, in response to the devastation caused by the tsunami in 2004, assisted displaced families in Sri Lanka by building homes; and
- Whereas: NAPS has sent a delegation of young volunteers to the city of Boston to spread their message of unity and love by conducting a Youth Week of Prayer, therefore

Be it Resolved, that The Boston City Council would like to extend warm wishes and appreciation to Ms. Brittany Wimberly, for her dedication to help the less fortunate.

This resolution shall be duly signed by the President of the City Council and be made part of the Official City Record, attested to, and a copy, thereof, transmitted by the Clerk of the City of Boston.

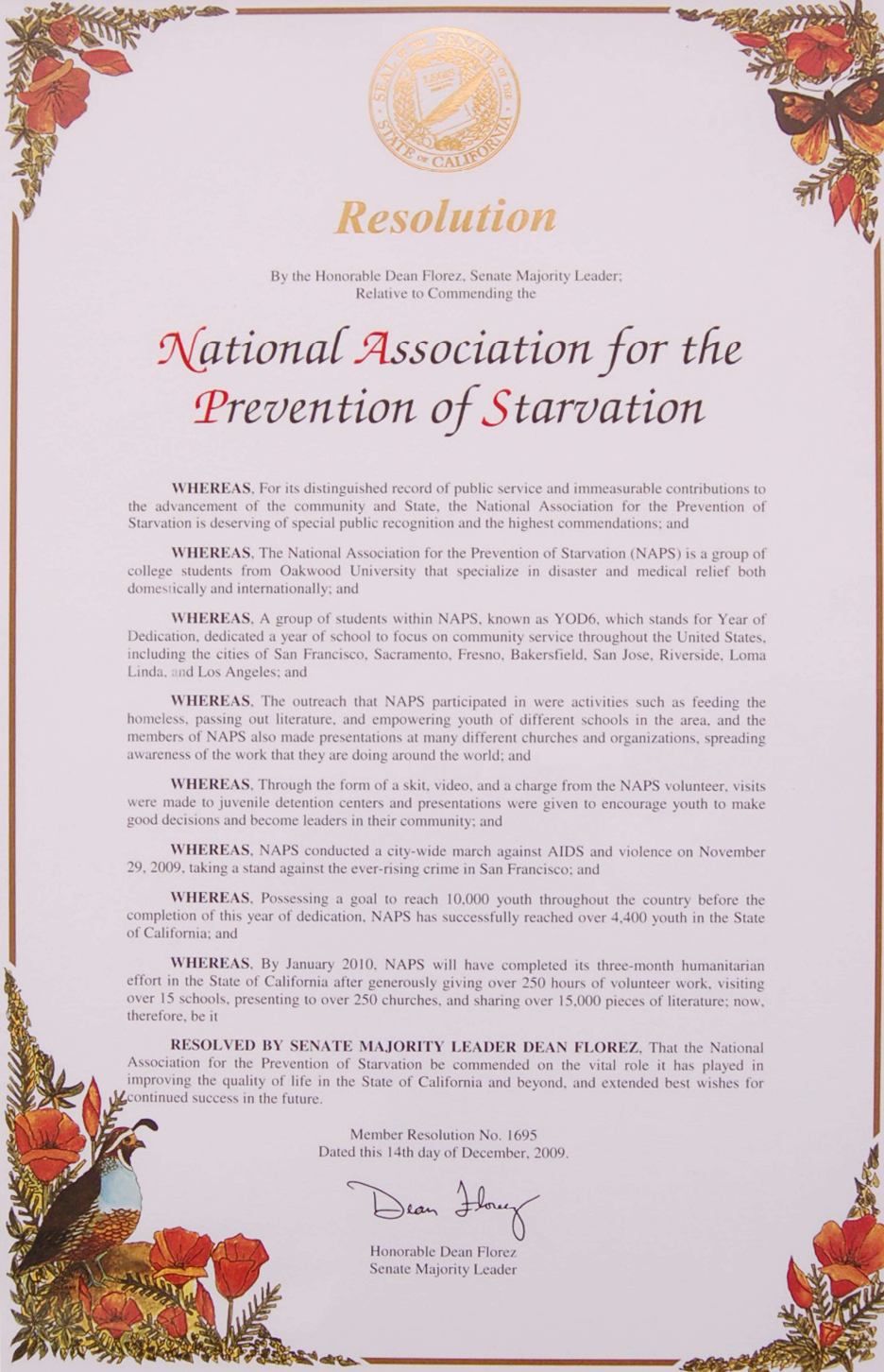



By: Michael F. Elie
President of the City Council
Attest: Alex Serrano
Clerk of the City of Boston
Offered by: Sam Yoon
Date: 9/22/2008

X-4600

0-1130

APPENDIX K



Resolution

By the Honorable Dean Florez, Senate Majority Leader;
Relative to Commending the

*National Association for the
Prevention of Starvation*

WHEREAS, For its distinguished record of public service and immeasurable contributions to the advancement of the community and State, the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation is deserving of special public recognition and the highest commendations; and

WHEREAS, The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS) is a group of college students from Oakwood University that specialize in disaster and medical relief both domestically and internationally; and

WHEREAS, A group of students within NAPS, known as YOD6, which stands for Year of Dedication, dedicated a year of school to focus on community service throughout the United States, including the cities of San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno, Bakersfield, San Jose, Riverside, Loma Linda, and Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, The outreach that NAPS participated in were activities such as feeding the homeless, passing out literature, and empowering youth of different schools in the area, and the members of NAPS also made presentations at many different churches and organizations, spreading awareness of the work that they are doing around the world; and

WHEREAS, Through the form of a skit, video, and a charge from the NAPS volunteer, visits were made to juvenile detention centers and presentations were given to encourage youth to make good decisions and become leaders in their community; and

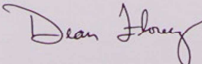
WHEREAS, NAPS conducted a city-wide march against AIDS and violence on November 29, 2009, taking a stand against the ever-rising crime in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Possessing a goal to reach 10,000 youth throughout the country before the completion of this year of dedication, NAPS has successfully reached over 4,400 youth in the State of California; and

WHEREAS, By January 2010, NAPS will have completed its three-month humanitarian effort in the State of California after generously giving over 250 hours of volunteer work, visiting over 15 schools, presenting to over 250 churches, and sharing over 15,000 pieces of literature; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY SENATE MAJORITY LEADER DEAN FLOREZ, That the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation be commended on the vital role it has played in improving the quality of life in the State of California and beyond, and extended best wishes for continued success in the future.

Member Resolution No. 1695
Dated this 14th day of December, 2009.


Honorable Dean Florez
Senate Majority Leader

APPENDIX L



The City and County of San Francisco

*Certificate of
Honor*

Presented To

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PREVENTION OF STARVATION**

NOVEMBER 30, 2009

WHEREAS, on behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, I am pleased to recognize and honor the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS) whose mission is to mitigate hunger, poverty, and disease, and to improve education and food security among suffering people, both nationally and internationally, regardless of race, religion, or nationality. The organization provides humanitarian aid and educational support in the areas of emergency relief, skilled volunteers, healthcare professionals, agricultural technology, and social and spiritual comfort. Congratulations and best wishes on all your future endeavors!



THEREFORE, I have herunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom".

Gavin Newsom
Mayor

APPENDIX M

Florida House of Representatives Tribute

*A Tribute to
The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation*

WHEREAS, the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation is a nonprofit humanitarian relief organization that was founded in 1978, and

WHEREAS, the mission of the organization is to alleviate hunger, poverty, and disease, both nationally and internationally, and to provide aid, education, and disaster relief without governmental support, and

WHEREAS, two teams of college students from Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, Team 4 and Team 6, dedicated a year to performing community service throughout the United States and focused, in part, on the cities of Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa, Orlando, Kissimmee, Fort Myers, and Jacksonville, and

WHEREAS, while in Florida, the teams fed the homeless, distributed literature, and made presentations in schools, churches, juvenile detention centers and to other groups to increase awareness of the work that their organization is performing, and

WHEREAS, in addition to completing a Week of Prayer in Orlando and Tampa, the teams conducted a citywide march for Higher Education Awareness in Tampa, completed over 1,000 hours of volunteer work, visited over 50 schools and 500 churches, and distributed over 20,000 pieces of literature throughout the state, NOW THEREFORE,

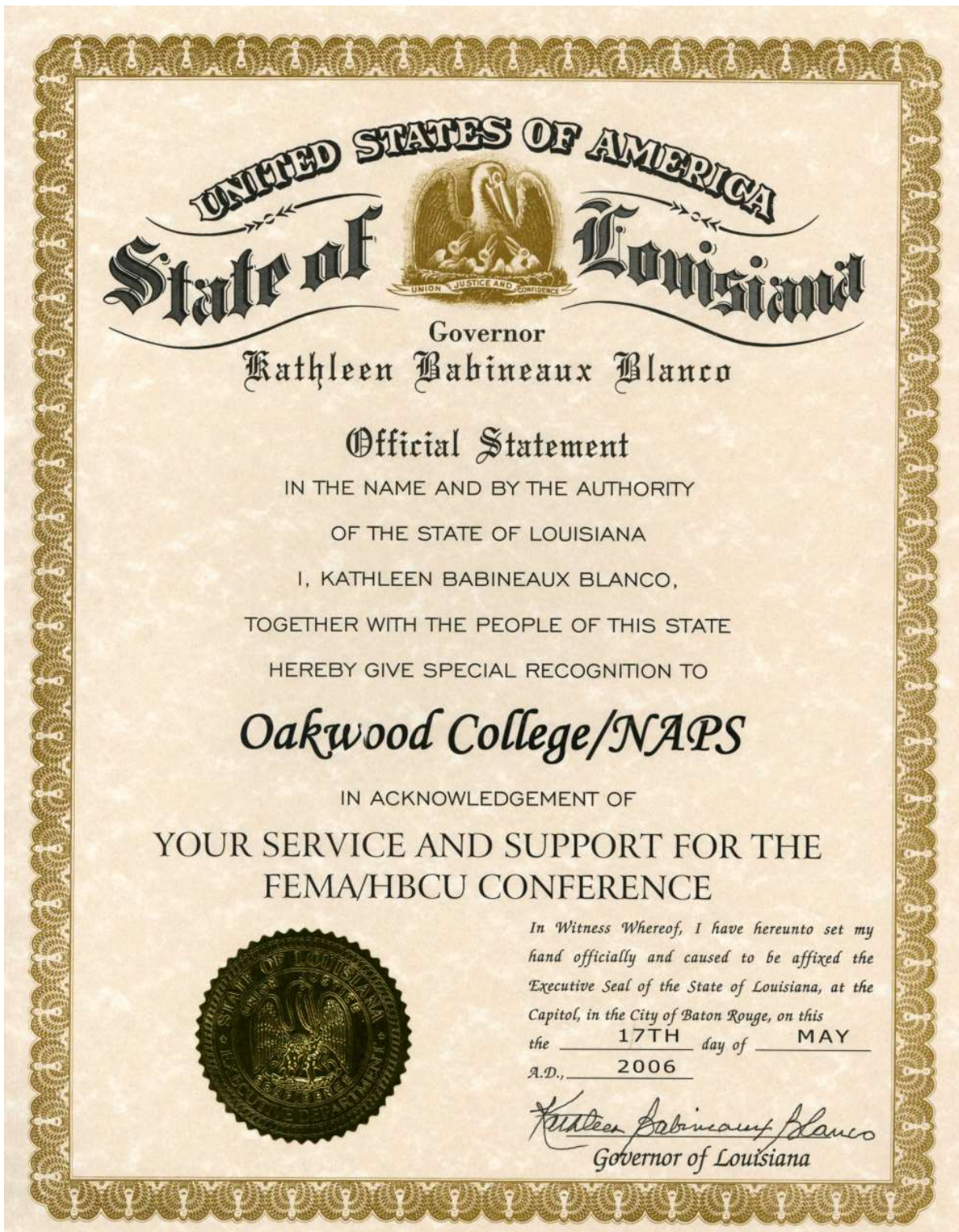
BE IT RESPECTFULLY PROCLAIMED that it is a distinct honor and privilege to commend Team 4 and Team 6 of the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation for the encouraging work that they have done in this state.



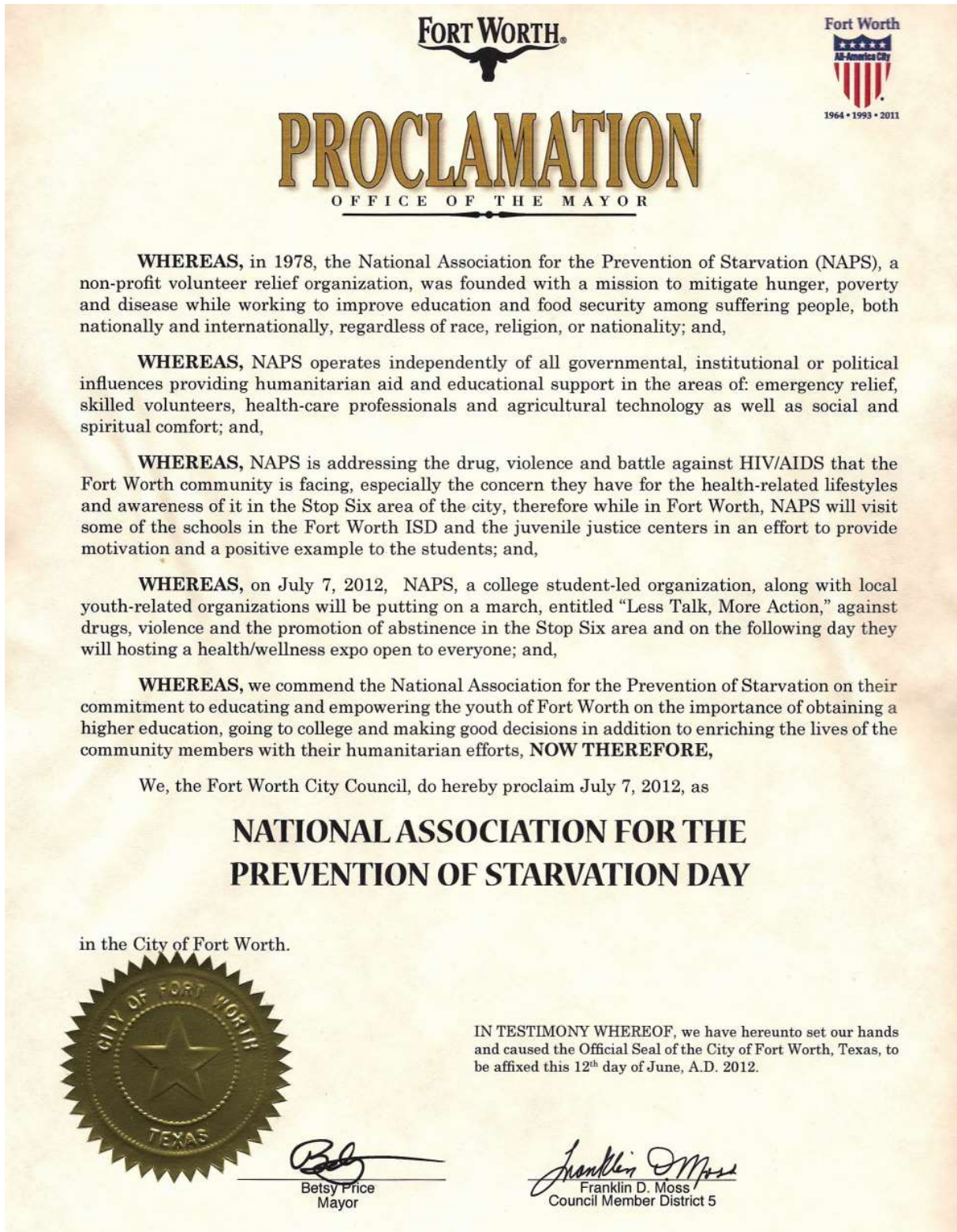
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Oscar Braynon II".

Oscar Braynon II
Representative, District 103

APPENDIX N



APPENDIX O



WHEREAS, in 1978, the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS), a non-profit volunteer relief organization, was founded with a mission to mitigate hunger, poverty and disease while working to improve education and food security among suffering people, both nationally and internationally, regardless of race, religion, or nationality; and,

WHEREAS, NAPS operates independently of all governmental, institutional or political influences providing humanitarian aid and educational support in the areas of: emergency relief, skilled volunteers, health-care professionals and agricultural technology as well as social and spiritual comfort; and,

WHEREAS, NAPS is addressing the drug, violence and battle against HIV/AIDS that the Fort Worth community is facing, especially the concern they have for the health-related lifestyles and awareness of it in the Stop Six area of the city, therefore while in Fort Worth, NAPS will visit some of the schools in the Fort Worth ISD and the juvenile justice centers in an effort to provide motivation and a positive example to the students; and,

WHEREAS, on July 7, 2012, NAPS, a college student-led organization, along with local youth-related organizations will be putting on a march, entitled "Less Talk, More Action," against drugs, violence and the promotion of abstinence in the Stop Six area and on the following day they will hosting a health/wellness expo open to everyone; and,

WHEREAS, we commend the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation on their commitment to educating and empowering the youth of Fort Worth on the importance of obtaining a higher education, going to college and making good decisions in addition to enriching the lives of the community members with their humanitarian efforts, **NOW THEREFORE**,

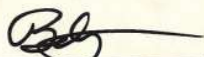
We, the Fort Worth City Council, do hereby proclaim July 7, 2012, as

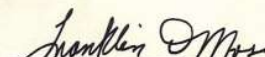
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF STARVATION DAY

in the City of Fort Worth.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and caused the Official Seal of the City of Fort Worth, Texas, to be affixed this 12th day of June, A.D. 2012.




Betsy Price
Mayor


Franklin D. Moss
Council Member District 5

APPENDIX P

CITY OF HOLLANDALE
POST OFFICE BOX 395
HOLLANDALE, MS 38748-0395

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

PHONE (601) 827-5647

June 22, 2010

**NAPS-Dr. Anthony Paul
Oakwood University
Huntsville, AL 35896**

Dear Dr. Paul:

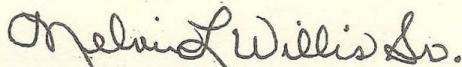
It is with deepest sincerity that I express my gratitude on behalf of the citizens of Hollandale, Mississippi to NAPS— The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation. The work that you have done in our town is remarkable. We were impressed with your methods of communicating with our young people and the engagement of the whole family in the development of the child. Additionally, the involvement of the youth in community service has made a deep and lasting impression on their characters.

Parents are now reporting improved behavior in their children with respect to: making wiser choices when eating, being more diligent in their studies and demonstrating more love towards their elders and peers. The older citizens who benefited from your medical services are now making life-style changes and are reporting improvements in their health.

You have given the citizens of Hollandale a new vision. Before NAPS came the young people did not know many of the options that are available to them. However they now see that they can leave Hollandale and become doctors, lawyers and teachers and give back to their communities. By reaching our young people you have impacted the future generations of Hollandale and the regions beyond.

Consequently, I, as Mayor and the Board of Aldermen, would like to invite you to return to Hollandale and continue the great work that you have started here.

With kindest regards,



**Melvin L. Willis, Sr.
Mayor**

APPENDIX Q



SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION

✉ P O Box 4583
RIETVALLEIRAND
0174
☎ 012-345-7000

Route 21 Corporate Park
29 Regency Road
Irene, Pretoria
Republic of South Africa

Dear Leader

On behalf of the leadership of the Southern Africa-India Ocean Division, I hereby highly recommend to all unions, conferences, and churches with SID, the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS) – is a mission-driven youth ministry with a global impact. The NAPS organization is located on the campus of Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama - a Seventh-day Adventist Institution.

NAPS was founded by Dr. Anthony Paul, Chair of the department of Biological Sciences at OU and is its present president. According to Dr. Paul, since 1978 NAPS has touched the lives of over one million people since that time. Its volunteers consist mainly of high school and college students who serve as missionaries both in the U.S. and around the world. Its mission is to train, by example, young people in evangelism.

They have work extensively in the USA and in the following countries: Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Sudan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Haiti, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Guyana, and Brazil. There are over 1500 trained NAPS members who are continuing the work faithfully and aggressively with their local churches and conferences in these countries. This relationship with NAPS missionaries and the mission of the SDA Church has resulted in over 7,000 baptisms in the last 10 years, numerous churches built, hundreds of thousands fed, and over 2,500 youth trained in evangelism and volunteer work.

It is my privilege to offer my highest recommendations for NAPS to hold evangelistic campaigns, bible work, youth training, and other missions work throughout Southern Africa-India Ocean Division and invite all unions, conferences, churches, and ministries to work with them in various capacities to advance the gospel message. You may contact me for further information on NAPS and visit their website at www.napsoc.org.

Sincerely may God bless you.


Gilberto Carlos Araujo
Vice President
General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist
Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division
PO BOX 4583, Rietvalleirand, 0174
27 Regency Road, Route 21 Corporate Park, Irene, Pretoria
+ 27 (0)826577549
+ 27 (0)123457003
www.sidadventist.org
araujog@sid.adventist.org

APPENDIX R



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

Greater New York
Conference Headquarters

Office of the President

PO Box 5029
7 Shelter Rock Road
Manhasset, NY 11030
Telephone: (516) 627-9350
Fax: (516) 365-5105
e-mail: president@gnyc.org

November 22, 2010

Pastors and Church Leaders of the Greater New York Conference:

The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS) is a non-profit volunteer relief organizational, primarily comprised of college students and graduates. The group has been blessed to tour the world providing relief in places such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti earthquake relief, Sudan, and Costa Rica.

NAPS is able to bring joy and comfort to many during the 911 tragedy in New York with their band, as well as rebuild homes in Sri Lanka that were ravaged by the Tsunami. Recently the group spent time feeding children and clearing debris of those affected by the earthquake in Haiti as well as those affected by hurricane Katrina and Rita in Louisiana. God has truly been using ordinary. Their purpose in all that they do is to show and tell God's love.

In their presentation they show a video that is a visual testimony of the work they have done. Some presentations involve personal testimonies shared by different students in the group. Their goal is to encourage the congregation, especially the youth to go and do likewise in their own communities.

The Greater New York Conference approves of their presentation and encourages you to support them in their effort. You may contact NAPS at (256)726-7056 or (256)640-0759, cell. For more information or to set a presentation date at your church, please give them a call. Their web address is www.napsoc.org.

Sincerely,

G. Earl Knight, D.Min.
President

APPENDIX S



NORTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

Office of the President

115-50 Merrick Boulevard
Jamaica, NY 11434-1896
Tel. (718) 291-8006, Ext 2214
Fax (718) 291-3225
<http://www.northeastern.org>

July 6, 2011

Dear Pastor:

This is to attest that the Administration of the Northeastern Conference affirms the work and mission of the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS), which is sponsored by the Oakwood University; and we recommend that you and your church extend to these students any courtesy and support you can give to them in their humanitarian and missionary endeavors, while they work within the Northeastern Conference territory.

Thank you for being gracious.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Trevor H. C. Baker".

Trevor H. C. Baker
President

jgs

APPENDIX T



Lusaka South Mission District

P.O. Box 117 Chawama, Lusaka-Zambia
Cell: 260-977-530101 / 0979 671470, Fax: 0211-229058
E-mail: lusakasouth@yahoo.com

Of
Central Zambia
Conference

6th June 2011

The Executive Secretary
N A P S Zambia
P O Box RW06
Lusaka
Zambia

Dear Madam

RE: PRESENTATION OF N A P S ACTIVITIES IN LUSAKA SOUTH MISSION DISTRICT

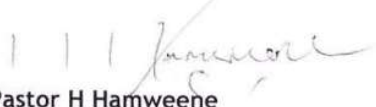
Thank you for your introduction letter.

The District Executive has allocated your organisation 27th August 2011 as the date for promotion in all our thirteen (13) congregations. You are therefore requested to make available speakers for the promotional programme to cater for the thirteen congregations in our district.

Your usual co-operation in fulfilling this programme will be highly appreciated.

Yours in Christ's service


Elder A. Muyawa
DISTRICT SECRETARY


Pastor H. Hamweene
DISTRICT PASTOR

APPENDIX U



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH LIBERIA MISSION

Headquarters, Sinkor Old Road, P. O. Box 10-00-52, Monrovia, 10 Liberia Telle: 226454, Email: sdamission@yahoo.com

August 31, 2010

SERVICE REQUEST

Dear Elder Chance,

Maranatha greetings from the Liberia Mission of Seventh-day Adventist family

At the Liberia Mission of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee meeting held on August 26, 2010, the following actions were taken concerning you, thus;

Whereas NAPS, an Evangelistic group of young people who have worked and trained many youth in several countries in Africa over the years and have established NAPS branches in each of the countries visited to continue the work, and

Whereas NAPS has expressed their desire to come to Liberia to select and train about 40 youths to take the gospel to the rural areas of Liberia that has not been entered, and

Whereas NAPS wants to visit the Liberia Mission's field to conduct similar program during the Christmas vacation and

Whereas the team wants to work in three (3) selected rural communities for the purpose of holding evangelistic campaigns and

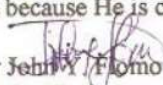
Whereas NAPS will stay in Liberia from December 16, - January 6, 2011 and return on the 7th of January 2011, thus;

VOTED: To place in Service Request for NAPS to visit Liberia as guest of the Liberia Mission of Seventh-day Adventists from December 16 – January 6, 2011, to train about 40 youths to assist NAPS to conduct Evangelistic campaigns in three (3) areas within the Liberia Mission field that are unentered.

Thank you very sincerely for accepting our invitation to visit Liberia during the above mentioned dates to work with our young people, in the area of evangelism in our field. May God Almighty bless and keep you in His constant care always as you prepare to undertake this Mission for our soon coming King.

Kind regards.

Yours because He is coming soon,


Pastor Jehu Flomo
Executive Secretary

APPENDIX W



Friendship-West Baptist Church

Dr. Frederick D. Haynes, III
Senior Pastor

*"Making Disciples To Make A Difference."
Matthew 28:19-20*

National Association for the Prevention of Starvation
Box 196
Oakwood University
Huntsville, AL 35896

December 27, 2009

To Mia Pile,

Thank you and your group for visiting our church today. Your presence made our worship service much more complete. We have taken up a generous offering today in support of NAPS's ministry work. Please expect a contribution from the Friendship-West Baptist Church within the next 15 days. Our offices are closed until Monday, January 4, 2010, a check will be mailed shortly thereafter.

Thank you.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Wilson, III".

Rev. John W. Wilson, III
Pastor of Christian Education

2020 West Wheatland Road
Dallas, Texas 75232
972-228-5200 Church
972-228-5201 Fax

www.friendshipwest.org

APPENDIX X



The Rev. Raphael G. Warnock, Ph.D.
Senior Pastor

December 29, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

It gives me immense pleasure to write in recommendation of your support for the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (N.A.P.S.). The Gospel according to Matthew records Jesus as saying: "*for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,*" (Matthew 25:35). This passage of scripture propels N.A.P.S. to action. Their work is truly God's work.

Please support these young people towards there goal of \$80,000.00 for this summer's mission trip, which expands from the U.S. southern region all the way to Ghana, West Africa. Ebenezer has supported them financially, and we would recommend your organization to do the same.

We have no doubt that N.A.P.S. will continue to make a tremendous impact on the world at large. We are equally positive that your contribution will help them meet there awesome challenge to globally: "hand deliver relief with love and care."

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shanan E. Jones", written over a white background.

Minister Shanan E. Jones
Associate Minister for Community Affairs &
Public Relations

"America's Freedom Church"

407 Auburn Avenue, N.E. • Atlanta, Georgia 30312 • Office: (404) 688-7300 • Fax: (404) 521-1129
www.historicebenezer.org

APPENDIX Y



January 4, 2010

NAPS
Box 196
Oakwood College
Huntsville, AL 35896

To the NAPS Missionaries:

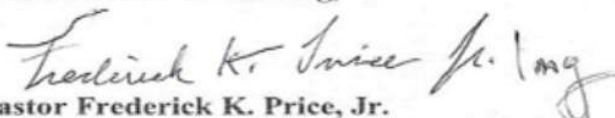
As a Minister of the Gospel and Pastor of Crenshaw Christian Center, thank you for dedicating an entire year of your life to missions as you are serving out your YOD (year of dedication). As we've been taught by my father, Apostle Price, we are either called to be "goers" or "senders." That is why Crenshaw Christian Center takes pleasure in assisting to send you to the nations.

Your presentation during Sunday Worship Service on January 3rd, 2010, was outstanding. You inspired us and reminded us of the millions that are fighting for their lives and asking for help in a world system that seems to have forgotten them and shows no compassion. Many of us were in tears as we viewed the video you presented to us. Your song was anointed and inspired us. Your sincerity and passion towards the lost was evident.

We, as the Body of Christ, are the only ones that can make a difference spiritually as well as physically. When we as Christians feed the poor, give them shelter, clothing and heal the sick, Jesus said it is as if we were directly doing the same to Him (Matthew 25:35-46). So I personally salute you and desire for you to stay focused as you have. Continue to represent our Lord and Savior with compassion, perseverance, dignity and love.

May you prosper in everything as you seek Him first.

In the Service of the King,


Pastor Frederick K. Price, Jr.

Av. Raimundo P. Magalhaes, 1720 Bloco 11 - 76, Pirituba, São Paulo, Brazil - 05145-000
Email: Igroves@faithdome.org
USA CCC Global Ministries, P.O. Box 44757, Los Angeles, CA 90044

APPENDIX Z



Mayfield Memorial Baptist Church

700 Sugar Creek Road West Charlotte, North Carolina 28213
Reverend Peter M. Wherry, D.Min., Pastor

(704) 596-7935 mayfield@carolina.rr.com www.mayfieldmemorial.com

November 26, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter comes in support of the work of the Student Missionaries of NAPS (National Association for the Prevention of Starvation).

I have had the privilege of meeting, interviewing and supporting these young people, and I can say without reservation, that the 2010 cadre of NAPS students are some of the finest young people I have ever met. I am very familiar with the school where most of them are matriculating, Oakwood College (Now University) in Huntsville, Alabama. I know this institution to have turned out some notable people in the fields of Religion and Music and the standards at this private, Christian university are high and uncompromising.

Moreover, my interactions with these students have been more of a blessing to me than I could ever have been to them. On the day of our first meeting, I was making my way to our sanctuary where we were to gather, and unbeknownst to them, I was rounding the corner in our building near where they were waiting for me, but I did not find them chit-chatting or engaged in frivolities as some their age might have been. They were all seated, with their heads lifted up, and singing songs of encouragement and inspiration. I was only to be further impressed as we engaged in conversation about the great and compassionate work they have done throughout the so-called, "Black Belt" of the American Southeast, and the awesome work NAPS has done around the world. These young missionaries minister to people suffering not only from starvation, but also those who are afflicted with HIV/Aids, the devastation of earthquakes and other natural disasters, and the inequities in education brought about by poverty.

They are in urgent need of funds to underwrite their upcoming missions to Suriname and Liberia. We in the Charlotte community have done what we could to support and encourage these students and to help fund their missionary assignment. I as a pastor and Baptist Association Moderator urge you who may read this to please do the same. Not only as a pastor and Moderator, but as a parent of two young adult children, I am proud to see what these young people are doing. The students of NAPS are making an impression *and* making difference in a world where people in so many places have given up hope.

Please assist them in any way you can. Feel free to contact me with any questions or for further information. I remain committed to helping them.

Grace and Shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter M. Wherry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Peter M. Wherry

APPENDIX AA



Greater Grace Temple
(City of David)

Bishop Charles H. Ellis III
Senior Pastor

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Charles H. Ellis III, *President*
Martin H. Hardy, *Secretary*
Willis Kite, *Treasurer*
Crisette M. Ellis
Frances Carter
Everett J. Howard
Wilma Johnson



80th Anniversary
1927-2007

23500 W. Seven Mile
Detroit, Michigan 48219
Phone: (313) 543-6000
Fax: (313) 543-6052
www.greatergrace.org

November 27, 2011

To whom it may concern:

Please allow me to introduce the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS). These fine young people from Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama are dedicated to various humanitarian causes including, but not limited to HIV/AIDS, hunger, domestic violence and civil rights. They are preparing themselves for medical and other educational disciplines, yet they are committed to servitude and an attitude of helping the less fortunate.

I would ask that you would consider receiving them and their video presentation of benevolent service. Furthermore, a generous contribution of any kind would greatly assist them as they travel throughout this world bringing hope, good cheer and the love of God.

Thank you for your consideration and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Bishop Charles H. Ellis III
Senior Pastor

CHE3/ykf

APPENDIX AB



Lawrence Smith
Assistant Facility Administrator

Anthony Wynn
Facility Administrator

Cheltenham Youth Facility
P.O. Box 160
11001 Frank Tippet Road
Cheltenham, Maryland 20263

Claude Waters
Assistant Facility Administrator

NAPS

The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation
Attention: Dr. Anthony Paul, Executive Director/Founder
P.O. Box 11970
Huntsville, Alabama 35814

Dear Dr. Paul:

On behalf of The State of Maryland, Department of Juvenile Services, at Cheltenham Youth Facility, we would like to thank NAPS for coming and sharing with us. We here at DJS value the safety of the citizens of Maryland and the fair, safe and humane treatment for all youth in our care. We value fairness and cultural competence regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity or religion. We value creating opportunities for youth and families to promote positive growth and development. We value continuous improvement and learning in all individuals. We value change for the growth opportunities it brings. We value accountability. We value collaboration and teamwork. We are constantly searching for opportunities to work with other agencies to improve social outcomes for our youth and would like to thank the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS) for the services provided to our youth.

Each presentation involved a skit created by warm caring individuals, and shared personal testimonies about life lessons. These skits and testimonies encouraged and inspired our youth to change an outlook on their own personal lives. The presenters whom are college-aged individuals were easily able to reach our youth because of the age similarity and ability to identify with similar backgrounds and difficult situations in life. These youth shared how they overcame their obstacles in life and explained ways that our youth can approach the same difficulties. They also shared where they are in life now as recent or pending college graduates with aspirations for their futures.

We would like to express our gratitude for being able to share a journey with NAPS as you move from nation to nation sharing helping hands and hearts with the world. We would be pleased and delighted to return to Cheltenham Youth Facility and the great State of Maryland to assist with all youth in our care on a yearly basis.

Best Regards,



Mr. Lawrence Smith

Assistant Facility Administrator

APPENDIX AC

CHARLES PRICE
Circuit Judge, Presiding
ANITA L. KELLY
Circuit Judge
WILLIAM G. O'REAR, JR.
Circuit Judge
PATRICIA D. WARNER
Circuit Judge
ROBERT T. R. BAILEY
Referee
BRUCE R. HOWELL
Court Administrator
MICHAEL C. PROVITT
Detention Director



CHARLES GLASSCOCK
Intake Supervisor
RAY WILLIAMS
Intake Supervisor
BEVERLY RIDDLE WISE
Probation Supervisor
RONALD T. MCKITT
Probation Supervisor
PATRICIA STRICKLAND
Probation Supervisor
TERESA H. ALLEN
Deputy Clerk
WARREN G. BRANTLEY, PhD
Court Therapist

Ms. Clea Moore
P.O. Box 196
Huntsville, AL 35696

March 17, 2010

Dear Ms. Moore:

Thank you for attending and sharing your experiences with the staff and youths at the Facility. We appreciate the encouraging information that you provided and how receptive the youths responded to the presentation. I will be recommending NAPS to other organizations for you to share the message.

Thank you again for taking the time to speak and providing the youths with a positive image.

Sincerely,


Darryl Andrews
Chaplain

1111 AIRBASE BOULEVARD • P.O. Box 9219 • MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36108-0219
TELEPHONE (334) 261-4100 • FAX (334) 261-4132

APPENDIX AD

DETENTION SERVICES, INC.

TUSCALOOSA COUNTY

Juvenile Detention Center

March 10, 2010


Dear NAPS Missionaries!

“WOW, WOW, WOW!!” What a treat you provided our residents and staff as you presented your motivational program this morning!! I was overwhelmed and amazed at the energy that was floating around the classroom as you interacted and visited with our residents! You were awesome role models as you genuinely loved and cared for our children. I was super impressed with your organization and look forward to checking out the website! Ms. McVay is currently in the class now allowing the girls to research Oakwood University!

I believe you have accepted God’s challenge to care for and to encourage others as you use your talents to make a difference wherever you are!! Please remember our address!! We want you to visit as often as you can! I was serious when I said we would love to serve you lunch the next time.....maybe we can fire off one of the grills we make in our welding class and have a hamburger cookout that can be enjoyed by the residents as well!! They would really enjoy that and would provide another opportunity for fellowship as you mentor and visit with our residents!

Thanks again for what you do everyday!! The books are treasures to our facility and will make nice additions to our library! I look forward to hearing from you in the near future!!

Sincerely,



Cathy Joiner Wood
Assistant Director and
Education Director of TJDC

5941 Twelfth Avenue, E. ◻ Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35405
Telephone 205-349-3131 ◻ Facsimile 205-349-3196

APPENDIX AE



34 Samora Machel Avenue, Boka Islip House, 7th -11th Floor
Tel: +263 -4- 792 320 / +263 -4-792 329 Fax: +263 -4-792 179
Cell: 0772 375 476 / 0772 848 620
E-mail: hilbright.science.college@gmail.com or info@hilbright.com
Website: www.hilbright.com

"Higher and brighter with science education"

To whom it may concern

REF: RECOMMENDATION LETTER FOR NAPS

This letter serves to confirm that we have been working with representatives from NAPS during the months of May and June 2014. This is a group of dedicated, God-fearing young people who have given themselves to offer a selfless service to humanity.

They have programs which address issues faced by our modern day youths and the way our own students responded by willing to be part of this group is evidence of how relevant NAPS is to the contemporary world.

On that basis, we do not hesitate to recommend them to offer service in your institution.

For more information, feel free to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

E. MADZORERA (Senior Chaplain – Hilbright Science College)



Directors: B.T. Deda (Chairman), C. Mutunhu, C. Garura, A. Chinoshava, N. Makumbirofa*, P. Mugari* (*Executive)

APPENDIX AF



STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

January 2, 2003
Richard Jenks, Assistant Superintendent
Orange Regional Juvenile Detention Center
2800 South Bumby AV.
Orlando, Fl. 32806

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is on behalf of the Department of Juvenile Justice and Orange Regional Juvenile Detention Center to express our thanks and gratitude to The National Association for the Prevention of Starvation, NAPS, for the volunteer services they provided to our facility on 1/1/03.

The members of your organization did a presentation to the detainees that we have incarcerated at our detention center. It was wonderful to have a group of young adults bring in a positive message to our detainees and to demonstrate that everyone has an opportunity to change their life by helping others.

Our officers and detainees were uplifted by the presentation and it would be appreciated if we could have you return next year.

I highly recommend your organization to other facilities that detain, house, and educate young people.

Again thank you for your services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Jenks".

Richard Jenks

ORANGE REGIONAL DETENTION CENTER * 2800 S. BUMBY AVE., ORLANDO, FL. 32806
JEB BUSH, GOVERNOR WILLIAM G. "BILL" BANKHEAD, SECRETARY

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