

**Ethical issues in fundraising in Seventh-day Adventist Church, Oke-ijebu,
Akure, Ondo State**

Ajisegbede, Clement Olanrewaju

Department of Religious Studies

Adeleke University,

Ede, Osun State

Abstract

Fundraising in Christian settings is the act of raising resources (not only money) in order to fund the work of the church which includes front-line activities and overheads. Almost every religious group makes efforts to raise funds for the sake of accomplishing set objectives. In most cases, the funds realized are used exclusively for project or toward assisting the basic needs of members or for evangelism and missions. The role of fundraising is to facilitate the transfer of money from a 'willing donor' to a 'worthy cause.' This implies that it is not the role of fundraisers to do this for 'unworthy' causes, though there is no ration of what counts as 'worthy; therefore, it raises an ethical question about what a fundraiser can or cannot do. Existing studies have been conducted by scholars on the ethical issues on fundraising under normative ethics, utilitarian ethics and deontological ethics; however, less or no studies have been done on the divine command ethical approach hence, this study sought to evaluate the ethical issues of Christian fundraising in Seventh-day Adventist Church, Oke-Ijebu in Akure, Ondo State. The study evaluated the ethical issues using biblical principles as its standard. These standards are: the universal ownership of God, the necessity of relationship building between the church and members, and strict observation of biblical principles of giving and receiving. The study also identified various unethical issues of fundraising in the church, which are: bad motive for charity giving, diversion of primary purpose to personal reason, lack of record keeping and inconsistency in accountability. The study therefore, calls for the need of more assessment of ethical issues on other Christian denominations.

Keywords: Ethical Issues, Fundraising, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Divine Command Ethics

Introduction

The ethical issue of fundraising is a topic that has received scant attention from scholars. the ethics of fundraising tends to focus on the domain of other ethical approaches; what to do in particular ethical dilemma, rather than divine command ethics; biblical theories about how to practice fundraising ethically.¹ There is no consensus definition of what fundraising is.² However, in 2006, the Institute of Fundraising which is now known as the Chartered Institute of Fundraising, provided a succinct description of fundraising. They state that the

¹ Ian MacQuillin, Normative fundraising ethics: A review of the field. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*. (2022).

²MacQuillin, Normative fundraising ethics, 3



principle of fundraising is to raise money by asking for it.³ By the middle of the next decade, the IoF had expanded this to state that: “*Fundraising is the act of raising resources (not only money) by asking for it, to fund the work an organisation carries out, including front-line activity and overheads.*”⁴

Marion argues that the role of fundraisers is to facilitate the transfer of money from a ‘willing donor’ to a ‘worthy cause’, which implies that it is not the role of fundraisers to do this for ‘unworthy’ causes, though there is no arbiter of what counts as ‘worthy’. This raises an ethical question about what a fundraiser can do to encourage or ensure the donor’s willingness. Almost every religious group makes efforts to raise fund for the sake of the accomplishment of set objectives. In most cases, the funds realized are used exclusively for projects, toward assisting the basic needs of members or for evangelism and missions. Unfortunately, sometimes when funds are raised in religious organizations, the ethical mode of operations are not often considered because of one or more of the followings: ignorance, covetousness, lack of planning, lack of objectives, greediness, bad motive and so on.⁵

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a denomination that grew out of the Millerite Movement in the United States during the middle of the 19th Century. By 1861, the group and those who were with them adopted the name Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Adventist message came to Nigeria in 1914 through Elder David C. Babcock, who began the work in Erunmu near Ibadan in Oyo State.

The Church advocates for a wholistic Christian principles. Their moral codes and standards are derived basically from the scriptures and deal with right and wrong behaviours.⁶ For the SDA Church, the traditional mode and method of fundraising consisted mostly of asking people to donate for projects like building, academic scholarships, orphanages, hospital bill, special assistance, evangelism and missions. This is mostly done face to face or through distribution of envelopes. However, fundraising in the contemporary era can be done in an advanced way like raising of funds online or on the net which will be transferred into the organizations’ bank account.

There are also professional fund raisers that could be employed if an organization desire.⁷ Be it as it may, this is not done free of charge. Professional fund raisers may be paid for their services either through fees unrelated to the amounts of money raised or by retaining a percentage of raised funds. The common practice of fund raising currently is the act of the church employing a

³ Institute of Fundraising, *Introductory pack on funding and finance: Guide to fundraising*. NCVO <https://spectruncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/NCVO-Guide-to-Fundraising.pdf> (Accessed on 12th April 2022)

⁴ B. Breeze, *The new fundraisers: Who organises charitable giving in contemporary society?*. (USA: Policy Press, 2017), 12

⁵ M. G. Briscoe, (Ed.) Ethics in fundraising: Putting values into practice. *In New directions for philanthropic fundraising*, Vol. 6, (1994a). JosseyBass publication

⁶ G. O. Alalade, *Problems Militating against the growth of Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Nigeria*, (Oyo: Adventist Press, 2000), 43

⁷ Pastor J.O. Olawunmi, inaugural District Leader of Oke-Ijebu District of SDA Church, interviewed on 18th January, 2022

staff into the office of the treasury, whose main responsibility is to take charge of fund raising. The person is paid a salary like any other church employee and is usually a part of the top management staff of the church. Therefore, the above premise poses a need for a thorough ethical assessment of fundraising in the Seventh-day Adventist in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted philosophical research approach which studies uncountable philosophical and ethical issues such as morals and logic, or socio-cultural beliefs of certain group of people or social classes. Hence, the primary source of the study was derived from questionnaire administered to three hundred (300) church members. The respondents consisted of Church leaders and members who are in regular standing. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section labelled A, sought for the demographic details of the respondents; section B assesses the ethical issues of fundraising in Seventh-day Adventist Church, Akure and the challenges they pose to the socio-economic state of the church; section C evaluates the theological implications of the mode of fundraising conducted in the church and section D ascertains the members' attitudes towards fundraising.

Sampling Procedure: Simple random sampling procedure was employed to select the sample size among the members. In order to select the 300 members, stratified, random sampling procedure was used to select the members for the study. The members were first of all stratified into cadres: Women ministry, men organisation and youth. Then, they were proportionately selected according to their numbers and cadres.

Ethical Consideration: The study was conducted after an ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethical Committee of Adeleke University, Ede. All the study participants were fully informed of the study and we're assured of anonymity and confidentiality of their information.

Procedure for Data Collection: The researcher administered the questionnaire to the members who met the inclusion criteria (members on regular standing). The consenting respondents were given a copy of the questionnaire each, to fill in their respective abodes. Some copies of the questionnaire were collected same day while others were collected later through the church leaders after successfully filling them.

Research Time Frame: The data collection lasted for a period of twelve weeks, partly because the church was involved in the study and some the respondents who misplaced their copy of the questionnaire were given another respond to. This prolonged the data collection period.

Methods of Data Analysis: The data generated were collated, coded and analyzed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. All analyses were done using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 17. The method of data analysis focuses on obtaining data from the description of peoples' ethical customs, habits and mutual differences on fundraising ethics. Furthermore, the secondary data were drawn from

consultation of Books, the internet and also historic documentations from the church pioneers.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the divine command theory. The divine command theory is the belief that things are right because God commands them to be. In other words, it means that things which are considered wrong or unethical are wrong because they are forbidden by God. It is an absolutist theory. This means that there is no debate or discussion over whether an action is right or wrong. The divine command theory defines an act or action as good or bad, depending on whether it supports God's commands or not. Any act that goes against what God has commanded is classified as wrong, no matter the situation or circumstance. An absolutist approach means that the decision and outcome will always be the same.

Historical Development of Fundraising

The word philanthropy comes originally from the Greek and means 'love of mankind'. Robert L. Payton defined it as:

voluntary giving, voluntary service and voluntary association, primarily for the benefit of others; it is also the 'prudent sister' of charity, since the two have been intertwined throughout most of the past 3500 years of western civilization.⁸

Philanthropy is seen to be quite dispassionate and impersonal, concentrating on the resolution of the root causes of human issues. It is concerned with improving the quality of life for all members of a society by promoting their welfare, happiness and culture. In contrast to this, Charity is focused on the poor and is a term drawn from the religious tradition of altruism, compassion and empathy.⁹ Over the years it has come to be defined somewhat differently from one country to another. In many countries, such as the UK, charity is a distinctive legal form of organization that has a series of tax advantages enshrined in the law. In the USA, the term has a wider application and has come to mean simply serving the poor and needy.¹⁰

The concept of charity has been around since antiquity and non-profit organizations of one form or another appear to have been with us since civilization began. References to voluntary giving can be traced back to the beginning of recorded history. The Pharaohs, for example, established some of the earliest charitable trusts, albeit in their case for the somewhat selfish purpose of ensuring the security and perpetuity of their final resting places. Of

⁸ R.L. Payton , ' *Major Challenges to Philanthropy* ', a discussion paper for the independent sector, (August, 1984)

⁹ M.G. Gurin, and J. Van Til, ' Philanthropy in Its Historical Context ' , in Jon van Til and Associates (eds) *Critical Issues in American Philanthropy* , (CA: Jossey-Bass , San Francisco, 1990), 3 - 18 .

¹⁰Gurin, and Van Til, *Philanthropy in Its Historical Context*, 15

course, such early arrangements could hardly be described as philanthropic in nature, since the giving in question served only to ensure the deceased's footprint in history and hopefully a glorious afterlife. It was certainly not the intention of these early trusts to enrich the quality of life for others.¹¹

Early references to giving in form of charity can be found in the Old Testament. The Old Testament of the Bible notes that the patriarch, Jacob promised to give a tenth of all that God gave him. Indeed, we read that what is now known as tithe was well established and organized. The Hebrews believed in sharing what they had with the poor who, for example, were traditionally the recipients of the harvest every seventh year. Other forms of donation from this time include the vast treasures dedicated to the Delphic Oracle (first recorded as early as the fifth century BC) and the earliest recorded school endowments of Plato in Athens and Pliny at Como. Giving in its various forms has thus been around for many centuries.¹²

In religious tradition, the earliest recorded instances of formal fundraising activity are frequently linked to the activities of religious faiths. Mullin elucidates the significance of organized fundraising activity to early Jewish charity. In this tradition, individual volunteers were clearly assigned within each community to take responsibility for specific fundraising tasks. This reflects the positive moral view of the volunteer fundraiser in the Jewish faith. In the words of Rabbi Akiba, 'It is a greater virtue to cause another to give than to give yourself.'¹³

In the Christian tradition, the now common practice of the weekly church collection dates from the Dark Ages and in medieval times the Church commonly sent out professional fundraisers (*Quaestores*) to solicit gifts from the wealthy in order that the Church could both support itself and minister to the poor. Indeed, grand fundraising campaigns were often designed and initiated to support the creation of the great cathedrals across Northern Europe, from the Middle Ages onwards. Frequently, professional fundraisers were employed to ensure success. Detailed analytical planning and market segmentation accompanied much of the fundraising that supported these appeals and, as Mullin demonstrates, a rich variety of forms of fundraising were undertaken.¹⁴

Fundraising was not only directed at the rich and powerful in society. Bishop identifies gifts from fundraising in schools, house-to-house and street collections, community fundraising events and even jumble sales, as significant in the generation of income for Milan's cathedral in 1386.¹⁵ Over the centuries, the Church developed many effective forms of fundraising practice, including the use of the now infamous 'indulgences. Until Martin Luther publicly rebelled

¹¹ H. Hurd, and M. Lattimer, *The Millionaire Givers*, (London Directory of Social Change , 1994), 66

¹² A.C. Marts , *The Generosity of Americans: Its Source, Its Achievements* , (Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1966)

¹³ R. Mullin, *Foundations for Fundraising* , (London: ICSA Publishing , 1995), 45

¹⁴ Mullin, *Foundations for Fundraising*, 49

¹⁵ Edmund Bishop , *How a Cathedral Was Built in the Fourteenth Century - Milan Cathedral* , cited in Edmund Bishop, *LiturgicaHistorica*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1918)

against the practice in 1517, the Church had for 500 years allowed individuals to pay for their sins by making a worldly donation to the Church. The system was simple. After confessing their sins to a priest, an individual would be set an appropriate penance. Ideally this would be dealt with in life, thereby expunging the sin. However, if the individual died before the penance had been paid, it would still need to be dealt with before entry to heaven would be permitted. Needless to say, this could delay entry to heaven by a period of some years and was described as a most agonizing and protracted process. The solution to this problem was simple. Having been furnished with an appropriate penance, individuals could buy an 'indulgence' to clear this 'debt'. This would reduce the years of punishment that could otherwise ensue and guarantee a speedy entrance into heaven. Indulgences could be purchased for a variety of good works including churches, hospitals and bridges, and were available from professional fundraisers as well as priests. As Mullin notes, these indulgences 'exploited very private self-interest, or harnessed the vulnerabilities of the poor to such self-interest'. The Church has long since abandoned the practice.¹⁶

Although individuals have been engaged in fundraising for centuries, fundraising as a serious profession did not really emerge until the mid-eighteenth century. It was common practice at this time to raise funds by assembling a list of suitable wealthy persons and inviting them to a special function or, more usually, dinner. Aside from potential benefactors early fundraising manuals typically suggested that the guests for dinner should include a smattering of 'pretty young ladies' which was seen as essential if high-value gifts were to be solicited. It appears that male donors have always been keen to impress with the size of their charitable wallets.¹⁷

Fundraising in this form, primarily as a series of dinners and special events continued throughout the nineteenth century. Given that wealth remained concentrated in the hands of comparatively few individuals, there was little motivation for charities to broaden the nature of the charitable appeal.¹⁸

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oke-Ijebu, Akure

The Seventh-day Adventist church is a denomination that grew out of the Millerite Movement in the United States during the middle of the 19th Century. By 1861, the group adopted the name Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Advent message came to Nigeria in 1914 through David C. Babcock who began the work in Erunmu near Ibadan in Oyo State. There was no actual date for the emergence of Adventism in Ogun State, but it is still believed to have started before 1937 as documented by Pastor Babalola. it was unbeknownst until after the civil war of 1966-1970.¹⁹

¹⁶ Mullin, *Foundations for Fundraising*, 49

¹⁷ S. Wilberforce, (ed.) *Legacy Fundraising*, 2nd ed, London Directory of Social Change, 2001).

¹⁸ I. Williams , *The Alms Trade: Charities, Past Present and Future* , (London: Unwin Hyman , 1989)

¹⁹ G. O. Problems Militating against the growth of Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Nigeria, (Oyo: Adventist Press, 2000), 167

The emergence of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oke-Ijebu is traced down to the early 60s when a business man identified Pa John Olatunde, popularly known as Freeman, came for a business fare in Akure. He hails from Ekiti state and was a fully baptized Adventist at the time. He started his evangelical mission after his arrival to Oke-Ijebu. Over the years, the needful quest to enter places that were yet to be evangelized became so obvious and it was clear that Pa John would continue to struggle to cover half of the area belonging to the district.

The first church service was held at his residence, Iromu street, around the current Texaco filling station, Akure. From that location, the church was shifted to his new residence at Emuagu street, now stadium road. This gathering was made up of Pa John and his extended family and was later joined by some other new converts. Among them were Elder David Olayinka, Elder Olu Bankole and few other members. The first church was single-handedly built by Pa John Olatunde in 1974. At this period, the membership of the church had increased to a substantial number, as there were conversions of the new members. From Oke-Ijebu to Oka, then to Idiroko, the then district had about 20 villages yet to be evangelized to, whereas the presence of the church was already felt in many of the remaining villages.²⁰

Fundraising Activities in Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Since the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Oke-Ijebu, the Church has depended on the traditional system (tithe and offering). In addition to this, funds are occasionally solicited from her congregation through the mode and method of fundraising which consists mostly of asking people to voluntarily donate for projects like building, academic scholarships, orphanages, hospital bill, special assistance, evangelism and missions. This is mostly done face to face or through distribution of envelopes, especially on special occasions.²¹

The modification has witnessed the introduction and adoption of various fundraising strategies, such as appeal for funds, special offering and harvest among others. One may argue that the various strategies are to aid the Church to meet its ever-increasing financial demands. Nevertheless, the application of the various strategies have received an unfavourable response from a section of the Church.²² These contemporary fundraising approaches add a new look through the soliciting of funds online or on the net which are to be transferred into the organizations' bank account.²³ However, there were expressions of opposing opinions that were emerging from some Adventist Christians regarding the various fundraising strategies that are currently used by some organs of the Church such as "Adventist Men Organisation" (AMO), "Adventist

20 Pastor Agbabiaka Nurudeen Oladipupo, Acting President of the SDA Church, Ondo Mission, interviewed on 18th January, 2022

22 Pastor Ogunbadejo Pious O, Lay Pastor, Oke-Ijebu District, Akure, interviewed on 24th May 2022.

23 Deacon Ebun Fabiyi, (Church Treasurer), SDA Church, Oke-Ijebu, Akure, interviewed on 16th May, 2022.

Women Ministries.” These organs were collecting dues to generate funds from their members. This in a way burdens the congregation who are compelled to give amid the economic volatility and global unrest that they find themselves. Besides, depending on one source is not healthy in that the collapse or otherwise of that source could spell doom or lead to some operational difficulties for the Church. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to measure the ethical issues of fundraising strategy as a viable source of generating funds in Seventh-day Adventist church adopting the divine command theory.

Similarly, one of the church elders opines that the quarterly financial goal fixed by some branches of the church, was a system of fundraising for the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath school. Although, the initiative of appreciating those who contributed more, was an effort to appreciate and encourage them; however, this have taken out the substantial purpose of this activity as the Church lays more concern on the goal rather than the people.²⁴

Data Analysis

The questionnaire distributed had the objective of evaluating the ethical issues of fundraising in Seventh-day Adventist Church. To this end, 300 copies of questionnaire were distributed respectively in the church and fortunately, all were retrieved in the same order. The questionnaire was divided in four sections: A, B, C and D. Section A identifies the respondents' demographic details, while section B assesses the ethical issues of fundraising in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Akure and the challenges they pose to the socio-economic state of the churches. Section C evaluates the theological implications of the mode of fundraising conducted in the churches and section D ascertains the members' attitudes towards fundraising.

The researcher presents number of questions with the answers placed on a five-scale frequency: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Not Sure (NS), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 1: Accessing the ethical issues of fundraising in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Akure, Ondo State.

S/N		SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	The method of fundraising in the church is ethical	50	120	100	30	-
2	It threatens my psychological stand	80	30	100	20	70
3	The approaches of raising fund is always right	140	10	-	100	50

²⁴ Elder OlatundeBisi, Head Elder, SDA Church, Oke-Ijebu, Akure, interviewed on 16th May, 2022.

4	The approach should be continued	10	30	40	180	40
5	the approach should be scrutinized	220	-	-	60	20
6	I feel totally safe with the fundraising pattern	100	70	50	50	30
7	I am psychologically threatened most times with the method	200	89	7	4	-
8	I feel extorted after every fundraising activity	50	40	100	60	50
9	It drastically affects my socio-economic life	20	-	200	45	35

From the above table, we can state that the ethical stand of the fundraising method in Seventh-day Adventist church is fairly moderate. Although there are what seem to be applications of some ethical measures, however, the members are most times psychologically threatened due to the approaches taken by the churches in raising funds.

Table 2: evaluating the theological implications of the mode of fundraising conducted in the church.

1	The method of fundraising in the church is scriptural	50	30	100	120	-
2	It threatens my spiritual stand	80	30	100	70	20
3	The approaches of raising fund is always biblically based	-	10	140	100	50
4	The approach should be continued with or without biblical bases	-	30	50	40	180
5	the approach should be scrutinized using biblical standards	220	60	20	-	-
6	Strict biblical principles should be adopted in fundraising activities	100	70	50	50	30
7	My spirituality is threatened most times with the method	200	89	7	4	-
8	I should be allowed to give willingly not by compulsion	150	70	60	20	-
9	It should be the pastor who dictates	-	20	35	45	200

	how and when to give					
10	A sense of relationship between me and God is strongly felt with the mode of fundraising	-	40	160	70	30
11	A sense of relationship between me and the church is strongly felt with the mode of fundraising	10	30	60	120	80

From Table 2, it is evident that most of the members only give under the compulsion of their religious leader or the fundraiser. Although this does not align with their conscience, they do so notwithstanding. It is also seen that the respondents barely feel a sense of connection between them and their Church and between them and God.

Table 3: Ascertaining the members' attitudes towards fundraising

S/N		SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	Donating funds is part of my Christian duties	50	120	100	30	-
2	It is compulsory to give under any circumstance	80	30	100	70	20
3	Donations are not limited to the church alone	-	10	40	100	150
4	I have a full knowledge on the rudiments of giving	100	30	50	40	80
5	Given should be done wholeheartedly	220	60	-	20	-
6	My progress lies on giving	100	70	50	50	30
7	Not giving is a major cause of poverty	200	89	7	4	-

8	I have a substantive biblical proof on giving	150	70	60	20	-
9	The amount I give matters	-	20	35	45	200

From the above evaluation, it is shown that the members have a vivid knowledge and a positive attitude on giving. However, there is what seem to be a misconception on the model of giving and blessings. Majority of the respondents believe that their measurement of divine blessing is determined by the amount donated towards the course of God.

Biblical Response to the Ethical Issues in Fundraising

To adopt the Biblical fundraising model, the Church has to be guided by certain principles and these are; God owns everything, relationship building, work with people and wrestling wisely. Shaibu notes that the basic biblical fundraising theology is derived from the theology of the Psalmist seen in Psalms 24:1 and 89: 11. The passages claim that *the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein* (Revised Standard Version).²⁵ The Psalmist declares God's dominion over this world in general, and his providential presence in every part of it. To the Israelites as well as Christians, God owns the universe and everything in it and this is what guides Nehemiah's fundraising theology. If God owns all things by virtue of creation, it implies that whatever man possesses, he/she does so as a steward. Knowing that God is the Creator, sustainer and owner should make the Church feel at ease in soliciting funds from the congregation and non-members as well.

Aside from this acknowledgment, the Church needs to think of relationship building. In fundraising, relationship building is paramount to the success. Relationship in this regard is not just about raising funds, it is an approach to the marketing of a cause that centers on a unique and special relationship between the Church and its members and between its members and God. Its overriding consideration is to care for and develop a bond and also avoiding anything that might damage or jeopardize it. Every activity is therefore geared toward making sure donors know they are important, valued, and considered, which has the effect of maximizing funds per donor in the long term. This relationship is therefore divided into two, horizontal (between the church and members) and vertical (between members and God). This model claims that to work for God, the Church must learn to work with people, regardless of one's religious affiliation and this requires establishing and nurturing a good relationship. Working with people needs sensitivity, tactfulness and prayer.

²⁵Iddrissu Adam Shaibu, Nehemiah Fundraising Strategy: A Model for the Ghanaian Church, *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies (ERATS)*, Volume 7 Issue 2 (February 2021) 30-36

Many times, large number of Christians tend to separate life into the sacred and the secular. Sacred activities include worship, prayer meetings, discipleship, evangelism and Bible study while all money matters are usually viewed as non-spiritual. Any time we see an individual, especially a Christian talking about raising money by inviting people to come and donate there is a feeling of imperfection. Hence, this study deemed it fit to establish the biblical perspective of fundraising. The bible is the standard for fundraising with divine command ethics. In Exodus God told Moses to raise a contribution and in Exodus 35 people were invited to give and they gave. The Bible is clear about the unethical issues in fundraising, such that include focusing on the money and not the giver, dishonesty, long and poor talk, exaggeration of purpose, show off, wrong motives and unnecessary spending. These must be avoided as much as possible. It is a privilege to give and to receive. Three times Paul called the Christians in Jerusalem to contribute to the gracious work, freely and wholeheartedly (2 Corinthians 8; 6-7, 19). He devoted a portion of his ministry to financial projects and he worked according to the rule. Biblical fundraising is a way of proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer people opportunity to participate with us in our vision to mission. It is a way of advancing the kingdom of God.

Generally speaking, “giving” is biblical and thus, the collection of gifts through endowment fund should not be controversial. Ethics suggests that the right owner must be respected and appreciated. God is the owner of life and anything man has. It will be unethical for anyone to think of absorbing this peculiar position of the rightful owner. Man is a steward and must be accountable to God. In the moral law, man is responsible to God and his fellow man. Man must share what he has with others in need.

In essence, the following 15 points are the ethical position of fundraising and giving charity implied in the bible

1. Respect and appreciate the right of the owner of all gifts and money. (Deuteronomy 4:44)
2. The donor must be appreciated. (1 Thessalonians 5:12)
3. Giving of full confidence to the course through which opportunity to give is given. (Hebrews 10:35-36)
4. Consideration and sustaining the integrity of the fund raisers. (Proverbs 28:6)
5. Consideration for right motive in giving or in donating a reasonable amount. (Matthew 23:23)
6. Understand the plight of the fundraisers. (Proverbs 14:31)
7. Be honest with “self” and the organisation. (2 Timothy 2:15)
8. Consideration for vision and the mission of the organisation. (Matthew 6:33)
9. Pre-planning and budgeting for amount to be raised (James 1:9)
10. Keeping of records, issuance of receipt and giving feedback to both the organisation and donors. (Nehemiah 4)
11. Set limit for fundraisers. (Nehemiah 8)
12. Opening of bank account for online donors benefit and accountability. (Ezra 4)

13. Regulate the activities of fundraisers in case of long term fund raising schedule. (Luke 2:3)
14. Engage the service of professional editors. (Nehemiah 5)
15. Give training on stewardship to the members of the organisation and the public. (Jeremiah 6:12)

Unethical Issues in Fundraising

1. Bad Motive for Charity Giving

Many reasons are accountable for why people donate or give charity. It is difficult to search and understand the heart of men. Some do not actually give freely; some give to receive returns and the reward of men. A donor's motives are very crucial to the donations made to anyone or organisations. A Christ Apostolic Church member recalled an attitude of a donor to the church, after a presentation of 500,000 naira; the donor requested that his son should be given the youth leader in the church even when the son has no qualification for the post sought for. He became very angry that he retreated donating towards the classroom building project.²⁶

Furthermore, Pastor Jason claimed that some politicians donated towards education funds on the base that they can be elected into position again by the church members, not that they actually love to give. The spirit of free giving is expressed clearly in the scriptures "freely you have received, freely give" Matthew 10:8. The person or the committee in charge of fund raising should be aware that if money is raised for a specific purpose, it has to be used for that purpose. And in the case of left over, donors should be informed on what the left over is used for or else the left over should be kept for either the maintenance or for further endowment. To avoid mismanagement of fund and to keep the process transparent, it is advisable to open a bank account in the name of the fund with two signatories.

2. Diversion of Primary Purpose to personal Reason

Before funds are sourced, there should be laid down purpose, that is, what they want to use a particular donation for. Many times, fund raisers often divert money realized to another use of the organisation. Sometimes we see the worst happen as fund raisers are tempted to quickly put personal reasons into play. An Accountant in Seventh-day Adventist Church related an account of a pastor changing the name of his Church to his own name on the land document he purchased for the church because the land owner gave the land to the church free of charge. He now looked for another land to be purchased for the church. There are also stories of fund raisers who use the money realized to pay flight to countries overseas. Some use donation to their organisation to buy flashy cars.²⁷ This is highly unacceptable. Fund raisers must disclose any conflict of interest that may arise.

²⁶ J.O. Olawunmi, Inaugural District Leader Ijebuode SDA Church, interviewed on 18th January, 2022

²⁷ Pastor Ogunbadejo, Pious Oluwole (Lay Pastor), SDA Church, Oke-ijebu District, Akure, interviewed on 24th May, 2022

3. *Lack of Record Keeping*

Another ethical issue is failure on the part of the individual or committee of fundraising to keep proper record of the donors, time, amount collected and accurately describe the intended uses and the destinations of all donations. Lack of transparency affects record keeping. It is ethical that fund raisers and those selected to use the donations or endowment funds and materials maintain the dignity of both the donors and the organisation through record keeping.

4. *Inconsistent in Accountability*

Some churches leadership demonstrate greater accountability by showing donors the direct impact of their fundraising efforts. Some neglect this aspect of ethics in fundraising while some try to give account but not fully correct figures. Lack of correct accountability lower the integrity of fundraising in the church and could make the organisation to lose confidence in the committee. In the light of this, persons of integrity should be put in charge of fund raising.

Conclusion

Most Christian Churches have depended on the traditional system of soliciting for funds since their inception. Even in this twenty-first century where Christianity has become sophisticated, they still depend mainly on the traditional system of soliciting for funds. The sophistication of the Church has led to a modification of the liturgical practices of the Church and one affected aspect is fundraising. The modification has further led to the introduction of several fundraising strategies, some of which are allegedly unbiblical. The fact is that the over-dependence of the Church on the traditional system of funding is never healthy and this is because the Church's capacity to fulfil its core divine mission may dramatically be impeded especially now that some Christians are experiencing fatigue regarding giving. This is likely to have an adverse effect or hinder mission, evangelism, Church growth and personal spirituality. Although, as the day goes by, new means of fundraising are being thought out; however, it should be subjugated to biblical principles and not on the gain the church pose to get alone.

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