

College of Post-Master Guide Studies

A South African Adventist-associated Institution

Founder/Senior Lecturer: Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi

Research Director: Kelvin-on-Athol Church, Johannesburg, South Africa

Think!

“One of the urgent tasks facing the church is to re-assess its procedure, its attitude, and its teaching, taking into account the questions which have remained unanswered in the first phase of evangelization. Missionary endeavour touched only the aspects of African humanity which seemed worthwhile, leaving as unproductive, a no man’s land disfigured by tangles of questions, doubts, and unfulfilled expectations of every kind. If it were possible to begin the mission all over again...one thing which would have to be taken seriously is the whole sphere of the African as a human being who was belittled and cheated under the old system of evangelization...As soon as we become aware of the need to live our faith at the point of the intersection of several cultures, we also feel the need to go beyond our pastoral institution and encounter Africans in the real setting of their daily lives. For this reason, the worries which drive converts (and pastors) to consult fortune-tellers and fetish priests must concern the church in Africa.”

Jean Marc-Ela, *From Charity to Liberation* (1984, 1990: pp. 6, 7)

“The cardinal problem with South African Adventism is that it has not landed on African soil. It is still flying in the socio-epistemic space of Eurowesternism.”

Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi

Founding Statement

When I released the first smaller edition of this study pack in June 2021, somebody asked me the question, “*Who gave you permission to launch this programme?*” I responded, “God and me.” That was the end of the story. Some Adventists have rendered themselves objects of institutional capture, if not hypnotism. They are slaves of an organisation that never went to the cross for their sins. I was not brought up that way, and I am not ready to fit into that brand of colonised African Adventist spirituality.

I created this institution and programme for two sets of reasons:

Set Number One

1. to articulate concerns about the internal colonisation that has rendered African Adventists in the church slaves of Eurocentric epistemology and sociology;
2. to critique aspects of South African Adventism that have underdeveloped thought and mission in the African section of the church;
3. to articulate ideas and methodological tracks we may need to follow

3.1 to free ourselves from colonial capture by Eurowestern Adventism, and to restore the Bible to its primary authors. The Bible was not written by Europeans! White people may produce thousands of texts on Christianity, but the valid historical truth is that the Bible in its entirety is the product of African swept under God’s inspiration. Thus, all your General Conference Caucasian biblical pictography consists of intellectual hogwash. I wrote Dr Ted Wilson, General Conference president, on this matter some time ago. I have not received any response in many moons.

3.2 to validate African presence in the Bible and shape a methodology for our witness to the millions of our people who labour daily under the loads created by Eurowestern socio-political sophistry and capture. I am, frankly, launching a liberation genre of literature for Africans in the Adventist church in this land. For this reality I need no man’s permission or concession. My soul is not a slave to the thoughts of anybody in this land and church.

Set Number 2

The central and broader reason for this study cohort is to usher a liberative and contextual epistemic culture in African Adventism in South Africa. There is a firm moral and

developmental imperative, embedded in historical realities for us to declare who we are in the historical schemes of “things” in Christianity, in general, and in Adventism, specifically, in this land; and to delineate a path we should henceforth follow in the Christian faith that we can deliver as a proud and heroic legacy to our children. For this no person has a right to ask the imbecile question, “Who gave you permission?” Here is the simple answer, “God!” End of story.

About this Batch

This text is the first in a batch of studies that will introduce thought and discourse around contemporary social issues that senior youth in the African church ask about South African Adventism. The large and growing numbers of Adventist children and youth in this land have no exposure to Adventist education. This deepening absence of Adventist institutional education has birthed a generation of members with a myriad of questions and quandaries about the nature of Adventism in a troubled post-colonising country. A myth that now settles on the collective psyche of black Adventism is that education from Model C schools is an alternative to sound Adventist education.

Pastors and parents do not know some of the strange questions that some of us who spend time with youth often face. Some of our senior youth, for instance, are exposed to phenomenal realities for which parents have no answers. In the New Destiny InstituteSA education camps for instance, I have had to deal with evolutionism and ideologies from the supernatural world that may parents have no idea about. Your children are exposed to pagan and atheistic ideologies while you spend time reading your GC-created Sabbath School lesson much of which does not speak into the African condition.

THE DOMINANT PRESENCE OF AFRICANS IN THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE

Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi

Lecture One of Four

The era of black protest literature in South Africa is gone. The new trend is declarative, affirmative, liberative and developmental. This is the reason why some of us no longer read the monotonous propagandistic Sabbath School Lessons from the General Conference. Almost twenty years ago I discovered that the GC was reprinting stuff from previous decades. Friends in Cape Town that I schooled with at Bethel College sent me, in a recent year, evidence of this reduplication of studies.

In my home in Ethekwini (Durban) we have Sabbath School lessons going back to the 1930s. The SS Lesson was created by James White to send people back to the Bible. Read your denominational history. The SS Lesson is a road sign. Stop wasting time reading signs. Walk or drive into to your destination through direct Bible study.

Listen: **The Bible was written by African people.** Your church and other western-born churches have deceived and misled you. One of the challenges of Helderberg College is that it is teaching African pastors' systematic theology. This genre of studies is irrelevant in Africa. Africans – from Old Testament times – believed and taught **contextual theology**. **This was a lived theology rooted in existential revelatory encounters with divinity.**

African reality was rooted in lived spirituality. This is the reason why when an African vows that he knows somebody, he/she encompasses experiential knowledge that person. Precolonial Africans were not theorists. They were practitioners of knowledge and skills.

In these studies, much of our teaching will encompass reality knowledge. Theory in Africa has produced citizens who are alienated from the realities of people. We are functionalists. Theory is strange to us.

Introduction

I well remember my Standard Five (Grade 7) teacher, Mr Ndlovu (uSchibi), in Steadville Location, Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal. He always reserved Fridays for a special lesson in African history. He would teach the prescribed history and then use Friday for what he termed, “the real story.” He would always preface his Friday lesson by saying, “This week we studied such and such. But today I will tell you what really happened.” To this day I cannot forget the Friday history period. All of us in that class grew up with the understanding that there is false history and real history. Every African parent or teacher must do this in order to give perspective to his/her children in a world that thrives on falsehoods and distortions.

In this lecture my intention is threefold:

1. to arouse the moral conscience of concerned African Senior Youth to the urgency of a decolonial agenda about the presence of African people in the Christian scriptures.
2. to argue for an epistemic reformation in the teaching of Bible history, Christian anthropology, and sociology among African Christians.
3. to argue for an Afrocentric biblical model of mission and ministry to South African communities with specific reference to Africans.

Indigenous Africans get little or no respect from westerners because of long-held myths and prejudices held by generations of their race. Some of these myths are deepening in the post-apartheid period. They derive from the degeneration that we have suffered from colonisation and forced superintendence of whites over our lives. The notion that as “innocent children of nature” (Hegel) we must be nursed and tutored by whites to serve their interests is a silent driving motivation for our continued subjection to western civilisation and Eurocentric Christianity.

There are certain historico-epistemic traditions, rooted in the Christian community, progressively fuelling negative behaviours and responses to the welfare, even salvific experiences of Africans. One of these is that Africans are an inferior learner-nation from which nobody can derive any worthy and sensible knowledge and value.

Caucasian westerners have placed themselves as perpetual tutors of other national groups in the world. Very few white people hold the notion that Africans have something to teach other nations. This, to me is one of the reasons why decolonisation must be conducted and sustained without the permission of Eurowesterners or their endorsement. Decolonisation is not meant to please them or to place Africans at par with Europeans. **Decolonisation is meant to declare to the world we can be who we wish to be and become through the power of the One God who**

created us, and that our existence in the world cannot be seconded to or be subservient to the existence of others.

The purpose of decolonisation is to correct and re-empower our nation to become what God had intended it to become even in the absence of Europeans. If western natural knowledge, even theology brought by them to the continent, were designed to place them above us so that we can be servile to their interests and schemes, we need to tell our children and future generations what late Professor Adam Small of the University of the Western Cape, stated in the early 1970s, that “We do not live by the mercy of whites.”¹

The old historical tendency of African Christians to ignore issues in their social environment while they desire to win souls therefrom, is one of the strange anomalies of modern Christian mission. It may have been easy and convenient to shun and ignore these issues in the colonial past; but the 21st century is another century. Historical critics are now interrogating all questionable traditions and institutions. There is no way African Christianity will survive the rising critique of decolonial thinking.

This text seeks to inform, to clarify and redirect our people to the truth. We are committed to speak what we know and leave the decision to the reader. We shall endeavour to expose falsehood and direct our people to the truth as we know it. We believe that there is something better than what presently clouds our vision of who we are and our future. We believe also that somebody has told us small and big lies about ourselves and our duty and destiny in this world as Africans. We do not believe that there are superior and inferior nations. We also believe that colonisation is more than a political or moral error. It is the worst form of slavery that one nation can visit on another.

The Tragedy called “colonisation”

Colonisation has to do with loss, capture, destruction, or distortion, for the purpose of control of people and resources. Today Africans are so messed up one almost does not know where to begin to redress the situation. Some are so stuck “in the mud” that they will not understand why decolonisation must take place. We may as well state here that some of the hardest resistance to decolonisation will come from our own people – believers, church leaders, community leaders and academics. It will be old case of the African American House Nigger versus the Plantation Nigger.

Colonisation has survived, locally and globally, through direct assault, educational design and collaboration of some in the subject group and mystification. Major platforms of colonisation have been **religion, culture, education, economics and politics.**

I have lived in South Africa all my life except six years that I spent in Eswatini. I have been to Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Zimbabwe many times. All these countries were colonised and missionised by Europeans of English, German, and Dutch origin. There are

¹Mokgethi Mothlabi, (Editor), *Essays on Black Theology* (A Publication of the South African Students Organisation (SASO), Durban, 1972

therefore common socio-spiritual and cultural similarities and spiritual threads that run through all of them.

These countries were also all extensions of European countries, and all were also involved until the nineties in struggles for liberation from European rule. In addition, all these countries have communities with common or shared ethnological and lingual ties which make them culturally uniform and epistemically connected. Thus, there is an imperative for a rebranding of their current and ongoing development with the truth from a text that has become a salient guide of all modern self-respecting societies.

The Imperative of Decolonisation

There is a need for a thorough and ongoing discourse on decolonisation within Christian theology, worship and mission. We must be deliberate and intentional in doing this. **We need a methodology that will create a free and developmental spirituality capable of delivering the gospel of Jesus to local communities without the cultural trappings of western Christianity.** Unless such happens and happens reasonably soon, Christianity in the African community will be overrun by an emerging internal discord on decolonisation and fail to deliver salvific mission and development to our people.

As youth and scholars taking studies in tertiary institutions, it is your moral duty to leave these institutions with sound knowledge and engage our church communities with knowledge and understandings that will redeem them from centuries of white ignorance of the anthropology of the Bible and the heroic roles that our people have played in Christian salvation history. Frankly, if salvation history is foundational to Christian life and vocation, it should correspondingly be disgraceful for us to remain ignorant of our roles as Africans in that history.

Further, we have a duty to pass this knowledge to our children so that we can recalibrate the intelligence of African Christianity for more redemptive and liberative mission from the vagaries of this sinful world.

I argue on a broader scale that the decolonisation agenda should be led by religious communities for the following reasons:

1. Churches and missionary organisations are the most colonised. They have used the Bible to sanction and justify acts of injustice, giving undue longevity to oppression of Africans by Europeans in the church and in the street.
2. Churches should be best able to tell where things really went wrong since their faith stood as the vanguard of colonisation. Theological sophistry and ethical miscreancy were used to hoodwink and exploit the benevolence of our forebears during the missionary era. Missionaries and missionary education stood as the foundation of all oppressive and discriminatory acts done to blacks by European missionaries and colonists. Paul Makhubu's text, *"Who are the Independent Churches?"* (1988), provides ample simple evidence of this condition in the history of faith in South

Africa. Churches must take it upon themselves to redeem their historical and epistemic association with our plight.

3. Within the Christian community evidence is awash on this condition. There is simply no way our church can claim innocence on this matter. The fact that we have mixed structures, schools and churches, does not imply that the church has decolonised. It is very possible for people to live and worship together when they hold diverse theological and anthropological views on life and of one another. Frankly, physical togetherness has never been the platform for unity.

African Christians must stop hiding behind global administrative decretals and programmes, while ignoring the burning issues on the ground. We shall not be able to win our people to the Christian gospel if all we do is to listen and not speak, mediate and not engage, tithe and not create the wherewithal for material development for the money the church needs and continually calls for.

African People and the Bible

I have a reason for this part of the study. We cannot decolonise a faith and associated systems of thought until we locate ourselves in the epistemic trajectory of what we must decolonise. It is necessary for us to know that the Christian faith and its central text of reference are not alien realities in African history and life. The Bible is full of African people more than those who colonised us. This fact must be emphasised many times to our children and youth so that they do not become victims of the tragedy that befell and continues to befall their parent generations.

In this subsection I deal with the presence of African people in the Scriptures dating from the beginning of human history. I do this with no prejudice against other national groups. It is pedagogically necessary for us to do this since white Christians, in the main, have made the world believe that they are first-class citizens of heaven while the rest of us belong to the servant's quarters. The truth is the opposite.

Oral and literary histories tell us that there was a time when African people owned **knowledge, land, cattle, their time, their labour, their God, culture and education**. *Africans owned themselves on behalf of God*. This too was their attitude to land and cattle. Ownership was cultural, not legal. Our ancestors were in kingdoms, chiefdoms, and clans and not in republics. This governance was consistent with the theory of rulership and power in the Christian Bible, an Afro-Asian text.

All facets of their sacred lives have been lost or distorted by other communities in the past four or five centuries. In recent decades more people have laid their burdens on Africans. We are now troubled by other communities as well. The loss did not occur by error, magic or some mysterious process that cannot be understood or explained. The loss was not caused by God, even though his name was invoked in all the losses we suffered. The loss was discussed, planned, deliberate, forced, legalised and politicised. Think of the 1884 Berlin Conference

chaired by Leopold II of Belgium. The intricate process continues to this day in subtle and sophisticated ways. The name for these processes is **colonisation**, with a sinister strategy now termed **capture**. Tragically, in more ways than one the process has involved some of our own people, as perpetrators, collaborators or beneficiaries. Amilcar Cabral once stated,

The colonialist has a habit of telling us that when they arrived, they put us into history. You are well aware that it is the contrary. When they arrived, they took us out of our own history. Liberation for us is to take back our destiny and our history.²

No truthfully informed African will deny the fact that African history in recent centuries is deeply compromised history. It is no longer our story; it is the story of how some people interfered with our past and future. It is a history in which areas of utter ignorance were declared knowledge or forms of intelligence. It is also a history in which areas of knowledge and wisdom were declared ignorance and superstition. White knowledge also interfered with our visions of the future.

Being black and African knowledge

In his book, *“What is wrong with Being Black?”* African religious leader, Matthew Ashimolowo, says that Africa is the richest continent in the world but is carrying the poorest people. We live in a stolen continent. We simply participate in the religious, social, political and technological histories of other people.

Think about alcohol. Drinking beer is not new in the continent. Since Noah all nations of this world have been drinking, some to excess. *But why have Africans in our country found joy in literally drinking their way into the future? Whose liquor are they drinking?* Today it has become easier to lift a bottle or can of alcohol than to lift a book. In South Africa 56% of alcohol used in 2016 was bought in December, and most of it went to African people. Why? *Why are Africans fuelling their journey into the future on alcohol?*

What makes us more drunk than other nationalities? Why are there more bottles and cans of liquor than books in many African homes? Why do black areas have more bottle stores than libraries? These are some of the questions we must ask if we plan to free ourselves from colonisation and capture.

Why have other nations of the world turned Africa into a market for their goods and even poisons? These questions and many others need our immediate attention. How many African-owned shops are in Pakistan and Somalia? We are not asking this question to kindle xenophobic feelings. This question is meant to say – We cannot hope to deliver ourselves from colonisation until we manufacture, sell and buy our own goods. *Africa, it is time you stopped to think!*

In this country most persons who are doing terminal degree (doctorates) in South Africa are women – and foreign. So, inside the African problem, there is also a South African problem.

²*Pre-Theology*, Lessons 1-24, Theological Education by Extension College, 1989, p. 86

Inside the South African problem there is a gender problem. Where are males in educational development?

All nations come from the past. So do African people. Our history as Africans dates far beyond the histories of many nations in the world. Even while this paper does not subscribe to evolutionary thinking, evolutionists, creationists and oral traditionalists agree on one fact – Africa is the cradle of humanity.

When Europeans came here in 1652, they found the *Khoi, San and African* people. In 800 AD Roman soldiers in a ship saw the Xhosa and Zulu-speaking people along the eastern coast of South Africa. The notion that we came here around the same time as Europeans came, is falsehood.

Nobody disputes the fact that Europeans came here in April 1652. The first European sighting of South Africa was done by Greek soldiers in 1488. Apartheid history told us that African people came here around the same time whites landed in the Cape. This is the myth propagated by misguided apartheid scholars and their Department of Communication to undermine the claim by blacks that South Africa belongs, *not to all who live in it but to Africans*.

Oral, historical, archaeological and linguistic evidence all point to the fact that we have been here for a long time. Maylam presents evidence that in KwaZulu-Natal, for instance, human presence has been known as far back 207 AD. South African history did not begin in 1652. Theirs did so, not ours. They came; we did not come. They found us here.³

African historian, a former teacher-colleague of mine, Ntsatsi S. Kekana, also affirms in his master's dissertation, the pre-European presence of Africans in this subcontinent. He goes to state that Europeans even fiddled with our personal identities by given us false names in order to recreate us into beings they could manipulate.

In a paper titled, "The Remaking of South African History: African languages as European scripts", scholar Sinfree Makoni even argues that when whites came to South Africa they re-invented our languages, with the South Sotho language being the most Europeanised because of literary work done by French missionaries in the late 18th and 19th centuries. This is beside the fact that Sotho and Tswana had long been affected by the San. For instance, the hanging sounds at the end of many Sotho and Tswana words is of San origin, which is also linked to the language of the Chinese people. Words such as *qetelong, mafelong, tshimolong, Mahikeng, Taung*, etc, typify this San influence on African languages. The absence of an emphatic vowel sound is not African at all.

This is very clear in many of our language cognates that even the Zulu paper, "Bayede," attests to. There is even a need for the regrammartisation of African languages, among other tasks of the decolonisation agenda. In our re-reading of African histories and knowledge systems a lot calls for reconstruction and redress. The decolonisation agenda will have to deal, in some

³See *A History of African people of South Africa: From the Early Iron Age to the 1970s*, Paul Maylam (David Philip: Cape Town and Johannesburg), 1986

specific ways, with language distortion that came with the academic engagement of whites with our languages and knowledge systems. I learnt when I was in the University of Zimbabwe four years ago that the British linguist, Clement M. Doke, who also came here was mandated to reconfigure and distort African languages.

Our knowledge system

African religion is fundamentally theistic and creationist. There are no evolutionary tales in our histories of human origins. Narratives may vary from one community to another, and from one place to another, but the central organising fact is creationism. This is the reason why there is – historically – no discourse on atheism in Africa. Atheism is a heresy from other parts of the world. African theologian, Mbiti, has immortalised the statement that “Africans are notoriously religious” in his *Introduction to African Religions and Philosophy* (1969). The reader may benefit from Professor Gabriel Setiloane’s text, *“Introduction to African Theology.”*

Some Evidences from the Bible

In chapter 10 of Genesis in the Christian Bible, we read that Noah had three sons – Shem, Ham and Japheth. It has often been said that these three men are the progenitors of the major racial classifications or human types found in the world today. This claim cannot be true for very simple historical and biological reasons.

1. According to the Christian Scriptures the presence of human beings in the world predates the appearance of Noah and his family by 2000 years. Before Noah’s time human beings had a definable ethnological profile. Noah and his sons could trace their social, genetic history and ethnology from the first man, Adam.
2. The traits that Noah and his sons had in their bodies had come down from their immediate and remote ancestors. **In the normal course of life, no three national groups can be born by one man and woman.** This happens only where there are recessive genes. Noah and his sons were the continuation of already existent human types. They were not the original seed of variant human types.
3. **Scripture tells us that the curse that Noah pronounced on Ham, landed on Canaan. By the time Noah had children there were already black-skinned persons in the world. Canaan was not the ancestor of Africans but of Canaanites. This nation no longer exists.**
4. Colour has not been used as an instrument of punishment in the Bible. Blackness therefore cannot be described as the cause of the curse Noah made against Ham (Canaan). **Black people have never been cursed by any heavenly being.** Yes, other human beings have insulted them. What has come

to be known as the *Hamitic curse* is a creation of prejudiced people of other human types.

5. We Africans are dark-skinned because of a substance called melanin that has protected black people from skin cancer for many centuries. Diet and climate can also change pigmentation.

In a note captioned, *Noah and His Three Sons*, the editors of *The Original African Heritage Bible*, make the following statement:

Western teaching is that Shem was the progenitor of the Asiatic peoples, Japheth was the father of the Caucasians, and Ham was supposedly black, and was the progenitor of black people. This myth has been taught with such vigour and strength that most of the world's population have heard it at one time or another. Facts show that these sons were of African origin, all born of the same parents who themselves were African/Edenic. There is no account from the historical antiquities that their physical features were Negroid, Caucasoid, and Mongoloid. It can be logically concluded that the people inhabiting the earth after the flood were of African/Edenic descent. The only time the scriptures mention a change of colour pigmentation on a permanent basis is written in 2 Kings 5:15-27.⁴

A consequence of this misconception about Noah's curse of Ham is the misrepresentation of the identity of heavenly beings. According to this tradition God (Father), God (Son) and God (Holy Spirit) – and angels, are white European type personalities. Billions of people have an impression of God as a person with European features. Missionaries/Christian scholars/artists from the Eurowest are responsible for planting false ideas about God. Millions of us have grown up believing a lie – that God (Father) is a white man and that Jesus was a European male. Christian art continues to spread this lie. Contrary to this tradition, Bible history has a strong multicultural tradition.

The Exodus

When the Israelites left Egypt for Canaan, they were a mixture of several groups. Some of these persons were identified by their dark or honey-brown/ olive complexion. Miriam's misguided behaviour and for which she was punished by God, proves that there were African people in the Bible.

⁴Molefi Asante, Cain Hope Felder, et al, *The Original African Heritage Study Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: The James C Winston Publishing Company, 1993)

Copher, an African American Bible scholar, says that there were **African names** among the Jews, some of which included *Moses, Hophni, Merari, Miriam, Putiel and Phinehas*.⁵ In the four and half centuries of Egyptian slavery, some Hebrews married Africans. The books of Leviticus and Chronicles make mention of marital relations between Hebrews and Egyptians.⁶

Apart from experiences of captivity and enslavement, at various times in their history the Jews were scattered by war, persecution and flight from death across the world, especially in Europe. The most recent is Hitler's decimation of 6/7 million Jews. Events of this nature explain, in part, why millions of Jews today look *unlike* their original ancestors who were less Caucasian and white-skinned as present-day Jews. *The names and surnames of many Jews are not even those of their biblical ancestors.*

In discussing the question, **Was Jesus White?** Britten (a Canadian white science educator) makes the following significant statements,

Jews are Asians and so their natural colour is somewhat brown skin with black hair and dark eyes. But when they moved to Europe and Africa, their colour began to change. It changed through intermarriage. As the years and centuries passed, the Jews in Europe became lighter because of marriages with Europeans. Similarly, the Jews in Africa became darker through marriages with Africans. The result is: Today we find Jews of various skin colours.⁷

The VhaLemba: Black Jews

Not all the Venda speaking people we see in South Africa are Bantu-speakers. There is a section of the Venda community in Limpopo Province that has its origins in South Yemen, a state at the southernmost part of Saudi Arabia. Ancestors of present-day VhaLemba moved into east Africa and travelled down across the equator until they established a strong presence in Zimbabwe. Some of them were scattered across central Africa. For many years the Lembas claimed that they were Jews much to the disbelief of the world, especially historians. Recently studies conducted on the DNA of the Lembas have confirmed a genetic affinity between these people and other Jews.

Murphy has made the note:

That changed in 1999, when geneticists from the United States, Great Britain and Israel discovered some backing for their (Lemba's) claims. The researchers found that Lemba men carried a DNA signature on their Y

⁵Charles B Copher, "*The Black Presence in the Old Testament*," in Cain Hope Felder, ed., *Stony the Road We Trod* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991) pp 153, 154. See also Cheik Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality?* Translated by Mercer Cook (New York: Lawrence Hill & company, 1974) p. 103

⁶Leviticus 24:10-46, 1 Chronicles 2:34

⁷Bruce Britten, *I hate your white religion*, (Mbabane) Self-published, 1997, pp. 61, 62

chromosome that is believed to be unique to the relatively small number of Jews known as the Cohanim, *who trace their ancestry to the priests of the ancient Jewish Temple and, ultimately to Aaron, brother of Moses.*⁸ (Emphasis supplied)

In the same report it was stated that male Lemba persons have a twenty percent higher genetic evidence that they are Jews more than white male Jews. If genetic science validates such a crucial relationship between the Lemba males and the Old Testament Levite family of Aaron, Moses and Miriam, is it far-fetched to argue that millions of people who have had a physical association with the Lembas have Jewish blood?

Further, this finding has a significant bearing on the ethnological profile of Jesus whose descent is traced from the house of Judah, the elder brother of Levi in whose family line the Israelite priesthood was rooted.

It is a well-known fact among historians that the Greek historian, Herodotus, described the Egyptians as **black-skinned with woolly hair** in the 5th century before the birth of Jesus. In the 1st century BC the Greek historian, Siculus, “attributed the fact that the Ethiopians (a term used by Greeks for all black Africans) have the oldest civilization due to their closeness to the ripening warmth of the sun. It is should be noted also that at his time the Greeks tended to think of the fairer-skinned Nordic peoples as being an inferior race of barbarians.”⁹

Macrinus (164-218 AD), was an African who rose to the position of Roman Emperor. Black people were very common in the Middle East and in all parts of the Mediterranean region. Some of them appear in the literature of the Greeks and Romans. Shakespearean writings bear evidence of this African presence in these parts of the world.¹⁰ In Acts 13 Luke records that the church of Antioch had prophets and teachers among whom were Barnabas, Simon called Niger (Latin for *black*) and Lucius of Cyrene (present-day Libya). Simon of Cyrene (Libya) carried the cross of the son of God.

Geography and History

1. In Genesis 2:10-14 the Bible makes mention of four rivers – Hiddekel (Tigris), Euphrates, Pishon (Pison) and Gihon. The last two are clearly associated with the African continent. Right from the beginning of creation, African territory is mentioned directly in the Scriptures. Pishon and Gihon constitute what is known as the Nile River system. This system includes the *White Nile* and the *Blue Nile*. These rivers meet in Khartoum, the capital city of Sudan.

⁸*The Star*, Johannesburg, October 17, 2003. A more thorough text on the Lemba will appear in edition three of this paper.

⁹*The Original African Heritage Study Bible*, p 1814

¹⁰Joseph E Harris, *Africans and their History*, (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1998) p 34

2. The verses in Genesis 2:11, 12 refer to Pishon (Pison) in Havilah, the land of the Kushites (Ethiopia). This river is what is known as the White Nile. The White Nile is the longest river in the world. The second river, Gihon (Genesis 2:13), is the Blue Nile.
3. During the invasion of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem by Roman armies in 70 A.D. (Matthew 24), many Jews left their home country and journeyed to other places in search of refuge. The tribe of Judah spread south into sub-Saharan Africa. They eventually occupied parts of the west coast of Africa. Here they built the kingdoms of Ghana, Songhai (Songhay), Mali and others.
4. In this West African region, which also includes the Niger River Valley, came the ancestors of the people who live in Southern Africa today. Research done by language scholars and historians indicates that we, black Africans, have a close link with West Africans. Our languages have many similarities with languages spoken in parts of West and Central Africa.¹¹

Until the beginning of the First World War in 1914, the area now known as the Middle East was referred to as East Africa. Saudi Arabia was part of this region. What is known as Palestine was referred to as North Africa. These new names were imposed by European journalists who covered the war events. The tragic consequence is that many of us now regard people who live in these areas as aliens, if not enemies. Saudi Arabia is particularly significant for us in South Africa because it is the original domicile of the people known as the Lemba (VhaLemba).

Some African Names in the Bible

1. Ethiopia – Isaiah 18:1; Jeremiah 13:25; Esther 1:1
2. Memphis (a city in Egypt) – Jeremiah 2:16
3. Go to the Pentecost event in Jeru-Shalom (Acts 1). Study the list of nationalities who witnessed the Pentecost event. Among them were persons from Asia and Africa.
4. Who took the cross of the Saviour to Golgotha? An African
5. Who ordained Paul of Tarsus in Acts chapter thirteen? Simon (Nigger) and Lucia of Cyrene in North Africa.
6. The greatest Catholic theologian, St Augustine of Hippo in northern Africa, wrote the most influential book on Catholic eschatology, *The City of God*. In

¹¹The above facts have been confirmed by a teacher colleague of mine, South African historian, Dr Simon Ntsatsi Kekana, in his research for an MA dissertation in history titled, *“The History of African People in South Africa from Early Times to 1795: A Critical Analysis of 19th Century South African Historiography,”* (Universiteit te Leuven, Belgium, 1978).

that book rests the millennial hopes of Catholicism. The book has been around for 1500 years. That grand German warrior known as Martin Luther, was known as an Augustinian monk.

Summary and Conclusion

The writers of the Bible would not spend so much energy and resources on black/African people if they were of little or no importance to God. The truth is: **Black people are important to God, and we feature significantly in the various histories that are found in the Bible. The noble task that faces us now is to stand tall and act in the spirit of our divine royalty.**

Robert Ingersoll in England was an atheist. Above his headboard was a little note, “**God is nowhere.**” He fell ill one day and deteriorated towards death. One of his friends visited him, and said, “Robert, please look above your head and read.”

Robert looked at the usual line and read, “God is nowhere.” The friend insisted that he look at this line more carefully. Robert again saw nothing new. The friend then said, “Robert, look at this line, **GOD IS NOW HERE!**” Robert was surprised and immediately surrendered his life to God and soon died thereafter.

I want to tell you today, dear Africans, “**Black Man, you are not on your own.**” The grand all-knowing Creator of the Universe, is here, and is your God and Saviour. Walk tall and sit up straight. This is your country. God is and has always been and will ever be - the God of the Africans and other national communities.

BEYOND FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

Towards a Post-baptismal Perspective of Membership Development in South African Adventism

Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi

This short statement is rooted in a developmental theistic creationist model of the origins of life and progress on earth. The paper is also an expedition into a strategic design for comprehensive and long-range Adventist development for African members in South Africa. My central concern is the ravages caused by western ideologies of colonisation inside the church and methodological approaches that have turned Adventism into an inferior and self-conflictual institutional spirituality.

The design I propose here hopes to eventuate a programme of socio-human uplift that will have immediate and long-range positive generational effects. *There is presently no long-range executive master plan for African church development coming from the leadership.* African churches deserve a future beyond thirty-or-so minutes of a sermon delivered in academic behind the pulpit or on the electronic media. Thank God, I stopped listening to undevelopmental sermons several years ago. My father has enough sermons in our files at home in Durban. It makes no sense, even in the society of hooligans, to keep looking at your childhood.

1. The Comic Reason

This plan is born of the primary recognition of the fact that the universe is the product of the mind of an omniscient God, whose primary interest is the progressive fulfilment and progressive growth of humanity through creative thought and multidisciplinary engagement with life.

The biblical Genesis record of creation presents a model for human and natural development centred on the role of humanity as a steward over nonhuman living and inanimate creation. This document is rotted in, and articulates principles and possible routes humanity must follow in developing and sustaining humanity.

2. Point of Departure and Design Model

The Genesis record of creation is the foundation of a comprehensive multidisciplinary programme of human and societal development. The operative view is that the material world was created for the joy and fulfilment of its human and animal creation. Humanity was to be manager, the carer (steward) and sustainer of the nonhuman creation.

This paper roots its arguments, propositions and designs on the universal need of humanity to find fulfilment through

- 2.1 meaningful productive labour and development,
- 2.2 the search for fulfilment in creativity and articulation,
- 2.3 creative engagement with society at micro and macro dimensions, and
- 2.4 designs that will sustain persons and communities for a long time into the future,
- 2.5 the ultimate purpose of preparing humanity for eternity.

A specific motivation behind this programme is the reversal and eradication of the ravages of colonisation in the African community. The design of the plan includes the constructive participation of specific social and organisation communities and institutions. The development of global humanity and local communities cannot occur meaningfully and progressively outside of an overarching worldview that locates human spirituality and national development at the centre of life. This is especially significant in Africa where the primary communities are foundationally rooted in and guided by a theistic paradigm. Atheism and materialist worldviews from the Eurowestern world cannot find firm rootage in this continent because Africans, as Kenyan theologian, Professor John S. Mbiti, said, “Africans are notoriously religiously” in his landmark text, *African Religion and Philosophy* (1969).

The design hopes to eventuate open socio-human uplift that will have immediate and long-range generational effects. There is presently no master plan for national development

coming from the “underground”, the communities that deserve a future better than the rugged present.

3. Central Considerations

Post-colonial South Africa seriously needs critical study and broad-based formulation of a design that will take the following realities into consideration:

- 3.1 The negative impact on Africans of the oppressive social system of Europeans who did to believe in human equality.
- 3.2 The racism in the missionary implantation of Christianity fractured the African family and community.
- 4.3 The colonial education system which worked along religion and economic to give moral justification to structural and social colonisation of Africans.
- 1.4 The role of churches in giving support and validation to the colonial system. This is the reason why the broad Christian Church needs recalibration in South Africa.
- 1.5 The insertion into the national education system of decolonial studies.
- 1.6 The insertion into the national education system of compulsory practical skills for self-sustenance.

2. The Imperative of a Plan for South Africa

South Africa has a complex history of the material deprivation of Africans, whose consequences have also become their own minor paradigms and problems. Sadly, churches have contributed to this damage, and many appear nowhere on the platforms of social redress and development in this land.

This plan therefore aims at addressing humanity in this country from all disciplines associated with the life, development and welfare of humanity. The country has suffered more than enough of social-spiritual, moral and material decay and underdevelopment. This plan purports to be a solution to this tragic circumstance.

The plan is a strategy with several pillars, participants, and decision-makers. While the human territory of focus is youth, the plan will also benefit an older generation. The parts that follow are a systematic strategy to deliver the plan. (To be continued)

The next part of this paper is titled,

FROM BAPTISM TO DEVELOPMENT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TRANS-ORANGE CONFERENCE¹²

Primary Author: Thula M. Nkosi – Editor: Grant Lottering¹³

The Trans-Orange Conference (TOC) is a subsidiary church administrative unit of the Southern Africa Union Conference that forms part of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Current Territory and Statistics

The Trans-Orange Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (TOC) covers the territory of the following South African Provinces: Free State, North-West, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the following towns in the Northern Cape Province: Barkly West, Danielskuil, Delporthoop, Douglas, Griquastad, Hartswater, Jankempdorp, Katu, Kimberley, Kudumane, Kuruman, Pampierstad, Postmansburg, Ritchie, Salt Lake, and Warrenton. *According to recent (2019) statistics, the TOC has 382 churches, 92 companies, and 56,987 members.¹ Its headquarters is located along 17 Louis Road, Orchards, in Johannesburg.*

The TOC has one primary school, named Orlando West Primary, that continues to be an active missionary center of influence to its learners. The Youth Department hosts a conference summer camp at various destinations across South Africa annually. Attendance continued to grow at exponential rates prior to the coronavirus pandemic. “These summer camps help in keeping the youth focused on spiritual activities during the festive season and minimizes the opportunities of temptations by worldly jublations that usually takes place at the end of the year.”² At such camps the young people embark on various sporting and humanitarian activities including hiking, community outreach, and sightseeing. These activities are meant to increase their social awareness and develop their adventure skills and sporting talents.

Students studying at government universities are encouraged to remain connected to church life through a student-body organization called Seventh-day Adventist Student Movement (SDASM). The TOC provides chaplaincy services for these groups and annual rallies and camps that emphasize spirituality.

¹²This paper and the one by Grant Lottering appear in the new General Conference literary project, **ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**.

¹³Grant Lottering works in the Ellen G. White Estate in Helderberg College. He is the SID Co-ordinator for the *Encyclopaedia of Seventh-day Adventists*

The Adventist Community Service Department oversees the work of the conference Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA TOC) that often collaborates with the conference branch of Meals on Wheels (MOWCS TOC) to assist people in need during various disasters. What differentiates the two entities is that ADRA TOC provides groceries and accessories while MOWCS TOC provides cooked meals.³ ADRA TOC has responded to natural disasters caused by fire and extreme weather conditions and promotes food banks where food can be stored for times when crisis strikes. MOWCS TOC provides more than nine million meals annually and works to increase the number of cooked meals provided at an inverse relationship to poverty.⁴ MOWCS TOC also identified agricultural farming projects that promise to be a channel of food production.

Origin of Adventist Work in the Territory of the Conference

The entrance of Black Africans into the Adventist Church in South Africa initially occurred in the Trans-Orange Conference territory and in Lesotho in the late 1890s. The first converts were the families of Richard Moko and David Kalaka. Moko was what was called a Visiting District Teacher (old nomenclature for a school inspector). His home was in the Eastern Cape. Kalaka lived in Basutoland (Lesotho) and accompanied missionaries to translate for them before he became an itinerant preacher himself. When Kalaka died, he left his sons to Murray and Senkopane to establish Emmanuel Mission with White missionaries.

The “discovery” of diamond and later gold in Kimberly and Johannesburg, respectively, in the 1870s facilitated the birth and growth of Adventism in these parts of the country. Thousands of African males from almost all countries in Southern Africa descended on Kimberly seeking work and wealth. Moko later left the Northern Cape and established himself with missionaries, a school in the Eastern Cape, named Maranatha School. The key British missionary was David F. Tarr, who later moved to other parts of South Africa to establish mission work and schools.

Both Tarr and Moko were later instructed by the young South African Union Conference to move to the Eastern Cape to advance mission there. Moko worked until he finally died in 1932 in the Eastern Cape. Tarr later received instruction to move northward into what is now known as Limpopo Province. Here he established a school and mission work in a place he called Shiloh in 1928. The school closed down in 1955 after the *Apartheid* nationalist government declared the area in which Shiloh was located a place designated for “White people.” Two other schools were established in Gilead and Seema in the Limpopo Province, some 300-400 kilometres north of Johannesburg. By this time the church had trained native pastors and teachers to advance the work, even while missionaries held leadership positions in the work.

Many of those who accepted the Adventist message in the Eastern Cape Province and Natal where the message was already spreading migrated to Johannesburg to work in the thriving mining sector. Alexander Adventist Church, organized in 1924, is the oldest church in the West Rand District. West Rand District played a very crucial role for the development of the North Bantu Field. Alexander Adventist Church was established by members from all over Southern

Africa who went to Johannesburg for work.⁵ From there the work naturally spread to the North West Province where Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom were the first congregations. North West Province became the entry point for missions into Bechuanaland (Botswana).

Pastors who were trained at Spionkop went to Lesotho, the Cape Province, Botswana, Namibia, and the provinces comprising the Trans-Orange Conference. Spionkop closed down in 1937 and relocated to Bethel Mission where it was then renamed Bethel Training College in 1938.

Organizational History of the Conference

The very first organizational structure that existed for Black South Africans in the Transvaal region was the Southern Union Mission, which was organized in 1919. When the South African Union Conference was organized in 1902, it administered the work in all the mission fields within the borders of South Africa. When the African Division was organized in 1919, it took over the reins of all the mission fields while the South African Union Conference continued to oversee the work of all the self-supporting conferences in South Africa. The African Division cared for the work of the Black African mission field that was organized into the Southern Union Mission at the same time. These mission fields were Emmanuel and Kolo Missions in Basutoland, Maranatha and Bethel Missions in the Cape Province, and the Zulu Mission and Zululand Field in Natal.⁶

The Rand Mission Field was organized in 1921 for Black Africans in the Transvaal. The Rand Mission Field then became incorporated into the Transvaal Mission Field that was organized in 1922 with J. R. Campbell as the superintendent. At the same time, the Southern Union Mission was absorbed back into the South African Union Conference. In 1924 all mission stations and mission fields were incorporated into the self-supporting conferences in their territories. Thus, the Transvaal Mission Field was absorbed by the Natal-Transvaal Conference.

Three years later, in 1927, the South African Union Conference “suggested that the old system of racially separate mission fields and conferences be brought back.”⁷ Consequently the Transvaal-Delagoa Mission Field was organized in 1927 with J. R. Campbell as the superintendent. This structure was unable to support itself, and the subsequent financial constraints that were worsened by the global depression of the 1930s caused the work in South Africa to be realigned.

The two Black mission fields, namely the Transvaal-Delagoa and the Kaffirland Mission Fields, were merged into the South African Mission Field. This field lasted until 1936 when circumstances improved and the mission field was again split into two mission fields, the North Bantu and South Bantu Mission Fields. The North Bantu Mission Field covered the work of the Black African members in Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Orange Free State, Natal, Portuguese East Africa, Swaziland, Transvaal, and Zululand. The South Bantu Field covered the work of the Black African members in the Province of the Cape of Good Hope.⁸

The North Bantu Mission Field continued operating for several years. As the mission fields grew, church leadership became increasingly aware of the necessity of placing more

responsibility in hands of the Black people. G. S. Stevenson, who served in administrative leadership in South-East Africa and the South Bantu Mission Field, spearheaded calls for organizing the Black mission fields into their own Union Mission. All the while the North Bantu and South Bantu Mission Fields existed for the Black people of South Africa; yet, they were administered by White people. G. S. Stevenson then submitted a proposal to the South African Union Conference and the Southern Africa Division to replace the North Bantu and South Bantu Mission Fields with ten mission fields on the basis of geographic and ethnographic lines.⁹ It was suggested that these mission fields should all have Black presidents instead of White presidents and that they eventually be organized into their own Union Mission so that they may receive equal appropriations. This proposal followed through and in 1961, the North Bantu and South Bantu Fields were reorganized into nine mission fields: Cape Western, Eastern Province, Natal-Zululand, Northern Transvaal, South Sotho, Southern Transvaal, Swaziland-Eastern Transvaal, Transkei, and Tswana Fields. The Northern Transvaal, Southern Transvaal, Tswana Fields, and part of the Swaziland-Eastern Transvaal covered the territory of the present day Trans-Orange Conference.

This turned out to be short lived, and in 1963, the Northern Transvaal, Southern Transvaal, and Tswana Fields merged to form the Transvaal Field. The Transvaal Field in turn became the Oranje-Transvaal Field (also known as the Trans-Oranje Field) when the mission fields were realigned again with the formation of the Southern Union Conference in 1966.

The TOC is the grandchild of the North Bantu Mission Field and the child of the Trans-Oranje Field (TOF). The first president was Percy V. Msimang, who led the church during difficult times. The apartheid government had violently clamped down and incarcerated liberation activists, some of whom were Adventists. A number escaped into nearby countries.

Msimang led the church when laymen from Johannesburg, and Soweto especially, agitated for autonomy from White church leadership. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists' archives has the Memorandum from the laity of that time, as well as the one from the Memorandum Movement of 1984–1986. The TOC has been noted for its most socially revolutionary laity in the Southern Africa Union Conference and the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

The North Bantu Mission Field region comprised the whole of the present territory of the TOC, including Botswana and Swaziland. When Botswana became independent politically in 1966, it was attached to the Zambesi Union with offices in Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. Swaziland became an autonomous territory in September 1968, the month of its independence from Britain. The present territory of the TOC comprises Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, and parts of the Northern Cape and Free State Provinces.

The TOC was organized as a conference in the KwaThema Church in the Gauteng Province in March 1980. The first president was Pastor Z. N. S. Fosi. The Secretary-Treasurer was Pastor Aubrey Nzimande. The office was in the Soweto Tabernacle in Soweto township. Later the

offices relocated to Orange Grove in Johannesburg. The present office was the office of the defunct Southern Union Conference.

The TOC covers the same territory as the Northern Conference of South Africa. By the time work began among the Black people in the Transvaal territory, the Natal-Transvaal Conference (predecessor of the Northern Conference of South Africa) was already organized, but the political climate in South Africa at the time caused the work to be aligned along racial lines. For many years the White constituency and the Black constituency continued to serve different churches in the same area. The General Conference condemned the *Apartheid* regime, which existed in South Africa and convened calls for unity among Seventh-day Adventist Church organizations that were still racially divided.

In 1983 the church in South Africa was separated from the divisions in Africa due to the racial segregation that prevailed at the time. The South African and Southern Union Conferences were placed as attached fields to the General Conference. Shortly thereafter the General Conference initiated appeals to churches in South Africa to become united once more. The merging between the South African and Southern Union Conferences in December 1991 was a milestone for the church in South Africa. Local conferences were left to follow the example set by the union conference.

Multiple discussions took place between the Transvaal Conference and the Trans-Orange Conference, including a joint business session in 2006 that proved to be unfruitful. Presently, both local conferences still operate in the same territory, serving different churches, although they are no longer racially exclusive. Both conferences are receptive to people of all races and nationalities, although the Trans-Orange Conference continues to have a larger Black membership.

A crisis in the years preceding 2013 changed the outlook of the conference drastically. In 2013 the Southern Africa Union Conference (SAU) called a special business session of the TOC to consider a crisis created by the TOC officers and executive committee. This special session took place in Bloemfontein in the auditorium of the South African Union Conference Headquarters. The SAU called this meeting to report how an action taken by the TOC executive committee regarding the Diswilmar Farm caused TOC and the SAU to be liable for damages in a lawsuit that amounted to millions of South African Rands. The SAU convened this meeting to avert the lawsuit by asking the TOC to intervene and give a directive.

This constituent meeting resolved to remove for cause all the incumbent officers and executive committee members. This action prompted the Alberton group to break away from the TOC the following year in 2014. This breakaway group was led by the officers and departmental leaders who were removed from office by the constituency meeting convened by the Southern Africa Union Conference. They claimed many sympathizers from among new believers who have not been part of the church's long history and struggle to maintain unity. The future of the Alberton Church is uncertain. We can only speculate from the past about previous movements of this type

in the history of global Adventism. At present Albertyn churches are active and seem to have no intention to be reconciled to the TOC.

The following are the challenges to the present mission and ministry of the conference:

1. a rapidly growing urban population with a diverse lingual culture;
2. a rising number of persons from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries and beyond;
3. a rising numbers of other Christian denominations and geographic communities for mission in this region;
4. rising levels of moral declension and criminality;
5. urbanization of members and associated sophistication;
6. modernization and technicalisation of church life;
7. severe decline of interest in Adventist education. The TOC has shut down seventeen schools since 1955. The TOC has grown to become a secularistic church, especially its senior youth.
8. rising secularism and what I refer to as a “Mall Model” of the church. Many senior youths no longer locate their allegiance to a specific church. They shop around for programs of interest to them. Membership is very mobile. We face the same challenge addressed by the *Church of Refuge* document of the North American Division. Urbanization mixed with absolute lack of Adventist education in the TOC is wreaking havoc on the spirituality and commitment of the senior youth of the church in this conference. The youth church in Cedarwood Park in Johannesburg is a typical evidence of this emerging phenomenon.
 - **The church in Kelvin-on-Athol, born twenty years ago, is an innovation from post-secondary educated senior youth from Dube Central and Orlando West churches who sensed a need for a church that would speak to their academic literacy and professional qualification. It is the first such church in South Africa.**
9. an inordinate increase in the politicization of church matters, especially around session seasons.

Future Outlook

Continuous efforts are made by the TOC administration to foster unity and reconciliation between the conference and the Albertyn breakaway group. Considerable effort has been put

forth by the TOC to reclaim members, churches, pastors, and institutions from Alberton.¹⁰ The TOC works to reclaim all those who separated from the conference constituency in fulfilment of Christ's prayer that we may all be one (John 17:21).

The TOC prioritizes the spiritual nurture and maturity of its membership that would ensure holistic and balanced faithfulness. The TOC anticipates double membership through comprehensive evangelism by pastors and lay persons by engaging everyone in the Total Member Involvement strategy of the world Seventh-day Adventist Church. The TOC constantly strives toward attaining sustainable financial viability “through faithfulness in stewardship involving comprehensive capacity building—entrepreneurship, personal finance, asset development, and ownership and risk management.”¹¹ Within the scope of the growth trajectory are ensuring proper church governance and adequate human resource management within the conference and improved general stakeholder relations management.

- *A TOC Directory Application is available on Google Play Store. This application provides current and updated contact information of local church clerks, elders, as well as the location of churches. IT personnel are working toward having the application available on Apple Store in the future.*¹²

The Orlando West Primary School has recently been reclaimed from the Alberton group following three years of “ceaseless consultations and a good number of visits to the school to be able to convince the administration and teachers that the TOC cannot have the school administered properly under two administrations.”¹³ Strategic plans are already in place to support the planting of Adventist schools in various districts of the conference on the local church level. To this effect, a site visit was made to a farm site in Magaliesberg with the intention to establish a Mathematics, Sciences, and Engineering Technology (MSET) boarding school in the near future.¹⁴

The TOC owns a farm in Magaliesberg in Gauteng, South Africa. The farm keeps Bonsmaras, which is a breed of cattle and bull cows. The conference hopes to increase this livestock through purchase and natural reproduction. The cattle will be auctioned from time to time in order to invest financial capital into the conference, making the conference less dependent on tithes and offerings for its operation.¹⁵ Agricultural activities on the farm include planting and harvesting mealies and sunflower, which are staple products of South Africa's economy. Future plans for the available grounds on the farm include constructing upmarket chalets for holiday goers, a school, and a conference centre.

List of Presidents

Transvaal Mission Field

J. R. Campbell (1922–1924)

Transvaal-Delagoa Mission Field

J. R. Campbell (1927–1933)

South African Mission Field
J. R. Campbell (1933–1936)

North Bantu Mission Field
L. S. Billes (1936–1939); J. G. Siepman (1939–1947); G. A. Lewis (1947–1949); J. D. Harcombe (1950–1955); I. E. Schultz (1956, 1957); M. M. Webster (1957–1961)

Tswana Field
W. M. Tshefu (1961–1963)

Northern Transvaal Field
S. G. Mkhwanazi (1961–1963)

Southern Transvaal Field
P. V. Msimang (1961–1963)

Transvaal Field
P. V. Msimang (1963–1967)

Oranje-Transvaal Field
W. M. Tshefu (1967–1969)

Trans-Orange Conference

P. M. Mabena (1969–1971); W. M. Sojola (1971–1979); Z. N. S. Fosi (1979–1981); C. K. Moepeng (1981–1983); A. B. Koopedi (1983–1986); P. M. Mawela (1986–1989); S. B. M. Motha (1988–1992); S. N. Mahamba (1992–1995); P. M. Mawela (1995–1998); T. Letseli (1998–2001); T. Kunene (2001–2006); M. B. Molopa (2006, 2007); A. M. Setsiba (2007–2013); J. M. Mongwe (2013–2016); D. P. Shongwe (2016–present)

Sources

1. Anakoka, Mufungulwa Maurice. “Session Education Report.” Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017 – 2019, October 2–6, 2019.
2. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics. *Annual Statistical Report*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2020.
3. Makuwa, P. S. Makuwa. “Executive Secretariat 13th Constituency Meeting Report 2017–2019.” Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017 – 2019, October 2–6, 2019.
4. Maseko, T. “Trans-Orange Conference Adventist Youth Ministries Report 2017–2019.” Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017–2019, October 2–6, 2019.
5. Mbatha, Z. O. “Adventist Community Service Session Report 2017–2019.” Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017–2019, October 2–6, 2019.
6. Nhlapo, Clifford Nhlapo. *Tears of the Black Pulpit*. Wandsbeck, South Africa: Reach Publishers, 2010.

7. Rantsoabe, Mpho. "Report of MOWCS TOC Presented to the Business Session of the Trans Orange Conference." Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017–2019, October 2–6, 2019.
8. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1920 and 1937.
9. Shongwe, D. P. "President's Report." Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017–2019, October 2–6, 2019.
10. *TOC Media SDA*. "TOC Farm Tour." March 25, 2018. Video, 7:59. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaBqdiXhrdY>.

Notes

1. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, *Annual Statistical Report* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2020), 28.
 2. T. Maseko, "Trans-Orange Conference Adventist Youth Ministries Report 2017–2019," Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017–2019, October 2–6, 2019, 80.
 3. Z. O. Mbatha, "Adventist Community Service Session Report 2017–2019," Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017–2019, October 2–6, 2019, 178.
 4. Mpho Rantsoabe, "Report of MOWCS TOC Presented to the Business Session of the Trans Orange Conference," Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017–2019, October 2–6, 2019, 230.
 5. Clifford Nhlapo, *Tears of the Black Pulpit* (Wandsbeck, South Africa: Reach Publishers, 2010), 125.
 6. "Southern Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1920), 205.
 7. Nhlapo, *Tears*, 36.
 8. "North Bantu Mission Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1937), 190.
 9. Nhlapo, *Tears*, 41.
 10. D. P. Shongwe, "President's Report," (Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017 - 2019, October 2–6, 2019), 7.
 11. Shongwe, "President's Report," 8.
 12. P. S. Makuwa, "Executive Secretariat 13th Constituency Meeting Report 2017–2019," Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017–2019, October 2–6, 2019, 25.
 13. Shongwe, "President's Report," 8.
 14. Mufungulwa Maurice Anakoka, "Session Education Report," Johannesburg, South Africa: Trans-Orange Conference Triennial Business Session Report 2017–2019, October 2–6, 2019, 127.
 15. *TOC Media SDA*, "TOC Farm Tour," March 25, 2018,
-