

STUDY PACK

Batch Number One of Seven

Adventist **FOUNDATION** Studies

Authored/Compiled by
Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
Kelvin-on-Athol Seventh-day Adventist Church, Johannesburg
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INTROUCTORY NOTE

This **Study Pack** is an instrument of the educational project of the Kelvin-on-Athol Seventh-day Adventist Church in Johannesburg, South Africa. This pack and others that will follow have been designed, primarily, for the development of the members of this church. The goal is to ultimately venture into On-Line education for this church and others who may be interested in the programme.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme is structured to achieve four goals:

1. to educate the membership of the church who have not had exposure to Adventist institutions of learning;
2. to integrate social, missiological orientation into the lives of participating members
3. to affirm Seventh-day Adventist teachings and social culture;
4. to prepare participants for effective leadership in the church and in the world through the provision of conceptual and practical skills relevant to the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

Adventist Foundational Studies

This is a modular set of faith and socio-theological and organisational themes designed for

1. youth in secondary and tertiary institutions;
2. adult members and professionals;
3. other interested persons

2. Part 3: Staff Development

This programme is targeted at the development of the personnel associated with programme. The following are studies ion this cohort:

1. Adventist Philosophy of Education – four units
2. Organisation and Practice of Adventist education – two units
3. Integration of Faith and Learning – two units
4. Wellness Education and Management – four units
5. Strategic Planning and Change Management – four units
6. Research Studies – three units
7. Social Ethics

METHODOLOGY

The implementation modes include:

1. Development of study materials that will further the goals of the Project
2. Orientation of Tutors in the Adventist Philosophy and Practice of Education
3. Education of youth and adults through a curriculum inclusive of Adventists teachings, history, social ethics, organisational culture, lifestyle themes and mission
4. Competency Education for training in occupational skills.
5. Key Performance Activities:
 - 5.1 Instruction
 - 5.2 Leadership
 - 5.3 Mentorship

Module 1

UNDERSTANDING ADVENTISM

Electronic Source - Edited by Thula Nkosi (2007, Revised 2021)

The **Seventh-day Adventist** (abbreviated "**Adventist**") **Church** is a Protestant Christian denomination which is distinguished by its observance of Saturday, the "seventh day" of the week, as the Sabbath. The denomination grew out of the Millerite movement in the United States during the middle part of the 19th century and was formally established in 1863. One of the church's earliest members was Ellen Gould. White, (1827-1915), whose extensive writings are held in high regard by the church.

Although some critics consider the church to be a sectarian movement, its theology corresponds to key evangelical teachings such as the Trinity and the infallibility of Scripture. Distinctive teachings include the unconscious state of the dead and the doctrine of an investigative judgment. The church is also known for its emphasis on diet and health, for its promotion of religious liberty, and for its culturally conservative principles.

The world church is governed by a General Conference, with smaller regions administered by divisions, union conferences and local conferences. It currently has a worldwide membership of over 14 million people, has a missionary presence in over 200 countries and is ethnically and culturally diverse. The church operates

numerous schools, hospitals and publishing houses worldwide, as well as a prominent humanitarian aid organization known as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency

Origins and early history

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the largest of several "Adventist" groups which arose from the Millerite movement of the 1840s. The Millerite movement was part of the wave of revivals in the United States known as the Second Great Awakening and originated with William Miller, a Baptist preacher from Low Hampton, New York. Miller predicted on the basis of Daniel 8:14 and the "day-year principle" that Jesus Christ would return to Earth on October 22, 1844. When this failed to occur, most of his followers disbanded and returned to their original churches.

Following this "Great Disappointment" (as it came to be known), a small number of Millerites came to believe that Miller's calculations were correct, but that his interpretation of Daniel 8:14 was flawed. Beginning with a vision reported by Hiram Edson on October 23, these Adventists arrived at the conviction that Daniel 8:14 foretold Christ's entrance into the "Most Holy Place" of the heavenly sanctuary rather than his second coming. Over the next decade this understanding developed into the doctrine of the investigative judgment: an eschatological process commencing in 1844 in which Christians will be judged to verify their eligibility for salvation. The Adventists continued to believe that Christ's second coming would be imminent, although they refrained from setting further dates for the event.

As the early Adventist movement consolidated, the question of the biblical day of rest and worship was raised. The foremost proponent of Sabbath-keeping among early Adventists was retired sea captain Joseph Bates. Bates was introduced to the Sabbath doctrine by a tract written by a Millerite preacher named Thomas M. Preble.

who in turn had been influenced by Rachel Oakes Preston, a young Seventh Day Baptist. This message was gradually accepted and formed the topic of the first edition of the church publication, The Present Truth (now the Adventist Review), which first appeared in July 1849. In recent years the General Conference launched Adventist World which features theology, mission, education, social projects and other matters of interest to Adventists.

Organization and recognition

For about twenty years, the Adventist movement consisted of a loosely knit group of people who adhered to the Sabbath, the "heavenly sanctuary" interpretation of Daniel 8:14, conditional immortality and the expectation of Christ's premillennial return. Among its most prominent figures were James White, Ellen G. White and Joseph Bates. Ellen White came to occupy a particularly central role; her many visions and strong leadership convinced her fellow Adventists that she possessed the gift of prophecy.

After intense discussions a formally organized church called the Seventh-day Adventist Church was established in Battle Creek, Michigan, on May 23, 1863, with a membership of 3,500.^[2] Through the evangelistic efforts of its ministers and laity and the guidance of Ellen G. White, the church quickly grew and established a presence beyond North America during the late 1800s. In 1903, the denominational headquarters were moved from Battle Creek to temporary quarters in Washington, D.C., and soon thereafter established in nearby Takoma Park, Maryland. (In 1989, the headquarters was moved again, this time to Silver Spring, Maryland.)

For much of the 1800s the Adventist church was dominated by Arianism. This, along with the movement's other unique theological views, led most Christian denominations to regard it as a cult. However, the Adventist church adopted the

Trinity early in the 20th century and began to dialogue with other Protestant groups towards the middle of the century, eventually gaining recognition as an "orthodox" Christian denomination.

Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs

The official teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination are expressed in the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. This statement of beliefs was originally adopted by the General Conference in 1980, with an additional belief (number 11) added in 2005. Acceptance of the church's doctrines and baptismal vows is a prerequisite for membership.

Adventist doctrine resembles trinitarian Protestant theology, with premillennial and Arminian emphases. Adventists uphold key evangelical teachings such as the infallibility of Scripture, the substitutionary atonement, the resurrection of the dead and justification by faith alone. In common with certain other Christian churches, they believe in baptism by immersion and creation in six days.

In addition, there is a generally recognized set of "distinctive" doctrines which distinguish Adventism from the rest of the Christian world, although not all of these teachings are wholly unique to Adventism. Only ten are mentioned below.

1. **Law** (fundamental belief 19) - the Law of God is "embodied in the Ten Commandments", which continue to be binding upon Christians.
2. **Sabbath** (fundamental belief 20) - the Sabbath should be observed on the seventh day of the week, i.e. from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.
3. **Second Coming and End times** (fundamental beliefs 25-28) - Jesus Christ will return visibly to earth after a "time of trouble", during which the Sabbath will become a worldwide test. The second coming will be followed by a millennial

reign of the saints in heaven. Adventist eschatology is based on the historicist method of prophetic interpretation.

4. **Wholistic human nature** (fundamental beliefs 7, 26) - Humans are an indivisible unity of body, mind and spirit. They do not possess an immortal soul, and death is an unconscious sleep (commonly known as "soul sleep").
5. **Conditional immortality** (fundamental belief 27) - The wicked will not suffer eternal torment in hell, but instead will be permanently destroyed.
6. **Great Controversy** (fundamental belief 8) - Humanity is involved in a "great controversy" between Jesus Christ and Satan. This is an elaboration on the common Christian theory that evil began in heaven when an angelic being (Lucifer) rebelled against the Law of God.
7. **Heavenly sanctuary** (fundamental belief 24) - At his ascension, Jesus Christ commenced an atoning ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. In 1844, he began to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary in fulfillment of the Day of Atonement.
8. **Investigative Judgment** (fundamental belief 24) - A judgment of professed Christians began in 1844, in which the books of record are examined for all the universe to see. The investigative judgment will affirm who is worthy of salvation, and vindicate God as just in His dealings with mankind.
9. **Remnant** (fundamental belief 13) - There will be an end-time remnant who keep the commandments of God and have "the testimony of Jesus" (Revelation 12:17). This remnant proclaims the "three angels' messages" of Revelation 14:6-12 to the world.
10. **Spirit of Prophecy** (fundamental belief 18) - The ministry of Ellen G. White is commonly referred to as the "Spirit of Prophecy" and her writings are considered "a continuing and authoritative source of truth", though ultimately subject to the Bible.

Theological spectrum

As with any religious movement, a theological spectrum exists within Adventism comparable to the fundamentalist-moderate-liberal spectrum in the wider Christian church and in other religions. A variety of groups, movements or subcultures within the church present differing views on beliefs and lifestyle.

The conservative end of the theological spectrum is represented by "Historic Adventists", who are characterized by their opposition to theological trends within the denomination beginning in the 1950s. They tend to view modern Adventist theology as a compromise with evangelicalism, and seek to defend older teachings such as the fallen nature of Jesus Christ, an incomplete atonement, and character perfectionism. Historic Adventism is represented mainly at the "grassroots" level of the church and is often promoted through independent ministries, but has weaker support among Adventist scholarship.

The most "liberal" elements in the church are typically known as "Progressive Adventists" (it should be noted that progressive Adventists generally do not identify with liberal Christianity). They tend to hold a "modernized" perspective on such controversial issues as the inspiration of Ellen White, the doctrine of the "remnant" and the investigative judgment. The progressive movement is strongest amongst the scholarship of the denomination, where it finds expression in bodies such as the Association of Adventist Forums and in journals such as Spectrum and Adventist Today.

Theological organizations

The Biblical Research Institute is the official theological research center of the church. The church has two professional organizations for Adventist theologians who are affiliated with the denomination. The Adventist Society for Religious Studies (ASRS) was formed to foster community among Adventist theologians who attend the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) and the American Academy of Religion. In 2006 ASRS voted to continue their meetings in the future in conjunction with SBL. During the 1980s the Adventist Theological Society was formed by Jack Blanco to provide a forum for more conservative theologians to meet and is held in conjunction with the Evangelical Theological Society.

Sabbath Activities

In order to keep the Sabbath holy, Seventh-day Adventists abstain from secular work and other non-essential business on Saturday. They will also usually refrain from purely secular forms of recreation, such as competitive sport and watching non-religious programmes on television. Nature walks, family-oriented activities and charitable work however are generally accepted.

Much of Friday might be spent in preparation for the Sabbath—for example, preparing meals and tidying homes. Some Adventists gather for Friday evening worship to welcome in the Sabbath, a practice often known as Vespers.

Saturday afternoon activities vary widely depending on the cultural, ethnic and social background. In some churches, members and visitors will participate in a fellowship (or "potluck") lunch.

Worship service

The major weekly worship service occurs on Saturday, typically commencing with Sabbath School which is a structured time of small-group study at church. Most

Adventists make use of an officially produced "Sabbath School Lesson", which deals with a particular biblical text or doctrine every quarter. Special meetings are provided for children and youth in different age groups during this time (analogous to Sunday school in other churches).

After a brief break, the community joins together again for a church service that follows a typical evangelical format, with a sermon as a central feature. Corporate singing, Scripture readings, prayers and a money collection (or offering) are other standard features. The instruments and forms of worship music vary greatly throughout the worldwide church. Many youth-focused churches in the Western world have a contemporary Christian music style, whereas other churches enjoy more traditional hymns including those found in the *Adventist Hymnal*.

Holy Communion

Adventists usually practice communion four times a year. The communion is an open service that is available to members and Christian non-members. It commences with a feet washing ceremony, known as the "Ordinance of Humility", based on the Gospel account of John 13. The Ordinance of Humility is meant to symbolize Christ's washing of his disciples' feet at the Last Supper and remind participants of the need to humbly serve one another. Participants segregate by gender to separate rooms to conduct this ritual, although some congregations allow married couples to perform the ordinance on each other. After its completion, participants return to the main sanctuary for consumption of the Lord's Supper, which consists of unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice.

Health and diet

Since the 1860s when the church began, wholeness and health have been an emphasis of the Adventist church. Adventists present a health message that

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recommends vegetarianism and expects abstinence from pork, shellfish, and other foods proscribed as "unclean" in Leviticus 11. The church discourages its members from the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs. In addition, some Adventists avoid coffee and other beverages containing caffeine.

The pioneers of the Adventist church had much to do with the common acceptance of breakfast cereals into the Western diet. John Harvey Kellogg was one of the early founders of the Adventist health work. His development of breakfast cereals as a health food led to the founding of Kellogg's by his brother William K. Kellogg. In Australia, the church-owned Sanitarium Health Food Company is one of Australia's leading manufacturers of health and vegetarian-related products.

Research funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health has shown that the average Adventist in California lives four to ten years longer than the average Californian. The research, as cited by the cover story of the November 2005 issue of National Geographic magazine, asserts that Adventists live longer due to not smoking or drinking, and their healthy, low-fat vegetarian diet rich in nuts and beans. The cohesiveness of Adventists' social networks has also been put forward as an explanation of their extended lifespan.

Ethics and sexuality

The official Adventist position on abortion is that "abortions for reasons of birth control, gender selection, or convenience are not condoned by the Church." At times, however, women may face exceptional circumstances that present serious moral or medical dilemmas, such as significant threats to the pregnant woman's life or health, severe congenital defects in the fetus, and pregnancy resulting from rape or incest, in these cases individuals are counseled to make their own decisions.

According to official statements from the General Conference, heterosexual marriages are the only biblically ordained grounds for sexual intimacy. Adventists do not perform same-sex marriages and gay men cannot be ordained. An extramarital affair is one of the sanctioned grounds for a divorce, although reconciliation is encouraged whenever possible. Following biblical principles, Adventists believe in and encourage chastity for both men and women before marriage. The Adventist church has released official statements in relation to other ethical issues such as euthanasia, birth control and human cloning.

Dress and entertainment

In Western countries, Adventists have traditionally held socially conservative attitudes regarding dress and entertainment. These attitudes are reflected in one of the church's fundamental beliefs:

"For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit."

Accordingly, many Western Adventists are opposed to practices such as body piercing and tattoos. More conservative Adventists refrain from the wearing of jewelry altogether, including such items as earrings and wedding bands. Traditionally Adventists dress formally when attending church.

Conservative Adventists also avoid certain recreational activities which are considered to be a negative spiritual influence, including dancing, rock music and secular theatre. However, these sentiments are far less common among the more

recent generations of Adventists. The Adventist church officially opposes the practice of gambling.

“Though it seems unbelievable to some, I’m thankful that when I grew up in the church I was taught not to go to the movie theater, dance, listen to popular music, read novels, wear jewelry, play cards, bowl, play pool, or even be fascinated by professional sports.”

James R. Nix, Growing Up Adventist: No apologies needed

Structure and polity

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is governed by a form of democratic representation which resembles the Presbyterian system of church organization. Four levels of organization exist within the world church.

1. The local church is the foundation level of organizational structure and is the public face of the denomination. Every baptised Adventist is a member of a local church and has voting powers within that church.
2. Directly above the local church is the "local conference". The local conference is an organization of churches within a state, province or territory (or part thereof) which appoints ministers, owns church land and organises the distribution of tithes and payments to ministers.
3. Above the local conference is the "union conference" which embodies a number of local conferences within a larger territory.
4. The highest level of governance within the church structure is the General Conference which consists of 13 "Divisions", each assigned to various geographic locations. The General Conference is the church authority and has the final say in matters of conjecture and administrative issues. The General Conference is headed by the office of the President. The General Conference head office is in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA.

Each organization is governed by a general "session" which occurs at certain intervals. This is usually when administrative decisions are made. The president of the General Conference, for instance, is elected at the General Conference Session every five years. Delegates to a session are appointed by organizations at a lower level. For example, each local church appoints delegates to a conference session.

Tithes collected from church members are not used directly by the local churches, but are passed upwards to the local conferences which then distribute the finances towards various ministry needs. Within a geographic region, ministers receive roughly equal pay irrespective of the size of their church.

The church manual gives provisions for each level of government to create educational, healthcare, publishing, and other institutions that are seen within the call of the Great Commission.

Church officers and clergy

A number of lay offices exist within the local church, including the ordained positions of elder and deacon. Elders and deacons are appointed by the vote of a local church business meeting or elected committees. Elders serve a mainly administrative and pastoral role, but must also be capable of providing religious leadership (particularly in the absence of an ordained minister). The role of deacons is to assist in the smooth functioning of a local church and to maintain church property.

The ordained clergy of the Adventist church are known as ministers or pastors. Ministers are neither elected nor employed by the local churches, but instead are appointed by the local conferences, which assign them responsibility over a single church or group of churches.

Membership

The primary prerequisite for membership in the Adventist church is baptism by immersion. This, according to the church manual, should only occur after the candidate has undergone proper instruction on what the church believes.

Some Major Adventist Church Organisations

1. The Biblical Research Institute is the theological research center of the church.
2. The Ellen G. White Estate was established in 1915 at the death of Ellen White, as specified in her legal will. Its purpose is to act as custodian of her writings, and as of 2006 has 15 board members. The Ellen G. White Estate also hosts the official Ellen White website whiteestate.org.
3. The Geoscience Research Institute, based at Loma Linda University, was founded in 1958 to investigate the scientific evidence concerning origins.

Adventist Evangelism

Started in the late 1800s, Adventist mission work today reaches people in over 200 countries. Adventist mission workers preach the gospel, promote health through hospitals and clinics, run development projects to improve living standards, and provide relief in times of calamity.

Missionary outreach of the Seventh-day Adventist church is aimed at both non-Christians and Christians from other denominations. Adventists believe that Christ has called His followers in the Great Commission to reach the whole world. Adventists are cautious, however, to ensure that evangelism does not impede on the

basic rights of the individual. Religious liberty is a stance that the Adventist church supports and promotes.

Education

The Adventist church runs one of the largest Protestant educational systems in the world. It operates more than 7,000 schools, colleges and universities, with a total enrollment of more than 1,300,000 students. The Adventist educational program is comprehensive, encompassing "mental, physical, social, and spiritual health" with "intellectual growth and service to humanity" its goal.

Health

Adventists run a large number of hospitals and health-related institutions. Their predominant school of medicine and hospital in North America is Loma Linda University and its attached Medical Center. Throughout the world, the church runs a wide network of hospitals, clinics, and sanitariums. These play a role in the church's health message and worldwide missions outreach.

Humanitarian aid and the environment

For over 50 years the church has been active in humanitarian aid through the work of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). ADRA works as a non-sectarian relief agency in 125 countries and areas of the world. ADRA has been granted General Consultative Status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Worldwide ADRA employs over 4,000 people to help both provide relief in crises and development in situations of poverty.

The church is committed to the protection and care of the environment as well as taking action to avoid the dangers of climate change:

- "Seventh-day Adventism advocates a simple, wholesome lifestyle, where people do not step on the treadmill of unbridled over-consumption, accumulation of goods, and production of waste. A reformation of lifestyle is called for, based on respect for nature, restraint in the use of the world's resources, reevaluation of one's needs, and reaffirmation of the dignity of created life."

Religious liberty

The Adventist church has been active for over 100 years advocating for freedom of religion for all peoples, regardless of faith. In 1893 its leaders founded the International Religious Liberty Association, which is universal and non-sectarian. The *Seventh-day Adventist Church State Council* serves to protect religious groups from legislation that may affect their religious practices. This is primarily achieved through advocacy. Recently the organization has been fighting to pass legislation that will protect Adventist employees who wish to keep their Sabbath.

Media

Adventists have long been proponents of media-based ministries. Traditional Adventist evangelistic efforts consisted of street missions and the distribution of tracts such as *The Present Truth*, which was published by James White as early as 1849. Until J. N. Andrews was sent to Switzerland in 1874, Adventist global efforts consisted entirely of the posting of tracts such as White's to various locations.

In the last century, these media based efforts have also made use of emerging media such as radio and television. The first of these was H. M. S. Richards' radio show, "Voice of Prophecy", which was initially broadcast in Los Angeles in 1929. Since then Adventists have been on the forefront of media evangelism, and one program, "It Is Written", was the first religious program to air on colour television and was the first major Christian ministry to utilize satellite uplink technology. Today "The Hope"

Channel", the official television network of the church, operates six international channels broadcasting 24 hours a day on both cable and satellite networks.

Recently, a number of satellite broadcasted live evangelistic events have been undertaken by evangelists such as Doug Batchelor, Mark Finley and Dwight Nelson, addressing audiences in up to 40 languages simultaneously.

Additionally, there exists a range of privately owned media entities representing Adventist beliefs. These include the 3ABN and SafeTV stations. Amazing Facts and The Quiet Hour are two other radio and television programs.

Publishing Houses

The Adventist church owns and operates many publishing companies around the world. Two of the largest are the Pacific Press and Review and Herald publishing associations located in the United States.

The official church magazine is the Adventist Review, which has a North American focus. It has a sister magazine Adventist World which has an international perspective. Another major magazine published by the church is the bimonthly Liberty magazine, which addresses issues of religious freedom.

Ecumenical activity

The Adventist church generally opposes the ecumenical movement, although it supports some of the goals of ecumenism. The General Conference has released an official statement concerning the Adventist position with respect to the ecumenical movement, which contains the following paragraph:

- "Should Adventists cooperate ecumenically? Adventists should cooperate insofar as the authentic gospel is proclaimed and crying human needs are

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being met. The Seventh-day Adventist Church wants no entangling memberships and refuses any compromising relationships that might tend to water down her distinct witness. However, Adventists wish to be "conscientious cooperators." The ecumenical movement as an agency of cooperation has acceptable aspects; as an agency for organic unity of churches, it is much more suspect." While not being a member church of the World Council of Churches, the Adventist church has participated in its assemblies in an observer capacity.

Criticism

The Adventist church has received criticism along several lines, including its allegedly heterodox doctrines, in relation to Ellen G. White and her status within the church, and in relation to alleged exclusivist attitudes and behaviour. Many high profile critics of the church are former Adventists, such as D. M. Canright, Walter Rea and Dale Ratzlaff.

Several distinctive Adventist doctrines have been identified as heterodox by critics. Teachings which have come under repeated scrutiny are the annihilationist view of hell, the investigative judgment (and related view of the atonement), and certain eschatological views. Adventists have often been accused of legalism, because of their emphasis on law-keeping and strict Sabbath-observance.¹

While some Christians are inclined to classify Adventism as a sectarian group on the basis of its atypical doctrines, others (such as Walter Martin and Donald Barnhouse) have considered it a truly Christian church. Notably, Billy Graham invited Adventists to be part of his crusades after Eternity, a conservative Christian magazine edited by Barnhouse, asserted that Adventists are Christians in 1956. Martin's *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventists* (1960) marked a turning point in the way Adventism was viewed.

"...it is perfectly possible to be a Seventh-day Adventist and be a true follower of Jesus Christ despite heterodox concepts..." – Walter Martin, Kingdom of the Cults

Ellen G. White and her status

Ellen G. White's status as a modern day prophet has often been criticised. It is argued that the authority attached to her writings by the church contradicts the Protestant sola scriptura principle. In response, Adventists have asserted that the concept of a contemporary prophet is not prohibited by Scripture, and that Scripture remains the ultimate authority to which White's writings are also subject. Walter T. Rea and other critics have accused White of plagiarism. After a ten year study of White's book Desire of Ages, Adventist scholar Fred Veltman found that for the chapters he studied, there was content which derived from other sources without citation. The nature of the literary dependence must however be taken in the context of what was accepted at the time. It has also been argued that the sources she borrowed from were known to her readers, eliminating the likelihood of an intention to deceive.

Exclusivism

Finally, it is alleged that certain Adventist beliefs and practices are exclusivist in nature. Specifically, concern has been raised about the Adventist claim to be the "remnant church", and the traditional characterization of other Christian churches (Roman Catholicism in particular) as "Antichrist" and "Babylon". These apparently sectarian attitudes are said to legitimize the proselytising of Christians from other denominations. In response to such criticisms, Adventist theologians have stated that the doctrine of the remnant does not preclude the existence of genuine Christians in other denominations.

- *"We fully recognize the heartening fact that a host of true followers of Christ are scattered all through the various churches of Christendom, including the Roman Catholic communion. These God clearly recognizes as His own. Such do not form a part of the "Babylon" portrayed in the Apocalypse." – Questions on Doctrine, p. 197.*

Independent ministries and Offshoots

In addition to the ministries and institutions which are formally administered by the denomination, numerous para-church organizations and independent ministries exist. These include various health centers and hospitals, publishing and media ministries, and aid organizations.

A number of independent ministries have been established by groups within the Adventist church who hold a theologically distinct position or wish to promote a specific message. These include such organizations as Hope International and Good News Unlimited. Certain of these ministries solicit funding from members and have a strained relationship with the official church, which has expressed concerns that such ministries may threaten Adventist unity. Some groups such as Amazing Facts have been criticized for disseminating anti-Catholic material. In response, the church has acknowledged that some Adventists "have manifested prejudice and even bigotry" against Catholics, while insisting that such behavior is not condoned.

Throughout the history of the denomination, there have been a number of groups who have left the church and formed their own movements. These are not affiliated with the Adventist church in any way. They operate under their own system of beliefs and are considered to be entirely separate from the church.

A well known but distant offshoot is the Branch Davidians, themselves a schism within the larger Davidian movement. The Davidians formed in 1929, after Victor Houteff's book "The Shepherd's Rod" was rejected as being heretical. A succession

dispute after Houteff's death in 1955 led to the formation of the Branches. Later, another ex-Adventist David Koresh (formerly Vernon Howell) led the Branch Davidians until he died in the conflagration in 1993 at the group's headquarters near Waco, Texas.

Following World War I, a group known as the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement was formed as a result of the actions of certain European church leaders during the war, who decided that it was acceptable for Adventists to take part in war. When attempts at reconciliation failed after the war, the group became organized as a separate church at a conference from July 14-20, 1925. The movement officially incorporated in 1949.

The most recent large-scale schism within Adventism was the Glacier View doctrinal crisis of 1980. This crisis centered around the 900-page research paper by Dr. Desmond Ford entitled *Daniel 8:14, the Investigative Judgment, and the Kingdom of God*. The paper questioned the church's position on the investigative judgment. The meetings at Glacier View Ranch near Estes Park, Colorado, rejected Ford's proposals. The schism caused by this rejection resulted in Ford being removed from teaching and having his ministerial credentials revoked. Many Adventists also left the church as a result. In the years since, Ford has worked through the independent ministry Good News Unlimited.

Since the 1970s, debate concerning the inspiration of Ellen White has been particularly heated. A number of Adventists such as Walter Rea and Dale Ratzlaff left the church and have become prominent critics of the church's teachings and particularly of Ellen White. In parallel with these events, many Adventist scholars have adopted more moderate views of her inspiration.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals who are or have been practicing Adventists, have formed a social network that is not officially associated with the church called SDA Kinship International, formed in 1976.

Module 3

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi

The term Bible comes from the Greek word, *biblia*, meaning a book or a written record. Christians and other people treat the Bible as a sacred (holy) book. But there is a difference in the understanding of the Bible between Jews and Christians. The Jewish Bible has the Hebrew Scriptures. These are 39 books originally written in Hebrew and a few portions written in a language called Aramaic. Aramaic is a language that was used by some Jews. Moses, Daniel and Jesus used Aramaic, to quote three examples.

Christians accept both the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God. The Old Testament (OT) has 39 books while the New Testament (NT) has 27 books. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew. The New Testament was originally written in the Greek language. Catholics, however, have a set of books called the *Apocrypha*, or *Deuteronomicals*. They regard these books as part of the inspired writings or the canon.

The Bible of Judaism has three parts:

1. The *Torah* or Law (Books of Moses)
2. *Nebilim* (Prophets) – Earlier prophets and Latter prophets
3. *Ketubim* (Writings) – Psalms, wisdom books and others

The Bible of Protestant Christians has been organised according to the kind of information found in its sixty-six books. These books are usually grouped into several subjects. Some of which are listed below.

1. History (e.g. Genesis, Exodus, Acts)
2. Poetry (e.g. Psalms, Song of Solomon)
3. Wisdom Literature (e.g. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)
4. Prophecy (e.g. Daniel, Revelation)
5. Epistles or Letters (Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians)
6. Theology - Truths about God, Humanity, Sin and Salvation (Romans, Hebrews)
7. The Gospels – the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ (Matthew to John)

HOW THE BIBLE IS UNDERSTOOD

For thousands of years the Bible has been accepted as a collection of records of God's instruction, warnings and promises to humanity. The Bible also tells of how God has practically 'entered' into human affairs to correct or direct some events, people or nations. God did this through

1. Dreams, Visions
2. Prophets, Priests, Kings, Leaders known as Patriarchs (e.g. Noah, Abraham, David)
3. Nature or natural events
4. Religious and political events
5. Ordinary and extraordinary persons – men and women.

One very special way in which God became part of human affairs was the coming (advent) of Jesus Christ into our world as a human being about the year 3 BC in Bethlehem of Judea. We call this the Incarnation (the Word became flesh, John 1:1-14).

Inspiration

The Bible teaches us that certain men were specially chosen by God, instructed and given authority and power – through the Holy Spirit – to write the Bible. Each person wrote as the Spirit of God led or drove him. Christians first took the matter of inspiration seriously in the 19th century – that is, the period between 1800 and 1900. During those years some people (students of the Bible, scientists and others) began to question the writings, content, inspiration and authority of the Bible. This practice was called **biblical criticism**.

What is Inspiration? This is the general understanding that God is the originator of the message contained in the Bible and that the Spirit of God guided the prophets and others to write as they did. There is no total agreement among Christians about what inspiration really is. Some Christians claim (1) Direct, (2) Textual (3) Verbal or Dictational inspiration.

Seventh-day Adventists believe in personal inspiration. They believe that God did not treat Bible writers as thoughtless sound machines that had to listen to Him and write ‘things’ as they were told. Instead, God impressed upon their minds truths that He wished humanity to know through his Spirit. The Bible writers themselves do state that God spoke through them. They were not puppets or robots. Robert Pierson, a former President of the General Conference, wrote,

More than 3,000 times in the Old Testament, writers of the Word declared: “Thus saith the lord” or “the Lord said,” or they claimed that “the word of the Lord came,” or they used similar terminology.¹

¹Robert Pierson, *We Still Believe* (Washington DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1975), p 22

This statement simply means that while the message of the Bible is the expression of the mind of God, His mind and will are not imprisoned in the vocabulary of human language. The will of God is greater than the words of earthly men and women. In the preparation of the Bible God allowed each writer to use the language of his upbringing and one that could be understood by his first readers or audience.

The Bible does not make any claims to be a book of science, history, art, public administration or political science, etc. However, when you read the Bible you discover all these subjects and many more. The Bible speaks to the whole of the human condition, touching on education, health, family life, youth, social welfare, evangelism, history, biography, business practice, management, etc. Its information cuts across all areas of earthly life and influences people of all racial origin and cultural traditions. It is God's instrument for the salvation of sinful humanity.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21

3.0 ORGANISATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

3.1 The Pentateuch (books of the Law)

- ✓ Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

3.2 History

- ✓ Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st Samuel, 2nd Samuel, 1st Kings, 2nd Kings, 1st Chronicles, 2nd Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

1.3 Poetry Books

- ✓ Job,² Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

²The book of Job was the first book of the Bible. The writer was Moses.

1.4 Books of Prophecy

- ✓ Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

4.0 ORGANISATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Gospels

- 2. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

3. History

- ✓ Acts of the Apostles

4. Epistles (Letters)

- ✓ Romans, 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 2nd Thessalonians, 1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews (This book is also a book of theology), James, 1st Peter, 2nd Peter, 1st John, 2nd John, 3rd John, Jude

5. Prophecy

- ✓ Revelation

6.0 THE CANON

The word **canon** means a rule or a law. The processes of establishing the divine inspiration and authority of a biblical text or book are called **canonisation**. The condition of such inspiration and authority is known as **canonicity**. Christians regard the Bible as a collection (compilation) of canonical writings. This means that the Bible is a rule of faith a practice, and an indicator of how people are saved from the power and presence of evil in their lives.

- 6.1 The Jewish Scriptures are the foundation of the canonical tradition. The notion of the sacredness of the Bible began around 621 BC (Before Christ) during the kingship of Josiah of Judah. When the Jerusalem temple was

being repaired, the High Priest, Hilkiah, found the book of the law.³ The scroll that was discovered had a connection with the book of Deuteronomy (one of the books written by Moses). This text was given a lot of respect as sacred writing during the time of Ezra, the priest and scribe around the end of the 5th century (Nehemiah 6).

- 6.2 About 150 years before the birth of Christ, a need arose for the translation of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) into Greek. The reason for this was that many Jews who had gone into captivity or exile no longer knew Hebrew language. Many did not live in Palestine.
- 6.3 When Jesus was born there were already two Old Testaments – one in Hebrew and the other in Greek. The Greek Old Testament was called the ***Septuagint***. This translation is called the Septuagint (“seventy”) because of the legend that 72 scholars translated the Torah in the 3rd century BC.
- 6.4 In the Level 2 Manual much mention will be made of the work of a group of Jewish scholar-copyists known as the **Masorites**. The Masorites faithfully copied and reproduced the Bible. The Masorites worked until the time known as the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages are the years between 1000 and 1600. These men ensured that the Bible had correct punctuation, correct vowel points and other notes. The original Hebrew was written in consonants only. The present Hebrew Bible is a reproduction of a Masoretic text dated 1088 AD.

³1 Kings Chapter 22

Module 4

INTRODUCTION TO ADVENTIST CHURCH ORGANISATION

Unit 1 – LEADERSHIP

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was given its name in September 1860. The legal organization of the church occurred in 1863 in Battle Creek, Michigan, in the United States of America. Ordained elders lead our church. Some of these elders are called local church elders, and others are known as pastors. Normally, pastors are persons who have ‘sensed’ a special call from God to commit their lives to the care of the church and ministry of the word to society.

Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses

A local elder is the most senior leader of a specific congregation below a pastor. The pastor is the elder of elders. He leads several congregations. Pastors and Elders are overseers. They have persons (men and women) who work under their guidance. These persons are called Departmental Leaders or Co-ordinators. Local elders and Departmental leaders are elected to work for 12 months. At the end of 12 months, new elders and leaders are elected. Sometimes a church can elect the same persons again.

Elders work with a special group of functionaries called Deacons or Deaconesses. Deacons\Deaconesses assist in promoting order, discipline and spiritual growth in the church. They see to it that worship services and other programmes of the church are run properly. Deacons\Deaconesses do their work under guidance of the elders and the pastor or pastors. The deacons (males) are also responsible for the physical

maintenance of the church building. They share this duty with the Communications Secretary who is the church's public relations officer.

Deacons and Deaconesses are not spies or church police that go around looking for 'dirty' or sinful stories among church members. Do not treat them in this fashion. These men and women should be treated with respect and dignity. Their work is very important for the growth of the church and for the salvation of souls.

Membership

Membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a very important matter. In our church, a person becomes a member after baptism or when a local congregation votes that person into its fellowship. If you have been an Es-Dee-Ay and you have lost your membership because of moving from one place to another, or for some other reason, the local church should not vote you into membership until your 'story' has been investigated by the Conference Office.

Do not believe everybody who comes into your church and tell you that he\she is a member of the SDA Church in some other place. Some of these persons are crooks whose names have been moved from the Church Record Book.

If you happen to do some wrong that displeases or disgraces the church, do not run away from your local church to be baptized in another congregation. There are people who do this. It is not proper, and it creates 'bad blood' between congregations. We should not use our local churches as places of safety from discipline. Fortunately, children never act in this way. It is usually elderly (youth and senior) persons who act in this fashion. I hope that you will not act in this way in your life.

Before You are Baptised

Before you are baptized you are normally taught the beliefs of the SDA Church. They are called Fundamental Beliefs. Shortly before you are baptized a pastor will ask you to stand before the church and make a statement that you understand, accept and believe what the church has taught you. You also promise that you will support the church with your time, strength and means such as money or property so that the church can do its work well.

After baptism you receive a Certificate. It is not a Certificate of Membership but a Baptismal Certificate. The SDA Church does not give people Membership Certificates. We are not a political party, a community organisation, cultural club or burial society. We demonstrate our new life by living Christlike lives. The pastor who has baptised you signs your Baptismal Certificate. This document has the date and the name of the place or church in which you were baptised. It is important for you to keep the Certificate in a safe place, but not very far from your eyes. You may need to use it for your own Bible Study. The Baptismal Certificate has a short list of some of the belief of the church.

Unit 3 - THE CHURCH CLERK

Every congregation has somebody called the Church Clerk. This man or woman has a book called the Church Record Book. In this book, all the names of members – dead or alive – are recorded. When your actions cause unhappiness in the church, and you are an open shame to God's name, the church may ask the Clerk to remove your name from the Record Book. The name is recorded again after you have repented from your bad ways (sin). In the past, this action was called excommunication. We no longer use this painful word in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. If your name has been removed from the Record Book, it can be written again after you are baptized again.

Sometimes your name is not removed from the Record Book. You may be treated like somebody who is not a member for three, six or nine months. This is called censure or suspension. At the end of these months, you will be told to begin your normal or regular church life again. There are several reasons why people's names can be removed from the Record Book. The next section has a list of these reasons. Read them carefully. You can discuss this list with your parent\guardian\senior relative or sister\brother.

Unit 4 - REMOVING A MEMBER'S NAME FROM THE RECORD BOOK

This painful step can be taken for the following reasons:

1. if there is open and public evidence that you are living a life that displeases God and embarrasses the church.
2. if you smoke or sell tobacco; if you use or sell drugs; if you use or sell liquor.
3. if you have sex before marriage; if you abuse a child sexually; if you practise prostitution. The Bible is also against homosexuality (gayism \ lebianism
4. if you engage in physical violence against your family (wife, husband, children) or other people;
5. if you are known to be a regular user of lies.
6. if you fail to observe the Sabbath or break parts of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) after you have been given warnings;
7. if you marry somebody who is divorced and has been the cause of the divorce through unfaithfulness.
8. if you are divorced and remarry, and you have been the unfaithful partner in your marriage in which adultery or homosexuality is involved.

[Date]

9. if you teach ideas that are opposed to the beliefs and practices of the church.
10. If you fight the leadership of the church and influence others to do so as well; or if you start an organisation that causes disobedience and disorder in the church.
11. if you practise witchcraft or engage in Satanic practices.
12. 12.if you eat types of food that are clearly forbidden in the Bible
13. (e.g. pork, horse meat, bubble fish, etc)

SOME FACTS TO NOTE

1. The Church Board alone does not discipline members.
2. Elders\Deacons alone do not discipline members. Even the Pastor does not have the right to do this alone.
3. Membership discipline is the function of the whole church.
4. The decision to punish – to suspend or remove names from Record Book – is made in a Church Business Meeting chaired by the Pastor or ordained elder.
5. Discipline of a church member is not done in our homes, in our departments or in some private meeting of members.
6. The member to be disciplined has a right to appear before the Church Board or Church to speak for himself or herself.
7. Lawyers are not permitted to speak for members in the church. The church is not a civil court of law. In the church members represent themselves.

Unit 5 - THE ORGANIZED CHURCH

A group of believers that are organised into a local congregation is called a Branch or a Company. A company is larger than a branch. The Company is led by a Company leader. A company falls under a local church, and is also led by the elder or elders of the 'mother' church. The company leader is a helper of the elder and the pastor. The

names of all baptised persons in a branch or company are kept in the record Book of the Church Clerk in the 'mother' church. When a company has grown, and can show the ability to run church matters in a satisfactory manner, it is organised into an independent congregation. It becomes an organised church. It is then able to elect its own elders and other leaders without asking for permission from the 'mother' church.

Unit 6 - ADVENTIST SUB-ORGANIZATIONS

1. A number of local churches\companies\branches can be organised into a District, Region or Pastorate. A Pastorate is a group of churches under one pastor. For instance, churches in Durban, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Bulawayo, Harare, Manzini, Maseru or Gaborone can be a district, region or pastorate.
2. When these churches, districts or regions are combined, they are called a Conference.
3. A Conference is a set (group) of churches, districts\regions\pastorates in a specific country or section of the county. Examples of Conferences are – Trans-Orange Conference, Northern Conference, Cape Conference, Swaziland Conference, KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference, South Botswana Conference, Namibia Conference, Southern Hope Conference, and Lesotho Conference. There are many other SDA Conferences in Africa and in other parts of the world.
4. Conferences combine to form a Union Mission or Union Conference. Examples of Unions are Southern Africa Union Conference, abbreviated SAU (Head office in Bloemfontein, Free State).
5. The SAU is our union. It is formed of the whole of the Republic of South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and St Helena Island in the Atlantic Ocean, and Namibia.
6. There are other Union Conferences such as the Angola Union, Botswana Union, Indian Ocean Union, Mozambique Union, Zambia Union, Zimbabwe Union.

Unit 7 - DEPARTMENTS

The local church does its work through Departments or Ministries. Leaders or co-ordinators lead these departments\ministries. Every leader reports to the Pastor, elder, Church Board or Church. They also have small committees or councils who help them to execute their work. Some of the departments\ministries you will find in a local church are the following:

1. Children's Ministries,
2. Communication,
3. Education,
4. Health & Temperance,
5. Home & Family Life,
6. Personal Ministries,
7. Publishing
8. Religious Liberty
9. Sabbath School,
10. Stewardship,
11. Youth Ministries,
12. Women's Ministries.

- There are other departments or ministries that are often established or run from the Constituency office (Conference, Union, GC/Division).
- Sometimes a church may establish a ministry that is relevant to its needs. For instance, in 2006 the Kelvin Church (Johannesburg), established a Ministry of Counselling in response to social and emotional needs observed in the membership of that congregation.

Note the Following

1. A Departmental leader does not plan or work alone. When this happens problems arise between him/her and his associates or the church leadership.
2. A leader must study the Church Manual (a book of church rules) carefully so that he\she can run his/her department properly. It is dangerous to be a leader who is ignorant of church rules. We call these rules *POLICY*.
3. Departments or Ministries take care of the learning and service needs of members and other persons who are not members of the church.
4. A branch or company is led by a Leader
5. A church is led by an Elder
6. All branches/companies/churches are led by Pastors and elders.
7. A local church is guided by a Church Board
8. A Director leads a district/region.
9. A Council/Committee/Board directs the affairs of a district/region.⁴
10. A President leads a Conference.
11. The affairs of a Conference are directed by an Executive Committee
12. A Union is led by a President
13. An Executive Committee directs the affairs of a Union.

⁴Please note that other parts of the world do not have districts. These were created in South Africa for the administration of the black church. District are not in the core policy of the church.

Module 5

ADVENTIST YOUTH AND SEX

Author: **Brenton Stacey**, record@a1.com.au, Editorial assistant, *The Record*.

Edited by Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi

Nearly half of all young adults in the Adventist Church are ignoring no-sex-before-marriage and safe-sex messages – and that’s the naked truth.

What the research says?

The 1997 Valuegenesis: Young Adult Study (of youth aged 19-24) reveals that 44 per cent of young adults attending Adventist churches have engaged in premarital sex at least once, and more than half (54 per cent) did not use contraception. The major reason for the non-use of contraceptives? A lack of forethought.

The 1993 Valuegenesis: Adolescent Study (of youth aged 12-18 in the Adventist Church), shows 15 per cent of adolescents in Years 11 and 12 have engaged in premarital sex at least once. So if you're a young person, please consider the following.

What the experts say?

Three experts were asked their opinions for the “Sex: worth the wait?” issue of The Edge,

1. Dr Percy Harrold, health director for the South Pacific Division, sees a lot of people in committed relationships (where sex is involved) with problems. “It ends up being that a so-called ‘committed relationship’ can be for only one week or one year, rather than being forever,” he said.
2. Judith Mazz, a chaplain at Sydney Adventist Hospital, says sex isn’t even a good basis for a lasting marriage. “Sex isn’t love and it isn’t intimacy. A couple first needs to connect emotionally, socially, intellectually – and spiritually.”
3. And Dr Norman Young, senior lecturer in theology at Avondale College, cautions that sexual pleasure shouldn’t be pursued for its own sake: “The ancient moral philosophers tended to think of sex purely for reproduction. But when Paul speaks of our sexual responsibility to our spouse, he says nothing about offspring! Paul viewed sex as having a purpose beyond reproduction.”

What your peers are saying?

A theology student, also at Avondale College, says he believes the Adventist Church never fully explains to young people why premarital sex is bad. “The only reason we give for not having premarital sex is, ‘because God says.’ We never say it hurts and has long-term effects.”

And a tertiary student in Melbourne says breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend is sometimes a hurtful experience. “And,” she says, “it’s been proved that this process is even more painful if sex was part of the relationship. I think God wants to save us from experiencing that pain.”

What long-term effects, what pain? Try unwanted pregnancy; abortion; social diseases; emotional attachment, embarrassment and guilt.

What the Bible says

Is sex about guilt? It shouldn't be. Why? Because there's a whole book about it in the Bible. Check it out sometime. It's called Song of Songs – the erotic diary of King Solomon. (For a spiritual explorers' guide to Song of Songs, visit <http://www.bigquestions.com/> and click on three.) The theme? “Sex is best if you wait.”

✓ If you've never had premarital sex: Great, you're doing the best thing.

Some advice:

1. You may be tempted.
2. Think of what you'll be giving up.
3. You can't get virginity back.
4. Remember, God will help overcome temptation.

Charles Mills, in his book Bible-based answers to questions kids ask about love and sex, asks a newly married couple their feelings on the subject of premarital sex.

1. **Groom:** “Because I saw my future wife demonstrate to me that she was able to withstand the sexual temptations of courtship and engagement, I now have more confidence that she'll be able to say no to someone else in the future if the temptation arises.”
2. **Bride:** “I can trust myself totally to my husband. We can enjoy the relationship God gave us with guiltless abandon.”

If you've had premarital sex but stopped: Was it worth it? Were there consequences?

Some advice:

1. Avoid getting into situations where premarital sex might take place.
2. Plan for the best possible future;
3. Refuse to be trapped by your past.
4. Remember, God forgives.

If you're having premarital sex: Are you compromising what you truly believe for the relationship? Are you and your partner soul mates (do you share similar interests, temperaments and approaches to life?), or is the relationship built just on the physical? Do you pray together?

Some advice:

1. Talk things over with God and with each other.
2. Look at what the Bible says.
3. Remember, God wants the best for you.

Module 6

INTRODUCTION TO ADVENTIST EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON AFRICAN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Lecture 1

Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has engaged in the provision of education from the early decades of its history in North America. While some of the church's earliest members did not appreciate the necessity of formal education, they were soon led to accept the importance of organised education for their children and the training of church workers.⁵ Today Adventists conduct a worldwide church-related school system that comprises more than six thousand institutions from kindergarten centres to tertiary institutions offering postdoctoral studies.

NORTH AMERICA

Modern mainstream Adventism is the child of a well-documented religious phenomenon known as the Millerite Movement (1833-1844).⁶ William Miller – after

⁵George R Knight, "Seventh-day Adventist Education: A Historical Sketch and Profile," in James C Carper, Thomas C Hunt (eds), *Religious Schooling in America* (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1984), p 85

⁶For detailed information about the Millerite Movement, the reader may check the following texts: Arthur W Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1962); Richard W Schwarz, Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1979, 2000); P Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977); Everett N Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1994).

whom the movement was named – and other Christian clergy led some fifty thousand or so believers to expect the return of Jesus Christ and the end of human history in October 1844. These expectations were not fulfilled, as they were based on a misreading of biblical prophecy. A Post-Millerite group, meeting shortly after the failed event, continued part of the revivalist work of its parent movement until there was a need for both a name and formal legal organisation. This is how the name “Seventh-day Adventists” was born in September 1860 in Battle Creek, Michigan.⁷

In the early 1850s some influential members of the Post-Millerite group expressed a need for the provision of formal education for their children. Debate ensued as a section of the church argued that there was no need for the provision of organised education for the church’s offspring since Jesus was soon to return to the world. On this point Spalding has made the observation,

Seventh-day Adventists have become education-minded, but they were not born that way. They began, indeed, with very little idea that any education was necessary other than instruction in the cardinal tenets of their faith. The Lord was coming immediately; no child would grow up on this earth to maturity, no herald of the Advent needed training if he knew his Bible. Schools, with all other works of man, would perish, and the redeemed would enter upon a higher course, the beginning of which in this world was “the truth.”⁸

At some time, as the debate progressed, James White responded by stating, ...the fact that Christ is soon coming is no reason why the mind should not be improved. A well-disciplined and informed mind can best receive and cherish the sublime truths of the Second Advent.⁹

⁷Schwarz & Greenleaf, pp 91, 92

⁸Spalding, Volume 2, p 91

⁹Knight, p 85. The original statement appears in “Questions and Answers,” *Review and Herald*, 23 December 1862, p 29

The reasoning that White was confronting was influenced, in part, by chaotic conditions that marked a number of institutions in the public education system in those years.¹⁰ In time, however, a pro-education attitude captured and directed the collective mind of the new church. Between 1853 and 1871 concerned members of the nascent church established several schools. In 1872 the church officially assumed the task of establishing an educational institution. This step led to the opening, on 12 June 1872, of what was later known as Battle Creek College in the state of Michigan.¹¹

Battle Creek was, unfortunately embattled by endless operational challenges that eventually led to its closure. As time moved on the 1870s and 1880s saw the rise of interest in educational provision. By the end of the 19th century, the church had stabilised its belief in and commitment to Christian education. Through her writings and oral presentations Ellen Gould White (1827-1915) played a significant role in influencing and shaping the educational thinking of the church of her time. This literary and ideological influence has continued to our time. One notable statement of hers on education reads:

When the truth for these last days came to the world in the proclamation of the first, second and third angel's messages, we were shown that in the education of our children *a different order of things must be brought in*.¹²
(Emphasis supplied)

¹⁰Knight, p 85

¹¹Knight, p 87

¹²Quoted by E A Sutherland, *Studies in Christian Education* (New York, TEACH Services, Inc.: 2005), p 25

Ellen White reasoned that Adventists should see, within the evangelistic mandate, a specific task to educate youth in ways that would be distinctly different from those of the world. She hoped that the church's educational institutions would serve the same purpose and achieve the same goals that were designed for the Old Testament schools of the prophets. "These schools were intended," as she argued, "to serve as a barrier against the wide-spreading corruption, to provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counsellors." These words capture part of the vision and mission of Seventh-day Adventist education across the globe.

SOUTH AFRICA

While Adventist presence in this country goes back to 1878, the church's first overseas missionaries came to this country in July 1887. Five years later a school – Claremont Union College (CUC) – opened its doors to students from various denominations and racial groups.¹³ There was no viable Adventist community to give support to a project of this magnitude. The college's 1894 annual calendar had the following words,

The design of the institution is to give its pupils the advantage of thorough education in all those subjects usually taught in colleges of the first class.¹⁴

The college offered primary, secondary and post-secondary education. Apart from Biblical Education, courses included Greek, Latin, Trigonometry and Geometry, Chemistry and Physics, Logic and Moral Science. Special attention was given to

¹³*Silverleaf*: Helderberg College Centenary Publication, 1893-1993

¹⁴*Ibid*, p ix

moral development, vocational training and health education. Furthermore, “The college was open to all races and no distinction was made with regard to religious affiliation. In fact, half the students were not Seventh-day Adventists.”¹⁵ The goal of Union College was to produce students who would be ready to face the challenges of life with positive effect.

Closure of CUC and the Inception of Race-based Educational Provision

In 1917 Claremont Union College was closed. The programme was relocated to a spot near the river *uThukela*, north east of Ladysmith in KwaZulu Province. Here the college was given the names South African Missionary College (1919-1922) and Spion Kop Training College (Institution) (1922-1937), respectively.¹⁶ The differential racial operations in time occupancy of this new institution by Europeans (first period) and Africans (second period), respectively, ushered in racial considerations as determinants of educational and other forms of church provision in South African Adventist mission and ministry. This tradition was consolidated by the advent, in 1954/55 of state-legislated separate educational systems for the various racial and language groups in the country. This government measure had a direct effect on Adventist educational provision for the church’s children and youth. Thus, Adventist education in South Africa, despite all claims to biblical motivation and associated religious policy practices, became a cohort of all apartheid human development theories and practices – even in the training of the gospel ministry – a sector of the church’s mission whose integrity was severely compromised by racist thinking and Eurocentric interests.

¹⁵Ibid. p 12

¹⁶While some historical documents refer to Spion Kop as a College, a certificate that the father of this writer received from Spion Kop has ‘Institution’ rather than the former term.

From 1919 to about thirty years ago, Adventist education in South Africa became – in part - an institutional vehicle for the intended or unintended furtherance of colonisation, subjugation, marginalisation and underdevelopment of black people. In reality Adventist education for black people was partly responsible for the skills deprivation and career underdevelopment of African members.

When white use of Spion Kop came to an end in 1927, Helderberg College in Somerset West was born. The school's final closure in 1937 led to the expansion of Bethel Mission into Bethel Training College, later Bethel College. Thus Bethel and Helderberg have a common institutional parent – Spion Kop. Until about 30 years ago the ruins of Spion Kop could still be seen.

Further Educational Practice among Black Africans

In the late 1890s Adventism made its presence felt in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho with the advent of missionaries and the subsequent conversion of David Kalaka and his family. Here a school, Emmanuel Mission (now a secondary school), was opened in 1910 alongside a children's orphanage. The orphanage was closed down many years ago. Between 1925 and 1935 Joseph Nkosi (father of Pastor Gibson J Nkosi, Houston, Texas and Japhta Nkosi) from northern KwaZulu, established a small mission school in a place called Masala in the same country. Until the 1980s a small chalkboard used by the founder could still be seen in the small mission structure in Lesotho.

Between 1908 and 1909 Richard Moko (the first African Adventist in South Africa) and David Tarr established Maranatha Mission near Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. Maranatha lasted for about eight years. Tarr was then dispatched by the Union leadership of that time to move north into the Transkei where he established

Bethel Mission eight kilometres north east of Butterworth, eGcuwa. In 2017, God willing, Bethel will be 100 years old.

Spion Kop and Bethel College ministerial and teacher graduates went into the field and established a number of primary schools that dotted the map of South Africa until the mid-1950s. By 1960 these schools could be found in Butterworth, East London, Port Elizabeth, Cancele, Edendale (Pietermaritzburg), Ngome (KwaZulu), Mbukwane (Swaziland), Wesselton (Ermelo), Payneville (Springs),¹⁷ Alexandra (Johannesburg), Orlando West (Soweto), Tweefontein (Hammanskraal) north of Tshwane (Pretoria), Mafikeng (North West),¹⁸ Dinokana (North West), Buxton, near Taung (North West), Shiloh Mission near Potgietersrus (Limpopo), Gilead and Seema both in Limpopo Province.

Some schools that arose after 1960 include Balibedi¹⁹ in Sedaven (Heidelberg, Gauteng), Maranatha Primary and Middle Schools (Taung, North West), Sefati

¹⁷The school in Payneville was in existence for thirty-two years. Although it was closed in the mid-1960s, its registration stayed open until the 1980s. There was failure on the part of the Conference and the local church to revive the school in Kwa-Thema where the Payneville church was relocated after the forced removals programme of the apartheid government.

¹⁸As in the case of the Payneville School, Mafikeng SDA School also closed down in the 1960s. The states kept its registration open until the 1980s.

¹⁹Balibedi was originally known as Sedaven Farm School. The school was renamed some time in the 1980s. Balibedi (Sotho for *Adventists*) was established in 1965 to provide education to children of black persons who worked in Sedaven High School and of others who lived in the Sedaven plot. After a long struggle for funds the state provided a grant that alleviated financial burdens on parents and the Conference office. However, because of general neglect of Christian education and certain operational deficiencies on the part of the Conference, local state education officials closed the school some five years ago. The last principal was Ms Happy Moya (Springs).

Primary (Limpopo),²⁰ Pongolwane Primary (Swaziland),²¹ Salt Lake near Douglas (Northern Cape)²² and Themba in the Eastern Cape.

Black Occupancy of Historically Non-black Institutions

The liberalisation of the country's education system in the past decade has, ironically, led to massive black occupation of historically white church schools, on one hand, and a corresponding flight by whites from these same schools, on the other. Thus, today, because of black demographics, Adventist institutional education in this land, suffers mistrust from the white section of the church.

Black children and youth have steadily moved into historically nonblack educational institutions. Among these are Helderberg College (Western Cape), Helderberg High School (Western Cape), Good Hope High School (Western Cape), Patterson Park (Johannesburg), West Rand Junior Secondary School (Westdene, Johannesburg),

²⁰Like Balibedi, Sefati was also a farm school in the property of a certain Mr J Muller (Adventist) located south of Polokwane in Limpopo Province. Muller's wish was that the school should be the responsibility of the Trans-Orange Conference. Logistical problems arose in the mid-1980s that led to a loss of the school to other interested parties.

²¹Pongolwane Primary School was the vision and initiative of Brother Shongwe of the Pongolwane SDA Church, Swaziland. Its establishment goes back to the mid-1960s. At one time late JD Harcombe (then President of the Southern Union) drove from the office in Johannesburg to close the school. He did this without consulting the teaching staff and members of the local church. On his arrival from work later that day, Brother Shongwe was told that the school had been shut down. He then moved around the area informing parents to instruct their children to return to school the following day. And this is how Pongolwane has stayed alive for more than forty years.

²²There is a place in some desert-like area of the Northern Cape known as Salt Lake. Here a white Adventist family helped in the establishment of a primary school. However, because of administrative problems and conflicts with an interest group within the local Methodist church, the Conference relented and lost the school. Nothing has been heard of it since the late 1980s.

Sedaven High (Heidelberg), Sunnyside Primary (Pretoria), and the school in Keats Avenue in Durban (KwaZulu).

It is obvious from the mass exodus of white children/students from these institutions that the problem of racial prejudice in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa will take some phenomenal exercise to address and redress. There seems to be no foreseeable resolution of attitudes and actions governed by entrenched discrimination from the colonial past. One suspects that there is a need for an inquiry into the extent of the presence of neoCalvinistic, quasi-Nazi ideology, or Afro-pessimism in sections of the Adventist community in this land. Or have anthropological distinctions and cultural diversity become shrines to which some of us render oblations? How far are we from defying the first prohibition in the Decalogue (Exodus 20)?

Rise of Day Care Centres and Lay-created Schools

In the past twenty years, as a result of denominational dereliction of Adventist education, especially in the black church, some church members have taken the trouble to establish educational projects committed to the furtherance of Christian character development. There are numerous preschools (Day Care Centres), some of which fall within the supervising and funding programme of ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency). There were 40 such day care centres in with the TOC in 2004.²³

Adventist-associated Independent Schools

There are other primary and secondary schools that are independent of church control. These privately-owned Adventist-related institutions are destined to increase

²³Trans-Orange Conference Directory, 2004

in the future as the black church's organisations lose more and more of their commitment to educational planning and provision.

One such independent school is in Kempton Park (Gauteng). An educator from Malawi runs the school. There is also BASA Tutorial School founded by the deceased Mr Mncube, an Adventist teacher from Zimbabwe. It has two campuses: one in the Central Business District of Johannesburg, and another in Protea Glen Extension (Soweto). BASA management is planning expansion into the Vaal Area south of Johannesburg.

Blue Hills College

Another school – one that enjoys popular acceptance recognition is Blue Hills College in Midrand (Gauteng). Blue Hills is a full-fledged institution with boarding facilities. Students in this school come from various parts of the TOC territory, and as far as Lesotho, KwaZulu and Mozambique. Blue Hills is the brainchild of two brothers, Messrs Roy and Chief Ndlovu, and their brother-in-law, Mr Mlaudzi – all originally from Zimbabwe. This writer taught there for one year. The last two schools receive regular government subvention.

School in KZN

In the past two years or so, Thandi Masuku, an Adventist lady in northern KwaZulu-Natal, established a primary school. We hope that her endeavours will receive the support that all such timely and valuable initiatives deserve. The wife of Dr Solomon Lebesé, former Bethel College student, and Youth Director in the TOC, runs a small school in their place north of Tshwane (Pretoria). Lebesé runs a tertiary programme in this project

Adventist Bible School

The Adventist Bible School in Soweto was a joint initiative of the writer and the Zola Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Bible School was established to

1. to train and develop members of the Zola congregation into biblically informed, socially conscious and competent Bible users and practitioners of redemptive mission and ministry;
2. empower other interested persons – Adventist or nonAdventist – through the same core ABS curriculum;
3. develop Christians who embrace the importance of lifelong education and progressive competence in the handling of special truths for our time.

A certification event took place when the school shut down.

HOME SCHOOL IN THE EAST RAND

In 2007 a concerned parent – Mrs Ellah Sekobane (trained in psychology), then a member of the Thokoza Church in the East Rand – ventured into home schooling. After a long and arduous struggle and an endeavour - which she and the husband had been running for their three children - has finally earned the recognition of the Gauteng Education Department. The school was registered with state structures and used the Adventist curriculum from the Adventist Griggs University's Home Study International. The project was dedicated by Dr Paul Shongwe and this writer in the Sekobanes home during a ceremony attended by neighbours, close church friends and supporters on Sunday, 9 September 2007. **Some years ago the Sekobanes left the East Rand for Polokwane. When the children were returned to public schools, they were moved two grades ahead.**

Across the TOC territory there is a rising wave of concerned persons who wish to see the establishment of Adventist-related schools. Some individuals have even expressed a desire for the establishment of a technical institution. But we are most likely to see more independent schools in the foreseeable future. Currently, the Corona reality may interfere with any physical plans.

THE CENTRALITY OF AFRICANS IN THE BIBLE

Lecture 1 of 6 units

Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi

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 actually 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 discourse, 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.”²⁴

The 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 scalpel of decolonial thinking.

This paper 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

²⁴Mokgethi Mothlabi, (Editor), *Essays on Black Theology* (A Publication of the South African Students Organisation (SASO), Durban, 1972

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 Swaziland. 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 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. 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 wherewith all 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 paper. 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 believer 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.²⁵

²⁵*Pre-Theology*, Lessons 1-24, Theological Education by Extension College, 1989, p. 86

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 Africa problem. 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. What has been in dispute is the time of arrival of African people. 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 in order 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.²⁶

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 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 five and

²⁶See *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

half 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.”*

Presence in Scripture

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 5:15-27.²⁷

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.

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*.²⁸ In the four and half centuries of Egyptian slavery, some Hebrews married

²⁷Molefi Asante, Cain Hope Felder, et al, *The Original African Heritage Study Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: The James C Winston Publishing Company, 1993)

²⁸Charles 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

Africans. The books of Leviticus and Chronicles make mention of marital relations between Hebrews and Egyptians.²⁹

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.³⁰

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

²⁹Leviticus 24:10-46, 1 Chronicles 2:34

³⁰Bruce Britten, *I hate your white religion*, (Mbabane) Self-published, 1997, pp. 61, 62

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 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.*³¹ (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

³¹*The Star*, Johannesburg, October 17, 2003. A more thorough text on the Lemba will appear in edition three of this series.

noted also that at his time the Greeks tended to think of the fairer-skinned Nordic peoples as being an inferior race of barbarians.”³²

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.³³ 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.
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.

³²*The Original African Heritage Study Bible*, p 1814

³³Joseph E Harris, *Africans and their History*, (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1998) p

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 journey 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.³⁴

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

³⁴The 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).

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 person.
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 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 all other nations.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TRANS-ORANGE CONFERENCE³⁵

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

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, Delportshoop, 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

³⁵This paper appears in the new **ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS** published by the General Conference.

worldly jubilations 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.

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 Albertyn 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 Albertyn Church is uncertain. We can only speculate from the past about previous movements

of this type in the history of global Adventism. At present Alberton 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 nineteen 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.
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 Alberton 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)

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HISTORY AND MISSION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA³⁶

Grant Lottering

The Republic of South Africa is one of the countries that constitute the territory of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division of Seventh-day Adventists. The territory of the Republic of South Africa constitutes the major part of the Southern Africa Union Conference (SAU), within the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) of Seventh-day Adventists. Four of the eight local conferences that comprise the SAU are situated in South Africa. Church Statistics (2019) for South Africa were as follows: Churches –1,195; Companies–426; Members–145,268; Ordained ministers–194; Licensed ministers--95. The headquarters of the church are situated in Bloemfontein, the capital city of the Free State Province. The population of the country is estimated at 58,780,000.

Statistics (2019) for the conferences were as follows: *Cape Conference*: churches–506; members–45,924; ordained ministers–65; licensed ministers–31. *Northern Conference*: churches–119; members–21,861; ordained ministers–45; licensed ministers–21. *Trans-Orange Conference*: churches–382; members–57,989; ordained ministers–53; licensed ministers–19. *KwaZulu Natal-Free State Conference*: churches–186; members–19,494; ordained ministers–31; licensed ministers–24.¹

Additional statistics for South Africa (2019) were as follows: Adventist Deaths Per Thousands–1.53; General Population Deaths Per Thousand–9.00; Church Membership Per Ten Thousand Population–25; Population Per Membership Ratio–406; Percentage Net Growth–4 over the last year, and 64 over the last 10 years.²

³⁶The author is the SID representative in the Ellen G. White Estate in Helderberg College. He also represents the General Conference for the project, **Encyclopaedia of Seventh-day Adventists**

Overview

The Republic of South Africa (RSA) is the southernmost country on the continent of Africa. Its subtropical location accounts for its moderately warm weather conditions. The country receives most of its rainfall during summer, except for the Western Cape Province, which receives its most abundant rainfall in winter.

South Africa has a land surface area of 1,220,813 square kilometers and had a population of 55.7 million in 2016.³ The Black African population constitutes 81 percent of the entire population while the White population is estimated at 8 percent, the Colored population 9 percent, and the Indian/Asian population 2 percent. Unemployment in South Africa is estimated at 29.1 percent of the population currently. RSA recognizes eleven official languages, including isiZulu, English, isiXhosa, and Afrikaans as its most popular languages. Most South Africans can speak at least two or more of the official languages. “Life expectancy at birth for 2019 is estimated at 61.5 years for males and 67.7 years for females. The infant mortality rate for 2019 is estimated at 22.1 per 1,000 live births.”⁴ The country has an estimated 13.5 percent of its population living with HIV and AIDS.

The people. The first known people to occupy South Africa were the nomadic hunter-gatherers, known as the San.⁵ They were known as hunter-gatherers because the males hunted game for meat while the females gathered plants for food. The remnant of the San are commonly known as the ‘Bushmen,’ and small numbers survive in the Kalahari Desert.⁶ Following them, Khoikhoi shepherds settled in the southwestern region of Southern Africa.⁷ Like the San, they were a nomadic tribe who hardly established permanent homes but often moved with changed weather conditions in order to find warmer territories and food for themselves and their livestock. Due to their similar lifestyles, some of the Sans and the Khoikhois intermarried and became known as the Khoisan.

Later, African pastoralists known as the Bantu people since they spoke Bantu languages (popular African languages) descended from the north of South Africa. These people settled mainly in the northeastern regions of South Africa since the central region was a desert land, and the west region was predominantly occupied by the Khoisan. Peaceful relations existed between the Khoisan and the Bantus. These tribes often traded tools, and the Bantus influenced the Khoisan to abandon their

nomadic lifestyle and settle in their territory as farmers domesticating animals and cultivating crops.⁸

The Dutch first arrived in South Africa in 1652 when the Dutch East India Company established a refreshment station in Cape Town to supply their ships with fresh goods on their trade route from Europe to its colonies in South and Southeast Asia. The indigenous Khoisan people, who occupied the Cape, were driven inland after their resistance of the Dutch. Jan van Riebeeck (1619–1677), a colonial administrator, is considered the founder of Cape Town and became the first commander of the Cape.⁹

In the early nineteenth century, the British occupied the Cape to prevent this strategic settlement to fall into the hands of the French during the Napoleonic wars. During this period intermittent warfare ensued between the European colonialists and the native Africans.¹⁰ Zulus under the leadership of Shaka gained control of the southeastern territory. The descendants of the Dutch settlers, the Voortrekkers, expanded northward due to accentuated divisions between the Boer farmers and the British administration. After defeating the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River, the Voortrekkers established the Republic of Natalia. The British then annexed Natal, thus occupying both coastal colonies, the Cape and Natal. Africans “lived in their own autonomous societies.”¹¹ The Voortrekkers eventually formed two republics in the interior of South Africa, which appeared to be largely uninhabited areas. These two republics were the South African Republic in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Only White males had political rights in these Boer republics.

Political developments. In the second half of the nineteenth century, minerals such as diamonds and gold were discovered in Kimberley and the Transvaal. These regions were governed by the Boers who lacked investment capital, and they soon lost control over these mine fields to the British. This spiked one of the bloodiest wars in South Africa from 1899 to 1902 between the British and the Boers for the control of the mining fields. During this war, commonly known as the Anglo-Boer War, the British lost 22,000 men, the Boers 34,000, and more than 15,000 Black South Africans were killed.¹² The British eventually abandoned the war and negotiated a long-term political settlement that put the local White community in charge of a self-governing united South Africa.¹³

The Union of South Africa, comprising the Cape, Natal, Transvaal, and the Free State, was established on May 31, 1910. Legislation “restricted political and property rights to whites at the expense of blacks.”¹⁴ The African National Congress (ANC) was founded in 1912, birthed from Black opposition, and was organized to fight for the rights of Black South Africans. The ANC pioneered the struggle against White supremacy and the oppression of people of color in South Africa. On June 19, 1913, the Natives Land Act became law. Among its many restrictions, this act prohibited Black South Africans from owning land outside of a small area (estimated at approximately 7 percent of the country) that was allocated for their use. In 1948 the National Party (NP) won government election and enforced *Apartheid*, “an even more rigorous and authoritarian approach than the previous segregationist policies.”¹⁵

The ANC remained at the forefront of vehemently opposing the national apartheid government. Some notable role players of the ANC include Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918–2013), Oliver Tambo (1917–1993), and Walter Sisulu (1912–2003). Resistance came in the form of many protest actions. Some significant protests organized by the ANC included a mass meeting in 1952 when attendees burned their pass books and the events of Sharpeville in 1960 when a group of Black citizens arrived at the police station without their passes. This resulted in havoc and clashes between police officers and the group ending in multiple deaths and injuries.¹⁶

South Africa was declared a republic in 1961, and it enforced further residential segregation laws that saw many people of color removed from their homesteads. Nelson Mandela was incarcerated from 1963 until 1990. His imprisonment drew international attention, and many boycotts were launched against the apartheid regime of South Africa. In 1974 the United Nations General Assembly denounced *Apartheid* and instituted international economic sanctions on South Africa.¹⁷

A “sliding economy, increasing internal dissent and international pressure,”¹⁸ led to the South African government repealing its *Apartheid* laws, culminating with the release of Nelson Mandela from prison on February 11, 1990. The first democratic election took place on April 27, 1994, when all South African citizens had the right to vote. The ANC emerged victorious with a 62 percent majority vote, and the nation

became the democratic Republic of South Africa. Since 1994 the ANC has been the ruling party.

Today South Africa is considered a predominantly Christian country. Christian holidays, including the Easter weekend and Christmas, are recognized in the country. An astounding 74 percent of the country's population are Christians, while other major religions include Traditional African Religion, Islam, Hinduism, or no religious affiliation.

The currency used in the country is the South African Rand (ZAR). The present exchange rate to the American US dollar is R17.55.¹⁹ Its key economic sectors are mining, transport, energy, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture. Domestic travel in South Africa takes place via road, rail, and air facilities. Public transport include the Gautrain between Johannesburg and Pretoria, Metrorail throughout the Cape Metropolitan, bus transport systems in every major city, and minibus taxi services in every locality. Value-added tax on goods and services is levied at 15 percent. Following the Coronavirus outbreak, the country's economy contracted with the repo rate currently at 5.25 percent, inflation at 4.6 percent, and the GDP growth rate at -1.4 percent.²⁰

The government of South Africa is a constitutional multiparty democracy, which operates on three spheres—municipal, provincial, and national government. The national government is administered by the African National Congress (ANC) with Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa as the president of the country.²¹ South Africa has nine provinces and three national capital cities. The administrative capital resides in Pretoria, the legislative capital in Cape Town and the judicial capital in Bloemfontein. The constitutional court is located in Johannesburg.²²

Origins of Adventist Work in the Country

The first known Seventh-day Adventist believer to come to South Africa with the Advent message was William Hunt. Hunt was a gold miner in Gold Hill, Nevada, in the United States of America.²³ His keen interest in the Bible and its prophecies led him to John Loughborough in 1868. From Loughborough, Hunt bought literature on Seventh-day Adventist doctrines and Bible prophecy, including Uriah Smith's book on *Daniel and the Revelation*. Within one year Hunt bought every book published by Seventh-day Adventists, subscribed to the weekly *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, observed the seventh-day Sabbath, and was baptized by John Loughborough.

In 1871 diamonds were discovered in Kimberley, South Africa, and thousands of miners descended upon the Kimberley diamond fields because of the prospects that the diamond fields seemed to offer. Hunt was also attracted to the newly discovered diamond fields of South Africa. He made preparations to leave the United States and purchased a complete set of prophetic charts, along with other literature from John Loughborough to take with him. He also made arrangements for the *Review and Herald* and the *Signs of the Times* to be sent to him wherever he settled. Hunt arrived in Kimberley later in the same year and lived there until his death in 1897.

While working on the mine fields in Kimberley, William Hunt shared the Advent message with as many as he could through Bible studies and the literature that he had brought with him. That Hunt became an ardent Seventh-day Adventist missionary in Kimberley was attested by a letter received and printed in the *Review and Herald* in 1878. The letter was written by a former Methodist preacher named J. H. C. Wilson. In the letter Wilson stated that he, his wife, and four other persons decided to accept the Seventh-day Adventist faith after studying the literature they received from Hunt.²⁴ In the letter Wilson acknowledged that Seventh-day Adventists have the truth and expressed that there was a great work to be done among the wealth seekers on the diamond fields.

Pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism

In 1885 William Hunt became acquainted with George J. van Druten and Pieter Wessels, who became two of the most prominent converts to Adventism in South Africa. Van Druten and Wessels were both Afrikaners and attended the same Dutch Reformed Church congregation. By the time Van Druten met William Hunt, he already had an encounter with the seventh-day Sabbath truth. This encounter came through a dream and personal Bible study when Van Druten was traveling to Bloemfontein with his sick child seeking medical attention. As his custom was, he refused to do any traveling on the Sunday, which he revered as a holy day. This angered his wife, and that particular night Van Druten had a dream in which a stranger pointed out that Saturday was the Sabbath and directed him to the Ten Commandments.²⁵

One Saturday afternoon Van Druten and his wife passed by William Hunt, who was sitting under a tree in his finest clothes reading the Bible. Van Druten told his wife

that Hunt had been labeled as the “laziest man in town, since he kept two Sundays every week.”²⁶ Contrary to his remarks, Mrs. Van Druten insisted that Hunt looked like an old saint. Van Druten began to visit Hunt and learned about Bible prophecy and became convinced that Saturday is the Sabbath from the literature which Hunt shared.

Pieter Wessels was 29 years old when he discovered the truth about God’s Sabbath day. Wessels had been struggling with his health, and the medication prescribed by physicians was of no avail.²⁷ A sad turn of events worsened his illness when pulmonary inflammation, possibly picked up from working on his farm in the rain, threatened to end his life. Conscious of the fact that the medication he used proved to be of no apparent benefit, Wessels decided to put the promise of James 5:14, 15 to the test. Wessels continued to deteriorate during the night but was miraculously spared and strong enough the next morning to walk around the farm. Wessels had been a sincere student of the Bible, and the healing that he experienced made him even more studious.

Shortly after this, Wessels spoke to his brother, John, about how he had been healed because of prayer.²⁸ John discouraged Pieter from taking the Bible so literally, otherwise he would need to observe Saturday as the Sabbath. Wessels considered himself to be a faithful student of the Bible and already determined to show more reverence for Sundays by minimizing the labor done on those days. Along with his wife, Maria, Pieter Wessels searched the Scriptures and discovered that Saturday was indeed the biblical Sabbath day, and they began to observe it as such.

Wessels and Van Druten were already acquainted and upon sharing notes of their personal Bible studies one day learned that each observed the Sabbath. Until then Wessels thought that he was probably the only Christian in the world who observed the Sabbath day. Van Druten introduced Wessels to William Hunt without hesitation. It brought Wessels great delight to learn that there was an organized church who taught the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.²⁹

Their thirst for more truth remained unquenched. William Hunt provided Wessels and van Druten with English literature, which they could not easily understand since they mainly understood Dutch. Hunt had compassion on them, and they wrote a letter to the General Conference requesting a Dutch minister to come to South Africa

to baptize them by immersion and also instruct them in the teachings of Seventh-day Adventists. Along with this letter they included £50 to assist with the expenses of their noble request.³⁰

This time the plea for help to be sent to South Africa was not met with indifference such as the former made by J. H. C. Wilson. The letter was received and read at the 1886 General Conference Session in Battle Creek, Michigan, with great delight and applause. Unfortunately, there was no Dutch minister available at the time, but a group of two ministers, Dore A. Robinson and Charles L. Boyd, along with their wives, two literature evangelists George Burleigh and Richard S. Anthony, and a Bible instructor, Corrie Mace, were sent to South Africa to pioneer the work of Seventh-day Adventists in Africa.³¹ On July 28, 1887, they arrived in Cape Town where Pieter Wessels met them and took them to his parents who lived on a farm in Wellington.

The missionaries stayed in Wellington with the Wessels family to strategize how they would conduct the work in South Africa. It was determined that the group would split; half of them would proceed with Pieter Wessels to Kimberley while the rest would remain behind to begin the work in Cape Town and its surrounding suburbs. C. L. Boyd and George Burleigh went to Beaconsfield, Kimberley, and the Robinsons together with R. S. Anthony and Corrie Mace moved to Cape Town to pioneer the work.³²

Upon arriving in Kimberley, Pastor Boyd held some meetings and began instructing those who desired to become Seventh-day Adventists. A company of 21 adults were already anticipating baptism when he arrived. It was in August 1887 at Beaconsfield where Elder Boyd baptized the first Seventh-day Adventist believers in South Africa and organized the first Seventh-day Adventist Church. This church was organized with 26 newly baptized souls and their children. The newly formed church first met in a school room. After three years of evangelism in the form of tent meetings, literature distribution, and house to house Bible studies, the Beaconsfield Seventh-day Adventist Church was purchased in May 1890 and became the first Seventh-day Adventist church building on the continent of Africa. The Beaconsfield Seventh-day Adventist Church remains a heritage site in South Africa today.

In Cape Town the work did not take off as smoothly as in Kimberley. There was “much prejudice to be broken down.”³³ Cape Town’s first exposure to the Adventist

[Date]

message came through canvassing. Eventually Pastor Robinson began giving lectures in churches on temperance and prophecy. He refrained from teaching peculiar Adventist beliefs until a tent arrived from America with which they could conduct public meetings. When the tent arrived, Pastor Boyd came to Cape Town to assist Pastor Robinson with the public meetings.

Within a matter of months, Pastor Robinson requested the General Conference to allow him to return to England and continue working with John Nevins Andrews. Ira J. Hankins was sent to South Africa to replace Pastor Robinson. Pastor Hankins and his family arrived in Cape Town on February 9, 1888.³⁴ He immediately continued the work that Robinson began by doing visits to interested persons and holding cottage meetings. Tent meetings were not held until much later that year in November when Pastor Hankins moved the tent to Mowbray and started to conduct meetings in the southern suburbs of Cape Town.

The second church in South Africa was organized on March 2, 1889, with sixteen members as a result of these meetings.³⁵ In April of the same year the South African branch of the International Tract and Missionary Society was organized. The International Tract and Missionary Society was the department of the church responsible for taking the work into all parts of the world through every means. This was the first formal organization in South Africa and served as a point of literature sales and was used to conduct the business of the church in South Africa. A property along with a plot large enough to erect a church building, school, and printing press was secured by Roeland Street.³⁶ This became the first permanent location for the church in Cape Town and also became the first headquarters of the church in South Africa.

One whose efforts to strengthen the church in South Africa certainly cannot be overlooked is Asa T. Robinson, the brother of D. A. Robinson. A. T. Robinson's contribution is discussed further in this article, but he deserves being noted as a pioneer of Adventism in South Africa. A. T. Robinson arrived in South Africa in January 1892 to take over the general leadership when C. L. Boyd was recalled to America. When Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Robinson came to South Africa, they left their children in America with relatives to continue with Adventist education since there was not yet an Adventist school operating in South Africa. A. T. Robinson became a driving force to initiate Adventist education in South Africa in order to have his sons

come and join them. They were separated for a total of twenty months until his sons joined them in South Africa in August of 1893.

A. T. Robinson was hailed for his “energetic and enterprising leadership.”³⁷ Among his accomplishments for the continent of Africa are included the organizing of the first conference, the inauguration of the first Seventh-day Adventist tertiary college, the establishment of the first Seventh-day Adventist elementary school and a children’s orphanage, the publication of the denominational newspaper in both English and Dutch, the printing of the first African vernacular language tracts, the building of the Adventist medical hospital, and spearheading the expansion of Adventism into the territory north from South Africa into Matabeleland.³⁸ A. T. Robinson displayed efficient leadership during his six-year tenure in South Africa and is honored as a prominent administrator and preacher to South Africa.

Spread and Development of the Adventist Message

When Wessels became acquainted with the Adventist message, he enthusiastically shared his newfound faith with all his family members including his parents who relocated to Wellington in the Cape during that time. One of his converts who is of special note was his brother-in-law, Gert J. G. Scholtz. When Scholtz heard that Pieter Wessels was now a Sabbath keeper, he determined to set him straight. Scholtz attempted to dissuade Pieter Wessels thrice, but he was left speechless each time with Wessels’ biblical reasoning. Eventually he was convinced of the Sabbath truth, accepted it, and went about spreading the truth to all who listened.

Two prominent people he tried to convert were the presidents of the Orange Free State and the South African Republic. He first visited the president of the Orange Free State and then traveled across the Vaal River to convince the president of the South African Republic, President Paul Kruger, that Saturday was the Sabbath. The latter acknowledged the validity of his argument in favor of the Sabbath but maintained that his position as president would not allow him to keep the Sabbath.³⁹

David Fletcher Tarr played a crucial role in starting the church in the Eastern Cape. Tarr, a lay Methodist preacher, and Albert Davies were farmers from Grahamstown who met Pieter Wessels in Kimberley. When they engaged with Pieter Wessels, they learned that he kept Saturday as Sabbath. When Pieter Wessels convinced both of

them that Saturday was the biblical Sabbath day, they returned home and shared their new convictions with their family members.

On December 24, 1889, S. N. Haskell, Hattie Hurd, and Mr. and Mrs. Druillard arrived to strengthen the work in South Africa.⁴⁰ Their arrival relieved Elder Hankins of his commitments to the work in Cape Town. He could now move on to the Eastern Cape where an interest had already been kindled by Tarr and Davies. From prior experience in both Kimberley and Cape Town, it was clear that public meetings in tents proved less effective than house to house meetings and literature work. Elder Haskell advised Elder Hankins to conduct house meetings instead of public efforts when he arrived in the Eastern Cape. Elder Hankins and Tarr cooperated, and in April of 1890 a Sabbath School was organized with 26 members, and soon the third Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa was organized from the Willmore, Tarr, Davies, Sparrow, and Staples families.⁴¹ This church had a membership of 18 and was formed at Rokeby Park.⁴²

Elder Boyd continued holding meetings along the Vaal River into Transvaal, which was then still an independent state known as the South African Republic. He started to familiarize himself during this time with the African people and their customs. It was his intention to begin working with the native African people. This never materialized since his and his wife's failing health brought about their permanent return to America in 1891.

It became abundantly clear, however, that colporteur work was the way forward in South Africa. At a general meeting held mid-June 1890, reports were heard of the progress of the work, that colporteurs had gone as far as Natal with their literature.⁴³ It was then arranged for Mr. E. M. and Mrs. Morrison to come to South Africa from Australia to offer training in literature salesmanship.

The desire to have the Advent message taken to the indigenous people of South Africa resurged in 1893 when Pieter and John Wessels as delegates from South Africa took a donation of £3,000 with them to the General Conference. It was their hope that a mission station be set up among the African people.⁴⁴ This request did not receive ample consideration from the General Conference, and the work among natives in South Africa began without any help sent from the General Conference.

A proud descendant from the AmaXhosa chiefs by the name of Richard Moko, along with his wife, were the first Black South Africans to accept Adventism. He first heard the Advent message preached at meetings held in Kimberley in 1893 and was baptized in 1895.⁴⁵ He wrote the first isiXhosa tract to be circulated among his people and was granted ministerial credentials in 1897. He endured considerable hardships as a gospel worker, but a number of churches were planted as a result of his efforts.

In 1903 the South African Conference requested aid from the Foreign Mission Board to help establish a mission among the Xhosa people. Enough funds were sent to acquire a wagon that was used by Moko and his missionary associate G. W. Shone throughout the Ciskei. Missionary activity among the Xhosa people increased in the following years, and in 1911 the Maranatha congregation was organized with 27 members.⁴⁶ From here the work spread northward into Kwazulu-Natal and the Transvaal resulting in another mission being formed known as the Delgoa Mission.

In 1915 Richard Moko became the first Black South African to be ordained as a Seventh-day Adventist minister. Moko and Shone traveled extensively across the country, but a large part of their ministry was based in East London. The highlight of their ministry included finding a location for establishing the Maranatha Mission in Grahamstown. This mission was established under the supervision of Pastor W. S. Hyatt, the president of the South African Conference at the time. F. B. Armitage took over the leadership of the mission in 1907 and relocated it to Bethel in 1909 and renamed it Bethel School. In 1919 the lease was taken over by Charles Sparrow in order to farm the land, and the Sparrow family carried on with the mission.

The first colored Seventh-day Adventist convert can also be traced back to the diamond fields of Kimberley. Daniel Christian Theunissen was a farm worker employed by the Wessels family. Young Theunissen apparently did not respond to Adventism when Pieter Wessels made Saturday a non-working day.⁴⁷ Theunissen relocated to Cape Town in 1892 and went to work for A. T. Robinson at his home. He became friends with Robinson's son, Dores Eugene Robinson, who taught him the fundamental teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was baptized the following year in 1893 and "proved to be an effective church leader among his people for many years."⁴⁸

D. C. Theunissen first became a lay preacher and preached publicly on Sundays at the Salt River market close to Cape Town's city center. He reaped the fruit of his

efforts as a small group of interested listeners emerged. They continued to meet on Sabbath days for worship in a nearby hall.⁴⁹ Theunissen was employed as a full-time evangelist in 1905 and ordained as a minister in 1910. The first church for colored Seventh-day Adventists in South Africa was built by York Street, Salt River, in 1918. The church is still in use until this very day.

Institutions of the Church

Almost as soon as organizing the first local conference in South Africa occurred, the need for an Adventist school in South Africa became apparent. “Four Seventh-day Adventist families were employing private tutors in their homes,” and several children of the Wessels’ and other families attended Battle Creek College in America.⁵⁰ When rich diamond deposits were discovered on the farm of Johannes Wessels, the De Beers mining company bought the farm from the Wessels’ for £253,460. The Wessels family not only gave tithe and offerings from this income but donated large sums of money for setting up buildings for institutions and organization.

Helderberg College. When A. T. Robinson and his wife arrived in South Africa in 1892, they left their sons behind in the United States to continue with Adventist education. Land was purchased in 1892 from Ernest Ingle in Kenilworth,⁵¹ and the school building named Claremont Union College was completed by the beginning of 1893. The Cape Times, dated January 4, 1893, advertised the first invitation to prospective students, and on February 1, 1893 classes commenced with 65 students, half of whom were non-Adventist students. The school started out with three teachers from America, namely Mr. H. Lindsay, Miss S. Peck, and Professor Eli B. Miller, who also served as the principal. The Claremont Union College was the first Adventist educational institution outside of North America and offered primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Financial difficulty, coupled with the threat of urbanization, made it necessary to relocate the school after a number of years. The general consensus was that the sale of the building in Kenilworth would relieve the college of the heavy debt it had incurred. Housing developments in Kenilworth also impacted on the available land usage. A rural setting was necessary as the agricultural activities would help the students and the school financially. Physical work has been part of the Adventist educational philosophy since Ellen White first advocated it as part of the principles

of holistic education in 1873.⁵² These were the factors that led to the decision to relocate the school from Kenilworth to a more rural setting.

A farm located some 32 kilometers from Ladysmith, Natal, acquired by F. B. Armitage and paid for by the members of the Natal-Transvaal Conference for the purpose of setting up a mission station for the work among the Zulu people was considered to be the best location for the school. The farm known as Spion Kop was secluded from any prospect of urban civilization. There was ample land for farming and grazing, and the Tugela River provided an abundant water supply for cattle and irrigation.⁵³ Buildings were erected from materials salvaged from the Claremont Union College, as well as monies raised by fundraisers in preparation for the big move. Classes commenced on February 19, 1919 with an enrolment of 27 students.

Spion Kop turned out to be not so ideal after all. Its remote location made getting to and from the college, and getting essential supplies, a considerable hardship. The following reasons, which made relocating again necessary, were cited: “students in ministerial training had no opportunity for experience in actual ‘soul winning’ work without going a long distance from the college ... difficulties in transport to Ladysmith; unsuitable soil for general farming ... too far from business market” and emergency medical aid.⁵⁴ After having surveyed more than 50 farms in the Western Cape, Mr. Berger’s farm called Bakker’s Kloof was purchased in Somerset West for £10,000 on November 7, 1925. The South African Union Conference contributed £5,000, £2,725 was made from selling some of the ground at Spion Kop, and the remainder came from selling the Cape Sanitarium and individual contributions.

By 1928 the college was moved from Spion Kop to the Bakker’s Kloof farm. The location was ideal since it was out in the country yet close enough to civilization. The college adopted the name Helderberg College, named after the mountain behind the college. Helderberg College started with only two dormitory buildings in which were crammed not only rooms for student accommodation but a kitchen, dining hall, laundry, store rooms, chapel, library, laboratory, classrooms, and the business office. In 2018 the college celebrated its 125th anniversary. The college was renamed Helderberg College of Higher Education, and the campus remains an idyllic location and boasts of more than sixty buildings, including a church, administration building, auditorium, lecture buildings, a library, dormitories, flats and houses for married

students, staff houses, cafeteria, gymnasium, swimming pool, orchards, and a primary school, as well as a high school.

Bethel College. In 1904 Richard Moko and his associate, G. W. Shone, established the Maranatha Mission. The Maranatha Mission served as the mission station and training school for Black students. In 1908 Charles Sparrow offered a portion of his large farm nearly 50 kilometers from Grahamstown for the purpose of establishing the Maranatha Mission Station. The new mission opened here in 1909, and 60 students enrolled.

By 1916 it was evident that it would be in the best interest of the African people if the Maranatha Mission relocated. The African population around the Maranatha Mission had declined. A plot near Butterworth seemed satisfactory, and in 1917 this plot was purchased. The Maranatha Mission was moved there and renamed Bethel.

When the White school moved from Spion Kop to Bakker's Kloof in Somerset West, church leaders felt that Spion Kop was suited for the Black school. In 1928 the Bethel School relocated to Spion Kop where its name was changed to South African Training College, only to return to Butterworth in 1937.

Bethel Training College continued in Butterworth until it was closed shortly after the reorganizing of the Southern and South African Union Conferences to form the Southern Africa Union Conference in 1991. The circumstances that led to the closing of Bethel Training College were mainly due to the financial strain placed upon the reorganized Southern Africa Union Conference, which then had to maintain two colleges.

In its final years Bethel Training College offered three diplomas that were registered with the state: a diploma in accounting, a diploma in business management, and a diploma in education. The diplomas in accounting and business management were not popular and did not attract many students. Most of the students were drawn by the diploma in education for the teaching profession. Historically, Coloured and Black persons in South Africa were limited to teaching, nursing, and policing as professional careers. Many training colleges existed for the purpose of training persons of color as teachers. When the government of South Africa restructured the education system shortly after the end of Apartheid, most of the training colleges were absorbed by institutions of higher learning, although the government could not

absorb them all. The only colleges of education allowed to continue were those transformed to train students in scarce skills such as accounting, science, and mathematics. As a result, Bethel Training College, along with many other educational institutions, closed.

Apart from the three diploma courses registered with the state, Bethel Training College offered a program in theology that prepared Black pastors to enter the ministry. A plan to affiliate the theology program offered at Bethel Training College with Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, never materialized. While negotiations were underway, Oakwood was due for reaccreditation, and the theology program offered at Bethel Training College was discontinued. When Bethel Training College closed in 1991, students studying theology were transferred to Helderberg College to complete their studies,⁵⁵ but the primary and secondary schools were retained and continue until this day.

Good Hope College. A special school for Colored learners was started in connection with Claremont Union College. While Miss Hellen Hyatt taught the White learners in the church school, her mother, Mrs. Hyatt, taught the Colored learners elsewhere on the same grounds.⁵⁶ The first attempt at organizing a school for Colored Adventists occurred in October 1912 when Pastor Daniel C. Theunissen and Pastor Daniel May worked in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town.⁵⁷ They organized a small company that met in a rented hall in Parrow and established a school with Miss Isabel Petersen as the first teacher. The church school continued for a few years. The next attempt to cater for the educational needs of Colored Seventh-day Adventists was in 1929 at Salt River.

Seventh-day Adventist churches, in spite of financial constraints, endeavored to open church schools. Such church schools for Colored Adventists existed in Salt River, Wynberg, Elsie River, and Kensington in Cape Town. Elsewhere, church schools were opened in Durban, Natal, and Kliptown, Transvaal, in the late 1940s. Most of these church schools continued operating for years with the exception of the Salt River Church School. The Salt River Church School was in operation from January 1929 until April 1930 when the Good Hope Training School opened. The Salt River Church School was a temporary arrangement until a suitable rural site could be found for the establishment of an educational institution for the Coloreds.⁵⁸

Good Hope Training School opened on May 1, 1930, on a plot purchased along Klipfontein Road. The farm was called “Riverside” since it was situated on the banks of the Elsies Kraal River.⁵⁹ The name “Good Hope” was chosen with a double meaning. It was named after the Cape of Good Hope and also expressed the sentiments of its members for future education.

When Good Hope Training School opened, its curriculum included primary school education, three grades of secondary school education, as well as a course in tertiary education. Manual work was incorporated into the curriculum in line with the Adventist philosophy of education. The first principal of the institution was Miss A. V. Sutherland, and her assistants were Mrs. E. Heubner and Miss M. Africa. Thirty-five students enrolled when the institution opened in 1930.

In 1956 Good Hope Training School upgraded to junior college level when matric replaced standard 9 (grade 11) as the prerequisite for training courses.⁶⁰ It was renamed Good Hope Training College. Around the same time Good Hope Training College was faced with the same threat that Claremont Union College faced while it was situated in Kenilworth, increasing development in its surrounding area. A farm named Vorentoe (meaning “Forward” in Afrikaans) was purchased in Kuils River, and the institution was transferred there at the end of 1962.

On January 1, 1963 the high school and college divisions of the institution were established on the new campus in Kuils River. The school became known as Good Hope College “in keeping with developments in the educational field.”⁶¹ The primary school remained behind on the Riverside campus and was named Riverside Primary School. Presently the Riverside Primary School is still in operation and shares the Riverside campus with the beautiful Riverside church, the Danie Theunissen Hall, the Cape Conference bookshop, and a couple of apartments.

Since 1972 plans were considered to integrate third year theology students from Good Hope College with Helderberg College in order to complete a full four-year Theology Diploma. Both Helderberg and Good Hope College were institutions of the South African Union Conference, and it made no logical nor practical sense to divide resources to operate two small colleges that were merely 22 kilometers apart. Complete integration was first realized in 1974 when fourth year theology students from Good Hope College attended Helderberg College for the first time. At the beginning of 1975, third year theology students from Good Hope College were

allowed to attend Helderberg College. At the end of 1975, the Theology department at Good Hope College closed completely. By the end of 1976 all college classes ceased at Good Hope College, and Helderberg College became an integrated college institution for both White and Colored students.

When Good Hope College was established in Kuils River in 1963, a small primary school was also started in Kuils River. “On January 1, 1974, the Good Hope Primary School was established as a separate educational institution.”⁶² Having lost its college status, the institution became Good Hope High School on January 1, 1981. Both the primary school and the high school remain in operation independently under the administration of the Cape Conference today. Good Hope High School changed its name recently to Good Hope Adventist High School.

Currently Helderberg College of Higher Education is the sole Seventh-day Adventist tertiary institution in South Africa. South Africa has 18 Seventh-day Adventist schools operating as accredited private schools but following the National Senior Certificate curriculum of the Department of Education of the Republic of South Africa.

Plumstead Orphanage. Another institution owned by Seventh-day Adventists in South Africa was an orphanage. Fred Reed, a pharmacist from Kimberley, became the driving force behind this establishment.⁶³ Reed, along with Maria Wessels, Pieter Wessels’ mother, contributed liberally toward getting the orphanage erected. On March 8, 1985, the Plumstead Orphanage opened its doors. Unique features of the orphanage were that it followed a strict vegetarian diet, served two square meals a day, and followed a regular routine for schoolwork, exercise, and rest.⁶⁴

During August of 1897, the orphanage suffered a bad bout of publicity. A representative from the Cape Times visited the orphanage and wrote an article, emphasizing the peculiarities. What gained special interest, or rather indignation, from the public was the vegetarian diet; whereby the staff substituted a blend of almonds and peanuts as their main protein in place of meat and the practice of serving only two meals a day. The orphanage finally closed down at the end of 1900.⁶⁵

Claremont Sanitarium. A sanitarium was opened in Claremont on January 12, 1897.⁶⁶ Dr. R. S. Anthony and Dr. K. Lindsay were in charge of the sanitarium. Dr.

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R. S. Anthony came to South Africa for the first time in 1887 with the first missionary band sent from the General Conference. He later returned to America and attained his medical qualification. The sanitarium was located along Belvedere Road between Claremont and Newlands. At first the sanitarium accommodated 40 patients at a time. The sanitarium always operated at maximum capacity and often had to turn patients away due to limited space. Extensions were added and opened on February 22, 1899, with some notable guests in attendance. Guests included Mr. J. J. Bissett, the mayor of Claremont; Colonel Stowe, who was the U. S. Consul-General in Cape Town; and Dr. G. G. Eyre, the editor of the South African Medical Journal.⁶⁷

Special features of the sanitarium included monthly lectures to the public on healthful living and hydrotherapy treatment for a range of diseases. The sanitarium took special care to provide healthful vegetarian meals to their patients. The “medical and health work made a fairly wide impact,” but the church lost control of the sanitarium in 1904.⁶⁸ The sanitarium building, which belonged to the Wessels family, burned down in 1905. The property where the sanitarium once stood remains desolate until this day.

The Cape Conference (formerly the South African Conference) attempted medical work for a second time and opened the Cape Sanitarium in the orphanage building that closed in 1900. Dr. G. Thomason arrived in 1904 to take charge of the work until 1911 when he was called to become the Secretary General of the Medical Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Dr. W. C. Dunscombe and Dr. H. J. Williams succeeded him until Dr. John Reith became the medical director in 1920.

The sanitarium continued with considerable difficulty during the 1920s. Efforts made by the African Division to revive the sanitarium were futile, and the sanitarium no longer attracted public support. The sanitarium could not be maintained by the small White membership of the church and closed its doors in 1925.⁶⁹ Efforts made to establish a sanitarium again were of no avail. The medical work never revived in South Africa again.

Southern Publishing Association. When the first missionaries arrived in South Africa, they brought literature along. Literature work paved the way for the Adventist message in South Africa. Almost as soon as the work was started, the need to have a printing press locally was realized. Pastor Dores A. Robinson requested

help from the Review and Herald, and a small hand-printing press was sent in 1890.⁷⁰ The printing press was given the name South African Publishing Company and operated from the basement of the church along Roeland Street before it moved to Claremont Union College in 1896.

At first the press printed only announcements, sermons, and a monthly publication named *The South African Sentinel and Gospel Echo*, along with its Dutch counterpart, *De Wachter*. This monthly publication included theological discourses, articles on healthful living, religious freedom, Christian education, and a children's column.⁷¹ Books were still being imported. Literature was also prepared in South Africa's native languages. The first native translations of some of Ellen White's writings, including the well-known *Steps to Christ*, first appeared in isiXhosa, Sesotho, and isiZulu.

The press mainly served the printing needs of the conference and the sanitarium until the South African Union Conference took control of it toward the end of 1903 and expanded it. When it launched into commercial printing, the work became too much to be handled by the office of the South African Union Conference, and a separate publishing department was organized in 1916. This new organization became known as the Sentinel Publishing Company and occupied the building that previously belonged to the Claremont Union College, after it relocated to Spion Kop.

The publishing house continued along Rosemead Avenue for the greater part of the twentieth century, and in 1964 the name was changed to Sentinel Publishing Association (SPA). SPA published and printed the books for colporteurs, the Sabbath School mission quarterlies, Bible study guides, a magazine called *Signs of the Times*, the *South African Union Lantern*, and whatever mass printing needs the church had. Toward its final years, the SPA started doing commercial printing for the public.⁷²

Its name, however, became problematic. The Jehovah's Witnesses had a popular and trade-mark magazine known as the Sentinel. The Sentinel Publishing Association of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa became associated with the Jehovah's Witnesses, therefore they found it necessary to change the name. They decided to keep its initials as SPA and changed the name to Southern Publishing Association in 1983.⁷³

Financial difficulty led them to sell their properties along Rosemead Avenue in 1991 and relocate to a smaller facility in Ottery, Cape Town. They hoped that the profits made from the sale of the property along Rosemead Avenue would compensate for their financial difficulties they experienced at the time. Unfortunately, the new facility was smaller than the one along Rosemead Avenue, and they consequently had to downgrade from four color printing machines to two color printing machines that would fit into the new buildings. This resulted in a decline in business, which led them to finally close their doors and relocate to Bloemfontein in 2001. In Bloemfontein they no longer operated as a publishing company but rather as a distribution center.⁷⁴ The Southern Publishing Association closed in 2010, but the distribution center continues to operate under the name Home Health Educational Services (HHES) for literature evangelists.

Church Administrative Units

Pastor Asa T. Robinson is recognized for his major contribution toward the organizational structure of the church, not only in South Africa but also worldwide. The first local conference in Africa was organized under his leadership. On December 4, 1892, a session was convened at the Claremont College building. The highlight of their agenda was to discuss whether the mission in South Africa was strong enough to be organized into a self-supporting conference. On December 5, 1892, it was voted to request the General Conference to upgrade the South African Mission with its five churches and 128 members into the South African Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The officers of the new conference were A. T. Robinson (president), I. J. Hankins (secretary), and Mrs. N. H. Druillard (treasurer). The members of the Executive Committee were the Conference president, Pieter Wessels, Philip Wessels, Eli B. Miller (who had just arrived in South Africa to be the principal of the Claremont College), and J. H. Tarr.⁷⁵

When the South African Conference was organized under Robinson's leadership, he implemented an alternative system of operation. The General Conference plans committee of 1889 proposed "the idea of substituting subject-area departments within the conference structure in place of the variety of Seventh-day Adventist associations and societies."⁷⁶ Formerly the church did not have departments in their administrative units. Societies and associations were responsible for the work of their area, and conferences had to organize local branches of these associations or societies. For example, the Sabbath School Association was responsible for the

Sabbath School work. Today churches and administrative units have Sabbath School departments. Robinson was a member of the 1889 plans committee and introduced that plan in the South African Conference since he considered the conference too small to organize such associations and societies.

The departments proved to be a success in the South African Conference, and when A. T. Robinson was transferred to become president of the Victoria Conference in Australia, he implemented this departmental system there too. At first the departmental system was opposed by W. C. White and A. G. Daniells of the Australasian Union Conference, but it was later adopted by all the conferences of the Australasian Union Conference. In 1901 the General Conference not only reorganized the church's administrative structure by establishing union conferences after the model of the Australasian Union Conference but also integrated the departmental system, which was first tried in South Africa and Australia into all of its administrative units.

This reorganization consequently led to the organizing of the South African Union Conference in 1902. The South Africa Union Conference was comprised of the South African Conference, the Natal-Transvaal Mission Field, and the Rhodesian Mission Field. The Natal-Transvaal Mission Field was organized into a conference shortly thereafter, and the work of the Free State was shared between the South African and the Natal-Transvaal Conferences. The African Division was organized in October 1919 and coordinated the work in the territory from South Africa to Cameroon. When the African Division was organized, it took over the offices of the South African Union Conference in Claremont as its headquarters while the South African Union Conference relocated to Bloemfontein.

On September 7, 1930, the South African Union Conference took an action to separate churches along racial lines. The Cape Conference (formerly known as the South African Conference) approved the decision during the sitting of its Executive Committee two days later. The Cape Conference subsequently formed the Cape Field, which operated as a parallel organization administering the growing Colored work within the Union of South Africa. In the following years the “same situation existed in the Transvaal, Natal, and Orange Free State provinces—separate organizations for the different race groups.”⁷⁷ The Natal-Transvaal Conference separated into two conferences in 1958 to form the Transvaal and the Orange-Natal Conferences. The Colored work in both territories was administered by the Cape

Field, and the Black work was organized into mission fields--the South Bantu and the North Bantu Mission Fields. In 1959 the South African Union Conference organized the Cape Field into the Good Hope Conference.

The South African Union Conference reasoned that separating the church administrative units along racial lines would be favorable to God's work. In 1960 two groups were formed that worked separately but sat together when addressing specific issues. Group I managed the work of the Cape Conference, Orange-Natal Conference, Transvaal Conference, Good Hope Conference, and the Indian Field. Group II managed the work of the North Bantu, South Bantu, and South West African Missions. The North Bantu Mission field included the work in the territories of Basutoland (now Lesotho) and Swaziland (now Eswatini). This administrative separation led to the organization of two independent union conferences in 1965. Group I was the South African Union Conference, and Group II became known as Southern Union Conference.

In 1985 the General Conference gave a mandate to the South African and Southern Union Conferences to merge. This merger materialized later in 1991 to form the current Southern Africa Union Conference. In the years that followed, the local conferences were reorganized as well. The KwaZulu Natal-Free State Conference was organized in 1994 and became the first conference to cater for all races in its constituency. In 1997 the Good Hope and the Southern Conference (formerly known as the South Bantu Mission Field) merged to form the Southern Hope Conference. In 2006 the Cape Conference merged with the Southern Hope Conference to form the Cape Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The jurisdiction of the Cape Conference stretches over the largest territory in South Africa comprising the Northern, Western, and Eastern Cape provinces. The Trans-Orange Conference and the Transvaal Conference never merged and still exist as independent conferences serving the same territory.

The Trans-Orange Conference administers the work in the Gauteng, North West, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo provinces, plus a few churches in the Northern Cape and Free State provinces. The Transvaal Conference (which changed its name to Northern Conference of South Africa in 2014), cover the Gauteng, North West, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo provinces.⁷⁸ Its name Northern Conference of South Africa (NCSA) was given specifically to differentiate it from other conferences in the

union, such as the then Namibia Conference, which also had the same initials (NC).⁷⁹

Important Points in Membership

When the first church was organized in Beaconsfield, Kimberley, in 1887, the membership comprised 26 adults. When the South African Conference was organized in 1892, the church membership in South Africa had reached 128. When the South African Union Conference was organized in 1902, the church's membership stood at 351. It took the church twenty-five years since its inception to pass the 1,000 membership mark in 1912. From there onwards membership growth became more rapid. Within seven years the church reached 2,000 members in 1919, coinciding with the organization of the African Division.

Between 1945 and 1946, the South African church membership passed the 10,000 mark. Twenty years later, in 1966, when the Southern Union Conference was organized as a separate union conference to administer the work among the Black missions of South Africa, the combined membership of the South African Union Conference was 20,118. The first record of the membership of the two separate union conferences appeared in the 1967 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. One year following their reorganization, the statistics show that the South African Union Conference had 10,770 members, while the Southern Union Conference had 9,691 members.

Membership in the Southern Union Conference continued to grow at a faster rate than the South African Union Conference. By the time the two entities were merged in 1991, the South African Union Conference had 21,768 members, while the Southern Union Conference had 40,720 members, bringing the combined membership to a total of 62,488. When the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division was organized in 2003, the Southern Africa Union Conference membership was well on its way to reaching 100,000, with its 93,343 members out of the total 70,072, belonging to the churches in South Africa.⁸⁰ This represents a 49 percent growth rate since the two union conferences were merged to form the Southern Africa Union Conference in 1991. Finally, in 2012, the membership of the South African Church surpassed 100,000 members.

In 2014 the church in South Africa experienced a growth spurt when 12,153 members were added to the church as a direct result of the "Mission to the Cities"

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programs. The missionary book of the year, *The Great Hope*, was translated into the vernacular languages of South Africa, and 1.1 million copies of this book was distributed widely in preparation for the 182 outreach campaigns conducted in 91 cities. The latest (in 2020) available statistics show that the South African church stands at 144,311 members strong.^{[81](#)}

Effects of the Political Development on the Church

The rise of Seventh-day Adventism in South Africa coincided with the discovery of diamonds. Tensions between the Afrikaner Boers who governed the land and the British who possessed the investment capital necessary for mining led to one of the bloodiest wars fought in South Africa. The South African Civil War (the Anglo-Boer War 1899 to 1902) resulted in the loss of approximately 71,000 lives and also crippled the operations of the church in South Africa financially.

When Pieter Wessels' father died in 1892, his widow and children inherited his fortune. The Wessels family contributed largely, though not solely, to the financial prosperity of the church. When the South African Civil War erupted, the Wessels family's wealth became severely diminished due to real estate properties that lost market value. Their dissatisfaction with the Adventist missionary leaders from the United States of America caused them to decrease their financial contribution to the church. The following years presented great financial difficulty to the church and not until the African Division was organized in 1920, to take over the administration of the mission fields in South Africa, did the church become financially stable again.

In 1948 the National Party (NP) won the general elections and became the ruling government of South Africa. The NP's manifesto included apartheid laws. Prior to 1948, when segregation already existed in various forms, not all races had the franchise to vote in elections or stand for a seat in parliament. The land acts existed, which confined Black, Colored, and Indian races to demarcated areas. Many of these laws were legislated during the years of apartheid between 1948 and 1990, which consequently brought about several years of political unrest in South Africa.

When the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa seemed to follow the trajectory of segregation between racial groups, the conclusion made by some was that the church condoned *Apartheid*. But when the church started earlier in 1887, there were no racial segregation issues in the church. New converts simply joined the

church closest to them. But in 1925 there were calls for racial separation in the churches. Minutes of a Cape Conference Executive Committee of June 28, 1925 record the objection of the Wynberg Seventh-day Adventist Church to separate its church members on racial grounds.⁸²

There was a strong call for separation, and as *Apartheid* ensued, the church became all the more racially separated. Its administration began to be conducted separately—conferences and union conferences administered the work of the same territory but catered for different races. Educational institutions, too, were established to provide for the needs of different races—Helderberg College for White students, Bethel Training College for Black Students, and Good Hope College for Colored Students. According to one scholar, all these “reflected the paternalism of South African Whites toward persons of color at the time.”⁸³

The South Africa’s political situation led to further isolation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa from the divisions’ constituencies in Africa. Since 1952 the South African *Apartheid* ideology was condemned annually by the United Nations, and it was declared a crime against humanity in 1974. Earlier, in 1964, South Africa was banned from the International Olympic games and continued to be excluded until it rejoined in 1992 when the ban was lifted. Other sanctions and boycotts were imposed against South Africa such as the British Commonwealth leaders’ agreement in 1986 to impose economic sanctions against South Africa. These sanctions included, but were not limited to, “a ban on both air travel and investments in South Africa, as well as a ban on agricultural imports and the promotion of South African tourism.”⁸⁴

In 1979 church meetings were held in Africa to consider reorganizing the work into two major divisions, but excluding the two union conferences in South Africa. At the time, the South African and Southern Union Conferences were part of the Trans-Africa Division, which opposed the planned reorganizing hoping to avoid the impression that the world church was aligning itself with the countries and international organizations which were distancing themselves from South Africa. Nevertheless, the proposed reorganization followed through, and in 1983 the two union conferences in the South were separated from the African divisions and became attached fields of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

In 1985 the General Conference mandated the two union conferences in South Africa to merge into one organization. Deliberations followed and experienced heated discussions at a joint session at Helderberg College in 1991. However, the two union conferences successfully merged to form the Southern Africa Union Conference. The merger happened to coincide with the fall of *Apartheid*. South African President F. W. De Klerk lifted the ban on all opposition political parties, released Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990, and repealed the last of the *Apartheid* laws in 1991. The newly organized Southern Africa Union Conference, however, remained an attached field of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists until 2003 when the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division was organized, and the Southern Africa Union Conference was absorbed into it.

The residual effects of *Apartheid* are still felt in South Africa. It is, however, common to find mixed race church congregations in the urban areas of South Africa. Churches in rural areas remain racially separated, probably not because of racism but because of long lasting tradition and practical purposes such as the language used for worship.

Adventism's Place in the Country's History

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa has one tertiary educational institution, Helderberg College of Higher Education (HCHE). HCHE is located along 27 Annandale Drive, Helena Heights, in Somerset West. "Helderberg College of Higher Education is registered with the South African Department of Higher Education and Training as a Private Higher Education Institution. All programs are accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE). All qualifications are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as found on the Web site of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)."⁸⁵ The college is also accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities. The academic year is made up of two semesters: the first semester runs from January to June, while the second semester runs from July to December. HCHE offers seven degree programs and one higher certificate. These programs are run by three faculties: the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Social Science and Education, and the Faculty of Theology.

There are four Adventist high schools in South Africa and fourteen primary schools. All the schools are accredited with UMALUSI, the accrediting body of the

Department of Basic Education in South Africa and follow the National Senior Certificate (NSC) curriculum.⁸⁶ All schools are also accredited by the AAA. The general trend in all the schools is that the number of non-Adventist learners outnumber the Adventist learners. Baptisms are conducted annually for new believers at the schools.

A private psychiatric hospital known as Vista Clinic provides mental health services for persons aged 16 years and older. An initiative of Dr. Jappie Vermaak, the hospital is partially owned by the Adventist Professional Health and Humanitarian Services (APHHS). “The most frequent conditions treated are mood and anxiety disorders such as depression, bipolar disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorders.”⁸⁷ Vista Clinic is one of the largest private psychiatric hospitals in South Africa. It can admit 158 patients while catering for the needs of day patients, as well.

The Adventist Community Services (ACS) in South Africa has established an organization known as Meals on Wheels Community Services South Africa (MOWCS). MOWCS is an initiative of Dr. Dennis Baird and is entirely owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. MOWCS provides nourishing meals to the struggling elderly persons and operates kitchens throughout South Africa. MOWCS provides 31 million meals annually at 187 branches and 700 service points countrywide. MOWCS has more than two hundred eighty vehicles and more than one thousand four hundred volunteer helpers who are involved at their own expense in delivering nutritious meals to the less fortunate. Additionally, MOWCS provides more than one hundred twenty thousand Christmas meals and hampers.⁸⁸

Since its inception in 1962, MOWCS has established frail care centers and retirement villages. These centers and retirement villages were established to provide frail care and full board and lodging, which are subsidized for the aged persons who cannot afford to pay the full amount or pay at all, for that matter.⁸⁹ A total of 18 frail care centers are operational in South Africa with nine in Gauteng, six in Kwazulu-Natal, two in North West, and one in the Western Cape Provinces.

Another humanitarian organization in the country is the Adventist Development Relief Agency South Africa (ADRA SA). ADRA is a global humanitarian organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that delivers relief and development assistance to communities and individuals. “ADRA SA works with

people in poverty and distress to create just and positive change through empowering partnership and responsible action.”⁹⁰ Some of ADRA SA’s programs include “mitigating drought relief and providing health screening,” providing temporary shelter for displaced persons from informal settlements following natural disasters and disaster relief, and erecting crop-shelter for the vegetables grown in the communities “to reduce water evaporation and improve soil mulch in an attempt to mitigate the negative impact of El-Nino drought conditions.” ADRA SA also partners with both the National and Free State Provincial Department of Social Development to assist more than seven thousand households with food and nutrition access on a daily basis. ADRA SA also coordinates a training program for HIV/AIDS prevention, which is of special note since South Africa has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world.

South Africa has recently been in the spotlight for gender-based violence. The General Conference Department of Women’s Ministries launched campaigns against the abuse of women and children. These campaigns are run under the slogan “enditnow–Adventists Say No to Violence.” The fourth Sabbath in August has been designated as Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day on the worldwide church calendar. In support of the Adventist Church’s Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day, thousands of church members in South Africa took a stand against the abuse of women and children abuse on August 26, 2017. Church members joined hands with law enforcement officers to denounce violence against women and children. Public meetings and marches were held throughout major cities in South Africa to affirm that Adventists do not condone violence against women and children. Since that historic day, it has become an annual event for the Adventist Women’s Ministry Departments to participate in the fight against gender-based violence.

Challenges to Mission and What Remains to be Done

Considering that the Adventist work on the continent of Africa started in South Africa and spread northwards, it is of great concern that South Africa has one of the smallest membership statistics in the division territory. South Africa’s church membership is 145,268. With a national population of approximately 58,780,000, South Africa has the highest member-to-non-member ratio of 1:405 in the SID.

This reality has also impacted the administrative units in South Africa. South Africa is the second largest country in SID, followed by Angola, and South Africa has only

one union conference. The Southern Africa Union Conference covers the largest territory and includes the Republic of South Africa, the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Kingdom of Eswatini, and the Republic of Namibia. The local conferences in South Africa also cover large territories. For instance, the Cape Conference of Seventh-day Adventists covers the Northern, Western, and Eastern Cape provinces of South Africa, three of the country's largest provinces with a combined territorial area of 671,317 square kilometers. This makes the Cape Conference one of the largest conferences in terms of land mass in the world, yet it has a significantly small membership compared to many conferences with smaller areas. Church officers often need to travel great distances to get from one part of the conference or union conference to another.

South Africa has earned the label of “Rainbow Nation” as a testimony to its diversity. South Africa recognizes eleven official languages. As a result, the church has the challenge of presenting the Advent message using a diversity of methods, as one standard approach would hardly do justice to the national diversity.

The Adventist church in South Africa is also spreading its message in a religiously diverse context. Colonialists brought and introduced their own religious practices into South Africa. While these were mainly Christian denominations, British colonialists who occupied the Natal coastline also brought many indentured laborers from India to work the sugar cane fields of Natal. These laborers and other immigrants also brought their religious practices with them. South Africa therefore has a large variety of non-Christian religions, such as the African Traditional Religion, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists. Not only does the Adventist Church in South Africa compete against differing religions, but many Black South Africans retain their cultural practices and traditions upon conversion to Christianity. The church has to combat with many of these traditional practices that are not in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. Some of these practices include polygamy, which is culturally acceptable to some, and beliefs in divination and in ancestors as mediators between man and God.

South Africa's *Apartheid* history had far reaching effects that are still felt today and for years to come. The injustices done to persons of color by the *Apartheid* regime are still reported to still be far from being resolved, and the ongoing demands for restitution certainly present an obstacle in the church's work of spreading the everlasting gospel.

Not only are racial practices still rampant in the country in many ways, but tribalism is believed to still exist amongst many of the Black African cultures in South Africa. It therefore remains a great challenge for the church in South Africa to thrive under such circumstances. Xenophobic behavior has also been displayed in South Africa. Recent xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals put South Africa in a negative spotlight internationally. The church in South Africa is therefore presented with multiple challenges of effectively providing a house of prayer and a refugee shelter for all nations (Isaiah 56:7), as well as demonstrating national patriotism.

Lastly, South Africa is considered the eight most developed country in Africa.²¹ Its economic growth rate has attracted many foreign nationals from all over Africa and parts of Asia. The constant influx of foreign nationals is perceived to place a strain on South Africa's market, which has led to the agitation displayed by South Africans toward foreign nationals. Along with South Africa's economic development comes the threat of increasing secularization. As a result, the church in South Africa is losing more and more young people due to the influence of secularization. The onus rests upon the church to be innovative enough in order to rejuvenate its outreach methods while remaining doctrinally sound.

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ADVENTIST HISTORY AMONG AFRICANS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Thula M. kaSoqothile Nkosi

Editorial Note: This paper was prepared by me. It is a very abridged presentation of a 240-page text on the historical development of Black Adventism in Southern Africa. The larger manuscript is being prepared for a launch soon as a book. The title is **SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES: A Socio-ethical Evaluation of Black Adventist History in South Africa**. Four friends in the Kelvin-on-Athol Church gave me a retainer for two and half years. They sponsored research I did on our story. They also hired a vehicle for me to drive to a nearby country. The recent eight-part On-line discussions done on Black history from that church were but a small inkling of our work. Note that this lecture has been prepared in American Received English. The typist used this spelling culture.

Introduction

The initial evangelization of Africans by Adventist missionaries from North America was inspired by an understanding of Christ's evangelistic mandate as stated in Scripture¹. Not long after the church was organized in 1860 some persons were agitated by a sense of mission which initially localized itself within the United States, but in time led to the globalization of the Adventist faith. This missionary movement began in earnest in the 1870s when the church dispatched its first overseas missionary in the name of John Andrews. A decade later, after a special letter of request from Pieter Wessels reached the General Conference in 1886, a group of missionaries was sent to South Africa². This small group of men and women landed on the shores of this country in July 1887³, and soon divided itself into two main bands, one working within the Cape Peninsula while the other initiated work in the diamond fields in Kimberly.

Africans Pre-evangelized by other Agencies

When Adventist missionaries began their work among African people, they found communities that had already been partly evangelized by other Christian denominations and missionary societies. Some perceptive African believers were

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beginning to defect from missionary churches – especially the Methodist Church – for reasons ranging from cultural conflict to self-determination.⁴ This phenomenon of religious independentism bore the name **Ethiopianism**. The Ethiopian Movement swept across sub-Saharan Africa like a veld fire between the 1890s and 1940, leading to the emergence of thousands of religious formations known as *African Indigenous or Independent Churches* (AICs) with a faith culture largely marked by syncretic tendencie.⁵ At the same time there was political conflict between the English and the Dutch (Afrikaans speaking communities) over issues of sovereignty, which climaxed in the South African war, commonly called the Anglo-Boer war.⁶ Spicer and Swanepoel noted that the war had a negative effect on the progress of Adventist mission.⁷

First African Converts

One Saturday afternoon in January 1895 an African man entered a church hoping to listen to a sermon. This was Richard Moko, a teacher who had come to Kimberly from Eastern Cape. Instead, he found a group of white believers engaged in Bible Study. The speaker was Stephen Haskell who had come to South Africa to assist in consolidating the fledgling missionary activities of the church⁸. After showing interest in what he heard, Moko received a series of Bible lessons, which led to the acceptance of Moko and his wife into the fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Beaconsfield through the rite of baptism. Thus 1895 marked the formal entry of African people into the Adventist faith in South Africa.⁹

Around that time another African family joined the church. This was the family of David Kalaka who had been a member of the French Protestant Church.¹⁰ Kalaka initially traveled around Lesotho as a translator for A.O. Olsen, a former President of the General Conference. It was during these translation trips that he took interest in Adventist doctrines.¹¹ He became instrumental in establishing Kolo Mission, and later was joined by his sons, Murray and Sekopane, in pioneering work in other parts of Lesotho. David Kalaka passed away in 1903 after his health-weakened considerably.¹² His children and descendants have lived near Emmanuel Mission for many years after assisting in the founding of this school in 1910.¹³

By this time Moko had been ordained,¹⁴ becoming the first indigenous person to join the gospel ministry of the Adventist Church in the subcontinent. Moko received orientation into the Adventist ministry in Cape Town after which he was sent to the

Eastern Cape where he worked extensively for the Xhosa speaking people.¹⁵ In conjunction with the other ministers Moko founded Maranatha Mission in 1908-9 in the vicinity of Grahamstown.¹⁶ This small institution was shut down in 1916 and relocated to Bethel Mission eight kilometers south east of Butterworth.¹⁷

Remains of Maranatha could still be seen in the early 1980s. It should be clear that the establishment of educational centres led to the creation of the earliest nucleus of black clergy in the church as well as founding of the black church's earliest congregations. Mention must be made here that despite the fact that the first black accessions to there

were recorded in the Northern Cape, greater numerical growth occurred in the Eastern Cape for simple reasons that the latter was more peopled than the former and was located near the Indian Ocean which is warmer than the Atlantic and more habitable.

Progress after World War I

Swanepoel records that 1897 marked the beginning of Adventism in the Witwatersrand. No record, however, is known of the presence of blacks in the church at this time in this part of South Africa. It can safely be postulated that since the South African War caused extensive harm across the country, blacks were not readily attracted to the Adventist faith. Besides, this war was soon followed by the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906, which was wrongly attributed by the English colonial government to the influence of the leaders of the Ethiopian movement.¹⁸ The Bhambatha Rebellion affected Natal in the main, but had wide implications for race relations in the country. Its immediate cause was conflict around taxation.¹⁹

It has been noted already that the war of 1899-1902 slowed down Adventist mission. This can be seen in the fact that some thirty years after the arrival of the first Seventh-day Adventist missionaries the South African Union Conference (organized in 1892) could report only 256 black and 950 white persons in the church's records.²⁰

The demise of Maranatha made room for the growth of Bethel College. Bethel began after the Union Committee commissioned Tarr, an early founder of missions, to leave the Maranatha area and trek to north of the Kei River. Moving on a four-wheel horse-drawn wagon, the Tarr family reached the town of Butterworth where they lived for a year before purchasing the plot where Bethel is located. This 300-acre

piece of land was bought with money from the sale of a wheat harvest the Tarrs had grown soon after they landed in the Transkei. Bethel had been a sheep farm owned by a certain Mr. Crossley. Soon after a few schoolrooms and boarding quarters were built, Bethel admitted its first group of scholars. These were given elementary Bible training on a 50-50-work study program. The first class of completers left Bethel in 1920.²¹ These men became the foundation group of a ministerial force that has grown, evangelized and planted Adventism in many parts of our land and in a handful of neighboring countries.

KwaZulu-Natal

While Bethel was developing, Adventist mission was making successful inroads into the African communities in Natal and Zululand. It was particularly the presence of Spion Kop College (1928-1937) near Ladysmith that facilitated the spread of Adventism in Natal. Spion Kop had come into existence as a successor of Claremont Union College (1893-1917), which the church ran as its first educational institution in South Africa. It was also the closure of Spion Kop, which consolidated Bethel's development when some staff members and resources were relocated to Bethel.

East Griqualand

Between 1925 and 1926 discussions took place between the leaders of the church and those of the Salvation Army. The intent was the purchase of Cancele Mission near Mt. Frere. Adventist operation began there in 1927 and has continued to this day. Cancele, now a full secondary school, was initially meant to serve the people of the Cape. Over the decades, however, its students have come from all parts of South Africa.

Land Acts and Church Mission

It should be borne in mind that the Land Act 1913²² led to more exoduses of blacks from certain places they had copied for decades, if not generations, to the emerging industrial town. Apart from depriving Africans the right to land, the 1913 Act caused new population groupings around the country, which determined the geographic pattern, which black Adventist demography would follow. From the 1920s the growth pattern of black Adventism assumed a perceptible rural-urban trend leading to a church community, which, for some two decades thereafter, displayed tendencies of colonial rural-migrant sociology.

The Gauteng Area

The 1920s also saw the birth of Adventism among blacks in the East Rand township of Payneville, which influenced other black settlements in the East Rand. The appearance of the Adventist faith on Payneville was the work of Pastor Mnanzana who had initially arrived in Springs as a colporteur from Ermelo in Mpumalanga Province between 1926 and 1928. Some family who bought literature grew interested in the Adventist faith and left its original church. Soon a group of Adventist believers was formed into a congregation. The Payneville church later opened a school, which ran in the church building for thirty-two years. Payneville and other African townships like it were destroyed in the wake of the forced removals the National Party government instituted after the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950.²³ The Payneville Church came to an end in the mid-1960s, along with a number of other churches in that area such as Old Brakpan, Dukathole and Charters. Payneville gave birth to the churches in Kwa-Thema and Rest in Peace, while the church in Tsakane succeeded Brakpan.

In the West Rand churches had been born in Sophiatown, Alexandra, Orlando and Jacksonsdrift, among others. Another older church here was Pimville. These churches gave birth to twenty-some churches found in Soweto today. The oldest Church building in Soweto was built in 1936. The Orlando West church used it until recently when it was demolished for a larger structure. In the meantime, churches were springing up in many other parts of the country because of the evangelistic zeal that the early clergy infused into the congregations.

Botswana

The birth of Adventism in Botswana is attributed to the arrival of medical missionaries, in particular Dr Kretchmar. More instrumental, however, was the role of Ntebogeng Motshwareledi of the Ba-Ngwaketse tribe. This woman, born of royalty, was born in Kanye in 1882 as a child of Bathoen. She was related to the Bakwena royal family through her mother. Because of her formal education she regarded herself as a “standard bearer of modern culture, and as a leader.”²⁹ While her mother acted as a regent, Ntebogeng left the London Missionary Society and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which she promoted during her political career. Adventists, however, met much hostility from local councils, which were in the main, dominated by men who were pro-London Missionary Society. Despite this

opposition Ntebogeng used her links with Adventism to establish medical care centres, notably Kanye Hospital.³⁰ Adventism has been a popular faith in Botswana with many of its adherents occupying prominent positions in the community and in government. The former president of Botswana, Dr Quiet Masire, is known to have strong sympathies for the Adventist Church through an association he developed with the church's medical work.

eSwatini

In eSwatini Adventism was introduced by C. Rogers an American Missionary. At that time Pastor John Hlubi, then a teacher in Ermelo (Mpumalanga) and also an organising secretary of the African National Congress. He was also a servant of the English colonial Government in his country. Hlubi's conversion to Adventism occurred through an evangelistic effort by a Coloured person in Ermelo. His acceptance the Adventist message and began one of the most fruitful ministries in the history of our church in this subcontinent²⁸. After surviving gross hostility from a local chief in southern part of the country, Hlubi established a church in Mbukwane, which led to the opening of a school that has been in existence since 1925. It was from eSwatini that the Adventist message moved into the eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga) where a school was later opened in the church at Wesselston Township near Ermelo. There is thus a connection between the entry of the gospel in the Mpumalanga region and its arrival in the East Rand through Mnanzana from the Cape.

- **In eSwatini now the church runs five schools in a country whose population is far outstripped by the population of Soweto. I was part of an inspection team appointed by the SAU some eight years ago when I visited these schools. In Mbukwane in the south there are three institutions – a primary school and a secondary school.**

Namibia

The appearance of Adventism in Namibia was initiated by a white government officer. He invited Adventist missionaries from the Cape to plant church work there. The church has grown slowly there. The most successful work has been in the Eastern Caprivi region. The church has a primary school in Windhoek with staff who are miserably paid. I spoke to them three and half years ago. The sad reality is that the church in Namibia is divided tribally. The Caprivian community wish to be

independent from Namibia. Some Adventists are in prison now for long periods of time for participating in a military coup against the state. The SAU needs to study the nature of the church in that land.

During my week of spiritual emphasis for youth in Windhoek Central I was confronted by a strange situation. On Wednesday I spoke on the presence of African people in the Bible. The following evening, I was called to an elders' council. The reason was that some members had complained that my presentation was nothing but politics. This is the reason why I have attached the presentation here. I added nothing to what you read in this paper. I had to apologize with a lump in my neck. The university youth loved the presentation, but adults who could not be exposed to me were the problem. To this day I wonder what my real crime was. My simple conclusion is that many of our people have been colonized and brainwashed by white Adventist sociology and theology.

Northern Transvaal (Limpopo)

Tarr who was the instrumental in the establishment of Bethel was also asked to move north where he founded Shiloh Mission not far from Pietersburg.³¹ Shiloh, like Maranatha and Spion Kop, did not live long. In the early fifties the South African Union Committee studied the possibility of closing the school after it became clear that the church was facing problems with the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr Hendrik F. Verwoerd, in securing permission to start a boarding school there. The decision was then made that Shiloh should be sold. Talk about the fate of this institution occupied several sittings of the SAU Committee from 1951 to 1957. A decision of the Southern Africa Division (later Trans-Africa Division) 259-55, reads,

On request of the South African Union, and Shiloh Mission has proved through the years to be unsuitable for carrying on mission work,

VOTED: To authorize the sale of Shiloh mission on the understanding that the funds accruing from the sale will be held in trust to re-establish the work in that area at another site, following the report of a commission.

The final decision to sell Shiloh was taken on July 14, 1957 with the understanding that the proceeds will be "re-invested with the Division Council".³² Thus Shiloh became a lost chapter in the history of Advent mission in the African community. To this day the black church waits to hear about what happened to the funds referred

to above. The establishment of Shiloh was paralleled by the entry of Adventism in such places as Seema and Gilead where the church ran small schools. It took the effort of Pastor M. Mkasi and Brother Mudziwa and others to consolidate the work of the church in that area. Mudziwa met Adventism in Cape Town.

Racial Organisation

In 1953 the church held a session in Bloemfontein, Free-State Province. This session was marked by heated exchanges between white members (mainly Afrikaners) who advocated acceptance of the National Party doctrine of racial partition and anti-partitionists who desired to see the church maintain a non-racial tradition. The partitionists won and the church re-organized itself into two race-based structures—the South African Union Group One (Europeans, Asians, Coloureds) and the South Africa Group II (black African).

The first had its offices in Bloemfontein while the other was run from Johannesburg. The President of the latter was a Vice-President of the first which was the controlling body of the church in South Africa. This division of the church into racial entities became, in time, one of the miseries of the Adventist denomination in South Africa, and caused serious alienation, even hostility between primarily African and white Adventists. All church property was registered in the Bloemfontein office.

Black Responses to Racial Partition

In 1953 when the partition took place the black church had a membership of 5105 (South Bantu – 1718; North Bantu –3387).³³ In other words, it took 50 years for the black church to accumulate a membership of 5 000, a figure which was far outpaced by the figures of many mainline churches.

It was in the context of this slow growth that a man like Pastor J. Bacela organized the lay preachers of the Witwatersrand into councils for the purpose of evangelistic training and activity. These preachers' councils would, however, and unknown to him and other ministers, become the spearhead of a resistance spirit in the black church.

When what had happened in Bloemfontein reached the churches of the Johannesburg region, some leading figures of the preachers' structure in Soweto decided to mobilize the churches for protest action and for the demand for black

autonomy from white control. By the time of the 1958 General Conference Session a protest movement had emerged especially in Soweto. This movement coincided with the turbulent social- political climate of that time which had been created by the defiance programme of the African National Congress and its allies. The discontent in the world met a resonant note within the church. Besides, it was a time when Africa was declaring war on colonization. Thus, the 1950s were a period of special social conscientization in the African church. Harassed by the storms in the world, black Adventists sought for refuge in the church and there was none to find. The black church became a social orphan in the church during the apartheid years.

In the Witwatersrand the protest spirit was directed by what was known as the Lay Preachers Association under the leadership of Jeffrey Lolwane, Jeffrey Madi, Elijah Mathebula, C. Bendile, Aaron Mhlanga, J. Pilane, David Khoza, D. Nkohla, Japhta Nkosi, Christian Ntsikeni, and a host of other influential men. These men dispatched a memorandum of concerns to the local and international leadership of the church which was never addressed directly and transparently. Instead late General Conference President, Reuben R. Fighur, paid a visit to South Africa and did not talk to the black churches. His visit turned out to be inconsequential to the local churches. He did not address them. He only spoke to white people. This was in 1960.

The White Response

In June, the Trans-Africa Division – **without consulting the black pastors and churches** – dissolved the large Fields and created nine small ones which were reduced to six in 1962. These nine fields were each given a capital fund of R2000,00 (Two Thousand rand) out of a sum of R18 000, bequeathed to the black church on the dissolution of the North and South Bantu Mission Fields. This development brought a period of unprecedented hardship and poverty in the history of the black clergy.

Often field offices would be closed as ministers itinerated in the fields to collect funds for the payment of workers. Otherwise their salaries were not assured. It was during these years that black ministerial work suffered a heavy blow in its dignity. It was also during these years that the social conscience of the black church was almost fatally scarred and demobilized. The social philosophy of the black church was identical with that of the white church. The black church was virtually a spiritual

socio-ideological shock absorber of a primarily white political Adventist theology designed to legitimate exclusion and deprivation in the church and in the world. The decade immediately following the demise of the North-South Bantu Mission Fields were the Dark Ages of Black Adventism.

Movement into the 1970s and 1980s

In 1963 the TAD hosted a special meeting in Solusi University, near Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. It was termed Conference on African Trends. The purpose was to reflect on the political situation in Africa and its implications for churchmanship. The gathering was also designed to seek ways to develop indigenous leadership for the church. In those years a number of Adventist missionaries had experienced pain and other forms of pressure by the wave of decolonisation which late Harold Macmillan described as the “winds of change” in a speech made in the South African parliament in 1960.

Not long after the Solusi Conference some black ministers from some African countries (South Africa inclusive) were taken to Solusi for a brief course on leadership. A special crash course on finance was run by an officer of the SAU Group II in Johannesburg who issued the trainees a small certificate signed in his name. Other developments that followed thereafter eventuated in the total separation of the black and white churches with the formation in November 1965 of the Southern Union Mission, a structure created with the express purpose of serving African believers. During its first ten years this Union Mission was administered by white persons. A black person only became president in November 1975. This was Pastor Paul M. Mabena who led the Union for ten years.

By this time school-going youth had formed the Seventh-day Adventist Students Association (SDASA, 1967). SDASA was formed to restore, to consolidate and inform the spirituality of the church’s school-going young people. The problems that SDASA was meant to address had nothing to do with persons engaged in distant education. It was direct social contact with non-church education that was considered a threat to the church’s youth. Hence the incubation of the Association within the youth department.

The version of the Association which has evolved and entrenched itself in the church is not the model of the founding conference. Nevertheless, SDASA has played a

notable role as a conservatory of the church's youth in the past fifty years. The association has helped many youths to cross the conceptual chasm between education (especially higher education) and spirituality; a chasm which was regarded as sacrosanct and God-ordained by the pre-1967 generation.

From Structure to Ideology

Whereas earlier protest activity in the black constituency focused on matters of structure, policy and mission, a new movement which emerged in 1972 spent its energies on matters of social and political ideology.

Between 1972 and 1974 the defunct Trans-Orange Field and the Southern Union found themselves confronted by a Black Consciousness orientated movement within the Soweto churches and others in the environs of Johannesburg. This movement, called the Memorandum Movement (MM) by its detractors, was not as structured as the Lay Preachers Association of earlier years. However, while Black Consciousness Philosophy was not the official ideology of the Memorandum Movement, its appearance was contexted within a broader spectrum of liberation politics rooted in the BC vision of society. The Memorandum was authored by Pastor Wellman Ntwana who died recently in the Eastern Cape, Onkgopotse Tiro and Thula Nkosi.

Some pastors supported the sentiments of the MM while others were vehemently opposed to it, arguing that the movement had strayed into the realm of politics. The intent of the MM was to remove missionary dominance from the black church and espouse equality of believers and black self-determination. It saw the black church as devoid of self-agency and self-articulation. Indeed, the black church and its clergy were institutions cast in a colonial dependency complex which called for thorough-going psychic cleansing and liberation on the part of its membership. The MM was an attempt to reverse colonialism in the sinews of the black church and to empower it physically for relevant witness in South Africa.

Some prominent members of the MM Executive were Abram Sekgaphane (chairman), James Radebe, Danny Mapela, Thula Nkosi (secretary), Phanzi Magoso, Edwin Mekoa (the last two came from Springs), Washington Sixolo and Onkgopotse Tiro, a prominent leader of the BC Movement in South Africa and a popular student leader. Tiro died of a letter bomb on Friday, February 01, 1974 in

Botswana. His escape from South Africa and his tragic death had a signal effect on the spirit of the MM.

- The bomb that killed Tiro had been packaged in South Africa. It was delivered by males who were his close relatives. They were hired by South Africa and some persons in the Bophuthatswana government. Currently, top-level state officials are hindering the full investigation into Tiro's death. I have learnt this fact from some leaders in the Azanian People's Organisation. Two of Tiro's own relatives in three Soweto churches have also confirmed this to me.

State of the Black Church

At the beginning of the 1980s the black membership stood at 18 000. In December 1981 the church in Eastern Caprivi Strip – a region attached to Namibia – was connected to the church in South Africa. Caprivi brought a membership of 3 000 which changed the earlier figure to 21 000. In that year the black churches had been asked to respond to a serious concern for race relations which had come from a memorandum written to the General Conference by a section of the Coloured church constituency in the Cape. The memorandum decried racism in the church and all its manifestations. Apart from crucial moral factors pertinent to racial injustice, the concern of the Coloured sector which was later shared by the African church arose in the climate of the political turbulence, which began with the June 1976 student marches in Soweto. Discussions on race relations which took place at that time signaled the advent of a process of deliberations and consultations which culminated in the dissolution of the white-base South African Union Conference and the black Southern Union Mission in November 1991. This structural unification received impetus from processes set in motion in 1984 and in March 1991. But whether the unification is genuine or not remains to be proved.

The upshot from the unification process is that the black church – at least in the past two decades – has begun to see itself as part of a broader family of believers from all race backgrounds expressing a common faith and hope in God. Thus, even as far back as 1983 Towards Christian Unity, a Catholic publication, saw the Adventist community as a growing phenomenon in South Africa. In a general population of about 40 million, this paper reported that there were some 100 000 persons across the racial line who claimed to be adherents of the Adventist faith. However, the story of

black struggles in the church cannot be completed without mention made about the intensification of the liberation struggle and its ideological impact on black Adventists.

SDAYACO

(Seventh-day Adventist Youth Action Committee)

As the black church moved into the 80s it found itself surrounded by an intensified liberation struggle. The nature of events was such that some form of moral response, albeit feeble and unfocussed, had to be made by the church in an attempt to help its members define their spirituality in the context of oppression and contending anti-oppression politics. It was, however, frustrating, especially to a politically conscious young generation, when the church could not spell out its position on issues of injustice and the bloody war that was staged within and outside of the country's borders. The ideological climate and the moral indecisiveness of the church—especially its black ministerial leadership—led to the birth of SDAYACO, a small body of zealous youth (based in Soweto), which espoused in its Constitution and Manifesto principles of Black Consciousness within a Marxist perspective.

Between 1984 and 1986 the black church, especially in Gauteng, saw a group of young men within its ranks advocating an ideological position which, in the thinking of many, was diametrically opposed to the social thought that marks mainstream Adventism both here and in other parts of the world. SDAYACO subscribed to Black Theology/Liberation perspectives and challenged the ministry and the church to clearly identify themselves in the context of the whole struggle for liberation in South Africa. The black clergy, unfortunately, could not do this primarily for two reasons.

1. The first was that the black church did not have a theology of context since it was, and still is, rooted in a universalistic paradigm of faith which has senselessly globalized a Eurowestern understanding of spirituality and salvation. The black church is a mission church existing at the behest of Eurocentric thought and preferences.
2. Flowing from the above, the black church could not deal with the liberatory and highly philosophic agenda of SDAYACO because social liberation, as a concept and aspiration, does not constitute an aspect of historic Adventist

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theological reflection. This is caused by the fact that the church is of North American origin. Its whole theological tradition has developed without the serious input of people of the Third World. Adventist theological discourse is essentially a Eurocentric endeavour, which has been generally void of the concerns of the Third World.

(To be continued)

References

1. Matthews 28:18-20
2. William A Spicer, Our Story of Missions (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1921) pp. 208-209
3. Ibid., p 209
4. Peter Hinchliff, The Church in South Africa (London: SPCK, 1968) See Chapter 4, "Ethiopianism: Christianity and Politics," pp 90-97
5. Paul Makhubu, Who Are the Independent Churches? (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1988) pp. 13-15
6. Paul Maylam, A History of the African People of South Africa: from the Early Iron Age to the 1970s (Cape Town & Johannesburg: David Phillip, 1988) p 137
7. L. Francois Swanepoel, "Origin and Early History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, 1886-1920," (MA thesis, University of South Africa, 1972) p 86
8. Spicer, p. 225
9. Ibid., p 225
10. Ibid., p.225
11. Ibid., p225
12. Swanepoel, p 41
13. Interview the writer conducted on Mrs. Paulina Nkosi, August 31, 1996, Emmanuel Mission, Lesotho. Mrs. Nkosi was the widow of Pastor Joseph Nkosi who worked and died in Lesotho in the early 1930s. She died in 2005 in Soweto. These were the parents of Gibson (now in the USA) and Japhta Nkosi. Their father and mine were brothers.

14. Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, Vol. 10 (Washington DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1976)
15. Swanepoel, p 42
16. Spicer, p 227
17. Interview conducted by writer on Eric Tarr, son of Bethel College founder (D. Tarr), April 1985, Bethel College
18. Hinchliff, p 94
19. Maylam, p 141
20. Spicer, p 211
21. Interview with Tarr
22. The Land Act of 1933 displaced thousands of Africans from lands, which they had occupied for generations, even centuries where they could not have land tenure.
23. The Group Areas Act designated certain parts of the country as special reserves for white people while blacks were relegated to spots far from towns and places of work, many of the existing black townships were created in the wake of this Act.
24. Maylam, p 162
25. See Minutes of South African Union Conference Executive Committee 1915-1921. Further South Africa Division "Outlook" XXII, April 1924, p 5
26. See Pule Magethi, Thula Nkosi, God or Apartheid: A Challenge to South African Adventism (Braamfontein: Institute for Contextual Theology, 1991)
27. See Alven Makapela, The Problem of Africanity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, two Volumes, (Unpublished research, 1995). I also have the final print.
28. Spicer, p. 228
29. Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, eds., The Birth of Botswana: A History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910 to 1966 (Botswana: Longman, 1987) p. 21