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***“In a time of universal deceit, telling
the truth is a revolutionary act.”***

English satirist, George Orwell – Author of *ANIMAL FARM*

A Special Message to Dr Ted Wilson President of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

This paper confronts features of South African Adventism that need bold critique and urgent rejection. These are collectively and double-sided, *Eurowestern coloniality and racism, and on another side, and African institutional backwardness and fear, on the other.*

Both African and European pastors in this country will never tell you that the unification of the black and white Unions in this land some thirty years ago was a fraudulent act. This the reason why the Transvaal Conference, now the Northern Conference, has consistently rejected unification with the African Trans-Orange Conference. I have read their papers on unification. I keep them in my files.

Frankly, as far as this reality stands in this country, you are a leader of a racially divided church. In the northern half of South Africa Africans and Europeans are structurally and socially divided. The proposed gathering you will speak to in the agricultural show ground near Soweto, is a classical sham and lie. *You are being hoodwinked by local pastoral leaders to think that the church here is one when it is not and has never been.*

This binary reality, coupled with an unsalvific intuitional socio-ecclesiology, has caused moral and institutional depression and missiological stagnation in South African Adventism, especially black Adventism, in a land where historical

precolonial religiosity abounds. Adventism in South Africa is missionally flaky and numerically stunted.

It is a scandal that after more than a century of presence in this land, Adventism has not harvested more than a quarter million persons into the church. We are an undergrown ideologically deviant child who speaks like an adult.

This is one of the four reasons why some persons in the black church argue that African Adventists must secede from the Bloemfontein office. They reason that we Africans shall not grow as long as we pretend to be united with whites when we are not! Whites do not need us.

Black and white leaders in this land will use us during your visit to this country to validate a gruesome falsehood – **that we are one when we are not.** Caucasian

Adventists in this country do not want us in their churches. This the reason why many historically white churches in the country have been deserted by whites. Some have been sold. **We are as colonially racist now as we were in the pre-1994 period.**

In this country Adventist pastors—both black and white - do not tolerate anybody who criticises this church. Let me tell you something. This is a typical comatose medieval Catholic tendency that must stop if this church will be a realistic witness of Jesus Christ to our people.

I make bold to tell you that currently some deeply concerned African members of the African section of the church plan to register **a blacks-only Adventist church with the South African government not long before now.** Once this occurs the rest will be history. Your office has failed to tell whites in this church to comply or ship out. You have been warned.

Contact Number 076 681 9039

Adventism has Failed South Africa

Seventh-day Adventist theology and mission have miserably and phenomenally failed to liberate African people from western colonisation, racist oppression, and material deprivation. Because this theology is foundationally and historically a thought construct of Eurowestern systematic theologians, it leaves no room for thought systems from other continental realities and experiences. *This is the reason why white Adventists in South Africa were central in the military oppression and denigration of African people. Some even functioned as*

intelligence operatives in the apartheid military system.

The above reality and associated factors make the merger of the Southern African Union Conference and the Southern Union Mission a colossal fraudulent machination that has hoodwinked African Adventism (pastors in particular) into superstitious unity with racist whites. How you feel about what I have just said is, frankly, your own problem. My task is to tell you the truth in your face.

February 2023

South African Adventism is a pretentious semi-fraudulent thought and missionary system. It needs bold and deeply incisive and radical re-examination and recalibration. It remains a hospital in which chronic patients (pastors) operate as doctors when they themselves are sick and madly convinced that they have the right medicine for the patients. This is the reason why African pastors act as a protection shield to give safety to their white counterparts.

The strange unAfrican reactions of the Trans-Orange Conference leadership in the persons of Stephen Motha, Beauty Wakaba and Nditsheni Mahamba, then TOC officers, to the 32-page text, ***GOD OR APARTHEID: A Challenge to South African Adventism*** (1991) by Pule Magethi and Thula Nkosi, provided the most typical responses of House Niggers to a master's house on fire. I still owe Thomas Bradfield a response to the strange letter he wrote to me. I will do so not long from now whether he still breathes or not. **No white person will tell me how I should response to pain he/she is causing me.**

The Adventist Church in the African community needs urgent serious transactional analysis of its present condition and historical direction into the future. Its silence over its institutional paralysis, if not near-death, calls for a rude awakening from concerned members.

Listen: *South Africa is going through an unprecedented revolutionary time in its history. All features of its past and present are being re-examined and*

discarded by a critical African citizenry that has jettisoned its fear of authority and consequences.

Adventism must awake from its long self-induced historical slumber. This is not the time for institutional and missional somnambulism! The long colonial night of institutional sleepwalking is over. We either wake up or perish in the rising currents of present national and international history. Ellen White told us, "The final movements will be rapid ones."

A New Adventist Academic Organisation in Johannesburg

I write as a member of a new Adventist academic formation in Gauteng. Some of us have established a new academic organisation of lay theologians in southern Gauteng. We have no time to waste over timid initiatives from local Adventist administrative offices that are obsessed with tithe and missional idleness. Soon, as the movement grows, its voice will reverberate across the Adventist skies in this land.

We mean real business. We are not establishing a new Adventist Church. ***We are giving rise to a new and contextually responsive and responsible Adventist intellectuality and vocality over the troubled waters of our South African existence.***

The project is now registered with the appropriate organs of the State. Soon we shall see the birth of an independent theological seminary in South Africa.

Note this!

Some of us are creating and expressing our own biblical theological perspectives and routes from within the South African experience in the context of black existential pain and desperation in this land. We shall utilise all biblical and

associated valid literature to sustain a new theological airplane in the airspace of varieties of thought perspectives and articulations that Adventism must expose to our people.

February 2023

We find ourselves psycho-socially embattled by a concern over the lackadaisical attitude of institutional Adventism. We affirm without fear or favour, our concerns over the deep Adventist pastoral disquiet over the realities of South African existence in the African context.

We also affirm without any fear of criticism or repudiation from those who have nothing to say and do with the rugged realities of our national challenges.

Ours will be to speak and act in ways that God will direct us to speak and act. We shall not surrender to the pervasive dominant intellectual silence of black clergy in the church. We shall choose to fall on our spears when the church thinks that we have taken a route they will not like or endorse.

Ours is a deep-cutting *Kairos* consciousness in a time of historic varieties of challenges in this land. We choose to be judged by divine history and destiny as our country and church move into a period of deep and challenging realities. In the words of North America African theologian, Professor James H. Cone,

- *“Not everything that is, is what it appears to be. Underneath the European language of freedom and equality, there is slavery and death...Europeans created the problem that is our need for liberation, and it was naive of us to expect that our theological salvation can come from Europe.”¹ Emphasis supplied.*

In this new project we choose to be judged by history and not those who sit and spectate. **We shall welcome membership from persons who wish to be part of this**

new thought vehicle into the future. We are not a secret society. We are simply “sick and tired of being sick and tired.” These were the words of Miss Rosa Parks when she was asked to leave a bus seat for a white man in the United States of America.

An Argument for Liberative Adventist Theology and Mission for African People

White Adventist Christianity does not and cannot engage in liberative discourse for the oppressed in this world. Unless white people undergo cosmic epistemic and spiritual conversion, they will remain stuck in rigid capture by their own privileged notions of faith and mission. There is therefore an urgent moral imperative for Africans in Adventism to create a new path of theological faith for themselves and their offspring as we move into the future.

Many white persons in South African Adventism have not met Africans who speak their minds clearly on matters of colonisation and racist oppression. It is at this point where an organisation such as the church’s student association is infantile and useless. The association is embedded in elitist socio-spirituality and compliance with the church *status quo*.

Black clergy in Adventism must be challenged to tell the rest of the church exactly where they really stand in the context of historical injustices and theological lameness in this country. As leaders of faith thought, they have collectively failed the African membership.

¹ *Black Theology and the Black Church*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, USA, 1985.

February 2023

Argument for Liberative Adventism

I argue that until black clergy dislodge themselves from Eurowestern theology and mission and/or pressure Helderberg College to transform its theological curriculum to speak into the realities of South African existence, we shall see, at least as far as I know, this for the TOC region, new independent schools of thought and practice will give rise to new thought routes and missional practices in the African church.

Think through what the quotation below says.

“Christians believe that their faith has something to say to this world and about human beings in it – something that make a decisive difference in the quality of life. It is therefore the task of theology to demonstrate the difference in the quality of life. It is therefore the task of theology to demonstrate the difference that the gospel can and does in human lives, using the resources of the scriptures and the traditions of the churches as well as other modern tools of social, historical, cultural, economic, and philosophical analysis”²

I hereby state that theology is the Eskom of the Adventist church. When there is technical dysfunction in this thought system, several disturbing black-outs occur. **Currently, black Adventism in South Africa is on a long theological shut down.** Pastors, as technicians, have failed to repair the church’s power supply grid for effective mission and development in this country.

Some pastors have become experts at preaching funeral sermons or sermons of eschatological flight to a world they have never seen. The African church needs more than this dank uninspiring escapist pastoral culture. Indeed, some pastors have become theo-spiritual morticians in recent years.

The last reality African pastors will address in this land is social liberation from the ravages of colonisation by whites. Indeed, it is a painful “thing” to be led by moral cowards acting as the main bulls in the kraal.[]

The Challenge of Secularisation of Adventist Spirituality and Mission in the African Community (Paper One of Three)

1. Statement of Problem

This statement peers into the thick layer of the twin challenges of secularisation and paganisation of the Adventist Church in the African community in South Africa.

The cosmic reality of a secularistic Adventism has risen sharply after and within the rise of a pro-democratic state in 1994. The African National Congress-led government and its allies have created an ideological platform for the rise of and entrenchment of secularisation, if not paganisation, of our society with its embrace of multi-ideological stances and practices that were not permitted by the evil apartheid state before 1994. The pre-1994 government did not permit communism and socialism in this land. *The foundational epistemic premise of communism and associated socialist thought is the denial of the presence of a creator God in the universe.*

The South African parliament no longer prays. We are no longer in a “Christian” state, whatever that animal was. Religion has become a matter of private interest. The name of God has lost its centrality in the life of the nation. Social

²Cone, pp 28, 29

February 2023

contracts, legal and industrial, now operate outside of any institutional and/or communal faith context in the life of the nation. Thus, God's name has been systematically marginalised from our national life. The new constitution and associated bills have become the collective reference "Bible" of the nation. The immediate consequence is a nation on a fast trail to expanding ungodliness, rampant corruption and even sadistic criminality.

What I have just said does not condone the previous authoritarian and oppressive and obnoxiously racist Anglo-Afrikaner governments. Their use of the Bible and moral codes presumably rooted in a historically Christian tradition, specifically contributed to the rise of the self-contradictory post-1994 state. The Anglo-Afrikaner governments virtually harmed the ethos of the Christian faith while claiming adherence to it. The rise of a semi-paganistic secular state finds its umbilical theoretical genesis in the equally pernicious satanic colonial and racist Anglo-Afrikaner state. Our people have had no ideological rest since April 1652. We now live in a failed state under black majority rule.

Our colonial history has been one of undeserved pain and destruction. Strangely, Adventism has been a committed part of this historico-systemic plight and destruction of African lives. We have always been an apartheid church! Some may indeed deny this, but denial does not constitute truth when historical realities point in another direction. South Africa is an independent state grounded on a semi-paganistic foundation.

The Anglo-Afrikaner state, Adventism and the post-1994 ANC-led state are equally responsible for the secularisation and paganisation of the lives

of our people. The present rising criminal militarisation of our communities in the Covid and post-Covid periods is centrally embedded in the growing nexus of post-1652 white colonisation and moral denigration of our people.

The unique challenge facing South African Adventism now is not the post-apartheid state. ***The problem lies in the church's own deep-rooted continuous epistemic fear and stubborn refusal to address socio-political realities that are inimical to biblical principles first, within itself, and secondly, in the general community.*** Frankly, Adventism has not really landed on South African soil.

Listen: ***Apoliticality does not work in a state reeling under the rugged consequences of racist coloniality – even inside the church.***

2. Adventist Pastoral Ministry

The African and European Adventist pastoral ministry has silently connived to socialise the membership into moral and socio-theological cowardice and paralytic fear.

While the white membership practised and taught a deeply politicised gospel of socio-materially privileged pro-whitism, black clergy and laity practised and preached a precolonial and oppression-complaint gospel of unscriptural sheepish humility and poverty.

The black church sanctified poverty and declared it, by implication and silence, – a qualification for entry into heaven. This is the reason why some among the poor in the black church assumed that they were holier than the affluent! This was classical socio-theological nonsense.

February 2023

The Bible speaks of the **poor in spirit! Material poverty is not necessarily logically contiguous with valid spirituality. Rather it can be contiguous with the desperation that has implicated many in this land into criminality.** Many poor black persons in this country have deserted God!

In the past eleven years I have read four doctoral and six masters dissertations on Adventist history in North America and in South Africa. Two years ago, I also looked at documentaries of North American history themed around antislavery activism. In one of these the nonAdventist commentator noted the roles of Miss Sojourner Truth (the Black Moses) and Ellen G. White in the movement to free slaves. Then the Adventism church in South Africa tells us not to speak “truth to power” over issues that are killing our people in our God-given land! You must be standing at the door of a lunatic asylum ready for admission. In my language “Niyahlanya!”

Speaking for myself, I stand diametrically opposed to this nefarious racist-protective unscriptural Adventist theo-spirituality. It belongs to the rubbish heap of history. The sooner and faster blacks reject it, the better.

The Adventist church must admit that its presence in this land has been seriously problematic to the welfare and destiny of African people, beginning with its black membership.

Apartheid Adventism before and after 1994 has crippled and warped the institutional conscience of Africans. Black pastoral leaders have silently conspired to induce nefarious moral silence in the church towards social evils clearly rebuked in the Bible. I am one who cannot be frightened by any leadership and by any evil in the church.

I come from the clan and family of warriors. I am a member of the Nguni-Mntungwa-Khumalo-Mabaso-Siwela-Mphazima-Ndlangamandla-Nkosi clan of the AmaZulu nation. We are socialised for bravery!

The African section of the church is deeply infested with obnoxious scandalous antihuman gossip and interpersonal animosity. **Open truth telling has become a risky matter fraught with fear of cowardice.**

Church going has become a spot we play each Sabbath morning to gratify our vain emotions and perceptions of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. ***All we know is to sing foreign songs and preach western systematic theology which impresses our intellects without straightening our wayward inclinations and devious faith perspectives.***

Speaking for myself, I am sick and tired of this western Adventist decadent secularistic human-created religiosity which develops nobody. The present African Adventist church is walking into the future with no faith that will sustain it in the time of trouble immediately ahead of us.

Frankly, **Adventism in South Africa urgently needs serious and realistic rebirth and total redesign.** South African Adventism is, in its socio-anthropological essence, semi-paganistic and morally decadent. This church has evolved into a secularistic movement, incapable of convincing the African nation that it is indeed the remnant of end-time prophecy.

Adventists of all national groups in this land have completely lost the opportunity and task to speak biblical godliness into the totality of South African life. The church is seriously

[Date]

February 2023

challenged by its own derelict and internal socio-immoral history. Any argument to the contrary consists of Luciferian escapism and institutional mischief.

3. The Urgent Imperative of Institutional and Missional Rebirth

What Jesus told Nicodemus, a Jewish leader in the first century AD is the same message Adventists must embrace now if they hope to be effective witnesses of Jesus Christ to lost South African society. Anything else will be a devious escapist stratagem. This church stands in need of a deep-touching resounding rebirth and institutional recalibration. Its central malady is self-induced affirmation and institutionally defective end-time remnancy. Adventism in this land needs to hear the voice of the Saviour, “You must be born again.”

I repeat: *One way and one way only is open to us. Transform now or face continuous underdevelopment and missional disillusionment.*

The present and future generations of black Adventist youth – many of whom are “woke,” deserve a new church totally transformed from its present dank colonial and racist nature. The sins of South African Adventism in both African and European memberships have grown uniquely devious and destructive to faith and public witness.

According to the new General Conference publication, *Encyclopaedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, Adventists in this country number *less than a quarter million*. This church has been here since the late 1880s. African Initiated Churches (AICS) with beginning in the Eastern Cape in the early 1870s, had a membership of fifty thousand in 1910. Today they

constitute forty-to-forty-six percent of South African Christianity.

The Baptist Church of Shembe and the Zion Christian Church of the Lekganyane brothers have a membership of more than seven million alone. Adventists are a disgrace in a land populated by a people that late Kenyan Professor John Mbiti described as “notoriously religious” in his *Introduction to African Religion and Philosophy* (1969).

4. Which way to go? The Imperative of a New Discussion on Adventist Mission in South Africa

Adventists must – with bold and informed urgency - convene a series of definitive conventions to deal elementally with their dirty past, and then create a new visionary and missional path into the future. This land has not been evangelised by Adventists. South Africa remains an unentered area. Frankly, time is not on our side.

Alongside the above process, African pastors must undergo urgent socio-theological re-schooling. They must be disabused of vain celebrity status and retrained for total and re-productive servanthood. Nothing less than this will change the reality I have painted graphically above.

In modern educational and management studies we are taught that new historical contexts need new perceptions and new methodological practices. Adventists in the postcolonial African community must get ready for newness and new advances in mission and ministry. **If this does not occur soon, some of us who have already registered a theo-missional institution in Soweto will find boundless validation for grabbing the bull by its**

rugged horns. We fear nobody and nothing.

Conclusion

Frankly, we can no longer stake our salvation on the dry desert-like activities of a pastoral ministry laden with professional idleness, semi-invisibility, and obsolescence.

South African black Adventism stands in need of urgent revolutionary thought and redesign. Our children and senior youth deserve a better church. In the words of the people of the East Rand during the last years of the anti-apartheid struggle, “*Vuka mawulele!*”

- In my next paper I shall outline **A New Route to Future African Adventism: A South African Liberative Model**. Watch the space. Call me on the number appearing on page one. There are six parts in this series.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVENTIST MISSION AND MINISTRY TO AFRICANS IN 21st CENTURY SOUTH AFRICA

In the January 6-12, 2017, edition of the Johannesburg-based newspaper, “*Mail & Guardian*,” University of the Witwatersrand former research professor, Achille Mbembe, wrote an incisive and illuminating article under the caption, “The digital age erases the divide between humans and objects.” In the article he discussed the impact on minds, self-perception, behaviour and relationships of our domination and manipulation by computational media. He noted, “People are exposed to, and are absorbing more images than they have ever have” and that this form of multi-image impact on our

February 2023

senses represents what he calls “a new form of worldliness” in which the cell phone is a key vector of Afropolitan social reality.

The following statement from the article sets the stage for this paper:

The interaction between humans and screens having intensified, the boundaries of perceptions have been stretched as people are projected from one temporal regime to another. Today it is possible to move from the Stone Age to the Digital Age, from magical reason to electronic reason. Time now unfolds in multiple versions while life and the world are increasingly experienced as cinema. (Italics supplied).

Life in the 21st century has become an extremely cinematographic reality. Computational technology has moved life from entity to movement, from a static scene to a shifting reality show for which dynamic interlocking competencies are required to interact and deal with it. We are all confronted by the reality and demand for multi-competency lifestyles as we manage our studios and shifting dramas.

Human beings have been objectified by media in which we are sometimes objects of observation while we are also directors of the cinema. We have become both the manipulators and objects in which pressing a button yields instant results and gratification. This scenario presents serious and urgent challenges for Adventist mission and ministry even within the church and to our immediate African communities.

One afternoon in the 2004 TOC Youth camp in Taung, I walked from the podium and asked some girls while they were photographing me. One of them

immediately said, “*Babu’Nkosi, siyaku-downloader.*” I immediately thought of the need for us who regularly appear before audiences to exercise extreme and rigorous circumspection as we design and articulate God’s truth to a society that has gone digital and global in thought. In one moment, your name will flow into glory. The next it may go down into dark and intractable ignominy.

Challenges of digital technology for Adventist mission

In South Africa Adventist mission must speak to Africans what it does not speak to persons of Eurowestern descent.

Challenge 1: Digital technology has created societies that no longer have time for long “things” and events. We compete with the social and public media. We need to rethink the length of our sermons. Length is not and never been a substitute for quality. People want to know what you want to tell them. As they listen and evaluate you as you deliver your subject. decisions for or against you are made as you speak. You sell your “product” (yourself) as you stand and deliver a presentation or sermon. Audiences have become a market. If you do not deliver as expected, audiences seek for others who have a better product.

- 1.1 We must read prodigiously and consistently. Many in our audiences know “things” we do not know. Many are more educated than we are. Pastors and seminar speakers, especially, need to reconcile with the reality that we are assessed daily on what we say and how we say it. If your information is not relevant and new, you may soon be relegated to the stone age.

February 2023

- 1.2 Until the late 1970s human knowledge doubled each decade. From the beginning of this century knowledge expansion has grown exponentially. Each day three thousand books are published. A Pastor-friend in Johannesburg stood behind the pulpit in Kelvin and preached a Googled sermon. A congregant went into Google and discovered the same topic and same content. He distributed the sermon friends around the country and the pastor became the centre of hilarious but shameful fun.
- 1.3 All elocutionary practice is a form of self-advertising. In your first appearance people make decisions on whether they deserve your presence again. If a second invitation never comes, you should engage in serious and honest rethink. Of course, the absence of a second invitation may not necessarily imply that people did not appreciate you. There are many reasons why you may not get a second invitation. But know this. Your first appearance is an advertisement, whether you like it or not. It is an act of proposing love to an audience. You stand to be married or rejected!

Challenge 2: The question of immediacy and relevance is a serious one in African existential thought and life. African people are instant people. The silent question at the back of their minds is “How will this connect with my concerns and needs.” Remember, every appearance is both an interview and assessment. We are phenomenologists by thought and lifestyle. Therefore, Africans will rather go to a “thing” than read about it.

[Date]

When we hear that Pastor/Bishop J. J. Mavuso prays curses and diseases away, questions are seldom asked. We flock to his church or services. The tradition of epistemological exposition and analysis from the pulpit may be good, especially in western-educated Adventist audiences.

But real Africans seek for immediacy, relevancy and practicality. I know an Adventist sister who taught in the Orlando West Adventist School who visited an African diviner in Soweto in search of marriage. She was harassed by extended singleness. I know of an Adventist pastor who regularly visited an *inyanga yakwaMiya* in Tsakane Township (East Rand) each time TOC business session was around.

In the 2010 TOC business session in Bloemfontein, people had to desert a senior pastor who had strong odour of strange herbs coming from his clothes. It is important for us to come to grips with the phenomena of immediacy and relevancy. In the psyche of Africans, the fundamental question is not, "When is Jesus returning?" The central concerns are around health/wellness and personal progress.

Africans are practical philosophers and theologians, not systematic theologians! Therefore, the long-range and monotonous repetition of the fundamental beliefs in the Sabbath School has not benefited anybody. The African wants to know, since God is a creator of the universe, when will he come into my life to create joy and fulfilment. We are practical (contextual) theologians. Thus, it is possible for some of us to come to church on Saturday and go to a Sunday-keeping church for fulfilment.

A Research Project

In the late 1980s the Human Sciences Research Council tasked late Prof Gabriel Setiloane (a Methodist pastor) to research the question: **Did Africans fully embrace Christianity?** After months of travelling around the country during which he interviewed many people, and read papers, he came to one significant conclusion, among others, that *Africans did embrace the Christian religion, but stayed connected to some of their precolonial notions and practices.*

I read the report. Therefore, I fail to understand pastors who have a junior degree in theology, who then do master's degrees in disciplines totally unrelated to theology/ministry. They hardly have roots in their primary discipline. But they are permitted academic deviation that will not confirm and consolidate their calling if pastoral ministry is indeed a calling for some of them. I am therefore never surprised when some of them give us the satanic impression that we owe them jobs as Directors and Officers in Orange Grove and elsewhere in the SAU. Frankly, some should not be in the ministry!

Challenge 3: We have a challenge to witness to a country whose indigenous communities have suffered and survived double western colonisation. The Bible has been central to our colonisation and oppression by the English and Afrikaner. Our hurt will last for "eternity" as a result. In the postcolonial period we should be shaping a new gospel story of re-education and development. We evangelise and run church as if we are in the colonial period.

Virtually nothing has changed within black Adventism, institutionally and missionally. We are pushing the same useless agendas

February 2023

that wasted our energy during the British-Afrikaner dispensations. We waste energy on determining who occupies this office and who leaves. Therefore, even young pastors can meet in a church in the East Rand and deliberate on office-bearing. The agenda is satanic and grossly undevelopmental.

Some pastors often leave business sessions deeply pained and aggrieved such as Pastor X.Y.Z. Masondo because they did not see their name the election list. All this is hogwash that stunts growth in the church.

- During the TOC Presidency of Dr Paul Shongwe we could not even see that it was morally and professionally wrong to appoint interns as directors of departments and member of the Executive Committee. This was a gross violation of the terms of the country's New Labour Regulations. When I brought this to his attention, he gave me advice that showed that he was afraid to tackle the challenge.
- *How does an intern determine the employment of other interns and full-time pastors when he/she has no legal guarantee of further employment? I could not understand this.*

General Conference Quinquennial Mission Programmes

In the black church mission (e.g., TMI) was conducted without community research. This was anomalous in the 21st century whose people's lifestyles and orientations differ markedly. People do research for their degrees but none for God's mission. Is this not a moral and developmental anomaly?

In June 1999 seventy-six languages were spoken in the Greater Johannesburg Region. How many languages are being spoke in our cities? It is possible today to walk in the streets of our cities and not understand what people are saying. A friend of mine once described business done without research as a young man who proposes love to woman in the dark and expect a response.

Our cities have become extremely complex in thought, ideology, lifestyle and material conditions. If our mission is directed at getting more tithers and just increase in numbers, then it is in utter vain. We must also be careful that we do not plant ideas and programmes here that work in other regions of the world without clear adaptation. It is also important to remember that the church does not live for five years. It takes time for organisations to change. There endless quinquennial programmes from the General Conference don't make long-range sense in this land. *As far back as I can go, I recall Mission 70, Mission 72, Mission 74, One Thousand Days of Reaping* which were compromised by wrong baptisms in parts of the world, *Witnessing for Christ, Mission to the Cities, Five-Initiatives* (which I discovered were old business models used by corporates. Go to Professor Google), and recently, Total Member Involvement! My sincere question is simple: **WHAT IS REALLY NEW?**

Global Youth Day was a partial disaster where I was a witness. All the food is in the sewerage pipes! No missional impact. Mission done without research, but vague and misguided assumptions from Silver Spring!

- Who told us that children who have run away from their homes are seeking for buttered bread and few home-made vegetarian burgers?

[Date]

February 2023

I posed some sharp questions to the youth of my church in Zola (Soweto) after they gave bread to people in Johannesburg. I asked, especially those who were studying in universities and those who had degrees if this is what their studies entailed. They were embarrassed! One from a prestigious university came to me later and confessed failure.

The Necessity of Ground Research

Let me emphasise the importance of research by the following anecdote. Each time I go home, I visit the BP Centre Library not far from the Workshop Mall in Durban. In March 2019 I visited home and then took three days in the library. On the first day the chief librarian asked me to present a ten-minute talk on how to develop a writing culture. A book, "The Pavement Bookworm" authored by what we call a "street child," was to be launched the following day. A hall in the library was full of visitors and a host of social outcasts and "street kids." In this group there was a white man who looked like a social derelict. His looks and attire could tell that he lived in the Fourth World.

After the book has been summarised and advertised, question/comment time came. This man raised his hand to speak. By the time he was done, he had told us news about "things" that many of us in the hall had never imagined. He told us that he came from under bridges and in tunnels below the city. This is where he and scores of others live and find their fulfilment. He said that a new socio-ethnological phenomenon was in the offing in South Africa; that they – the louts and dropouts, hobos, under the bridges and elsewhere, had met several times to create a new underground society in South Africa. He said that there were masters and doctorates in their condition

that no longer live in what we would term "normal" or "standard" society. I turned back to look at him. His language was that of somebody who had spent at least sixteen years at school. He was incisive, academic and daring in his comment. It was very clear that he was a reader and a thinker. He told us they had critiqued us and dismissed us – the normal or standard society, and that they had no longer any need of us. We had failed them, and they were forging a new open nation with a revolutionary scholarship and economy.

I looked at the chief librarian and his assistants and saw stunned faces. This man told the audience new literature is emerging from their groups that would give the rest of the world a shock and new perspectives on what it means to be poor and discarded by society. Nobody asked questions after that. I immediately recalled my book by Alvin Toffler, "Future Shock" published in 1970. Since that day I have been asking myself the question, "For whom is TMI?"

Why do close to twenty million people in South Africa queue for grants each month end? Do we know what is really happening in this country? Who do we wish to see converted into the Adventist family? What if these people bring their children into the church? Where will they receive schooling? Why do some people react with shock and anger when some of us talk of a new Adventist Church in Soweto with a new Curriculum in South Africa?

When I worked in the course writing department of Khanya African Associated Churches Theological College (Johannesburg) in the late 1990s, I discovered "things" I did not know about Africans; things that remain unexposed by western methods of mission.

[Date]

February 2023

I am not ashamed to state the fact that I am an Adventist Decolonialist. I share no love for a faith that answers questions asked in the Eurowest. I need answers to African concerns and worries. And it is time we provided the right answers to our people – from the Bible, and not from the texts of persons who have never known what it means to go for six months on a shoe that has a hole on the sole; people who share their food with dogs and cats when somebody in the street sleeps on the pavement floor.

On page 32 of the book “*God or Apartheid: A Challenge to South African Adventism*,” by Pule Mageghi and this writer, are the following words by late Dr James Londis, one of my favourite Adventist thinkers and writers:

God put the church in the world, so it would not adjust. We don't want well-adjusted Adventists. We want Adventists who resist; who are not adjusting to the abnormal. The church must take up its cross and become the underground resistance movement in the world. We are not content with this kind of thing. We are not content to see people go to the end of history doomed, hungry, if we can feed them. The church somehow has to let it thunder above the rockets and bombs that are being dropped, and above all the IRA in England and the rest of it around the world; the Church must thunder out. God cares, God loves. God feels it, and we want to do what we can to help you. God will make his voice heard if we won't be the voice; if we won't be the church that

will pick up its cross, God will find another one. And if we try to muffle in any way the distinctiveness of the trumpet sound, Christ has told us that the cross will crush us.

Let the Adventist Seer speak:

God never that the widespread misery in the world should exist. He never meant that one should have the abundance of the luxuries of life, while the children of others should cry for bread.

Bert Beach uses different language for the same challenge.

The arena of showing Christ's love is the world...We Adventists must not live in an “ecclesiastical ghetto,” but must endeavour as salt and light, to permeate and influence unchristian society in order to draw people to Christ.

Challenge 4: This challenge is complex, multi-faceted and developmental. The challenge relates to societal transformation resulting from other mega-transformations occurring in our country at various levels because of the demise of the apartheid state, the evolution of a society with an alternative constitutional culture and social trajectory. The challenge is intensified by the impact of global and historical trends in the world as the day of Jesus' return draws nearer. In respect of South Africa, I shall refer to six challenges that shall be the subject of our second edition. [Text to be continued]

**REFERENCES WILL APPEAR IN THE
LAST SECTION OF THE PAPER**