

MINISTRY[®]

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OUR READERS RESPOND...

Unbaptized children and Communion

After reading the two articles on children and Communion (June 2007), I was heartened to see an attempt to bring children back into the same salvation focus as Jesus displayed in His ministry. "The children of our hearths are as much the purchase of His blood as were the children of long ago."

"It is still true that children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received" (*The Desire of Ages*, 512, 515).

I was somewhat confused with Robert Johnston's article. He gave us the context of forbidding exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper quote and applied it to Jesus' inclusion of Judas. But he then proceeded, in every one of his arguments, to preclude a "Judas type" individual today. The message I gained was that it is acceptable to include a Judas character and exclude unbaptized children. I can understand the application of the quote "Give not that which is holy to dogs" being applied to Judas. I cannot see that this quote can ever be applied to unbaptized children—especially after reading chapter 56 of *The Desire of Ages*, "Blessing the Children."

—David McClintock, email

Thank you, Darius Jankiewicz, for your clear presentation to help us understand the importance of including children in Communion. It is a time to remember our salvation and the gift that Jesus gave each of us. It is also a time of looking forward to—anticipating—Jesus' return. I cannot begin to think of excluding the children and having the heavenly meal take place without them. Jesus showed how much He valued children by including them in His ministry.

—Julie Weslake, director, children's ministries, South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia

I want to thank *Ministry* for the "pro and con" articles on the issue "Children

and Communion." When I first became a Seventh-day Adventist, Russell Holt, who was then an associate editor of *Ministry*, introduced me to the journal. In those years, one would see different issues discussed in this "pro and con" article manner. I always found this to be very informative and greatly helped me to reach my own opinion. Please continue this approach on current issues as they come up.

—Daniel Endres, Ruckersville, Virginia, United States

Pastor's Pastor

Thank you, Pastor Cress, for reminding us how everyone needs friendship ("Friendraising," June 2007). Why is it that we like to remain in our familiar little groups rather than reach out to those we don't know? I think often we are unsure of how to go about it. Not long ago I attended a course called "Bridge Builders," and we were reminded that "relationships are the bridge that Jesus crosses from one person to another." In an affirming environment, we learned and practiced connecting with others. Now, often I pray before going to events, "Lord is there someone you want me to meet and encourage today? Please lead me to them."

—Lyn Daff, email

Your article ("Doing Church Like a Pub," August 2007) expresses my concerns. I grew up in and was a pastor's wife in churches that had lots of "police."

It seems that we are afraid to have friends out of the Adventist church. Yes, I would love to see our churches serve as a hospital for the world. But until we give Jesus the POLICE job we will not have the love that we should have for each other. If only we could create a place where people can experience understanding and love! I could see Jesus walking into a "church pub" basement or living room and find a group of people talking, encouraging, caring, praying, and singing. If our churches

would be more like that, then so many members would not leave.

—Ingrid Killius, email

Pastor's Gethsemane

I appreciated Willie Hucks's editorial "The Pastor's Gethsemane" (August 2007). Having served as a multichurch district pastor and as a member of the staff of larger churches, I can certainly empathize with the thrust of Dr. Hucks's message. Indeed, "To whom can the pastor turn?"

I am currently serving as a chaplain in a large Adventist hospital. While I recognize that many district pastors do not have an Adventist hospital nearby, I would like to suggest that if one feels the need of a "safe" person to process their thoughts, feelings, and frustrations, a chaplain can provide the caring, compassionate, and secure answer to that need. Many hospitals now feature a clinically trained chaplain or chaplains on staff and there are often well-prepared correctional and military chaplains in the community.

Many of us have pastored multichurch districts or have other ministerial backgrounds that enable us to at least partially understand what the local pastor is dealing with. So, if you need a friend who has been where you are, try talking to a nearby chaplain.

—Bob Burns, chaplain, Florida Hospital, Orlando, Florida, United States

Teaching preaching

While looking for resources to teach a class on preaching, I came across a book review in the April 2007 *Ministry* on James Wibberding's book, *Learn to Preach before Next Weekend*. I ordered it, liked it, and immediately ordered more for the members of my church plant who would be doing the majority of our preaching. This book takes a simple, practical approach to the subject and proves itself as a great textbook for lay members. My inexperienced preachers, some of them new to the church, are succeeding with the help of this resource.

—Paul F. LeBlanc, pastor, Houston, Texas, United States

continued on page 4

Africa

NIKOLAUS SATELMAJER



The first book that my parents bought me was an adventure story; the story of a young boy—a little older than I was—traveling from Germany to Africa.¹ As I read the narrative, I imagined that I was on the way to Africa. After all, we lived in Hamburg, Germany, a major seaport. Each day I took the subway called U-Bahn to my school, and I envisioned that on that day I would not go to school, but I would get on one of the ships leaving the harbor. Africa—it sounded mysterious, inviting, and a place of adventure. In my mind I made that journey, but in actuality I did not make it to Africa until four decades later.

I have been to Africa several times, and I still find it mysterious, inviting, and a place of adventure. But now I travel to Africa for other reasons; it's a part of my ministry. I have opportunity to see a church making progress and facing challenges—some unique to the African continent and some common to other parts of the world.

Why Africa?

Africa, one of the world's seven continents, is the second largest in landmass (just slightly smaller than Asia). Here are some other facts about Africa: It has more countries (53) than any other continent; its population is second only to Asia, and it has more people than North and South America combined; the Sahara desert is the world's largest desert and larger than the United States; it is home to many animals including the world's largest land animal (African elephant) and fastest short-distance runner (cheetah). It is also home to the pyramids of Egypt and the world's longest river, the Nile.²

Bible readers will recall that Africa can be classed as a place of refuge and persecution, as well as a place of hope and despair. Christianity also has deep roots in Africa,³ and today it has a significant presence on the continent. But why would we focus in this issue almost

exclusively on one continent—Africa? The editors plan over the next several years to focus on the Adventist Church on other continents; so this becomes the first of a series.

There are several reasons for focusing on one geographic area of the world. As a worldwide church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has 34 percent of its membership in Africa. We hope that our readers will more fully appreciate the opportunities and challenges that our church faces in Africa. Furthermore, we may discover that the responses to some of the challenges can assist us, wherever we live. (Perhaps the differences are not as stark as some might think.) Most of all, I hope that we will recognize that the Holy Spirit unites us no matter where we live. After all, the church belongs to Jesus Christ, and it is His, in all parts of the world.

Look up

On December 2, 2006, a group of us flew from Nairobi, Kenya, to the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton. This short flight was in a 20-passenger propeller airplane, and as we boarded, I sat in the seat right behind the pilot with no door separating us. I watched the pilot go through the usual review of instruments before taking off. I felt safe, seeing the young pilot carefully preparing for the flight. She was young, but obviously experienced and someone who could be trusted.

After an uneventful takeoff I noticed her doing something else. In addition to looking at the many instruments in front of her, she continuously scanned

the sky—looking carefully ahead, to the left, to the right, and above. Throughout the flight she continued looking in various directions making certain that the sky was safe. The instruments were sufficient for flight, but to ensure a safe flight she went beyond doing what was necessary.

The church continues on a journey, a journey with many challenges and opportunities. Decisions will need to be made, but it may not be sufficient to look at that which we know. The obvious may not be adequate for we need to do more than the obvious; we too need to look in all directions, especially up. That's the place of success for the church in Africa and elsewhere. ■

1 Nico Backe, *Gerd schaff's in Afrika* (Hannover: Neuer Jüngerschriften-Verlag, 1954).

2 Betty Debnam, The Mini Page (*The Washington Post*), January 21, 2007.

3 For example, the Sabbath has deep roots in Africa. See Charles E. Bradford, *Sabbath Roots: The African Connection* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists), 1999.

Tell us what you think about this editorial. Email us at MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or write to us at 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

Letters continued from page 3

Kudos

You have done it again! Your August issue of *Ministry* is full of excellence. Particularly I would like to commend you for the interview with the Treasury staff. Openness on finance is one of the blessings of our church. Secondly, the first of three articles on plagiarism has put this issue into an excellent historical and academic setting. I am looking forward to the next two articles. Then let me commend my friend James Cress for "Doing Church Like a Pub." Frankly that was one of his best as I try to recall his many excellent articles.

—David Currie, Wandin North, Victoria, Australia ■

The African worldview: a serious challenge to Christian discipleship

Zacchaeus A. Mathema



Zacchaeus A. Mathema, DMin, is professor of leadership at the Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.

John Fowler defines the term *worldview* as “a construct about the make up of life as it struggles with the questions of reality, truth, ethics and history. It is a construct that provides a point of departure, a sense of direction, a locus of destination, and a strategy of unity for human thought, life and action.”¹ Accordingly, this construct satisfies a fourfold need: first, the need to unify thought and life; second, the need to define the good life and find hope and meaning in life; third, the need to guide thought; fourth, the need to guide action. At the core of every person’s being lies the worldview that constitutes what Charles H. Kraft writes of as the “control box” of culture that determines thinking, acting or doing, and determining values.² Worldview, therefore, exerts a strong, shaping influence and power on a person’s life.

In the same manner, the traditional African worldview has a strong influence and shaping power on the African in that it unifies the African’s thoughts and life. It defines the good life that must be pursued, preserved, and protected; and it guides the thinking, choices, and actions. The traditional African worldview often hinders the internalization of Christian message and practice among many African Christians. Thus, the traditional African worldview throws a serious challenge before a church that seeks to “make disciples of all nations,” as the Lord mandated (Matt. 28:19, NIV). Those who seek to disciple men and women, as the gospel requires, find that the people who are being disciplined frequently regress or revert to unChristian practices, and some may

even manifest spiritualistic phenomena that warp and twist human life.

The centrality of a worldview and its functions

Anthropologists and missiologists confirm what Fowler states. Some regard worldview as “the pattern of assumptions a people holds about reality that determines what they think, feel, and do.”³ It exists at the foundational level of culture and at the core of the same cultural expressions and permeates everything that a people think and do by defining reality, truth, and values. Moreover, worldview gives meaning to life and comprises a crucial role in identity formation and integrity. Kraft further points out that a worldview plays a cardinal role in molding individuals and society. It “serves the evaluational—judging and validating functions” and “provides psychological reinforcements for that group.”⁴ A worldview “bridges the gap between the objective reality outside people’s heads and the culturally agreed-upon perception of that reality inside their heads.”⁵

John Mbiti describes the vacillations between Christianity and traditional African customs among Christians as “religious concubinage” because the professed Christian seems to find satisfaction in African traditional practices that has not been met in Christian living and practice.⁶ What we see as aberrations in Christian formation among many African Christians indicates to us that something has been amiss in the discipling process among many African Christians.

The importance of transforming a worldview in discipling people

The centrality of a worldview as the “control box” of a culture underlines a need to take cognizance of the worldview in the discipling process of persons. During the early missionary thrust on the African continent, the aspect of the traditional African worldview was not factored in the process of discipling many Africans and in many situations still happens today.

B. J. van der Walt points out that Christianity was weakened when missionaries ignored the traditional African worldview and packaged the gospel with colonialism and Western culture. This approach “produced dualistic Christendom which brought about schizophrenia in the life of the African.”⁷ The unfortunate result of this approach was a divided soul. Van der Walt further asserts that the average African “convert” was not helped to “experience the gospel as adequate for life. For that reason we get the phenomenon all over Africa today that Christians, in time of need and crises, (such as illness

or death) often revert to their traditional faith.”⁸ There was a problem because the “gospel was not brought as a new, total, encompassing worldview to take the place of an equally encompassing traditional worldview. So, the deepest core of the African culture remained untouched.”⁹ Only a veneer of Christianity was embraced.

Selected aspects of the traditional African worldview

Aspects of the traditional African worldview that impact the Christian faith include, but are not limited to, the following: belief in hierarchies and entities of power, a strong sense of community and belonging, strong orientation to power, and belief in mystical powers.

Belief in hierarchies and entities of power. For the traditional African, in general, human existence remains orderly and structured although the construct of the hierarchies varies from culture to culture. Whatever the setup, systems are such that each person lives under those entities of power and depends on them for the good life pursued by most human beings. Hierarchies and entities of power are there for the good of the people who fall under them.

Zebron Ncube draws from Hubert Bucher a construct of hierarchies from the Shona people of Zimbabwe and others of southern Africa. According to this construct, the critical hierarchical arrangement and entities of power have God as the ultimate reality. In between are divinities, ancestors, mystical powers, sacred days with specific features and events, rites of passage, religious specialists, and prohibitive laws and taboos. At the lowest level of the hierarchy is the sacredness of interpersonal relationships and kinship.¹⁰

While the traditional African believes in a supreme God, they also believe that this God lives far from those who are alive. In order to access Him, His power, and all His other benefits, the living have to go through intermediaries who are between those on the level of human existence and the supreme God Himself. Individuals should benefit from God if they recognize the entities of power in their descending order down through the elders and other specialists.

The difficulty lies in attempting to break ties that bind the individual to these hierarchies and entities of power. To break away from this system or to be “converted” to another system means that one gets cut from the connections that make life complete, meaningful, and safe. This kind of worldview should be taken seriously when traditional Africans are being evangelized and disciplined. Some scholars refer to aspects of the traditional African worldview as the religio-cultural heritage of the African that must be addressed, or the person who claims to have been converted to Christianity has only a veneer of Christianity. Breaking away from the system invites ostracism and other forms of social punishment. No wonder many African Christians become hijacked in their spiritual journey.

In one situation, Adventist Christians in a particular district were being persecuted by traditional leaders and other villagers for flouting regulations concerning *Chisi* (a Shona word that is not translatable). *Chisi* has to do with a day set aside for recognizing the entities of power that bring blessings to people. On this day, no member of the community may work in the fields. Adventist believers asked for help from conference leadership because they were threatened with banishment and other forms of punishment for refusing to comply. To the local chiefs and elders it made sense to have these “enemies of the people,” who violated orders from God through the established mediators, to get out of the way so that others who comply and cooperate do not have to suffer.

Since some individuals may not approach God directly and present their case, it becomes difficult for them to break ties with the system. Those who seek to make it on their own without this established hierarchy do not have a chance. A strong sense of community in the mind and heart of the traditional African also exerts pressure with a strong pull to remain tied to the system, even if this negates a newfound faith in Christ that compels them to engage in unChristian practices from time to time.

Community solidarity. One of the greatest gifts of the Africans to the world consists of a strong sense of

community. In the turbulent environment of our contemporary world, redemptive communities have become important in shaping human beings. For the traditional African, harmonious relationships are central to the formation of people and are, therefore, imperative to cultivate and maintain relational harmony within the community. Laurenti Magesa stresses this fact about the importance of community: “We cannot understand persons, indeed we cannot have personal identity without reference to others persons.”¹¹ “Bondedness,” Magesa adds, “is the key to the understanding that ‘what falls on one, falls on all.’”

A strong sense of community also contributes to the African religious concubinage. The religious formation of the traditional African—the socialization and the cultural conditioning—work together to fortify close family bonds among people of the same tribe, clan, or community.

How then does this strong sense of community affect the African Seventh-day Adventist Christian negatively? The arrangement that each person belongs to the family, community, or clan has a strong influence on what the individual member of the community decides and does. A person exists corporately as a member of the extended family. Whatever happens to the individual happens to the corporate group. Mbiti further helps us to grasp that this is the “cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man,” that is, “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.”¹²

Thus, it becomes difficult for the individuals who have accepted the gospel to live a truly Christian life and to disengage from their community. Davidson Razafiarivony writes, “If a member dares go against the tradition, such a person would be rejected, and would lose all the rights and prerogatives of the members of the circle. It is the fear of this rejection that brings syncretization of the gospel message.”¹³

The constraints of belonging to the community also hijack Christians in their journey because the force of the traditional African worldview carries a system of encouragement or stimuli to continue with life at points of anxiety, stress, and crisis. The crisis times, such as death, birth, and

illness, and the transition times, such as puberty, marriage, planting, and harvest, are all moments of practical applications of the provisions of this kind of worldview. At these points of crisis and anxiety a person needs psychological reinforcements that come from the traditional worldview. Unfortunately, many of the rituals that may be performed to mark the points of transitions carry spiritualistic overtones.

How can Christians avoid participating in those unChristian rituals and practices when they are expected to participate just because they belong to the family or clan? Rites of passage or rituals with religious significance must be performed to mark each stage of growth and development—like transition from childhood to adulthood, marriage, starting on a new job or promotion, and at death. Unless the Christian ministry addresses adequately this African religio-cultural heritage, vacillation between Christianity and African traditional practices may be difficult to contain as long as people in these communities of solidarity are forced to “toe the line.”

The traditional African's orientation to power. Ncube quotes Bucher who asserts that the main ancestor cult of Zimbabwe “is a religion that revolves around the quest for power—how to acquire and retain power for protection and prevention against forces of evil.”¹⁴ In one way or another, this power must be acquired and retained. Many traditional Africans believe that some persons and other invisible entities wield this power.

There are two main concerns in the traditional African belief system: The first one is to make life possible and to sustain it—which explains the concern about fertility and food. The second has to do with finding solutions for that which disturbs life. Setbacks, illness, death, and all forms of suffering must be dealt with, and power to counteract these is necessary.¹⁵ Bad magic, demon possession, sorcery, and witchcraft are among the mystical powers that should be counteracted and overcome.

When the traditional African ignores the clear word of Scripture to consult with “experts” in manipulating power, they are actually seeking for power to counteract evil. Since this traditional person wants life in its fullness and as completely as possible, they have a need, therefore,

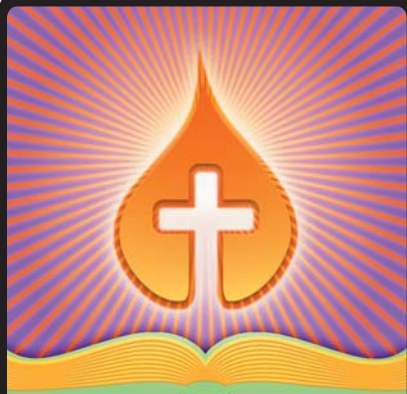
to affiliate with powers that command the power of life.¹⁶ Richard Gehman makes this observation about traditional African religions and worldview: “The whole emphasis is on a man gaining power needed to live a good life.”¹⁷ It is not surprising that the traditional African who joyfully receives the gospel relapses to traditional beliefs when life gets difficult as they search for power to alleviate suffering. There are many Christians in Africa who profess to be worshippers of the true God, but secretly, in times of crisis, visit medicine men, traditional healers, and other specialists.

Mystical powers and the traditional African worldview. The most disturbing element of the African traditional worldview can be identified as the fear of power that may be harmfully used, as evil magic, witchcraft, and sorcery are considered to be at work all the time. Bad people, who know how to tap this power, use it to harm other people. There is, therefore, a need for good people who have access to good power that can be used to counteract power from evil forces.¹⁸

For the traditional African worldview, mystical powers such as demon possession, divination, magic, sorcery, and witchcraft are real and can be used to enhance life or harm human beings. According to this view of life, “mystical powers are impersonal forces which pervade the universe and are an ever present reality.”¹⁹

Magic manipulates the use of impersonal powers through ritual and ceremony and is described as either “black” or “white.” Black magic, supposed to be used by witches, is detrimental to people and closely connected with sorcery and sorcerers who use it to harm others.

Christians are tempted to consult medicine men so that they may gain power to counteract their enemies’ powers. Unfortunately, even among professed Christians, the same practices are expected of the community. Spiritualistic activities are performed for the ancestral spirits, to seek their favor and blessings for power to live the good life that is full of wealth, prestige, status, honor, and authority.²⁰ Unfortunately, the same pursuits and phenomena show up either due to unconscious fears or beliefs rooted in the traditional African worldview.



ACTS100

**Billy Graham on
memorizing Scripture**

“Now that reading has become more difficult, I probably read the Bible less but pray more.

”Of course, over the years I’ve memorized many passages from the Bible, and I’m especially thankful now that I did this.

”I wish we gave more attention to Bible memorization in our churches today.”

—Christianity Today, June 2007, p. 19

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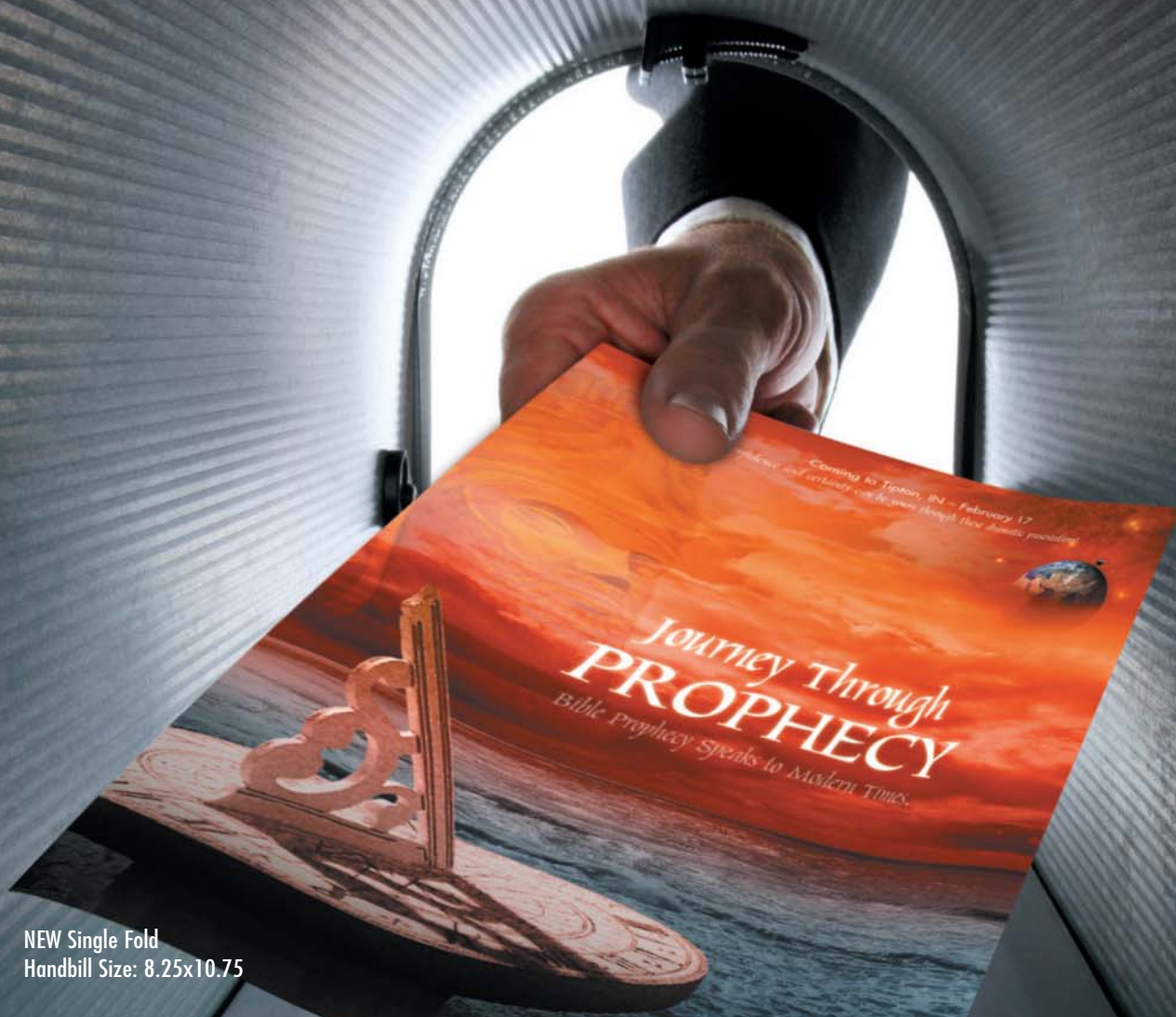
Conclusion and recommendations

The traditional African worldview poses a serious challenge to Christians. Mbiti did not come up with a solution, but the point he made was valid when he stated that the Christianity that was shared by missionaries was not sufficient for the religious impulse and need of the traditional African. “Mission Christianity failed to penetrate deep into African religiosity.”²¹

Africans have resorted to what used to be termed “African Independent Churches” but currently are referred to

continued on page 19

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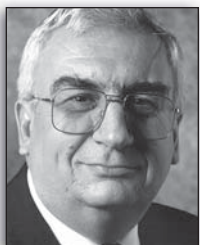
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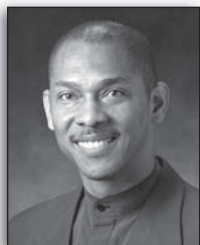
Joys of service, challenges of growth: a review of the Adventist Church in Africa

Ministry editors interview Seventh-day
Adventist Church leaders in Africa

**Nikolaus Satelmajer
and Willie E. Hucks II**



*Nikolaus Satelmajer,
DMin, is editor
of Ministry.*



*Willie E. Hucks II,
DMin, is the
associate editor
of Ministry.*

Recently Nikolaus Satelmajer, editor, and Willie E. Hucks II, associate editor, talked with several church leaders on the African continent: Luka Daniel, president of the West-Central African Division; Geoffrey Mbwana, president of the East-Central Africa Division; Paul Ratsara, president of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division; Bertil Wiklander, president of the Trans-European Division; Gabriel Maurer, secretary of the Euro-Africa Division; and Brempong Owusu-Antwi, president of the Adventist University of Africa. Excerpts follow:

Nikolaus Satelmajer (NS): Looking at the future, what kind of Adventist church do you envision in your part of Africa?

Geoffrey Mbwana (GMb): A growing church, both congregationally and continentally. This is inevitable because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our believers and their involvement in evangelism. I foresee the establishment of mega churches across Africa, somewhat like the Nairobi Central church with more than four thousand members. Then, across the continent establishment of churches in villages, towns, and cities. With growth, I see many blessings and challenges. While we are blessed to see the church grow, we also experience growth-related challenges, such as pastoring. Right now, we have pastors shepherding seven, eight, and even



twelve churches. And we are involved in massive stewardship education—training church members to a sense of ownership and stewardship of church, and thus to enhance their giving patterns.

Paul Ratsara (PR):

I envision a church in which more and more lay persons will play a vital role. Pastors alone cannot provide the needed ministry, nurture, and leadership. We will



also have better trained pastors, with advanced degrees in theology and ministry. The current emphasis in leadership training and responsible stewardship will begin to bear fruit. All in all, I see a church with great strength, hope, and growth emerging throughout Africa.

Luka Daniel (LD): The

challenge of pastoring a growing church can be met by an intentional training of laypersons to work as undershepherds. Such training would cover the areas of doctrine, witness, preaching, and nurture. When we have these lay ministers, the problem of one pastor caring for numerous churches or the problem of administrators and departmental directors serving as pastors will disappear. With lay pastors, church planting will take on an added dimension and meaning. I would also like to see the church in Africa on the road to self-support.

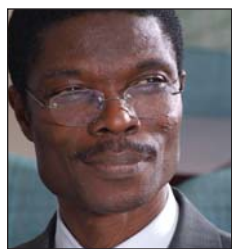


Gabriel Maurer (GMA):

The challenge in northern Africa is quite different from the one in the central, southern, and western parts of Africa that my colleagues have addressed. In the north, our concern is to move from absence to presence. At the moment, we have very small Adventist communities in the north. Our challenge is: How do we make the Advent message a viable one in the countries that are predominantly Muslim? It's a challenge, but we already have some very encouraging experiences. For the future, cooperation between the north of Africa and the rest of Africa would be very helpful. Immigrants from Ghana, Kenya, and other countries have proved valuable in establishing new contacts.



Brempong Owusu-Antwi (BO): One critical issue the church will increasingly face in Africa is personnel development. In ten to fifteen years, it is projected that Africa will have fifty percent of the world membership. From where will we get pastors and leaders for such a growing church? We also face another unique problem. The current evangelistic surge has yielded a lot of new Adventists, but they tend to remain the way they came in. There aren't enough pastors to fully "Adventistize" these new members.



Here's where the new Adventist University of Africa is going to play a crucial role. The university aims to turn out each year leaders who will help in the administration, leadership, and nurturing of the churches. Our course development also involves the training of the laity.

NS: As a follow-up to what you have just said, we see in Africa massive movements in education taking place. How do you see our church being part of this educational surge?

LD: Speaking about conventional education, we have seven Adventist universities in Africa. Together, they may be educating twenty thousand students at any one time, graduating perhaps three thousand a year. But a large number of them are non-Adventists, and only a small percentage is trained as church pastors and leaders. So I want to look at ways of augmenting the conventional educational process. I want to see Adventist universities and colleges reaching out into the field, to where the church is, and conducting workshops and seminars to train lay people, the undershepherds.

NS: Even that is only a small step, compared to the membership of the church.

LD: Yes, but the educational process need not be confined to the universities alone. Let's augment this formal educational resource by tapping other leadership training resources the church has. We have administrators, pastors, and

departmental directors who can help in training the lay people where they are. That will augment what is happening on the campus.

NS: In some parts of the world, the church is developing in a responsible way, bivocational pastors. A conference looks around and sees a good carpenter who also has a sense of ministry. The conference provides pastoral training and recruits that person as a part-time pastor. There are conferences that have systematic training for such persons and the individuals may well turn out to be good pastors. We are waiting to see the results.

PR: Both academic and on-the-job training are important. I would like to see all our resources—the university, the church administration, and the pastoral staff—focus on turning every local church into becoming a training center.

Willie Hucks (WH): What are some of the greatest opportunities you see in your areas?

GMA: Growth itself is one big opportunity. Growth is more than numbers; it means precious people coming into the church. Rightly trained, these new believers can make for a stronger church to play their role as effective witnesses not only within the continent, but beyond.

LD: Opportunities for witness are wide open. More and more, non-Adventists, and even non-Christians are inviting us to come to their communities, their homes, and teach them about Christ. Communities of faith are being established in places where once it seemed impossible. Such opportunities also provide some great challenges. When people come in large numbers, they come with baggage, their varied beliefs and lifestyle. So, we need to not only bring the new believers in, but also hold them. While we take hold of the opportunity, we must not neglect the challenge. Hence the need for nurture and training and the need to help the new believers unpack their baggage and accept what is truly Adventist. Where this is done the new believers are becoming instruments of witness. They have

accepted the message and now they are passing it on.

NS: I will turn to Bertil Wiklander for a moment. What are some of the opportunities that you notice in the part of Africa that your division serves?

Bertil Wiklander (BW): Trans-European Division includes Egypt and Sudan. These countries are quite different in that the population is Arab and Muslim. We have about a thousand members in Egypt and less than that in north Sudan. In southern Sudan, we have more Adventists and other Christians with a receptivity to the Adventist message. Khartoum, in the north, is where we have the headquarters for the Sudan field. Peace that is slowly returning to southern Sudan provides us fresh opportunities. During the difficult times of war, an Adventist school system has slowly developed there with close to six thousand children in attendance. We do not have any Adventist colleges in Sudan or Egypt, but the Middle East University in



Lebanon serves the field. But we find it difficult to send students there because such students usually do not return.

NS: Maybe that's why I was asked to go and teach in Sudan for a few weeks.

BW: Yes, that's so. We have developed an off-campus program where people like you—people with experience—can go and teach the people where they are. So, I think we have great opportunities, especially in the south.

NS: Now you mentioned elementary schools. How did they develop?

BW: Local leaders, driven by the Holy Spirit and by the need for education, just started developing elementary schools on their own. We had no idea of their existence, but now that we know, we are visiting them and helping them with whatever is necessary. It's amazing what initiatives and drive people have.

Gmb: Adventist education is in demand everywhere. I have received numerous letters inviting the church to open schools. One such request came from Zanzibar, an island component of Tanzania, with a population that is ninety-nine percent Muslim. We have a small clinic in Zanzibar. Because of the impact it has had on the community, the government leaders invited us to start a secondary school there, even though they were fully aware of the philosophy and mission of our educational system.

BO: Education has also made it possible for us to reach the higher strata of society. Years ago when I was a student at the University of Ghana, there were only twelve Adventist students there. Now we have more than four hundred students. Likewise in other universities throughout Africa. With such a large presence of Adventist students in secular universities, we not only have an influence on campuses now, but we also have a large potential of well-educated African Adventists becoming thought leaders in the country. That will indeed be a new opportunity for the church.

GMa: The north of Africa is different. We do not have any Adventist universities there. But we bring people from these countries, train them outside, and send them back to their homes where they serve effectively. Health and development work are two areas that provide opportunities for service in countries like Tunisia and Morocco. Even governments in these countries are interested in Adventists making a contribution by means of health expos and similar ventures.

NS: *It's encouraging to see that historically we as a church have interpreted mission not as a venture for profit, but rather as an outreach for service. That makes the church radically different from a business undertaking. An industry or a business invests where they can make the most profit and make it immediately. But the church invests in ministry for the betterment of the community, for the glory of God. As a result, we see explosive growth in countries where there was hardly a ripple years ago.*

GMa: Another opportunity we have is the Internet. It's a good way to reach people one never would have met. So we're focusing on Internet access in Arabic, French, and different dialects. Through this new media, we can send to thousands of people programs on health, education, child training, and Bible studies.

PR: The church in Africa has another great opportunity: to turn a present tragedy that is afflicting the continent into an opportunity to affirm the care and compassion of Jesus. I am referring to the tragedy of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Is this not a time for the church to express the compassion of Christ, to live the love of Jesus, to bring hope to the hopeless, and to change even the way people see those who are carrying the virus? As a church, we have a center that deals with HIV/AIDS issues, and it is making a lot of progress, and it is serving to make a difference. ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) is also carrying a message of compassion, care, and development to the entire continent. People are very appreciative of what we are doing in these areas.

LD: Talking about the media again, in most parts of Africa, people have no easy access to the Internet. Some have not even seen a computer. But there's one traditional media that the church must continue to use—the radio.

NS: *So that works well in your area.*

LD: Ah, yes. Radio has no boundaries. Often, the new members coming from non-Christian backgrounds found their first contact with Adventists through what they have heard on radio programs.

NS: *Do you use radio a lot in the northern part of the continent?*

All: Yes.

WH: *Changing directions a little, what can the worldwide Adventist Church learn from the church in Africa?*

BO: What an empowered laity can do! When I visited a western country the

first time, I remarked to a church pastor, "If the laity is actually involved, I think the church will grow even faster." He queried, "In what sense?" I told him, "Well, if the lay members get involved in preaching and in evangelism, imagine what can be accomplished." The pastor remarked, "Well, you do that in Africa because you don't have pastors." The pastor's last remark may be true. But the real point is that the New Testament model of a church is a lay-empowered church. Where there is a strong laity and lay involvement in evangelism and church planting and nurture, there is a strong growth of the church. We can see this in Asia, Africa, and South America. Anyway, lay empowerment is something the world church can least afford to ignore.

BW: Another lesson we can all learn from the church in Africa is the simple trust and reverence people exhibit toward God. Wherever I go in Africa, I note a widespread respect for God. People take spiritual things seriously, and this seems to be missing in places where there is an excessive concentration on material aspects of life: careers and salaries, houses and cars, and power and parties. This trend is likely to come to Africa as well, and may have hit the large cities already but has not yet touched the vast hinterland. Along with respect for God, there is respect for people, and the two are powerful ingredients for making life less self-centered. Can the church in more affluent parts of the world learn something from the church in Africa and return to priorities of God-centered and other-oriented faith and mission?

Gmb: Let me go back for a minute and stress another great opportunity the church finds in Africa: As the church continues to grow, its influence with the government and the society at large also grows. In Kenya, for example, Adventists with a membership of close to six hundred thousand are one of the largest influential churches. They are involved with every aspect of the government and the country, including the critical opportunity of working on the development of the country's constitution. Adventists can impact in a positive way.

WH: *What personal spiritual experiences have you gained as a result of your ministry in Africa?*

NS: *We're all involved in ministry and we're wondering how has that impacted you? As you see challenges and opportunities and as you face different issues, they must surely impact your spiritual life.*

PR: One impact is a sense of God's presence. How can one serve in Congo, Rwanda, west and central Africa, and other places during the tumultuous days of recent history and not feel impacted by the powerful presence of God and His personal intervention in life? In every movement of history, we feel His touch and sense His ever-abiding assurance.

GMA: I have had moving experiences in northern Africa, in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and was encouraged by the spirit of service. In one place I visited a man who hardly had anything of this world. His house was just a room, and there he stayed with his wife and two daughters for sixteen years. In the midst of that poverty, he discovered Jesus. He read the Bible. He eventually found Seventh-day Adventists. He worked, he struggled, got his Sabbaths off in a country where such a request would normally end in either loss of job or a place in prison. But his faith rewarded him. His God carried him through, and now he lives in an apartment where he shares his faith and studies the Bible with friends that come to him. Such experiences increase our confidence in God who is faithful to His promises.

LD: I would like to thank God for the ministry in Africa because it has taught me to share. In Africa, the neighbor's problem is your problem and your problem is your neighbor's. As a minister, I am on duty twenty-four hours a day. People knock at my door at any time. If they are looking for a place to sleep, you better give them a place to sleep. If they look for some counsel, don't look at your watch. These personal one-on-one sharing encounters are what makes ministry so fulfilling, so challenging.

GMb: Often when church members thank me for the ministry I have done, I find myself humbled. It is I who should thank them for their ministry to me. In the most sophisticated of churches as well as in the most humble ones, in the midst of a variety of congregations from affluent to struggling, from the most educated to the barely literate, I find the power of Jesus working in various ways in shaping the saints to be great citizens for the kingdom. As I visit these churches across my division, I see God at work, and I often ask myself: *Am I worthy of this ministry?*

BW: I am not an African, but I love Africa and African people. What blessed me the most in my ministry in Africa is the great faith of the people and their search for the truth as found in God's Word. Things have happened in south Sudan and in other areas where I work that we could only dream about where I come from. For example, a priest becomes an Adventist and then tells his congregation that what he has found is the Truth. The congregation examines the priest's discovery and decides to follow the Word. Similar discoveries of truth take place over and over again. Simply astounding and incredible.

NS: *What you just said reminds me of the New Testament church. People came together, and somebody brought them a message and then they said, well, this is what we need to do. It's that simple.*

BW: They take the study of God's Word and its consequences seriously.

WH: *Pastor Daniel, I remember when I first met you five years ago. I was conducting an evangelism series in Abidjan for about three weeks. My daughter, ten years old at the time, was sick back home. I was so worried. One night when I was preaching, a prayer group was meeting for intercession. They said to me, "Pastor, you're here doing God's work. God will bless you and your family back home because you're doing God's work here." I was strengthened by that support, and later in talking to my wife, I found out that my daughter was beginning to feel better pretty much right about the time the prayer group was interceding for*

her. So I learned a lot about faith that night—the faith I did not have, and the faith that others had. It strengthened me.

GMb: Talking of faith and prayer reminds me of an experience I had with the Masai people. It was camp meeting time. A pastor and I were staying with the Masai, sleeping in their huts. To the Masai, that means a lot. If you can accept them, live among them, with their cows around, sit and talk, to them, that is love; that is acceptance. One night a lion came in the neighborhood and set off an alarm. The young people in the meeting rushed out, picked up their spears, and dashed off after the lion. About the same time, a message came from one of the cattle keepers that he lost all the cattle. He was out in the woods, and then somehow something happened, and all the cows were gone. Panic gripped the entire village and those in the camp meeting. "Can we pray together?" suggested someone. And we prayed together, earnestly and trustingly. After the prayer, one of the elders said, "Let's continue with the meeting. The Lord will work out our problem." The next morning when the cow-hands went out, they found all the cows under a tree not far away. Not one was lost. The Masai knew the power of prayer. I came away tremendously impressed.

NS: *A little over a hundred years ago the Adventist Church sent its first missionaries to Africa. Many of those early missionaries worked hard and long, often wondering what would happen to all their toils. I just wonder what their reaction will be at the second coming of Jesus when they will arise and see the vast throngs of believers rise to greet the Savior. What would their reaction be to see what God has accomplished? Many of them worked for many, many years without seeing great things happen. Is that not foundational to Adventist missiology? We go, not because we know the results are guaranteed, but because we know the Lord who has sent us. M*

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God of the Africans: ministering to adherents of African traditional religion

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Social scientists have come to the conclusion that peoples' beliefs have a powerful influence on their thought patterns and behaviors. African scholars, like John S. Mbiti and E. Bolaji Idowu, have argued that Africans are very religious; hence, the religion of Africans influences every aspect of their daily lives.

What is the religion of Africans and what do they believe? These are things that we need to know as we seek to reach Africans with the gospel of Christ.

Background to African traditional religion

African religion involves the whole of the African's life: the environment, values, culture, self-awareness—a complete worldview. Religion considers the dynamic interaction of various activities that take place in every African community, and it permeates all phases of life. According to John S. Mbiti,

Traditional religions are not primarily for the individual, but for his community of which he is a part. Chapters of African religions are written everywhere in the life of the community and in traditional society there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so [belong] involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, and festivals of that community.¹

Still on the centrality of religion in the life of the Africans, E. Bolaji Idowu has this to say,

There is a common Africanness about the total culture and religious beliefs and practices in Africa. This common factor may be due to either the fact of diffusion or to the fact that most Africans share common origins with regard to race, and customs and religious practices.²

Preview of African traditional religion

Before we launch into the important task of sharing the gospel to members of the African traditional religion, we would do well to identify this religion and know its basic tenets. African traditional religion has no sacred literature and no human founder, therefore, this religion has not been named after anyone, such as is the case in Buddhism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. A revealed religion, it came into existence through the peoples' experiences with God from time immemorial. Passed from father to son, this religion has no zeal for membership increase, yet it is displayed everywhere for all to see. How do we identify African religion?

It should be stated that when it is said that African traditional religion has no sacred literature, it means it has no document similar to the Holy Bible of the Christians or the Koran of the Muslims.

Identification and sources of African religion

The two major ways of identifying this religion come through primary and secondary sources. The primary sources could be oral or concrete. The oral sources include myths, traditional events told as stories, as well as proverbs and wise sayings that contain the philosophy and worldviews of the people. Liturgy, worship recitals, and songs are also integral parts of this source. The concrete sources, on the other hand, include the ecological landmarks and artistic objects. The ecological landmarks refer to sacred trees, rivers, mountains, forests, and rocks. Every ecological landmark is not regarded as being sacred by Africans. But those believed to display supernatural qualities—such as protection in times of danger, or those that act as sources of supplying the needs of the people in times of scarcity—are deemed sacred. It is important to note that this worship is not directed to these landmarks but to the Supreme Being who put these objects in their strategic locations for the benefit of man.

The secondary sources are the various published works of anthropologists, social workers, scholars of religion, as well as religious leaders. Specifically, these secondary sources include books written by scholars on African religion and

some have been referenced in this article. Also available are academic journals published by educational institutions, research agencies, and individuals. In addition to these are photographs and various electronic documentaries on the subject under discussion.

Fundamental beliefs of African traditional religion

P. A. Talbot wrote that African traditional religion is made up of four important elements: polytheism, anthropomorphism, ancestor worship, and animism.³ E. Geoffrey Parrinder posited that this religion should be given a fourfold classification based on belief in a Supreme God, divinities, ancestors, and charms with its accessories.⁴ It was Ralph Tanner who maintained that African traditional religion should be seen as a threefold religion based on the Supreme Being, the ancestors, and the diviner-magician. But according to E. Bolaji Idowu,

Taking Africa as a whole, there are in reality five important elements that go into the making of African traditional religion. These are belief in God, belief in divinities, belief in Spirits, belief in the ancestors, and the practice of magic and medicine, each with its own consequent, attendant cult.⁵

These five basic beliefs that make up the African traditional religion are corroborated by the work of Vincent Okungu, who argued that a slight difference might be observed in these component elements with different people groups in Africa to demonstrate the peoples' understanding of God in their locality.⁶

These basic beliefs are:

1. *Belief in God.* With this belief based on God's revelation of Himself to the Africans, God became real, and every African community has a local name for God. God has always been real and never an abstract concept to the African. The names which various African communities give to God project their best expression of Him in their religious experiences. These names are descriptive in nature because they portray the character as well as the attributes of God as understood by the people.

For instance, in the eastern part of Nigeria, God is known as either *Chukwu* or *Chineke*, which means "the big God" or "the God who creates," respectively. The Akan people of Ghana call Him *Onyame* to confirm their belief in this Supreme Being. The Mendes of Sierra Leone call Him *Ngewo*, which means "Creator of the universe" as well as "Father,"⁷ while the Kikuya people of Kenya call Him *Murungu*, which means "Creator of all things."⁸ God in the African worldview is the Controller, Protector, and Provider for the whole universe.⁹

2. *Belief in divinities.* These divinities are the functionaries, as well as ministers, in the theocratic government of the world. The divinities are there as messengers of the All-powerful God. Their power and authority are derived from the Deity in order to enable them to render acceptable services both to the Deity and to man.¹⁰

3. *Belief in spirits.* This concept is anthropomorphically conceived, since the spirits are both immaterial and incorporeal beings. These spirits live in rocks, mountains, rivers, trees, bushes, waterways, among other places. Another important dimension associated with this belief is the "born-to-die" idea, which is closely connected with reincarnation. This aspect of the belief claims wandering spirits specialize in finding their way into the wombs of pregnant women in order to be born and later to die. In a similar manner, it is believed in many parts of Africa that the activities of witches, who operate as mystic living creatures such as birds, bats, rats, and other living things, should not be ignored. The objectives of the witches are to inflict harm: insanity, disease, miscarriages, deformities, or any other unexplainable problem.¹¹

4. *Belief in ancestors.* The ancestors are neither Deity nor divinities; they are however, the dead members of the community—known as "the living-dead"—and are believed to exist in communion with their living loved ones.¹² The ancestors are regarded as heads of their respective families or communities, with death as just a continuation of ancestors and their services, but now in the afterlife. Those qualified to become ancestors must have lived to ripe old ages, lived godly lives, and must have

had children. Indeed, where the ancestors live permanently is the "paradise" or "heaven," which the average African longs for when he or she dies.¹³

5. *Belief in the practice of magic and medicine.* Magic and medicine could either be used in their destructive or protective forms. Protective forms are used to avert illness or calamities for the individual or communities; destructive forms are used to cause individual misfortune or communal calamities.¹⁴ The medicine man (pure herbalist) in Africa uses herbs, roots, rhizomes, and other natural materials that can be beneficial. On the other hand, the native doctor works with herbs combined with mystic powers, oracular consultations, sacrifices, and incantations. This is the most dreaded form of magic because of its secrecy shroud.

Applying Paul's approach to adherents of African traditional religion

With this background in mind, we ask, How, then can we share the good news of Jesus Christ with the adherents of this religion?

Several methods could be applied in sharing the everlasting gospel with adherents of African traditional religion. Knowing what the Africans believe will help the Christian preacher know how and where to begin. When the apostle Paul traveled to Athens, he got the people's attention by speaking to them on a subject already known to them, the unknown god (Acts 17: 23). Paul started where the people were, and he finally guided them to where he wanted them to be.

This method will also work well in Africa today. A sound knowledge of the basic beliefs of the people should be mastered to enable the preacher to go from the known to unknown.

Christ's method of soul winning¹⁵

Another successful way of ministering to adherents of African traditional religion would be to apply Christ's methods of soul winning. Ellen White outlined five unique steps that Christ applied during His earthly ministry. The first was by mingling with the people He had come to serve because He desired their good. He spent time with the people—both

great and small, rich and poor, men and women, the sick and the healthy—and He made Himself available for this interaction both day and night. He did this in order to find ways to benefit the people.

Next was Christ's humanitarian ministry. In this context Jesus Christ ministered to the people by meeting their needs. He met their needs by providing food for the hungry and healing for the sick. This ministry is needed more than ever before in Africa today, where sickness and hunger have become a daily companion to millions. How can anyone accept that Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life on an empty stomach?

Christ also demonstrated sympathy to the people. He ministered to the people in all life situations by identifying Himself with them in their times of sorrow and sickness. At Bethany, He wept because of the death of Lazarus (John 11:35). He sympathized with the people on the account of the death of His friend and because of their ignorance that He was the Resurrection and the Life. When the people were hungry and moving about as sheep without a shepherd, He had compassion on them (Matt. 9:36). By His actions He demonstrated His love and care for these people. We cannot do less for the adherents of African traditional religion today.

With all the above accomplished, Christ was able to win the people's confidence and tell them to follow Him. Certainly some people followed Christ because of the food He provided, but the majority came to Him because He met their needs, showed sympathy to them, and worked with them as Someone who desired their good. These methods will produce the same results in soul winning when properly applied today in every African community.

Conventional methods of soul winning

The conventional methods of soul winning consist of personal and public evangelistic outreaches; mass media (radio, television, satellite); literature ministries; and educational, health, and medical institutions. These, as well as other means of sharing the good news, can also be used in ministering to adherents of African traditional religion.

The second coming of Jesus Christ should be made the central theme of such soul winning. A survey from 12 African countries between 2005 and 2006 revealed that most Africans expect preachers to talk of the blessed hope.¹⁶ It's not surprising that 52.5 percent of the respondents believed that the second coming of Jesus Christ should be emphasized in every sermon. After all, the second coming of Jesus Christ will end human suffering. War, disease, and death, so common in AIDS-stricken Africa, will finally be over. No wonder so many Africans long for it!

Yes, the second coming of Jesus has become the hope for all of us, Africans included. This is the message all the adherents of African traditional religion need to hear. Using Christ's method of soul winning, Paul's method of sharing the good news, conventional methods, as well, in sharing the blessed hope, we will have success in this important work. ■

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- 11 Benjamin C. Ray, *African Religions: Symbols, Rituals, and Community* (NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 132-144.
- 12 Elisha O. Babalola, *Traditional Religion: Islam and Christianity—Patterns of Interaction* (Ile-Ife: Olajide Printing Works, 1992), 24, 25.
- 13 Ibid., 27.
- 14 Kwabena, 83.
- 15 Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 143.
- 16 Philemon O. Amanze, *Preaching the Everlasting Gospel in Today's World* (Ibadan: Goldfield Publishers, 2007), 215-217.

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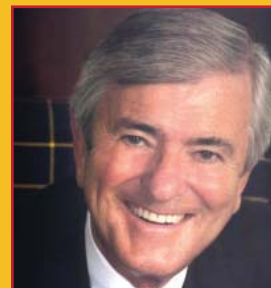
James Earl Massey is the son and grandson of ministers. For 22 years Dr. Massey was the senior and founding minister of the Metropolitan Church of God, a large multicultural, mission-oriented congregation in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A. He was also elected for a five-year period to be the speaker on the "Christian Brotherhood Hour" — a weekly international program which broadcasted on more than 140 radio stations. Additionally, Dr. Massey has been invited to preach in distinguished pulpits across America, Europe, Egypt, the Caribbean, Australia, and Japan. More than 140 colleges, universities, and seminaries have invited him to preach or lecture. James Earl Massey has authored 25 published books and in 2006 *Christianity Today* named him one of the "25 Most Influential Preachers of the Past 50 Years."



Laurence Turner began his ministry as a pastor-evangelist in South England before being invited to be a lecturer in Theology at Avondale College, New South Wales, Australia. Currently he is Principal Lecturer in Old Testament Studies and Director of Research Degrees at Newbold College, Bracknell, England. Dr. Turner's main area of research and publishing has been the book of Genesis, on which he has published three books and contributed to major reference works and journal articles. He is very highly regarded as an expository preacher and enjoys expounding the Old Testament in a contemporary Christian context. In addition to Old Testament, Dr. Turner teaches homiletics at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and is regularly invited to preach internationally.



Jo Ann Davidson is the daughter of missionary parents. Formerly a homeschooling mom and music instructor, Dr. Davidson now lectures at the Andrews University Theological Seminary. She has the distinction of being the first woman lecturer in the Theology Department. Articles she has written have appeared in the *Adventist Review*, *Signs of the Times*®, and the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*. Her column, "Let's Face It," which has a woman's slant on theology, appears regularly in the journal *Perspective Digest*. She has also authored the published book *Jonah: The Inside Story*. Dr. Davidson is a highly sought-after speaker for large national and international Christian conventions and continues to find great fulfillment in her various roles as wife, mother, daughter, sister, auntie, teacher, musician, student, and active Christian.



Lloyd John Ogilvie has long been recognized as having a remarkably distinguished ministry. He was the 61st chaplain of the United States Senate in Washington, D.C. Dr. Ogilvie was also the Senior Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Hollywood, California, for 23 years with a very significant TV and radio broadcast ministry. He is currently the president of Leadership Unlimited, receiving numerous high-profile speaking invitations. Dr. Ogilvie has authored more than 55 books and has been the recipient of many prestigious awards including being named in the 1996 Baylor University's worldwide survey as one of the 12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world. Recently, Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, established the Lloyd John Ogilvie Preaching Institute and the Lloyd John Ogilvie Chair of Preaching.

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A ministry of compassion to the HIV/AIDS community

Willie E. Hucks II

Willie E. Hucks II: Please share a bit about Adventist AIDS International Ministry, as well as your own background in working with the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Oscar Giordano: My wife Eugenia, also a medical doctor, and I worked in the refugee camps in Congo. Then we worked in other regions of Africa for many years, before moving to South Africa with this new assignment for the HIV/AIDS Africa office, which we now call AAIM, Adventist AIDS International Ministry. We have been based in Johannesburg since October 2003. The General Conference voted on this office in May 2002, and we received the call to go to Johannesburg.

WH: Do you have an idea of how many people are participating with you in this project throughout all the churches?

OG: We don't know precisely how many people are involved; but we know from the reports that there are thousands. So, we already have fourteen countries active, a fifteenth country that is about to start, Zimbabwe. We have many, many churches that are reaching people—people both within the church and in the surrounding communities.

WH: What motivated you to start this ministry?

OG: The HIV epidemic has been around for the last twenty-five years. The church felt the need to create an office specifically to focus on this issue.

We tried to trace the actions of our churches, institutions, or agencies back from the beginning of the epidemic, and we found that, since 1985, there have been actions in trying to help mitigate the impact of this epidemic—but these are fragmented actions. So most of the churches kept silent, and generally people didn't speak or preach about it. But, of course, we have a strong presence in the communities. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has programs in the communities. But the issue remained: How do we help the churches cope with the epidemic? How do we break the silence, break that stigma, break the isolation and discrimination—even in our institutions—where sometimes we have found people were fired because they are HIV positive?

WH: Paint a picture for us of what you see on a daily basis in your ministry to those with HIV or AIDS, especially since many of us have never dealt with AIDS patients on a regular basis.

OG: Usually the people we find in Africa who have been touched by this epidemic don't have enough food or clean water, nor do many of them have anybody to care for them when they get very weak. This is when the support groups that we train come into play to provide that support. Many of these people have been rejected by their families and chased away from home. Church members come to them—to become their friends, to establish a relationship. The book of James talks about the importance of doing something for the person, not just saying "I'll pray for you." That person needs food, that person needs covering in the winter, that person needs clothing, that person needs company. Let us not forget that it is estimated from surveys that about twenty percent of our membership in southern Africa is HIV positive, ten percent in eastern Africa, and four to five percent in western Africa.

WH: In terms of meeting the challenges person-to-person, are you able to make a difference? The challenge must seem too big to handle at times.

OG: Of course HIV/AIDS is a big issue, and for a big continent like Africa, it is not an easy task, but we feel this is a call from God. Looking back at what all the other organizations have done, we decided we needed a clear action plan. We needed to see what our church could do with the limited financial resources we have. Jesus approached people who were suffering on a one-to-one basis; what Jesus offered the people is exactly what the people today need—love and compassion. They also need



Willie E. Hucks II, DMin, associate editor of *Ministry*, interviews Oscar Giordano, MD, executive director of the General Conference organization, Adventist AIDS International Ministry (AAIM).

to know of the possibility of eternal life. Salvation is much more important than anything else for a person who is suffering. Actually, many people suffer more from the heavy load of guilt, and we have experiences with people that we have found while visiting homes and visiting villages that when you ask them, "What is your relationship with God?" they will say, "I've asked for forgiveness." They don't focus on walking again or having good health or even wanting to be with their families. They want forgiveness. And when we see Jesus Christ ministering to the sick, the forgiveness of sins comes first before the physical healing.

WH: *Does your ministry focus solely on the spiritual aspects of their existence?*

OG: No. We have to do much more for them. For example, we found a group of people—thirty Adventists in Nairobi, Kenya. The government was providing free treatment, but they were not doing well physically. So, I asked them, "You're all being treated, but why are you not recovering?" The answer was simple: "We don't have money to buy food." Treatment without food is a very bad prescription. It doesn't work. So, how can we provide food for them? We don't have the money to provide food, but we can create small businesses for them, small income-generating activities. So, we started income-generating activities such as sewing workshops, bakeries, beehives and honey harvesting, and food gardens. When these young ladies who are HIV positive come to the sewing workshop, it's not only that they are learning skills, but it's being with other women in the same situation; it's the interchange, the relationship, that brings them back to life.

WH: *Do you find that the pastors are more willing to preach about these topics, and teachers are more willing to teach about these topics, and parents are willing to talk about topics like AIDS at home?*

OG: Since we have been pushing this agenda, there is a change. And we have provided wonderful materials like the one used by Family Ministries on human sexuality that is translated in different



Doctors Oscar and Eugenia Giordano

languages. We have given out those materials and we have a special chapter in our training where we talk to the pastors, elders, and members; and yes, there is a change. There are programs going on in several churches, but still, when we think of the four and a half million members we have in Africa and more than sixteen thousand five hundred churches, we see that even with what we have done, much more needs to be done. And then, don't forget that HIV/AIDS is not only a problem in Africa. We have Asia and the Caribbean Islands, we have HIV everywhere, and there are countries in which the disease is more prevalent. When we are invited to talk in the church and institutions in the United States, people say, "Wow!" Earlier this year, my wife spoke at a university in the United States. So many of the students came to her saying, "We didn't know about this. We need more talk about this in our churches and university." There is so much denial everywhere. If you keep silent, you are working for the devil. You are helping this situation to get worse because nobody knows, nobody's aware. People don't think much about it, don't know much about it. But if you talk, you break that silence, you break that ignorance, you empower the people, the youth, the children. They can learn how to say "no" and avoid risky behavior.

WH: *What do you say to the pastor who feels it is more important to talk about spiritual issues like overcoming sin and dealing with temptation rather than talk about HIV and AIDS?*

OG: When we look at the whole picture of this problem and we remember that our relationship with God at the very beginning was broken by sin, then we see that HIV and AIDS is a consequence of that broken relationship. Now, how can we work in a way that addresses

this problem? We have to help people re-establish that relationship with God. I would say to the pastor, "Think of what Jesus would do when that person comes through the door of that church—that person who is infected with HIV." Now, we think, how can we help that person re-create that relationship with God again? By rejecting them? By disfellowshipping them? By pushing that person out of the church or standing up and sitting far away from that person and leaving them alone in the church, embarrassed and ashamed? What would Jesus do? Many people have HIV, but not because they have sinned. Today, fifty-nine percent of the infected in Africa are women, and the majority of those women didn't do anything wrong. They found themselves infected after their husband died or the husband went to the hospital, and they got tested and they found themselves positive. What about the children who are infected? They didn't do anything wrong. So, there are millions of people who didn't do anything wrong. And even the ones who made the wrong decision—who are we to judge them? This is what I would say to the pastors: Be compassionate. Our church has to be recognized as a church that is open to the people who are suffering, a refuge of hope and healing.

WH: *A refuge of hope and healing?*

OG: Yes, a center. We are promoting centers of hope and healing: for prevention of infection, after-infection care, home-based care, care of orphans, care of all kinds, support groups, to prevent the spread, to reduce the vulnerability in neighborhoods. For example, women, children, grandmothers are very vulnerable. Grandmothers are getting infected today because they are completely ignorant, they don't know how to protect themselves, they are unaware that their daughters are infected, and they are getting infected at the age of sixty-five or seventy. So, we need a lot of education in our churches to provide care and support for those infected by the disease and provide the socio-economic and human part of the healing. Also, we are establishing our churches as training centers for the youth. Our youth are idle and idleness

in youth is a good opportunity for the devil. But when you train them how to be carpenters, masons, welders, how to bake bread, then training centers in our churches become another great thing. This is a very comprehensive ministry because AIDS has many faces, and we need to fight all of those things with a spiritual effort combined with treatment and with what medical science can offer. We are creating voluntary counseling and testing centers in our churches calling them Adventist Center for Care and Support (ACCS). We have one beautiful ACCS in Nairobi Central church in Nairobi and also one just built in Swaziland. We like to call them Adventist Centers for Care and Support because care and support are what the people need.

WH: What can you share with our readers who wonder, "What can I do?" Let's face it, a lot of our readers don't know anyone

who has AIDS. Or, perhaps they say, "That problem is in Africa," or "That problem is with the homosexual community." What can our readers actually do; how can they help?

OG: We have published for east African countries a magazine that is exclusively dedicated to HIV, and recently the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division published their magazine—and we have contributed all of the articles on HIV and AIDS. We discuss what the church can do and also what individuals can do for those who have HIV/AIDS, especially for those to whom they give care. We address how the church in Africa needs to understand the crisis and organize itself with support groups. That, indeed, is a concept we need to have in all of our churches. What usually happens when we go to church? We shake hands with the person at the door and they say, "Happy Sabbath." That is the routine for most of us. Now

what if we say "Happy Sabbath" with our right hand, and with our left hand we bring a plastic sack with some fruit and/or nonperishables? And then in the front, on the platform, we have this basket where we put all those things. We go out that Sabbath afternoon, taking the youth of the church to an orphanage, hospice, hospital, or home and give some home-based care. We don't need lots of money. We just need a willing heart. That's all.

WH: And that's the gospel in Acts chapters two and four.

OG: Exactly, this is our ministry.

WH: Thank you so much. ■

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"The African World view" continued from page 7

as "African Instituted Churches." Such churches have mushroomed all over Africa, and they continue to grow. These are syncretistic and unorthodox; but by incorporating the African religio-cultural heritage, they have demonstrated that it helps to attempt to reach the traditional African at the core of their being. African Instituted Churches also show us that in order to deal with the traditional African worldview we should not just condemn it or only talk about it, but we need to establish strong church communities with strong fellowship that can nurture those who choose the Christian worldview. Adequate response from the church that is serious about accomplishing the mission of God has become mandatory and urgent because of a cry from many circles for the revival of true African traditions and heritage. The "African Renaissance," which has many advocates from prominent African thought leaders, is, unfortunately, fraught with Afrocentricity that is not helpful in the formation of African people in a Christian way.

The challenge of the traditional African worldview to authentic Christian formation

needs to be tackled expeditiously—not just to proclaim the gospel, but also to render a complete service of discipling persons and providing for the formation of these same people into a new worldview. To do so, there must be intentional discipleship programs that help people to internalize the Christian tradition. People who accept Christ must be helped to grow in Him and to cherish His new values in ways that supplant aberrant spiritualistic tendencies. They must also be rooted in an authentic Christian spirituality and anchored on the solid Rock, Jesus Christ. ■

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- 14 Ncube, "Ancestral Beliefs and Practices," 57.
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- 18 John Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religions* (Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1975), 42, 165.
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Plagiarism: Alternate explanations?

Part two of a three-part series on the
accusation that Ellen G. White plagiarized

Research by
David J. Conklin
Article by
Kevin L. Morgan



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Wilkesboro Seventh-
day Adventist
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United States.*

Accusations of plagiarism often fly when similarity of wording is noted between two authors. This was the case in the late 1970s when Walter Rea discovered similarities in writing between Ellen G. White and the life of Christ writers who preceded her. In this article, we will examine ways in which a person may duplicate the words of others without it being plagiarism.

How do we know if similar passages are related to one another?¹

"In two novels published by two different publishing houses and issued on or almost the same date, there were two paragraphs which were not only in meaning but in phraseology and in reference almost precisely identical."²

A stanza of a poem published in May 1900 was the same as an unpublished poem written in January 1899.³

A writer confronted a critic who accused her of "borrowing" the title of her poem from another. The writer's poem had been published years before the alleged original. Yet, "not only were the poems identical in name—that name constituting their refrain, an entire line, oft repeated—but their burden was the same, and the rhythm—very irregular, identical also. The critic was dumbfounded."⁴

How could this be? Often two people come to strikingly similar conclusions without having collaborated with one another.

"The discovery that your discovery has already been discovered is surprisingly common,

said Stephen Stigler . . . there is the oft-told story about Larry Shepp, a famous mathematician at Rutgers University. Dr. Shepp, when told that a piece of work he thought was his discovery actually duplicated another mathematician's breakthrough, replied: 'Yes, but when I discovered it, it stayed discovered.'"⁵

"Hus and Wycliffe seem to illustrate the phenomena of an idea developing in two minds along parallel lines to results that are surprisingly similar. This is to history what 'unconscious plagiarism' means in letters."⁶

Cryptomnesia—unconscious plagiarism

To a person who is fairly well read and who writes much it is often a serious question whether something he has written is as purely original as anything can well be, or whether it is the aid of the subjective mind that suddenly interposes with its stored-up knowledge and furnishes just the words and thoughts needed from the unconscious (to the objective mind) memory of the subjective mind. And the more he tries to discriminate and remember, the less he knows about it.

And the very state of the absorbed and earnest writer aids the unconscious plagiarism and subconscious action, because he becomes so absorbed in his work that the objective mind is almost unconscious of its surroundings, thus making it an easy matter for the subjective mind to interpose its ready memory aid without regarding the storm of criticism or cry of plagiarism that the act may entail.⁷

Researchers Marsh, Landau, and Hicks conducted a study that showed that "recollection of information and the ascription of its original source can be separate cognitive acts."⁸

Alan S. Brown and Hildy E. Halliday have noted that "dramatic and serious incidences of cryptomnesia do exist."⁹ Jung "noted that 20 years elapsed between Nietzsche's hearing a folk story to his using it in a novel"; Helen Keller heard a story and three years later wrote it as her own short story; Freud heard a friend talk about a theory and, two years later, "inadvertently claimed the idea as his own."¹⁰ Authors Brown and Murphy mention a man named Daniels, who described knowing that he "had an extraordinary ability to remember material when I wanted to, but I have never before realized that I did it unconsciously."¹¹ (A reporter, who listened to a presentation of Ellen G. White that was "interspersed with instructive

facts . . . she had gathered in her recent visit to foreign lands," called attention to her "remarkable memory of details."¹² Linda Hutcheon concludes, "Literary criticism has been somewhat slower than literary theory to acknowledge the role of these other players."¹³

Evidence of Ellen G. White's independence of thought

Similarity is not the whole picture. "To notice similarities is only the first step in the study of literary relationships. One must also catalogue the differences, and then, even more importantly, ask what use the second author made of the first author's work. In spite of the fact that she [Ellen G. White] used Melvill, her writings are far more than a replay of his teachings."¹⁴

Since Ellen G. White had written "most of the ideas which are common to her and Dr. Stowe at a time prior to the writing of" Manuscript 24, 1886, and because "there are significant differences between the theories of revelation presented by Dr. Stowe and Mrs. White" she was *not* "appropriating the ideas of another man."¹⁵

Consider her borrowings from Conybeare and Howson. After doing a "parallel study of Ellen White's *Sketches from the Life of Paul* and Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*," Denis Fortin says:

we . . . [found] evidences that Ellen White did get some materials from these two authors. However, we must recognize that her borrowing was not done in a mindless manner. She borrowed geographical, archaeological and historical information to supplement her thoughts and descriptions of the events she was describing. Sometimes she loosely paraphrased what she borrowed, other times the paraphrases are more substantial, still sometimes the passages borrowed are almost word for word, or following the same line of thought. Yet, it also seems evident that she borrowed what she needed and left out what did not fit her thought. One drawback of this comparative study is the fact that long sections of Ellen White's

chapters are not mentioned because there is no parallel with Conybeare and Howson. Furthermore, one should note that Ellen White often rearranged Conybeare and Howson's outline and thoughts, she took materials from different pages or chapters and lined them up in her own way. Most students doing research today do not take the time to rework someone's thoughts and outline to that extent. This study shows that Ellen White knew what she was borrowing and did not borrow material mindlessly, simply to fill a page. She interacted with the material which to me indicates she was not plagiarizing.¹⁶

There have been claims that Ellen G. White constructed several chapters of her books out of Daniel March's book, *Night Scenes in the Bible*.¹⁷ Drs. Brand and McMahon's book, *The Prophet and Her Critics*, contains an exhibit that shows that Ellen G. White was far less dependent on March in *Prophets and Kings* than critics allege.¹⁸

While we would have to agree with Douglas Hackleman that the 2.6 percent literary indebtedness in the Cottrell and Specht study of *The Desire of Ages* is low due to its being based on William Hanna's work alone, the assertion that 80 to 90 percent of Ellen G. White's writings were copied is wildly overstated.¹⁹ The Veltman project, which was set up to find any possible literary dependency, surveyed more than 500 works for possible sources and documented only 31 percent of possible literary dependent sentences for the representative chapters in the study. Discounting the quotation of Scripture, that would mean that 61 percent of the sentences in those chapters in *The Desire of Ages* were independent.

A recent study by Jean Zurcher cites eight instances of Ellen G. White's correctness in describing the Waldenses and Albigenses, despite claims that she was merely copying information from misinformed historians.²⁰ Albert Reville explains why she contradicts certain historians:

We are reduced to descriptions given by adversaries, by some

apostates, and to depositions gathered by the tribunals of the inquisition. Some are disparaging, others suspect, so that we have to beware especially of the tendency of these judges or of these historians, equally biased, to present as direct dogmas or as beliefs positively professed by the Cathari, many ridiculous or repulsive eccentricities which are only the real or assumed consequences of principles admitted by them. Nothing is more deceptive than a method like this.²¹

Borrowing not an argument against inspiration

Was Walter Rea justified in his reaction to the similarity of *The Desire of Ages* to other life of Christ writings?

Alden Thompson reviews Rea and observes:

Biblical scholars will observe fascinating parallels between Rea's reaction to his data and the nineteenth century reaction to the "critical" study of the Bible. In the nineteenth century, initial reaction to the discovery that the biblical writers used sources was violent. Only after many decades did it become possible for mainstream scholarship to emphasize the finished product as being more meaningful than the bits and pieces. As part of that concern with the finished product, biblical scholars today emphasize the importance of what the author added *and* deleted (redaction criticism). Rea betrays his lack of awareness of modern research methods when he exclaims in evident disbelief that the defenders of Ellen White are finding it significant to study "that which she *didn't* include when she copied."²²

Inspiration cannot be determined merely by the percentages of borrowed and unborrowed material in a given article or book. *Ministry* magazine in a well researched inset takes up the point:

The amount of borrowing is not the most important question . . . An instructive parallel is found in the relationship of the Gospels. More

than 90 percent of the Gospel of Mark is paralleled by passages in Matthew and Luke. Even so, contemporary critical Biblical scholars are coming more and more to the conclusion that although Matthew, Mark and Luke used common materials, each was a distinct author in his own right. Thus even 'higher critics' have a more analytical approach to the study of literary sources than does *The White Lie*.

At one time in the infancy of 'source criticism' the Gospel writers were thought by higher critics to be little more than 'scissors and paste' plagiarizers. Now critical scholars realize that literary studies are not complete until they move beyond cataloging parallel passages to the more significant question of how the borrowed material was used by each author to make his own unique statement.²³

"If the 'inspired' authors of Scripture could 'borrow,' how can Ellen White's borrowing be an argument against her inspiration?"²⁴

Peterson's comments are significant:

Plagiarism is a narrow, technical term which simply does not apply in the case of Mrs. White . . . Any literary scholar can tell us that "source studies" are among the most treacherous tasks to undertake, for merely establishing a similarity—even a marked similarity—between two literary texts is not sufficient evidence of borrowing. One must also demonstrate (a) that text B was written after the publication of text A (the presumed "source"), (b) that the author of text B could be reasonably supposed to have had access to text A, and (c) that the ideas or even the language of text A have not become sufficiently dispersed so as to be, in effect, the common literary property of the age.²⁵

Issuing a verdict

A legal claim of copyright infringement against Mrs. White could never have succeeded. While Mrs. White's compositions may bear resemblance to other writings

of the same genre, the evidence shows that their similarity is often due to mutual dependence on Scripture (which isn't copyrightable), that many of the words and phrases determined by the original *Life of Christ Research Project* to be literary parallels of the "sources" were merely extensions of verbatim and thought material in her earlier writings,²⁶ and that the amount of material she borrowed without credit does not exceed that borrowed by other writers of her genre.²⁷ Moreover, she was not even threatened with suit, though the accusation of plagiarism circulated during her lifetime.

In our last article, we will review evidence showing that Ellen G. White's "sources" borrowed from one another without acknowledging their sources at least as often as she did.²⁸ ■

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- 23 "The Truth About the White Lie," *Ministry* insert, 55:2 (August 1982), 2.
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Africa: a land at the crossroads

**Hearyl G. Mayr and
Mike Negerie**



Hearyl G. Mayr is assistant director for marketing and development, ADRA International, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



Mike Negerie is regional technical manager for health in Africa, ADRA International.

With life in Africa frequently considered tough, every day becomes a challenge. Farmers lose fertile lands to droughts and desertification at an alarming rate. Profits from the extraction of natural resources such as gold, diamonds, platinum, gas, and oil have not improved life for the average African; instead, the extraction has polluted rivers, destroyed farmlands, and ignited civil unrest. Today, millions experience poverty, overpopulation, environmental decline, armed conflicts, and disease.

Appalling statistics show that in many areas of Africa life expectancy is just 48 years. Armed conflicts and famine have displaced more than 10 million people in their own countries and turned another 3.3 million into refugees. Across Africa between 21 and 27 million people are living with HIV/AIDS—60 percent of the world's total population, while 12 million children have been orphaned because of AIDS. In 2006 alone, 2.2 million people with AIDS died in Africa.

For these reasons and more, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) tackles specific challenges, including malaria, refugees, water issues, and HIV/AIDS.

In what ways does ADRA make a difference?

The hazards of a bite

The *Anopheles* mosquito infects between 350–500 million people every year with *Plasmodium*, the protozoan parasite that causes malaria, resulting in about 3 million deaths yearly. Malaria has become one of the most significant threats to millions of Africans, especially among populations of refugees and displaced persons. Governments have started to pay attention. In Uganda, the Ministry of Health reports that malaria accounts for 25 to 40 percent of all outpatient visits to health facilities and that between 70,000 and 110,000 children die each year of the disease. These statistics, however, don't reflect the true numbers because many people don't seek medical help when ill.

The impact of malaria in Africa puts pressure on not only health services across the continent but also on the pocketbook of the average African. A single malaria episode can devastate a family's income, especially when it hits the breadwinner. A family must cover hospital fees, medicines, and funeral expenses, if needed. In agricultural industries as much as 50 percent of lost man-hours are caused by malarial illnesses. Among school-aged children malaria has a similar effect, causing them to miss class and fall behind.

In Mozambique, where the disease killed 5,156 people and affected more than 6.3 million others in 2006 alone, ADRA is partnering with other organizations to implement the Together Against Malaria (TAM) project, which aims to



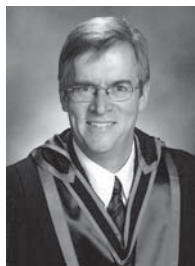
Photo: ADRA International

reach 1.5 million Mozambicans. The United States' First Lady, Laura Bush, announced the initiative recently in a speech in Maputo. "Defeating this epidemic is an urgent calling, especially because malaria is treatable and preventable," she said. ADRA plans to implement this plan first in the

Attention Preachers!

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Featured Speaker: Dr. Paul Scott Wilson



Dr. Paul Scott Wilson is Professor of Homiletics at Emmanuel College in the University of Toronto School of Theology, where he has taught since 1981. The son of a minister, he is himself an experienced and ordained pastor in the United Church of Canada, having served several churches. He is a past president of the Academy of Homiletics and conducts workshops and preaches and lectures widely in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Dr. Wilson is a prolific author. He has written many articles and books on the subject of preaching: *The*

Practice of Preaching, rev. edition (Abingdon, 2007); *Broken Words: Reflections on the Craft of Preaching* (Abingdon, 2004); *God Sense: Reading the Bible for Preaching* (Abingdon, 2001); and *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching* (Abingdon, 1999).

For nine years Dr. Wilson was the co-editor of *Preaching: Word and Witness*. He stays active in ministry with his wife, whom he assists at St. Stephen's-on-the-Hill United Church in Mississauga. He works with the adult church school, the youth group, and worship. He and his wife have three children.

Schedule & Topics

Sunday, October 21, 2007

9:30 a.m. – Lecture #1

“Preaching Trouble and Grace”

1:30 p.m. – Lecture #2

“Preaching as Teaching and Proclaiming the Gospel”

5:30 p.m. – Lecture #3

“The Biblical Text as Source and Lens of Proclamation”

Monday, October 22, 2007

10:30 a.m. Worship & Preaching Service

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densely populated Zambezia province by working at the grassroots level, training faith leaders about malaria control and prevention practices, then partnering with the Ministry of Health to reach local communities.

Far from home

In the last 20 years, the world has become a fast-moving, interconnected global community. While life has improved for millions, many remain outside the loop. Among them are more than three million refugees and ten million internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in Africa—the combined populations of New York, Buenos Aires, and Seoul.

Refugees and displaced persons don't move because they want to. They move because droughts, wars, persecution, inaccessibility to food, and chronic poverty force them to do so. Life as a refugee and IDP, of course, can be difficult, even dangerous. Overcrowded camps are breeding grounds for cholera and other diseases. Food and water, if available, are heavily rationed. People must often live in impromptu shelters that barely protect them from the elements. Personal security has become a matter of concern too, especially for women and girls, who are often targets of sexual violence and indiscriminate killings.

Sudan has become one of the worst-case scenarios. Years of civil war between the Muslim north and the Christian and animist south and recent violent raids in North and West Darfur have killed at least 200,000 people since 2003. As a result of the fighting, more than 693,000 Sudanese have fled to neighboring countries, while at least 2 million others have been displaced inside Sudan. The chaos has left 4 million people completely dependent on food aid.

The issue of displacement extends across Africa. Fighting and repetitive droughts in Somalia have forced more than 400,000 people from their homes. In northern Uganda, a brutal conflict has displaced more than 1 million people. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a decade of fighting has killed almost 4 million and caused 1.1 million to leave

their homes and more than 430,000 to seek asylum in nearby countries.

However, in Liberia groups of refugees who fled the country's two civil wars are returning home, says the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Angola reports a similar trend, and so do Burundi, Rwanda, Nigeria, Somalia, and a handful of other nations, albeit in smaller numbers.

As displaced Liberians return to their homeland after years of war, ADRA helps them resettle and jumpstart the farming sector destroyed during the violence. This project makes food available to more than 17,100 people in Lofa County.

In Somalia, where repeated droughts have caused traditional water sources to become unreliable, the ADRA Bakol Water Drought Response (BWDR) project addresses the water and sanitation needs of more than seven thousand people and nine hundred IDPs by deepening wells and building new water troughs for cattle.

In Sudan more than 20 years of conflict have displaced some five million people. But many are starting to go home. To help them during their trip down the Nile River, a journey that can last up to two months, ADRA's Returnees Support Program provides healthcare, shelter, food, clean water, blankets, and hygiene items—each a necessary part of feeling at home again.

The ultimate commodity

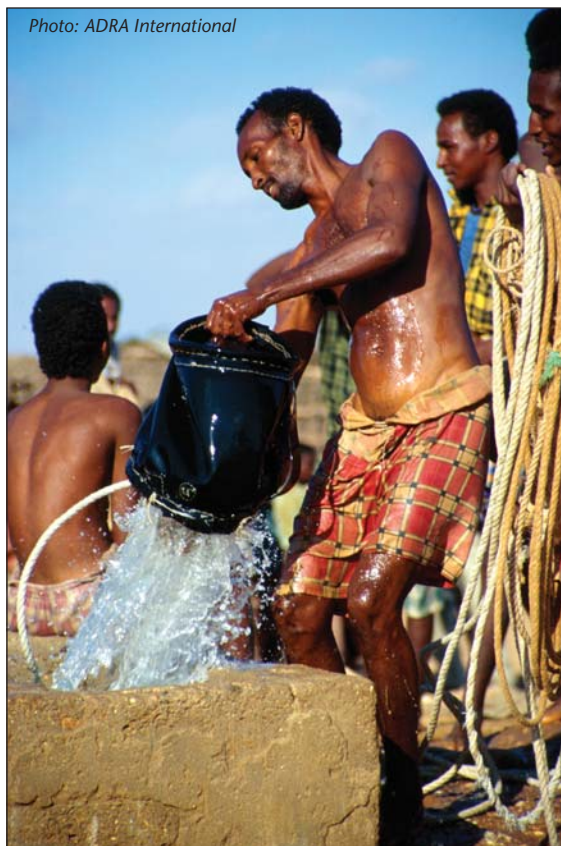
While Africa begins to show signs of a water crisis, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) the problem continues to be so severe that future “water wars” could be looming. Experts blame rapid population growth and urbanization for this problem. Exacerbating the situation are millions—among them refugees and IDPs—who are migrating to areas where water is already in short supply.

Take, for instance, Lake Chad. Since 1960, this lake, which straddles the borders of Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon, has shrunk by 90 percent, from 10,000 square miles to less than

580; a situation that has been caused by recurring droughts and increased extraction of irrigation water from the rivers that feed Lake Chad.

Conflict may center, too, around water sources like the River Cuito, which flows through portions of Angola, Namibia, and Botswana; the Nile river—the longest river in the world—that links the Great Lakes region in central Africa to Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt; and the Niger River extending across Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria.

Photo: ADRA International



Why? Each of these rivers flows through existing arid portions of Africa and, more critically, all the countries that lie in their path will suffer from water scarcity by 2025.

More pressing, however, is the existing quality of the water that many Africans, including millions of children, drink. Unclean water and poor sanitation cause cholera, intestinal worms, and diarrhea. In sub-Saharan Africa, just 56 percent of people have clean water. Every year diarrhea, the third largest child killer after pneumonia and malaria, kills more than 700,000 children throughout

Africa. In fact, a child born in Africa is five hundred times more likely to die of diarrhea than a baby born in the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Japan, Italy, the United Kingdom, or Russia.

To deal with the problem, ADRA is implementing different water projects. In Togo, ADRA funds an \$118,000 project to provide safe drinking water to 13,500 people in nine villages in the Maritime region. Not far to the north in Mali, a new project, (known as Water and Education for a Long Life) that will cost \$120,000, will help approximately 48,000 Malians gain access to decent water. The project will also highlight the importance of clean water and encourage women and children to adopt safer hygiene practices. In Namibia, ADRA works among the San people, or Bushmen, to build wells and fit them with solar-powered pumps, which not only help keep the environment clean, but are a cost-effective way to extract water in a region where electricity is hard to come by.

Outliving a killer

Though sub-Saharan Africa has only 12 percent of the world's population, it has 60 percent of the total cases of HIV and AIDS. The epidemic has devastated much of southern Africa. Botswana, a landlocked nation with the second highest occurrence of HIV and AIDS, 24.1 percent, in the world—only second to Swaziland at 33.4 percent—has seen life expectancy drop to 38 years, down from 60 years in 1987 and 46 years in 1958. Nearly identical trends are happening in neighboring countries. Because of HIV and AIDS, experts estimate that by 2010 life expectancies in 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa will revert to nineteenth century levels—below 30 years—at a time when they should have reached 70 years.

But some positive trends exist amid all this doom. In 1992 Uganda was among the hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, registering prevalence rates of 18 percent and higher in some areas. Between 1990 and 2000, a campaign

promoting abstinence and fidelity helped reduce the occurrence to just 6 percent, the biggest drop of any African country.

Understanding the need for HIV and AIDS prevention, ADRA has implemented numerous multimillion dollar HIV/AIDS programs targeting close to nine million direct and indirect beneficiaries in many African countries. ADRA's initiatives are implemented in collaboration with the public, private, and/or community organizations—focusing especially on HIV and AIDS awareness, prevention, and control activities. The initiatives also focus on orphaned and vulnerable children, voluntary counseling and testing, and provision of community and home-based care for persons living with HIV.

ADRA's Trainers of Trainers (TOT) program has been a highly successful initiative. Started in 2004, this program aims to provide HIV and AIDS counseling, care, and support to communities in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and Rwanda by trainers and counselors


who go into communities and discuss the effects of HIV and AIDS. TOT has worked with different branches of the Adventist Church in mobilizing people and other resources to support activities directed at reducing HIV infections among marginalized groups in hospitals, clinics, schools, churches, homes, and communities.

Who has benefited? So far, more than 231,250 people who received counseling, 1,127,904 participants of sensitization meetings, and 156,487 beneficiaries who received referrals for other HIV and AIDS services.

Church families can make a difference

The challenges facing much of Africa are great. However, these challenges are not restricted to just one part of the world. Now, more than ever, we all are part of a global community, linked to others in ways that were unimaginable a generation or two ago. "Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads," said American writer Herman

Melville. When others prosper, we prosper. When they suffer, we do too. And when others are vulnerable, we are called to comfort them and show God's unconditional love. "The Father is a merciful God, who always gives us comfort. He comforts us when we are in trouble, so that we can share that same comfort with others in trouble" (2 Cor. 1:3, 4, CEV).

The Lord has asked us to be brothers and sisters to the less fortunate, to comfort them during difficult times. Naturally, not everyone can be on the front lines providing food, water, or medical assistance. However, each church family member, whom you represent, can pray for the work that ADRA does unconditionally around the world. This vital act is necessary for ADRA's lifesaving ministry to continue growing. Please pray. Miracles happen every day. 


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The challenge to “growing in Christ” in Africa

Nehemiah M. Nyaundi



Nehemiah M. Nyaundi, ThD, is the editor of *Journal of Adventist Thought in Africa*, located in the department of theology and religious studies, University of Eastern Africa, Baraton; Eldoret, Kenya.

In an attempt to describe the numerical growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa the word *phenomenal* could be used. Figures from the West-Central Africa Division, East-Central Africa Division, and the Southern-Africa Indian Ocean Division tell an unequivocal story. The growth during the last two decades rises from 1.3 million in 1987 to 2.8 million in 1998 and to 4.7 million in 2007.¹

However thrilling, the figures don't reveal the challenges facing the Adventist Christian in Africa, challenges that hinder the experience of “growing in Jesus Christ.” And one of those greatest challenges comes from interaction with the beliefs and practices of African traditional religion.

The challenge from African traditional religion

In a bid to cushion Adventists from this challenge, in 2005 the General Conference session voted to provide a biblical rationale to help move Adventists away from traditional beliefs toward one closer to the biblical position, especially concerning the power of Jesus Christ over the power of Satan. Found in a publication issued by the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists,² the purpose of that endeavor was “to express the church's understanding of God's power to give victorious life over the powers of evil to the believers in Jesus Christ.”³ The need to provide the rationale comes from the realization that, in their Christian experience, Adventists in Africa get entangled with traditional beliefs that hinder their “growing in Jesus Christ.” To aid those who find themselves in this uncertain position,

the organization has undertaken to provide an assuring doctrinal position.

Interesting questions that arise when considering the challenge confronting Adventists in Africa include:

1. Are Adventists in Africa growing in Christ?
2. Do African Adventists have a problem with African traditional beliefs and practices?
3. Is African traditional religion an obstacle to socialization of members into Adventist beliefs?

The real-life situation in Africa—what the pastors say

In an attempt to answer these difficult questions, I used a questionnaire to obtain answers from a group of about two hundred pastors in the East African Union who are currently undertaking theological training towards a Bachelor of Theology degree at the University of Eastern Africa in Kenya. Being in their fourth year of training, the respondents are experienced pastors, some of whom have served as pastors for over twenty years, others perhaps only a year or so.

The results revealed that Adventists have a problem with traditional beliefs. This is particularly thought-provoking considering that Adventists have been in Africa for more than one hundred years. This is not an exhaustive study, but nevertheless it clearly identifies an issue we have to face.

I asked three questions whose answers reveal that the efforts by the Ministerial Association to offer guidance in matters of demonic forces were well-directed.

First: “How often do you confront an African cultural⁴ problem?” The answers were “often” 47 percent, “once in a while” 33 percent, and “rarely” 17 percent. When put together, the clusters of “often” and that of “once in a while” indicate that the occurrence is prevalent.

Second: “Have you heard of a case where a member has gone to look for the services of traditional⁵ beliefs, such as from a diviner, soothsayer, or magician?” I posed this question to find out if Adventists think that services of African traditional personalities are efficacious in tackling challenges of daily living. What came out was that an overwhelming 89 percent said Yes, they had heard of Adventists who had sought the services of a diviner, soothsayer, or magician.

Third: “Who are the members who get involved in traditional beliefs and practices?” This question was designed to find out if pastoral care—or the lack thereof—was a factor

in the socialization of believers against attraction to traditional beliefs. The answers to this question are intriguing; being “both new and old members” 77 percent, “long time members” 18 percent, and “recent converts” less than 5 percent. We find it captivating that the percentage of those who seek traditional ways of coping with daily life constitutes a surprisingly high percentage.

Unequivocally, then, the Adventist teaching in Africa coexists with cultural African religious beliefs. At the beginning of the Adventist mission in Africa, pioneer missionaries tackled the challenge by use of Mission Villages.⁶ These were exclusive “Converts Only” settlements that succeeded in socializing converts. In the settlements, new believers were initiated into the new lifestyle by the resident missionary, who was assisted by experienced native converts. Converts who lived in the establishment were shielded against traditional beliefs and practices. This system lasted for nearly 50 years, ending with the onset of sensitization to political independence during the 1950s. Today, Adventists do not live in Mission Villages. They are scattered throughout the communities and members fend for themselves with little pastoral care.

In African traditional society, cultural beliefs provide the worldview and the

cosmic view that inform daily living. Cultural beliefs lead society to turn to mystical personalities who are called upon to interpret situations, foretell the future, or to unfold secrets. This situation, an old one, goes back to the missionary era. It’s a thought-provoking fact that the two belief systems have coexisted over the last nearly two hundred years of Christian missionary activity on the continent.⁷ The challenge is not unique to Adventists, but to all Christians in Africa, and it does not seem like the problem will go away any time soon. That Christian churches continue to remove from membership those who participate and associate with African cultural beliefs remains as an adequate indication that the challenge still prevails.

Where is the Adventist Church in Africa going?

The document we surveyed acknowledges that the Christian experience is characterized by constant spiritual warfare. It says, “We are engaged in a warfare that is real and dangerous. . . . In this warfare, supernatural forces are arraigned against us.”⁸ This is similar to conceding that Adventists in Africa live in the shadow of African traditional religion, and the two belief systems often collide.

With the Adventist organization aware of this challenge, what remains now is to observe how Adventists in Africa will use the guidelines to help believers in their experience of “growing in Jesus Christ.” The challenge of traditional African religion goes back many years, but perhaps this will mark the beginning of the end of its hold on Adventists in Africa. ■

- 1 The figures do not include North Africa which falls under the Trans-Mediterranean Territories, whose membership is 225 in 2007. The figures are taken from the respective Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks.
- 2 See *Seventh-day Adventists Believe, A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005).
- 3 Ibid., 6.
- 4 Throughout this brief essay, the words *cultural* and *traditional* are used to mean indigenous beliefs and practices which are not compatible with biblical teaching.
- 5 See previous endnote.
- 6 For a detailed work on Mission Villages, see Nehemiah M. Nyaundi, *Adventism in Gusii, Kenya* (Africa Herald Publishing House, 1997).
- 7 The first Adventist Mission Station was opened at Solusi, Zimbabwe, in 1894, but Christian missionaries came to Africa much earlier than that date.
- 8 *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 160.

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RESOURCES

RESOURCES

Presenttruth—interactive media

Our readers will find interesting information and links on www.presenttruth.com, a new Web site. In addition to a collection of sermons and Sabbath Schools lessons, the reader will find material on the Sabbath and various world religions. The Web site contains material that will be of interest to professional clergy as well as to local church elders.

The site was developed by Jared Thurmon, and new material and links are being added. In addition to English, some of the material is in Spanish.

Better sermons

You are invited to participate in a new project that promises to provide quality sermon material.

BetterSermons.org is a new site being developed by the Pacific Union Conference as a resource for pastors and church elders. The idea is to bring together some of the best Adventist

material we can find to assist those who wish to improve their preaching skills.

Currently they are collecting sermon outlines to post on the site. Until December 31, 2007, they will pay \$25 for each sermon outline you submit that is original with you. View samples at <http://www.bettersermons.org/article.php?id=38>.

They are specifically looking for sermon outlines by Seventh-day Adventist pastors. If they are accepted, you will receive payment promptly. Each pastor may submit up to five outlines. ■

Dateline

A Swedish lesson in math

Rimbo, Sweden—In January 2006, the Seventh-day Adventist Church launched 100/500—a goal to baptize 100 members in 500 days. Total membership is just under 3,000.

Every member received a card with room to write up to seven names. They were then encouraged to prepare in advance a one to two minute testimony on what God has done in their lives, to pray daily for the names on their cards, and to invite them to join a small group or some form of Bible study.

Prayer, witness, and invitation are nothing new, but when combined and implemented by a complete union, it gave considerable results. For the first time in over 20 years, the church experienced numeric growth at the end of 2006. The result of the program was 103

baptisms in 510 days. This encouraging trend has continued during 2007.

Willy Aronsen, director of Evangelism said, “100/500 is not about numbers, it is about inviting our family, friends, and others. We have prepared the ground and planted the seed, God has done the rest.” *[Adapted from Audrey Andersson/TED News]*

Lowell Bock receives award

Lowell Bock, former vice president of the General Conference, recently received the prestigious Charles E. Weniger Award. The award was given to Bock for his accomplishments during his 45-year professional career, which included



20 years in Canada as a pastor and administrator and in the United States as a conference and union president.

The Charles E. Weniger Award is named after a professor who graduated from Pacific Union College (PUC) in 1918 and subsequently served at PUC as professor and academic dean. The award is given to people in Adventist education and denominational work who best exemplify the professional excellence and Christian commitment of its namesake, Dr. Charles E. Weniger.

The Weniger Award was first bestowed in 1934. One of the latest recipients of this award was Dr. Jan Paulsen, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *[Don Roth]* ■

BOOK REVIEW

From the Hood to the Hill: A Story of Overcoming, by Barry C. Black. Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2006

This autobiography by the chaplain of the United States Senate does not take a strictly chronological approach. It focuses instead on lessons learned throughout Black's life, with anecdotes to show how they were learned and why they are important.

The bare facts of Black's life chronicle what God can do with a fully committed Christian. Growing up in a Baltimore slum with a hard-working mother and

seven siblings, surrounded by drugs and crime and poverty, Black used these circumstances as stepping-stones, set high goals, and systematically pursued and achieved them. And he gives credit where credit is due—to his mother, to his church that encouraged him and held him accountable in childhood and youth, to his wife, and to various mentors along the way—as he attained college and seminary degrees, student-missionary experience, additional degrees, pastoral work, a navy chaplaincy career, admiral status, the role of chief of Navy chaplains, and then his current position.

Pastors can learn much from studying the lessons that Black has learned so well. One of the most important is his constant willingness to learn. All his life, he has sought out mentors and read their work, listened to their tapes, or boldly asked them on an airplane flight

to teach him their secrets. He has honed his presentation and professional skills.

Black gives us glimpses of the justifiable pride he feels in his accomplishments and of obstacles that would have blocked less-determined people, yet he acknowledges that the credit belongs to God. He also avoids unnecessary name-dropping or any compromising of the confidentiality required of his position, though he shares intimately in the private lives of many famous people.

Not only could other pastors benefit from the lessons Black has learned, but for children and young people this book could parallel Dr. Ben Carson's *Gifted Hands* as a motivational and inspirational tool.

—Reviewed by Madeline S. Johnston, assistant copy editor, Andrews University Seminary Studies, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States. ■

Dangerous communalism

JAMES A. CRESS



If the dissemination of information alone were sufficient to accomplish conversion, then Seventh-day Adventists, of all people, ought to be spiritual giants. With our numerous publishing ventures and worldwide network of literature evangelists, the Adventist Church is the best thing that has happened to paper since the government talked people into taking it for money.

The ability to articulate personal beliefs—to have a theological basis for a belief system and to understand its biblical focus—is essential. But knowledge alone is insufficient. Perhaps this has been the great lack in Adventist evangelism: an over-reliance on correct theology as the essential ingredient for attracting and incorporating individuals into the church without the appropriate regard for the sociological factors of friendship and involvement that must also accompany doctrinal understanding.

Adventists prize the truth. In fact, our love of theological correctness has been historically expressed with this very phrase: “the truth.” The phrase was code to describe the entire subcultural phenomena of the church. Our pride in theological accuracy and orthodoxy, combined with a distinctively conservative lifestyle, has often produced a closed society into which we ostensibly welcome new believers but, practically, make it difficult for them to join.

Dangers of communalism

Too often, Adventists have fostered *communalism* that John Stott describes as a “disastrous development.” He refers to it as “the rise of a Christian community which, instead of being scattered throughout the non-Christian community as salt and light, becomes isolated from it as a distinct cultural entity on its own.”¹

This is evidenced by numerous Adventist communities that have sprung up around educational institutions, publishing houses, medical facilities, organizational headquarters, or other Adventist entities. Now all is not bad in these communities. There is much to recommend the pleasant atmosphere, the safe, secure environment,

and the separation from “worldly influences” that such communities provide.

However, to the extent that such communities (whether Berrien Springs, Collegedale, Cooranbong, Salisbury Park, or Stanborough Park, etc., as present-day offspring of Battle Creek and Takoma Park) fail to integrate Adventist believers into the life and worldview of those to whom they minister, we have added to an isolationist “communalism” more than we have preserved piety. Or worse, we have actually come to equate piety with isolationism. As one wag said it, “Adventists are like fertilizer. Spread ‘em around, they do a lot of good. Pile ‘em together, they stink!”

Impious humor aside, however, the very survival of Adventist growth among indigenous Western population groups may depend upon our ability to break out of this communalism. Donald McGavran and Win Arn discuss the history of the Swedish Baptists in North America, who grew chiefly among Swedes until the late 1930s when they grasped new vision and realized they were living in the midst of multitudes of unreached people who were not Swedish Americans. They resolved to cease concentrating on just those of Swedish background and to win individuals from all backgrounds. They grew from forty thousand in 1940 to more than one hundred thousand in 1976, and projected that they would double again within the next ten years.²

Adventist Church growth is changing rapidly. The movement was founded in the United States among an Anglo constituency and was for many years largely Anglo and, for the most part, middle-class. Speaking to Adventists about their church growth in North America, Carl George says, “your reports show

Adventist growth going up year-by-year, but studying those reports carefully shows that your best growth is not occurring in the Anglo world, but among third world minorities. I don’t see anything wrong with that at all. I think it is wonderful that you are extending the gospel beyond the Anglo parts of society.”³

However, with regard to this issue of communalism, Carl George identifies problems that will prevent additional growth for Adventists: “nor should this plateauing of Anglo growth be viewed as a failure for the church. The white populations of North America have changed. Anglos, who showed the greatest potential for Adventist growth until 40 or 50 years ago, no longer present a recruitable target, at least by your current methodologies. Part of this can be attributed to lifestyle changes in America. Part can be attributed to the fact you segregate your children in Adventist schools, diminishing your contact with Gentiles.”⁴

At a time when first world church growth has virtually halted, we continue to “communalize” at our own peril. Furthermore, even if it were successful, “communalism” is not biblical. Stott correctly points out that the place for the converted individual is back in the world. “Conversion must not take the convert out of the world but rather send him back into it, the same person in the world, and yet a new person with new convictions and new standards.”⁵

Imagine! Godly people living in the midst of an ungodly environment. Salt, flavoring and preserving; light, illuminating and warming. That is discipleship! ■

1 John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 119.

2 Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth* (NY: Harper and Row, 1977), 81.

3 Carl George, *Empty Pews, Empty Streets* (Columbia, MD: Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 50, 51.

4 Ibid.

5 McGavran and Arn, 121.

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