

**AFRICAN CUSTOMS AND VALUES THAT CAN ENHANCE SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTISTS MISSIONS TO SOUTH AFRICANS WITH SPECIFIC  
REFERENCE TO THE ZULU CULTURAL HERITAGE**

A dissertation

Presented in the fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)**

In the Department of Science of Religion and Missiology

By

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**JULY 30, 2018**

## **CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP**

I declare that **AFRICAN CUSTOMS AND VALUES THAT CAN ENHANCE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS MISSIONS TO SOUTH AFRICANS WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE ZULU CULTURAL HERITAGE IS MY PERSONAL WORK** that all work and that all sources that I have used and cited have been acknowledged by means of completed reference list.

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## **ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH**

This study was carried out in KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference (KNFC) which is under the umbrella of South African Union (SAU) in South Africa. The objective was to determine how African customs and values consistent with biblical principles can enhance Seventh-day Adventist missions among the indigenous South Africans with reference to the Zulu heritage. The study also sought to investigate how embracing African customs and values consistent with biblical principles in mission endeavors has positive effects on indigenous South Africans' perceptions of the Seventh-day Adventist church and appreciation of Adventism.

The researcher administered a self-reported questionnaire which was completed by Adventist members. In order to verify the results of the self-reported questionnaire, interviews were conducted with church members, pastors, and church leaders. The findings showed that the SDA church has to build a contextually relevant ministry based on African customs and values that are consistent with biblical principles in order to appeal to the indigenous South African population. The researcher found that SDA run schools and hospitals mission station could be used to promote Adventism lifestyle among indigenous South Africans. The study also revealed that African-ness type of Christianity in areas like wedding, worship, meals, singing, dress code, dating, etc should be embraced by the SDA church.

This study motivated and prepared the Adventists to focus on contextually type of Christianity for future missionary activities among the indigenous South Africans. Based on the study, the author recommends that African customs and values consistent with biblical principles must be employed in evangelizing African people. Failure to embrace and employ African customs and values in evangelizing indigenous South Africans in South Africa has contributed to minimal success in penetrating religious and cultural barriers.

## **KEY WORDS**

African customs and values, contextual ministry, indigenous South Africans, contextualization, inculcation, indigenization, Seventh-day Adventist, African-ness, western-ness, poverty ‘bondage’ membership, Zulu heritage, fellowship, Ubuntu, community consciousness, Zulu/Ndebele cultural milieu, *lobola*, African extended family, African independent churches, and local church.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
KNFC	KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference
SAU	South African Union
SID	Southern African Indian Ocean Division
GC	General Conference
USA	United States of America
NKJV	New King James Version

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Background of the Study**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Unlike many other Christian denominations, the Seventh day Adventist Church has an insignificant presence in South Africa despite her unique ecclesiological self-understanding and the presence of the Southern India Ocean Division (SID). For example, in South Africa alone there are less than one hundred thousand Seventh day Adventist Christians. A sobering point should be mentioned here that there is evidence that some customs and values were not considered when evangelizing South Africans or have not been adequately used. The Seventh day Adventist churches have not done an excellent job on evangelizing indigenous South Africans. It is because of the African customs and values which have not been adequately addressed that the Seventh day Adventist church now have problems in promoting Christianity among the indigenous South Africans.

### **1.1 The gospel packaged in euro-western culture**

With the influx of especially of American and European missionaries to Africa, they brought the gospel with them, but the gospel was presented to the African packaged in a euro-western culture. With reference to the gospel packaged in western culture Amanze (1998:52) summed it up as follows:

The missionary packaged the gospel in his own culture, without thought of the Africans. The time-honored, time-tested, African culture thence on was to become backward, archaic, and heathen! This included the African song, the African's social system, Africa's rich history, concept of god, ethics and all that made him an African, in essence to be an African Christian meant to denounce the whole African.

The distortions about Africans are what motivated a westernized Christianity as noted by Okon (2013:10) who wrote that, "To Europe, Africa does not desire any serious attention because historically Africa does not exist." Lugira (2009: 24) put it succinctly, "missionaries were well

meaning but very ignorant about African culture. . . They meant to stamp out African religious practices they saw as superstitious and ignorant.”

In summary, it was this ignorance of the African belief, culture and traditions that led to these missionaries enforcing their customs and traditions on the African in order to civilize them.

## **1.2 African worldview not appreciated**

The ignorance of these European Christian missionaries of Africa’s worldview caused them not to appreciate African customs and values resulting in Africans accepting Christianity as a euro-western religion. Speaking from a missiological perspective, Mbiti (1969:233) states this valid point that, “Mission Christianity failed to penetrate into African religiosity.” Walt (1991: 8) also seems to concur with what Mbiti says. Walt asserts that by refusing to take seriously the African’s worldview the gospel workers actually weakened the impact of Christianity in Africa. Writing about Christian missionaries’ confrontational approach to evangelize Africans, Zvobgo (1996:112), notes that they tried to eliminate everything in African culture. The very African worldview which could have opened doors to evangelize Africans was rejected.

In response, one African scholar who addressed some aspects of African worldview that are consistent with biblical principles was Zacchaeus Mathema. His best work was *Towards understanding of the African worldview* (2011). From this work of Mathema (2011:37) one begins to understand how the traditional African worldview has a shaping power on the African in the sense that it unifies the African’s thought and life, it defines the good life which must be pursued, preserved and protected in some way, and it guides the thinking, choices, and actions. This means that the missionary, rather than condemning the entire African’s world view, should have commended and appreciated those elements in it that promoted, preserved and protected good life and finding hope and meaning in life. Added to this is the understanding that good life is a virtue that guides one’s thinking, choices and actions. It is sad to observe that the Christian missionary failed to appreciate some good elements like the pursuit for good life and unity for human thought, life and action within the African worldview which also are promoted in the scripture (which has been addressed later in this research).

### ***1.2.1 African customs and values undervalued***

African customs and values were underrated by those who had come to evangelize Africans. Fage (1970:1) notes that, “During the early days of missionaries, travelers, anthropologists and historians, there was no acceptance of any existence of anything called African history.” The result of denying African history is that, “the one without history cannot have religion” (Denis 2006:312). To the missionaries in the early days, Africans were regarded as not fully human. Missionaries prohibited polygamy, initiation rites, ancestor worship and other indigenous practices (Mercado 2005:99). In addition, with reference to Zimbabwe, Zvobgo (1996:112) states that the missionaries failed utterly to appreciate fully the values of the cultures of the African people of Zimbabwe whom they came to evangelize.

It is extremely regrettable, as mentioned above, that African cultural value and customs were seriously undervalued by Christian missionaries. Consequently, it seems to make sense to embrace the proposed approaches towards culture by Oosterwall (1980:116) which could have contributed immensely to a better understanding between these missionaries and Africans:

- 1) Culture is rich and good; however sin has distorted it and some elements in culture are demonic
- 2) No culture is superior to another, only absolutes in every culture are important.
- 3) Neither culture nor religions are static.
- 4) Cultures are not neutral
- 5) No one culture is exclusive, all cultures are equal.
- 6) The gospel judges all cultures, including our own
- 7) The missionary must gain an understanding of the host culture.

This proposal by Oosterwall is very significant considering that there is no discussion that can be valid if culture is excluded. The other point that emerges from his proposal is that no one culture is exclusive; all cultures are equal and must be respected. Coupled with such thought, it seems good to note from his proposal that all cultures have “fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Writing about the importance of respecting human cultures in evangelism, Shorter (2015:50) affirms and notes this:

Human cultures are vehicles of divine truth and theatres of God's salvific action. Like Moses before the burning bush, we must take off our shoes. Cultures must be respected. Disrespect for culture is an abuse of a human right and not even evangelization can ignore this obligation.

### **1.3 Positive and negative effects of colonial rule**

Both the colonists and the Christian missionaries of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed immensely to Africa as outlined below from the article *The positive and negative impact of colonization in Africa* from the website [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com) extracted May 10, 2015:

#### **Social Impact**

- more religious mission opportunities for Christianity
- Europe spread education to Africa
- Europeans defended Africans against their enemy
- Europeans brought technology to Africans

#### **Economic Impact**

- Africans obtained new goods such as equipment
- created more African jobs

#### **Political Impact**

- made tribes get along
- ultimately led to independence
- sights of democracy built confidence

The works of Mbiti (1969:239) outlines these contributions by mission Christianity:

“In the field of literature there are Christian publications of books, tracts and magazines, as well as religious and educational programs put on the radio by Church bodies, through arrangement with the national radio stations and the two main Church stations in Liberia and Ethiopian. In the medical field, again pioneering this service in Africa and continuing to run hospitals and dispensaries, as well as supplying Christian doctors and nurses to work in Church, private or government establishments.”

Musvosvi (1998) also suggested that education in Africa was started by missionaries and then colonial masters followed. On the impact of Western education, Zvobgo (1996:153) notes that the missionaries opened boarding schools to instill Christian virtues, morals, industrious and orderly habits into the pupils. He further mentions that more and more Africans began to regard literary education as the escape route from rural poverty and manual labor.

While these developments and contributions are commendable, it is unfortunate that they were delivered and implemented from the euro-western context. For instance in the field of literature, the Christian publications were written in English and in the field of economy they promoted euro-western products such as rice in place of *papa* (African staple food), they also preferred suits and neck ties as an official dress code, and in the medical field they did away with African herbs in favor of western concoctions which were too expensive for the ordinary African person. This means the positive impacts of colonial rule promoted the euro-western culture and hindered the growth of the African cultural values. Furthermore it should be noted that in the mind of Africans, missionaries came to Africa together with colonial rule. The observation from Zvobgo (1996: 92) is that, “the image that Africans received, and to a greater extent still hold, of Christianity is very much colored by colonial rule.” With Christianity colored by colonial rule, the challenges to Africans have been to embrace and practice Christianity which is heavily influenced by euro-western culture.

Added to this, the kind of religious life imported into Africa was different because there were Germans, Britons, French, Portuguese, Americans and people from other western countries, which resulted in different churches and traditions emerging from them. These denominations endeavored far more to produce perfect Methodists, Baptist, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Seventh day Adventists than to make their converts full followers of Jesus Christ, (Mbiti 1969: 232).

Sadly, Christianity for the missionaries, who were an integral part of colonialism, meant delivering everything and anything under the name “gospel” which was western in nature. It “meant separating Africans from their society and putting them on the side of Europeans evidenced by taking Europeans names” (Mbiti 1969:237).

## **1.4 Statement of the problem**

While Africans are grateful and thus pay tribute to the sterling job by the missionaries during the colonial era, it has been observed that their efforts to evangelize Africans were limited due to the fact that the gospel was packaged in the euro-western culture. As a result of this packaging, some African customs and values which could have enhanced the discipling of Africans, were undervalued because of the context from which the gospel was preached, which was from the context of the euro-western culture. Due to this approach, it became difficult for Africa to integrate Christianity, devoid of euro-western culture, find roots within the African culture and tradition. This led to a foreign type of Christianity, rather than a contextual type of Christianity from being born among the Africans.

Considering the introductory remarks, this dissertation have its origin in the idea that African customs and values that are consistent with biblical principles produces an acceptable contextual ministry which enhances the Seventh-day Adventists missions among the African people, in this instance KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa where the study was conducted. The KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a regional body composed of districts which in turn are composed of local churches (see chapter 2 for details). One of the shortcomings identified amongst the Seventh-day Adventists in South Africa, whose origin is the United States of America, is the limited number of converts among indigenous South Africans because their spiritual longings are met but out of context. Therefore, the absence of a contextual ministry by the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the indigenous South African context is a result of its failure to identify and employ African customs and values. This seems to be weakening the Seventh-day Adventist impact among the indigenous South Africans because of its use of western packaged customs and values. This thesis therefore intends to investigate the current position on effective missions based on African customs and values that are consistent with Biblical principles which can enhance the missionary efforts of the Seventh-day Adventist to the indigenous South Africans.

A review of literature on the subject has shown that the Seventh-day Adventist church, as a missionary church not only needs to be aware of African customs and values but also how to utilize it in order to be relevant and facilitative among the indigenous South Africans. White

(1956:213) recognizes the importance of contextualizing the gospel by mission agents when she states that: “The people of every country have their own peculiar, distinctive characteristics, and it is necessary that men should be wise in order that they may know to adapt themselves to the peculiar ideas of the people, and so introduce the truth that they may do them good. They must be able to understand and meet their wants.” Chalale (1995:25-28), a contemporary Adventist minister recommends ministries like healing, baby dedication, crisis management, seed-sowing and harvest, casting out demons and several others in order to reach the African mind. Embracing both counsels from the Bible and Adventist writers, traditional Africans would then notice a church whose theology makes sense to them since it relates to their customs, life and all its problems. To further appeal to the indigenous South Africans, the Seventh-day Adventist church needs to be responsive to diversity and avoid derogative terms in all their missionary endeavors. Brock (2005:4) supports such thinking as mission churches labor among African people. She writes: “Terms, such as natives and heathens, used by missionaries in a derogatory or patronizing way are not appropriate or useful, particularly when the assumptions which underpin them are being questioned.” One more related value to the success of mission endeavor in the African context is that compassion must overshadow coldness; the love of people must supersede concern over system and policy. By doing all this, then the welfare and wellbeing of the interests of those to be evangelized become paramount. With reference to compassion concern, White (1977:72) makes this observation,

One thing is positive. You must either mingle more of the oil of love, of tender compassion, with your work, your stiffness and coldness must be melted away, or you will not win your way in such a country as Africa. This country needs men who are as firm as a rock to principle, and who have also the simplicity and love of Christ. These can adapt themselves to the situation; they will not leave upon other minds an impression of sternness, and coldness, and harshness.

Reaching Africans require mission agents to leaven their labor with the yeast of compassion, much louder than the truth that is preached, if a good harvest has to be realized in this case among the indigenous South Africans.

## **1.5 Justification of the Study**

If the study is conducted effectively and African customs and values, rather than the current western packaged customs and values used by the Seventh-day Adventist, which are consistent with biblical principles are identified and evaluated, and ways of utilizing them to disciple indigenous South Africans are established, then this information is made available to the SDA stakeholders to use it to penetrate indigenous South Africans. These stakeholders include pastors, church members, and religious educators so that they can use it for the purpose of contextualizing the gospel among indigenous people in South Africa. It will be a joy to this researcher if perchance this will punch just one key in the orchestra of the African Christianity and overturn it into harmony.

## **1.6 Limitations and scope of the study**

A study that seeks to identify the African customs and values that is employed to disciple South African people requires a survey of all the African customs and values. Therefore it should be noted that it was beyond my limitations to explore every possible African cultural value, as well as all customs related to this study. The results of this study are therefore disseminated to the KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference where they have the same customs and values and Seventh day Adventists missionary activities.

## **1.7 Delimitation of the study**

This dissertation delivers its analysis and proposal of common shared South African customs and values through the window of the Zulu heritage in the KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## **1.8 Aim of the study**

The purpose of this study is to identify African customs and values which are consistent with biblical principles which are used to effect a productive contextual ministry and to enhance the Seventh -day Adventist mission among indigenous South Africans in the KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Quayson (2012:81) emphasizes the relation between evangelization and culture by arguing that “official missionary discourse was one of necessary ambiguity, and that the missionary intervention in society and culture legitimized a counter discourse in postcolonial writing.”

Hence it is proposed that those Seventh day Adventist African churches who appreciate African customs and values consistent with biblical principles in their practice of Christianity are attractive to indigenous South Africans than those who use western values as their means to evangelize. Hopefully this is enhanced by being arrayed in African customs and values.

## **1.9 Hypothesis**

The hypotheses can thus be stated as follows:

1. African packaged customs and values which are consistent with biblical principles produce a contextual ministry and enhance Seventh Day Adventist missionary activities among the indigenous South Africans rather than the current western packaged customs and values used by the Seventh Day Adventist.
2. A strong sense of fellowship is found in less westernized African churches than in more westernised African churches.
3. The more the Seventh Day Adventist church in South Africa embraces African customs and values which are consistent with biblical principles, the more it is relevant to the indigenous South Africans, and hence wins their confidence.

## **1.10 Research questions**

The study addressed the following primary research questions and their subsidiary questions:

1. Which Zulu customs and values are consistent with biblical principles?
  - a. In which way does the Zulu express their customs, values and traditions?
2. How can these customs, values and traditions enhance Seventh-day Adventist mission among indigenous South African people?

## **1.11 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify Zulu and other indigenous customs and values which are consistent with biblical principles in order for the Seventh-day Adventist to employ them in evangelizing Zulus and other indigenous groups in South Africa.
2. Determine how these customs and values enhances Seventh-day Adventist mission among indigenous South African people.

## **1.12 Assumption of the study**

This study was conducted under the assumptions that:

1. The respondents cooperated and provided correct information.
2. The stakeholders found the information valuable and used it for evangelizing people in Zululand which can be replicated in evangelizing other indigenous groups.

## **1.13 Operational Definitions of terms**

For the purpose of this study, I have provided definitions of the following terms that have been used:

1. *African customs and values* are a set of institutionalized ideals which guide and direct the patterns of life of Africans and are considered absolute.
2. *Contextual Ministry* means ministry divested of foreign but arrayed in local garments in terms of customs and values consistent with biblical principles.
3. *Indigenous people* claim pre-existing status, whereby they were established on their land before foreigners arrived (Brock, 2005:5). According Lewis (2001:2) indigenous peoples maintain their own languages, which normally differ from those spoken by the mainstream population, and their own cultures, which invariably differ from the mainstream. This study focuses on the evangelisation of such peoples in South Africa.
4. *Contextualization* means being faithful to the text and relevant to the context.
5. *KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church* is a governing board of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in KwaZulu Natal Province.

With this understanding of who the SDA is and its structures, I now turn to address the weakness of the Seventh day Adventist church's presence in South Africa. In order to achieve this research methodology has been divided into four sections. Section one focused on biblical and theological reflection on the role of customs and values in mission. Section two reviewed literature that focused on African customs and values that are consistent with biblical principles in order to highlight the impact of such customs and values in mission. Section three examined the importance of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Within this section, instruments to measure information like questionnaires and interviews were employed to gather and analyze respondents' views in understanding of the concept of missions, contextualization, and African

customs and values that can help Africans to embrace Christianity from a Seventh day Adventist perspective. The last section presents the statistics about the respondents' views on their understanding of African customs and values and views on their church and their understanding on the future of their church.

### **1.14 Biblical and theological reflection**

A biblical and theological reflection was conducted which focused on the theology of biblical customs and values in mission. Writing from a biblical perspective, Bosch (2011:4) states that mission is founded on Scripture (particularly the “Great Commission” of Matthew 28:18-20) and on the monotheistic nature of the Christian faith. Van (1996:35-36) rightly recommends that a researcher has to constantly reflect on scripture and its understanding of mission through the different generations. He quotes Bosch (1991) saying that “... both Old and New Testaments are permeated with the idea of mission.” This very strong statement resonates together with what Van 1996:37) mentions that, “we cannot have mission without the Bible, nor can we understand the Bible apart from God’s mission.”

### **1.15 Literary research method**

An extensive study of relevant literature review was conducted. This included books, articles, journals and web sites focusing on African customs and values which were consistent with biblical principles. Speaking from a missiological perspective Okonye (1997:474) makes a valid point: “African solidarity, love for community, and respect for the aged as the most honored members of the family could be significant contribution” in promoting Christianity among Africans. With such a value system in place Christian workers in Africa could use these characteristics to evangelize Africans as well as mature African Christian by internalizing Christian values of love and care for other human beings. White (1977:79) speaking about the absence of a living union with Jesus which led to the absence of a contextual ministry by the early South African missionary experience declared: “It is a sad fact that not all men who came from America as workers have been a help and blessing in South Africa. They were not living in connection with God. This has cost South Africa much.” If this was true back then in the past, the situation has remained the same and even worse today as Seventh day Adventist Christians are struggling in evangelizing the indigenous South Africans.

In connection with a contextual ministry, a succinct overview of contextualization in chapter 5 was done. Several mission scholars agree that contextual ministry is responsible for rapid expansion of Christianity among African people. Isichei (1995:98) and Walls (2002:98) are church historians who acknowledge that it was primarily under local leadership that the gospel message spread across Africa far faster than during the leadership of foreign missionaries. Other factors that contributed to the rapid spread of Christianity include translation of the Bible into local dialects, attempts by indigenous evangelists to contextualize the gospel using local idioms and proverbs, and responding to the supernatural elements in the beliefs of the people – such as witchcraft, and sorcery (Peel, 2003:259-261).

Then a growing African Instituted Church was reviewed to consider its practice of African customs and values with regard to its church growth. West (1992:73) gives a summary of the situation of African Instituted churches, in Soweto, Johannesburg:

Soweto's African Independent churches provide a blend of old and new which is particularly attractive to the people who join them. These people are mostly elderly, poorly-educated, and first-generation townspeople. For them Soweto, has few voluntary associations, other than sporting clubs, and few opportunities. Against this background Independent churches are very important as their congregations provide small reference groups in relation to the wider society. In them individuals are secure as part of a small community: they have their assigned places, each has an identity as a church member, and a ready – made group of friends. His group is able to give both moral and material assistance in time of need, and assists individuals in their adjustment to city life.

Brock (2005:177-178) presents a good postcolonial analysis worth noting on the practice of Christianity by a Zimbabwean-based Pentecostal movement. He writes:

The analysis centers on a lexicon of their key words, phrases and narratives, contextualized in neo-liberal Africa and shows how Pentecostalism, as a quintessential popular religion, aids those struggling for survival in a harsh environment and is able to satisfy deeper existential passions in ways that other religions have not been able.

In addition, Jacobs (1995:242) notes that, “the believing community will affirm those aspects of culture which pleases Jesus Christ.” It must be pointed out that to have balanced information on the practice of African customs and values by a growing African Instituted Church, interviews was conducted to complement data collected through literature as the case above on the promotion of Christianity among indigenous South Africans.

## **1.16 Combining qualitative with qualitative research**

In order to collect information that related to this study, the researcher employed qualitative and quantitative research methods. Kvale (1996:67) differentiates quantitative research from qualitative research by stating that, “Quality refers to what kind, to the essential character of something. Quantity refers to how much, how large, the amount of something.” According to Berg (1995:3), “Quality refers to the what, how, when and where of a thing – its essence and ambience”, while “quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things.” Since this dissertation will focus on how Africans think and feel about their customs and values, qualitative survey will be suitable to “examine the feelings, opinions and values of individuals and groups” (Fink, 2003:62). Qualitative also involved the elderly people who had difficulty in filling questionnaires. To gather information from such group, Fink (2003:63) recommends qualitative since it “surveys people who are unable or unwilling to complete statistical survey instruments.” For the purpose of balance in information gathering, this dissertation combined qualitative and quantitative research which is supported by Bryman (1988:93) who contends that qualitative and quantitative research process are not “mutually antagonistic and that although there are differences some areas of similarity are visible.” Therefore the above definitions justify the reason that the research carried out in this dissertation has significant quantitative characteristics as it pertains to “testing explicitly formulated theories” (Bryman 1988:122) as well as examining the qualities of human behaviour (Mouton 1988:1), with regard to African customs and values in Seventh-day Adventists missions in South Africans.

### ***1.16.1 Research instruments***

There are three common research instruments that are used by researchers to measure whatever it is about people they are studying (Goddard and Melville 2005:46). These common instruments are tests, interviews and questionnaires. The researcher’s main concerns were views, opinions,

perceptions, feelings and attitudes which can be best collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003:12).

#### **1.16.1.1      *Questionnaire instrument***

The questionnaire (Ammerman et al: 1998:217) is a paper-and-pencil instrument which is a good short way to find out about the demographic makeup of a congregation or to get a picture of various values, beliefs, and attitudes. Since the subject of this study is African customs and values in mission, it was felt that the questionnaire could be utilized in such a way to hear the opinions of many more people than it would be possible to interview. The questionnaire was further seen as suitable because it was developed in IsiZulu, using subjects from Zulu churches reflecting the predominant language and church background of this present study.

Although this may be one of the first studies using questionnaire, it was regarded as a suitable, reliable and valid instrument for assessing the views and attitudes of a broad range of members on transforming Christianity through African customs and values. Questionnaire reliability was measured through pre-test sample which is assumed to be the same with the survey. Pre-test was done as a measure of reliability (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003:105).

The validity most relevant in the questionnaire is content validity. This was judged to be valid by Professor Awoniyi (2016) who is the Solusi University Quality Assurance Director. He took time revising the entire questionnaire for any corrections or alterations before it was finally accepted to be administered in the field by the researcher.

#### **1.16.1.2      *Interview instrument***

Interviews ensure that the researcher gains control over the line of questioning information that cannot be directly observed and gives historic information (Oso and Onen 2009:90). Thus the strength of interviewing is also affirmed by (Ammerman et al: 1998: 208) who wrote that,

1. Interviewing allows the researcher or study team to hear individual stories, diverse perspectives, and minority voices they might not encounter otherwise.
2. Interviewing allows access to unobservable such as attitudes, personal feelings, and individual interpretations.

## **1.17 Statistics**

The study used descriptive statistics because they “describe or characterize data by summarizing them into more understandable terms without losing or distorting much of the information” (Munro and Connell, 2005:4). Hence descriptive statistics was further seen as suitable for this study on the strength of presenting data through its use of “summary tables, charts, frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency” (Munro and Connell, 2005). To sum up, descriptive statistics used were means, standard deviation, and frequency.

## **1.18 Conclusion**

The goals of this chapter was to focus on the background, while taking into account the historical problem of the gospel packaged in euro-western culture, statement of the problem, justification, limitations, research questions, delimitations, definition of terms, aim and hypothesis. The chapter also reviewed various research methods such as theological reflection, literary research, empirical research (quantitative and qualitative) providing both inferential and descriptive statistics with the aim to prove that African customs and values does contribute significantly in enhancing the presence of SDA church among African people.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Profiling the Seventh Day Adventist church**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Before the arrival of missionaries from the Seventh- day Adventist church to Africa in 1887 (Ogouma et al: 2017) it is understood that from the inception of modern Christian missions in the 18th century to their height in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Africa had been part and parcel of the mission fields. Viewed as the Dark Continent, Christian missionaries arrived from many countries of the world, especially the continents of America and Europe. Christian missionary activity began in earnest in the 19th century during the same period of time that European countries were becoming more engaged in Africa (Exploring Africa, retrieved May 10, 2015). The observation that can be made is that missionary activity heightened during the scramble for Africa. From a verbal interview conducted by the researcher with Elder Nxumalo Ndabezinhle, Nxumalo revealed that, “A common description of the missionaries in South Africa was of a white man with a gun on the right hand and a Bible on the left.” No doubt the missionaries came to Africa with the mentality that they were coming to the Dark Continent where there is no knowledge of God at all. Commenting on the missionary problem of evangelizing Africans Mbiti (1969: 237) contends that, “The Akan became Christians cleaving to the new order introduced by the missionary rather than working out his salvation within the traditional religious milieu. It did not redeem them within it.”

Therefore this study posits to investigate African customs and values which are consistent with biblical principles and how they will be used to enhance Seventh day Adventist missionary activities especially among South Africans with reference to the Zulu heritage.

In order to continue with this investigation, the researcher deems it appropriate at this juncture to introduce the Seventh - day Adventist Church (SDA) which introduced its first Missionary to South Africa in 1887 although there is evidence that some work had been carried out during the 1870s by William Hunt, who arrived in South Africa as a mining prospector in Kimberley (Ogouma et al. 2017: 46). Although Hunt was not an ordained missionary of the SDA it is recorded that in 1885, his first convert was G.J. van Druten, a local businessman in Kimberley.

## 2.2 The Seventh Day Adventist Church structural models

The SDA was formed on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 1863 at Battle Creek, Michigan in the USA. This church had four founders whose names were, E G White, J Bates, J Spinser White and JN Andrew. The SDA is regarded as a Protestant church that expresses the distinguished character of observing Saturday as the Sabbath and emphasizes the return of Jesus Christ to the world.

Vyhmeister (2000:1) describes the SDA as “a worldwide body of more than 10 million Christians who observe Saturday as the Sabbath and expect Jesus’ second coming soon.” She further describes the SDA as a “conservative Protestant body of evangelical Christians whose faith is grounded in the Bible and centered on Jesus, with stress on His atoning death on the cross, ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, and soon return to redeem His people. They are known for their Sabbath observance, for their emphasis on maintaining health as part of religious duty, and for their mission activities around the world.”

The researcher firstly seeks to profile the history of the church, from its forerunners until the early twentieth-century and secondly, to provide an overview of the church as it operates today, with glimpses of important challenges affecting the Seventh-day Adventist church mainly among the indigenous groups in South Africa.

The main characteristic of the SDA is how it carries out its mission through organized structures, which consists of churches, conferences/missions, unions, divisions and the General Conference. The figures below present these structural models of the Seventh-day Adventists from 1863 to the early twentieth-century.

### 2.2.1 Structural model of the Seventh-day Adventists in 1863

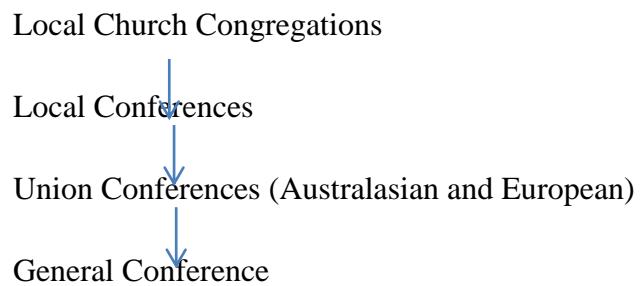


Figure 1: Structural model of the Seventh-day Adventists in 1863

Figure 1 above illustrates the 1863 Seventh - day Adventist church organizational structure which was championed by James White, one of the key founders of the church. White (1859:68)

strongly appealed for the formal organization in an editorial published in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* on July 21. He wrote that, “We lack system. And we should not be afraid of that system which is not opposed by the Bible, and by sound sense. The lack of system is felt everywhere.” In response to James White’s appeal for a formal organisation, the Seventh - day Adventist Church then established a three structured model. Commenting on the 1863 three levels organisational structure, Vyhmeister (2000:1) states that the church adopted its name in 1860, organized local conferences in 1861, and finally established the General Conference in 1863.

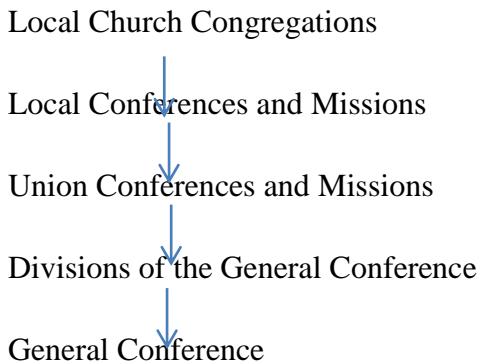
### **2.2.2 Structural model of the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1898 to 1913**



*Figure 2: Structural model of the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1898 to 1913. Extracted from: Crocombe, Jeff, SDA church history class notes, 2006, Helderberg. Fig 2)*

In Figure 1 above, the Seventh-day Adventist church had three organizational levels. However in Figure 2 the Seventh-day Adventist church added a fourth level which they called Union Conferences. The Union Conferences level is credited to Willie White who on December 21, 1892 proposed to O. A. Olsen that the formation of a “body to stand mid-way between state and colonial conferences and the General Conference” was needed (Olsen 1891). Trim (2017:18) mentions that the fourth level is called Union Conferences (Australasian and European) because were established only in Australia in 1894 and Europe in 1898.

### **2.2.3 Structural model of the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1918**



*Figure 3 Structural Model of the Seventh – day Adventist church in 1918. Extracted from: Crocombe, Jeff, SDA church history class notes, 2006, Helderberg. Fig 3)*

In Figure 3, the Seventh-day Adventist church added another level which it called the Division. Vyhmeister (2000:11) notes that, “a further development in SDA church organisation was the formation of “divisions.” The researcher further notes that the 1918 organizational structure is the Seventh-day Adventist church structure that still exists up to present. The researcher further observes that in the 1918 structure though there are essentially five levels of administration, the structure have Divisions of the General Conferences rather than Division Conferences. Therefore this structure makes Divisions part of the General Conference itself with no independent constituency. On the other hand, the researcher observes and points out that the four levels in this structure, namely Local Church Congregations, Local Conferences and Missions, Union Conferences and Missions and General Conference have constituencies and separate legal standing.

## **2.3 Profiling the Seventh-day Adventist structures**

The Seventh – day Adventist church is organized with a representative form of church government. Authority in the church comes from the membership of local churches. Executive responsibility is given to representative bodies and officers to govern the church. It is beneficial in this section to give more details to the five Seventh-day Adventists administrative structures through profiling each of the five administrative structures.

### ***2.3.1 The Local Seventh-day Adventist Church***

The local SDA is a “family” of Seventh-day Adventist members who have been granted, by the constituency session of a local mission or conference, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist church. The General Conference of the Seventh – day Adventist church manual, 19<sup>th</sup> edition (2015:26), clearly described the church “as the smallest unit form of organisation within the Seventh-day Adventist as the local church.” Thus the local church is the structural foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist church. All baptised members of a local church have voting powers within that church. At the local churches, decisions are made by elected committees through the votes of members. In reference to election and authority arrangement, the General Conference church manual 19<sup>th</sup> stated that, “Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church.” The day-to-day running of the local church is governed by the congregation’s pastor and a church board formed by members of that local church. For example, each congregation elects its own elders, deacons, deaconesses, clerks, treasurers, and departmental leaders.

### ***2.3.2 The Local Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church***

The local conference of the SDA is a “family” of Seventh-day Adventist churches who have been granted, by the constituency session of the Union Conference, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist Conference. Describing the Conference, Vyhmeister (2000:18) states that, “local churches are grouped into conferences or mission – so called because they are financially dependent on the higher level of organisation.” In the context of this study, the local conference where this study has been conducted is known as Kwazulu Natal Free State Conference (KNFC). Concerning its formation, Crocombe (2007) states that, “In 1994, the first merger at local conference level occurs between the Oranje-Natal Conference (predominately White) and the Natal Field (predominately Black) forming the Kwazulu Natal-Free State Conference.”

### ***2.3.3 The Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church***

The Union Conference of the SDA is a “family” of Seventh-day Adventist Conferences who have been granted, by the constituency session, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist Union Conference. Trim (2017:18) states, “The terminology union conference denoted that, unlike a district, it was a union of conferences – it was, indeed, a conference of conferences, like the General Conference, but subordinate to it.” About unions, Vyhmeister (2000) says, “the conferences and missions form unions, usually created along national, ethnic, or linguistic lines.”

This means in the union family, there should be national diversity, ethnic diversity, and linguistic diversity. This study has been done at Kwazulu Natal Free State Conference which is under the umbrella of the South African Union (SAU). About the origins of South African Union, a paper presented by Crocombe (2007:8) indicates that “In 1991, the South Africa Union Conference & the Southern Union Conference merged to form the Southern African Union Conference.” Since its inception in 1991, the South African Union Conference is the national Seventh day Adventist board that oversees mission activities in Conferences.

#### ***2.3.4 The Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church***

The Division of the SDA a “family” of Seventh-day Adventist Union Conferences who have been granted, by the constituency session of the General Conference, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist Division of the General Conference. On defining Divisions, Vyhmeister (2000) states that, “the Unions are grouped into divisions, which function as branches of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, with headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA.” Trim (2017:18) understands Divisions as “subdivisions of the General Conference and its branch offices – not its constituency.”

#### ***2.3.5 The General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church***

The General Conference (GC) is the world church that is more than merely the sum of the local churches. In addition, the website <http://www.adventist.org/en/world-church/general-conference/> reveals this about the General Conference:

The General Conference is the highest earthly authority for the Church. The General Conference in session, and the Executive Committee between sessions, is the highest organization in the administration of the Church's worldwide work, and is authorized by its constitution to create subordinate organizations to promote specific interests in various sections of the world.

As the church authority, the General Conference has the final say in matters of conjecture and administrative issues. Every member of the Seventh-day Adventist church has a voice in choosing officers of the General Conference. White (1948:236) states categorically that, “every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference.”

## 2.4 Seventh-day Adventist Operating principles

The Seventh-day Adventist church has adopted the following basic operating principles within its five level organizational models in order to fulfill its mission mandate.

1. *Defined membership.* By defined membership it means,
  - a person can only be a member of one church at a time
  - must be a member in order to hold office or to participate in the business meetings of the local church.
  - Boards and committees also have defined memberships
2. *Conferred status.* This is understood to mean,
  - membership in a church is always a privilege that is granted by a group (for example no one can baptize himself/herself); organisational status is never self-proclaimed nor self-derived nor automatically perpetual, it is always conferred/entrusted by others.
  - membership is not a right
  - membership can be withdrawn by the same group that granted it.
3. *Authority ascends to a group.* The idea behind this principle means that,
  - final authority is always in a group not in one individual
  - Every elected/appointed leader is accountable to a group
  - No group or committee has greater authority than the group that appointed it.
4. *Authority is distributed throughout the organisation.* In the context of its five organisational level, this means
  - different types of authority reside at different places in the organisation
  - distribution of authority helps to unite the church – no one part complete in itself.
5. *Representative democracy process.* This principle should be understood to mean
  - in a direct democracy every member can vote on each decision – particularly in the choice of leaders.
  - representative democracy involves the selection of representatives who then vote in the decision-making process.

Commenting on the representative democracy principle, Vyhmeister (2000:18) mentions that, at each level government is representative. The local churches send representatives to Conference or mission sessions. Conference and mission representatives assist in making decisions at the Union level. The division committees have Union representation on them. The General Conference committee includes division representation.

6. *Shared identity –concurrent elements of local and global identity.* The final principle is profound in the sense that it means

- a local Seventh day Adventist church is an official church but it is not the whole church.
- the world church is more than merely the sum of the local churches.
- as one integrated global community SDA have a common model constitution, share the same policies, have one common manual which describes the authority and functions of the local church, have a common statement of fundamental beliefs, and have an integrated resource support system which describes how we give and receive financial support to be effective in discharging the mission of the church.

With this detailed structure of the SDA, Spalding (1962: 9-18) describes the growth of adherents to the SDA as well as its missions in Africa and the structural formations of unions during this time from 1887 to 1948.

## 2.5 SDA church in South Africa

As this research is focused on the Zulu people in South Africa, it is prudent to address some of the early activities of the SDA in South Africa. The researcher focused specifically on the division in unions between European and “natives.” Much of the research material was derived from the writing of Spalding (1962).

Spalding (1962:9) notes that in spite of the first missionary assigned to South Africa in 1887, it was only in 1903 the South African Union Conference was formed consisting of “two conferences of European people and four missions among the natives.” Spalding (1962: 9) further suggests that the work in South Africa was naturally divided into “two concerns: first, with the white people – and that is in two languages. English and Afrikaans; the second, with the native peoples who had yet to be Christianized”.

Spalding (1962:11) claims that while the work among the whites grew slowly, “the message... among the native peoples, marched forward with massive strides... (yet) with much toil, sacrifice, illness, often deprivation, sometimes death”.

The SDA was not absolved from racial profiling and attitudes towards non-whites. Ogouma (et al: 2017: 48) refers to a letter Phillip Wessels wrote to Ellen White in 1893 where he states that, “I do not want my children to associate with the lower classes of coloured people. I will labor for them and teach my children to do so. But I do not want my children to mix with them for such is detrimental to their moral welfare. Nor do I want my children to think there is no difference in society that they should finally associate and marry into coloured blood.”

The attitude of Wessels gives an indication of the mentality towards other racial groups in South Africa and the African continent as a whole where the superiority of a euro-western culture and mentality became prevalent and the SDA was not immune to this. Thus, such mentality and other challenges have resulted in tragic consequences and severe setbacks to the Seventh-day Adventist’s mission in South Africa despite its strong organisational structures and good operating principles. In the following chapter, an understanding of this mentality is addressed as a prelude to shaping the focus of the research as entrenched in the title of this thesis.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Chapter 2 profiled and highlighted the Seventh-day Adventist’s strong organisational structures such as the local Church congregation, local Conferences, Union conference, Divisions of the General Conference and the General Conference which allows the SDA church to function well. With such strong organisational structures and operating principles, the SDA church now need to begin considering embracing African customs and values as missional tools to promote its presence among indigenous South Africans.

## CHAPTER 3

### Western missionaries and Africans views towards African customs and values

#### 3.0 Introduction

One of the most effective and reliable ways in which truth can be communicated is by personal interaction. In the home circle, at your neighbor's fireside and at the work place, personal interaction can be captured and shared with regards to people's customs and values. This chapter presents Western and African views towards African customs and values which have been captured in order to evaluate them and make an informed decision about these customs and values.

#### 3.1. Western missionaries and African ministers' views about African customs and values

The discussions below are based on western missionary founded churches and the attitudes of their missionaries towards African customs and values. The section also discusses the attitudes of African ministers towards African values and culture.

##### 3.1.1. Catholic Church

Zvobgo (1996:92) quoted Fr J.O 'Neil (*Habits and Customs of the Natives of Mangwe District South Matabaland*) who wrote in 1910 that:

"It is practically impossible to make any real impression on the adults. With rare exceptions they are unchangeable and will not give up their pagan and barbarous customs. The young much more pliant..." The position that seems to come out from the Catholic Church was that Africans particularly adults were irresponsible to the gospel message and this was due to the influence of their heathen and evil customs. The terminology used by Catholic Church representative is very hostile and condemnatory towards Africans making it difficult for them to appreciate mission Christianity.

### **3.1.2 Brethren in Christ Church**

Zvobgo (1996:93) cited H. Frances Davidson (*South and South Central Africa*) who reported in 1915 that:

The difficulty generally was that, although they believed the Word, they were not willing to take the Way. The darkness seemed too dense, the effort required was too great and the transformation was too absolute for these old people, rocked in the cradle of paganism for generations.

The missionary informant from the Brethren in Christ church seems to appreciate Africans' willingness to believe in the Word of God but their derogative tense appeared to block their transformation. The Brethren in Christ church like their Catholic counterpart also were judgmental as they used pagan terminology to describe Africans' religious status.

### **3.1.3 Seventh day Adventist church**

Robinson of the Seventh day Adventists wrote:

The non-Christian African villagers did not always welcome the missionary with open arms. It was convenient not to have to walk thirty miles to Bulawayo for medical aid. While happy to have a store where they could buy essential trade goods, they did not flock into the church. To accept the white man's religion was a step they were in no hurry to take. Particularly was this true of the older people (Zvobgo 1996:94).

The Seventh day Adventist acknowledge that Christianity was a white person's religion and that position justified Africans of turning down the offer since the white person's religion could not accommodate African customs and values by virtue of its western origin and nature. Consequently most indigenous Africans today turn down Christianity because of its white person identity and its western garments with regards to customs and values.

### **3.1.4 Methodist church**

Fr Richard Sykes, said that

The wives by native custom are bought for so many head of cattle, the great source of wealth and importance amongst the wild native tribes of South Africa, as indeed amongst all primitive races (Zvobgo, 1996:95).

The Methodist mission church saw African races as very primitive and with evil customs which advocated for the sale of African wives through so many head of cattle. To the Methodist missionaries *lobola* (bride price) was unbiblical since it involved the sale of wives. With such a negative view towards African customs, it became difficult for native tribes of South Africa by then and even now to accept Christianity since its proponents discredited African customs such as *lobola* which is very biblical (see chapter 4 and 7).

### **3.1.5 African Reformed Church**

Revered J.M. Zvobgo aged 88 and a minister of the African Reformed Church as well as founder of Shonganiso Mission in Mutirikwi Command Area in Masvingo Province said,

Every nation has its own customs and traditions. We have our own customs and traditions. A nation without its own customs and traditions is not worth preserving. The British, for example, have their own customs and traditions which we may disapprove of but are bound to respect. The same applies to *roora*. *Roora* is deeply rooted in African tradition (*tsika yevatema*). The missionaries should have respected this custom. They were completely wrong in condemning this custom; it is a good custom.

### **3.1.6. United Congregation Church of Southern Africa**

Revered Joshua Richardson Danisa, aged 75 and a minister of the United Congregation Church of Southern Africa (formerly the London Missionary Society) also approved the *lobola* custom and added that there was no time limit for payment.

### **3.1.7 Seventh day Adventist, Solusi Mission**

Pastor S.L. Masuku of Solusi mission provided this strongest argument in favor of the *lobola* system. He said:

Any missionary worth his salt should be familiar with the story of Abraham's family. Before Abraham died, he made sure that Isaac was going to marry a woman who believed in the God who made heaven and earth and so he paid all the *lobola* for his son before he died (Genesis 24:50-61). When Jacob wanted to marry, when circumstances had separated him from his parents, we find him

working for his wives, and it is written that ‘Jacob served seven years for Rachael, and they seemed but a few days for the love he had for her’ (Genesis 29:20-31). And he worked for six years for his cattle, sheep, camels, and goats (Genesis 30:27-43). Those who condemn *lobola*, do so out of ignorance of the reasons behind the system, or perhaps the way it is practiced in or among some tribes... There is a need for uniformity in its practice.

Pastor Masuku used two strong biblical cases, namely that of Abraham and Jacob who were the most revered figures in the Jewish history, that *lobola* is a good custom. Masuku appealed for uniformity in the practicing of *lobola* in order to avoid abusing this good biblical custom.

### **3.1.8 Reformed Church in Zimbabwe**

Revered D.P. Mandebvu, a retired minister of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (formerly the Dutch Reformed Church), said that missionaries “tried to eliminate everything in African culture. The Africans took Christianity to be a European religion.” Revered D.P. Mandebvu further noted that missionaries used a confrontational approach to convert Africans to Christianity rather than embracing Paul’s approach on his three missionary journeys. He said:

Paul made use of what he found among the heathens and sometimes made use of these things, preaching from what they knew to the new religion he was bringing to them. Generally, he did not try to eliminate the cultural background of the heathens or impose a Jewish cultural tradition on them but preached about Jesus Christ, the Son of God who had come to save the world including the heathens. Paul did not start by introducing sets of rules but preached the good news. Then rules were formulated (Acts 15:5). Some of the Pharisees suggested that before the heathens became proper Christians, they should keep the law of Moses. The apostles rejected this. The apostles call these laws a yoke which even their fathers failed to carry (Acts 15:9-11). The simple rules were formulated (Acts 15:20) for example, abstaining from worshipping idols, adultery, etc. These simple rules were introduced after the establishment of churches, not before.

### **3.1.9 Epworth Mission Farm**

Mr Wilson Muzambwa, aged 74 years and a resident of Epworth Mission farm, “The idea behind *roora* is to bring together two families (*kuita hukama*); it was never intended to be a source of wealth (*zvanga zvokuthi muhu apfume nazvo*)”.

## **3.2 Africans' views on African customs and values**

Africans are all unanimous that African customs and values discussed in chapter four and the selected few in this chapter have a strong biblical foundation. Consider their voices on what they have said about the goodness of African customs and values consistent with biblical principles.

### **3.2.1 on *ubuhlobo* (African kinship custom)**

The best study or work on *ubuhlobo* (kinship) custom is by Mbiti (1969:104). He wrote:

The deep sense of kinship, with all it implies, has been one of the strongest forces in traditional African life. Kinship is recognized through blood and betrothal (engagement and marriage). It is kinship which controls social relationships between people in a given community: it governs marital customs and regulations; it determines the behavior of one individual toward another... Almost all the concepts connected with humans can be understood and interpreted through the kinship system.

The African kinship system (*ubuhlobo*) is a good human networking system that creates a strong environment for belonging and socializing. It is also a good behavior and conduct regulator. Therefore African kinship custom rightly managed is a strong force to pass family values from one generation to the other making it a good Christian witnessing strategy. The positive impact of *ubuhlobo* is further illustrated below through a case study.

#### **3.2.1.1 A Case study: *Ubuholo* (kinship) in the Ndebele culture.**

On the value of *ubuhlobo* as understood by Pastor Amos Ndlovu who shared his views on June 2, 2016, was that:

*Ubuholo* (kinship) is by blood and surnames. *Ubuholo* (kinship) between ‘uncle and nephew’ is interesting because the nephew is very close to the uncle more than his legitimate father. In the African culture the uncle can pay *lobola* (bride price) for the nephew. In the event of the uncle’s death, the nephew can

take over the widowed wife of his uncle. The nephew or niece is never classified under orphans if his or her parents are all dead as long as the uncle is alive.

On *ubuhlobo* system, Mwizenge (2017:2) observes that, “all brothers of the father are called ‘father’, all sisters of the mother are called ‘mother’, all their children ‘brother’ and ‘sister’.”

In the case of identical surnames, during the interview, Ndlovu (2016) had this to say:

In the African culture, those who share identical surnames regard each other as relatives. Hence their families by virtue of identical surnames become one family where they share all life experiences. For example, when the other family is away on a trip their children are entrusted to the remaining family. They also entrust their valuable property like vehicles to the care of the remaining family. They share both their sorry and joys. On the issue of marriage, those with identical surnames, it is a taboo for a boy or a girl to marry those of his or her surname. The reason is because these two are considered to be relatives. The other reason is that the children born may be confused thinking that a brother and sister married each other.

The Seventh day Adventist church in Africa is posed for great mission endeavors if it adopts and adapts *ubuhlobo* custom in reaching out to the less privileged and marginalized within the community who will then gain confidence by appreciating its mission Christianity.

### **3.2.2 *On lobola***

The importance of *lobola* custom in African societies is propounded by the six reasons given by Mbiti (1969:140).

1. It is a token of gratitude on the part of the bride groom’s people to those of the bride, for their case over her and for allowing her to become his wife.
2. At her home, the gift ‘replaces’ her, reminding the family that she will leave or has left and yet she is not dead. She is a valuable person not only to her family but to her husband’s people. At marriage she is not stolen but is given away under mutual agreement between the two families.
3. The gift elevates the value attached to her both a person and as a wife.

4. The gift legalizes her value and the marriage contract. The institution of this practice is the most concrete symbol of the marriage covenant and security.
5. Under no circumstances is this custom a form of ‘payment’ as outsiders (westerners) have so often mistakenly said. He continues to note that “African words for the practice of giving the marriage gift are, in most cases, different from words used in buying or selling something in the market place. Furthermore, it is not only the man and his people who give: the girl’s people also give gifts in return, even if these may be materially smaller than those of the man.
6. The two families are involved in a relationship which, among other things, demands an exchange of material and other gifts. Since two families are in a relationship this continues even long after the girl is married and has her own children. In some societies, if the marriage breaks down completely and there is divorce, the husband may get back some of the gifts he had given to the wife’s people, but in other societies nothing is returned to him.

Arguing from the African context, Mbiti clearly shows the value of contextual ministry in relation to promoting Christianity among African people. Using a six point’s pattern, he has used the African context to correct the westerners’ view of associating *lobola* with a form of payment. Armed with the African context, he further dispelled their misconception about *lobola* by frequently using the term ‘gift’ rather than payment in his reference to *lobola*. The term gift is relational depicting the relationship that *lobola* creates between the two families.

In addition, Zvobgo (1996:111) had several interviews with African church leaders and recorded the following views.

### **3.2.2.1 The Twentieth-Century Seventh day Adventist Church on *lobola***

An interview conducted on December 25, 2015 with Dr Thulani Tshabalala of the twentieth-century Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa revealed exciting information about *lobola*.

The primary purpose of *lobola* is to build relations between the respective families as marriage is seen as more than a union between two individuals. It demonstrates how much the girl is valued by both sides. It marks respectability, worthiness and appreciation. It is a token of thanks and appreciation on the

groom's part to the family of the bride for their care over her and for allowing her to become his wife. And Similo Mabhena's price was worth it, actually we were undercharged: nothing can buy her love, she is priceless.

This affirms the relevance of *lobola* which was practiced by Abraham and Jacob 2000 years ago, then practiced by our African forefathers, and currently practiced by twentieth-century Africans. This old biblical and African custom has defied attacks from the westerners and need to be jealously preserved and used in promoting Christianity among African people.

### ***3.2.3 on levirate system***

Africans have a rich culture which should act as a springboard to their solution seeking processes. One of the solution seeking processes in Africa is the levirate custom which is not an exclusive African phenomenon. It is noted that the levirate custom was also practiced by the Israelites, Greeks and Persians etc. In fact, this is a good custom considering that three more nations at the time of Israel practiced the African levirate custom (Assyrians, Hittites, and the people of Ugarit). For example, article 193 of the Hittite Code of 1450-1200 B.C. by Matthews and Benjamin (1991:71) reads:

If a married man dies, then his brother must marry the widow; if his brother dies, then his father must marry her; if his father dies, then one of his brother's sons must marry the widow. No crime has been committed.

In this regards, Mbiti (1969:144) wrote that, "so that the dead man is not cut off from the chain of life. It may not matter very much about the biological link: it is the mystical link in the chain of life which is supreme and important."

Having reviewed westerners and Africans views on African customs and values that have been approved for their consistency with biblical principles, we now turn to a section that focuses on polygamy customs. The reason for considering polygamy is that rather than promoting Christianity among Africans it was a great hindrance to Christianity.

### **3.3 Case study on the practice of Polygamy**

This section reviews the arguments that approves and disapproves the practice of polygamy. In this respect, it is prudent to examine the views of those who support polygamy and the views of those who condemn it. The biblical perspective concludes the discussion.

#### ***3.3.1 The Cases for Polygamy***

Some Christian scholars who studied the topic of polygamy have concluded that in the Bible, polygamy was recognized and at times even encouraged. The following writers have maintained pro-polygamy views:

##### ***3.3.1.1 Hezekiel Mafu***

It appears evident that in the Old Testament polygamy was accommodated and tolerated. The polygamists were not cut off from the commonwealth of Israel – but continued to enjoy the fellowship of the Israelites. In fact it appears that polygamy under certain circumstances, such as the levirate system, was encouraged (Mafu 1986:11).

##### ***3.3.1.2 Alden Thompson***

Slavery, polygamy, and blood vengeance are all customs supported by Old Testament law codes but which most Christians would consider inappropriate for Westerners of the twentieth century (Alden 1991:100).

##### ***3.3.1.3 Russell Staples***

Levirate marriage in Israel was not simply a matter of choice, it was a defined responsibility and wherever the levirate is strictly practiced polygamy is an inevitable consequence (Staples 2003:14).

##### ***3.3.1.4 Josephat R. Siron***

There can be no genuine reason that we should deny people the privilege of salvation simply because they were polygamists when they heard the gospel (Siron 1991:24).

The above contemporary evidence should be sufficient to show that scholars are unanimous that polygamy is sanctioned in the Old Testament. The law codes and levirate marriage is their most frequently basis of supporting polygamy. These writers are cautious, and merely say that the Old Testament may have approved polygamy in some instances. Therefore, they maintain that it inevitably led to polygamy.

### ***3.3.2 The Cases against Polygamy***

While some Christians cited above have strong cases for polygamy, other Christians who also have studied the Bible on the topic of polygamy have presented strong arguments against polygamy on different grounds.

#### ***3.3.2.1 Arguments against polygamy from missionaries***

Even though opinion was divided among the missionaries on the merits and demerits of polygamy, the arguments raised below show that polygamy destroys human beings' happiness.

##### **3.3.2.1.1 Ellen G. White**

Noah had but one wife, and their united family discipline was blessed of God.

Because Noah's sons were righteous, they were preserved in the ark with their righteous father. God has not sanctioned polygamy in a single instance. It was contrary to his will. He knew that the happiness of man would be destroyed by it (White 1956:100).

**3.3.2.1.2** Father Peter Prestage in (*The Kraal Family System among the Amandebele*) quoted by Zvobgo (1996:94) said that polygamy should be condemned because when a man's heart is divided between three or four women, sometimes nine or ten, even twenty, his love for any of them must be little indeed, and his affection for his children still less.

It seems missionaries condemned polygamy on the basis of, *inter alia*, which means it breed jealousy and hatred in the family.

#### ***3.3.2.2 Arguments against polygamy from African ministers***

Several African ministers, who disapproved polygamy, did it on several grounds.

**3.3.2.2.1 Pastor S. L Masuku** of the Seventh-day Adventist Church shared his views with Zvobgo (1996:107) on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1991 mentioning three spirited arguments against polygamy:

Firstly, he pointed out that Paul in his instructions to a young minister who wanted to know the qualifications for the office of Bishop and deacons, stated categorically that a bishop ‘must be blameless, the husband of one wife...’ (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1: 6, 7).

Secondly, the Bible says of Solomon, considered the wisest king who ever lived that ‘his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord, his God’ (1 Kings 11:3-4).

Thirdly, Abram who later became Abraham, had his trust in God considerably shaken because when Abraham’s wife Sara bore him no children, and because she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar, Sara said to Abraham, her husband, ‘look, see now the Lord has restrained me from bearing. I pray you go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her.’ Abraham listened to Sara’s suggestion (Genesis 16:1-2). Then Sara, Abraham’s wife, took Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. Hagar conceived and when she saw that she had conceived, she despised her mistress and looked down upon her (Genesis 16:3-4). Thus, the once-upon-a time obedient servant who honored and respected her mistress after marrying Abraham by customary law, now began to look down upon her mistress.

**3.3.2.2** Revd M.S. Senda of the Brethren In Christ Church also shared his views with Zvobgo (1996:107) on 27 October, 1992 stating that:

Polygamous families have no peace at all. I have studied a few of such families and found that there is no peace in those families... there is endless hatred and bitterness... I have heard wives who belong to one man/husband ... referring to the other as an enemy. The children, who grow up in such homes, learn about enmity within the home in their early stages. They learn to hate from childhood.

**3.3.2.3** Pastor S.K. Mundet, aged 72 and lives just outside Chikore mission farm quoted by Zvobgo (1996:106) stated simply: “You cannot have two hearts; to love two wives in the same way is impossible. You will love one and hate the other.”

The above examples by African ministers clearly show that polygamy should be rejected because it violates the natural rights of wives and children as they are deprived of basic human necessities like food, drink and shelter since the father is unable to supply enough. This inevitably leads to hatred and strife in the family.

### ***3.3.2.3 Arguments against Polygamy from John Witte Jr***

Witte's article extracted on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2017 from [ft@firstthings.com](mailto:ft@firstthings.com) historically traces and presents several arguments against polygamy. The arguments are from Enlightenment liberals, Thomas Aquinas, John Locke, William Blackstone, Henry Home and David Hume and Catholic and Protestant writers.

#### ***3.3.2.3.1 Enlightenment liberals***

They rejected polygamy as a betrayal of reason, nature, utility, fairness, liberty, and common sense.

#### ***3.3.2.3.2 Thomas Aquinas***

Human beings, Thomas argued, are distinct among the animals in having perennial sex drives rather than annual mating seasons. They produce vulnerable babies who need the support of both their mother and father for an extended period. Women bond naturally with children; men do so only if they are certain of their paternity. Exclusive and enduring monogamous unions are thus the fitting way that humans can at once have regular sex, paternal certainty, and mutual caretaking for their young children. Humans have learned by natural inclination and hard experience that monogamy best accords with human needs.

#### ***3.3.2.3.3 John Locke***

regarded polygamy as a violation of the natural-born equality of men and women, as well as the natural rights of children to be properly nurtured and fully supported by both their mother and father. For Locke, the natural laws favoring monogamy trumped any religious arguments for polygamy, and he would allow no religious liberty exemptions from criminal bans of it.

#### **3.3.2.3.4 William Blackstone**

condemned polygamy as a “singularly barbaric” violation of the reciprocal natural rights and duties of husbands and wives. Polygamy, for him, was a grave offense against public health and public order.

#### **3.3.2.3.5 Henry Home and David Hume**

argued that polygamy would breed tyrannical patriarchy or servile submissiveness in children. Children of polygamy—whose mothers are deprecated, whose stepmothers are hostile, and whose fathers are distant and distracted—simply cannot learn the healthy balances of authority and liberty, equality and respect, and property and responsibility that they need to survive, let alone thrive, in a democratic society.

#### **3.3.2.3.6 Catholic and Protestant writers**

argued that polygamy violates not only the natural law but also the natural rights of wives and children. Calvinist theologian and jurist Theodore Beza stated this argument clearly almost five centuries ago. Taking the Ten Commandments as his guide, he argued that polygamy violates the commandments against adultery, theft, false testimony, and coveting all at once.

In summary, missionaries, philosophers, Protestants and African ministers unanimously agreed and condemned polygamy on the grounds that it violates human rights as it always brought hatred, mistrust and strife where the family once enjoyed peace and mutual forbearance. Therefore the conclusion is that the marriage institution as set up in Eden (Genesis 2:18, 22-24) and studied by several writers above, is that monogamy was God’s intention and will, His plan and design for humanity. The monogamy marriage set by God in Eden must be accepted as the ideal, model and example for all subsequent marriages.

Having examined several views by scholars on the case of polygamy, it is beneficial to conclude the polygamy case with a biblical perspective.

### **3.3.3 The Bible and Polygamy custom**

The Pentateuch and other Old Testament books were used as reference source in regards to the practice of polygamy custom. One of the Mosaic laws shows clearly that polygamy custom must be disapproved whether practiced by Africans or westerners.

Exodus 21:7-11, the law stated

<sup>7</sup> When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do.

<sup>8</sup> If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed; he shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt faithlessly with her.

<sup>9</sup> If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter.

<sup>10</sup> If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marital rights.

<sup>11</sup> And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money.

To understand this law in reference to the polygamy custom, two laws enshrined in the Old Testament need to be considered.

- 1) *Apodictic Law* – The Ten Commandments which always begin with “You shall not...” (Exodus 20:3-8, 10-17).
- 2) *Case Law* – relates with “If this”, “if that” normally beginning with an actual case. Thus case law states reality and gives divine counsel.

Therefore the law concerning the female slave is not an apodictic law, but a case law that means God does not sanction the issue but recognizes its reality and then gives divine counsel. So this case law has several contingencies that need to be analyzed with regard to the polygamy custom. Reading verse 10, there are two problems that are raised which may appear as it this case law supports and legalizes the practice of polygamy; but does it? Verse 10 reads, “If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marital rights.” There are problems that need to be addressed in this verse. The first problem is the word “another”, “if he takes another wife.” This problem can be solved through the Hebrew word “acheret” whose renderings are “another” or “different one.”

The second problem reads, “he shall not diminish her food, he clothing, and her marriage rights.” The problem here is “her marriage rights” which appear must be provided to her hence supporting and legalizing polygamy. However, the Hebrew word *onah* used in this passage need to be understood also. *Onah* could be rendered as “dowry”, “oil”, “conjugal rights”, and “habitation, or dwelling.”

If context is considered in this passage, the two Hebrew words “*acheret*” means different woman; and “*onah*” means habitation or dwelling. Thus the complete verse with context considered will then reads as follows: “If he marries a different woman, he must not deprive the slave woman of food, clothing, and shelter” (habitation). If he does not provide these three basic human necessities, verse 11 says, he must let her go free without any payment.

So based on the Hebrew word *onah*’s fourth meaning of “habitation”, the slave master had to provide the slave woman with basic necessities of life – food, clothing and shelter. Hence there are no sexual relations accommodated by this text to this different woman. The law concerning the female slave did not accommodate or promote the polygamy custom.

### **3.3.3.1 Concubine Israelite Society.**

The following passages (Genesis 22:24; 36:12; Judges 19:1, 2) in the Old Testament contain the Hebrew word *pilegesh* (concubine). Nevertheless, in the Pentateuch, *pilegesh* (concubine) is never used. Since in the Pentateuch concubine is never used, this may mean the Law of Moses did not recognize the legitimate existence of such a person in Israelite community. On the other hand, concubines can be traced as being in existence in the Israelites history.

### **3.3.3.2 Differences between Concubines and Wives.**

The following distinction from the Bible passages between concubines and wives are noted:

- 1) Nahor had a “wife” Milcah (Genesis 11:29)
- 2) Gideon had “many wives” (Judges 8:31)
- 3) Solomon had “had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines” (1 Kings 11:3)

Close deductions of the three points show that no laws were given concerning concubines. A concubine was considered as another wife. Hence it seems to make sense to conclude that they were an integral part of the practice of polygamy custom. Based on the point that no laws were

given regulating concubines and that concubines were an integral part of the practice of polygamy, then polygamy custom must be disapproved with strong terms.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The African customs and values have grappled with different theological viewpoints, both from the Western missionaries and Africans. The western missionaries rather condemned African customs and values consistent with biblical customs resulting in Africans rejecting Christianity as a white man's religion. The African themselves unanimously defended those African customs and values which were consistent with biblical principles from the western missionaries' attacks. In their defense, they used examples from the Bible and African culture to maintain their position. On the case of polygamy practice, scholars from Western and African used examples from the Bible and unanimously condemned it as evil and unbiblical. The next chapter now focuses on contextualization of the gospel which is a key topic in this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Biblical and Theological foundation of customs and values in missionary activities**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

My introduction to and interest in discipling Africans through their customs and values was birthed by the theology of customs and values in missionary activities among the Jews and Gentiles. My observation is that missionary activities are more successful when they are backed by customs and values that are consistent with biblical principles. Hence, in this chapter, firstly I examined biblical customs and values in missionary activities in order to draw some lessons on how African customs and values can be used in SDA missionary activities among African people. Secondly, I reviewed some mission insights from Jesus and his apostles to the Gentiles in order to draw some lessons on how western missionaries should evangelize Africans. I then concluded the chapter by focusing on mission insights from the Africans themselves.

#### **4.1 Biblical customs and values and their impact in mission activities**

In both the Old and New Testaments we find many instances of the presence of customs and values and their impact on mission. On account of the limited time, this section limited its discussion only to eleven biblical customs and values, which hopefully was sufficient in its engagement with biblical customs and values. Those customs and values identified and selected for our discussion included hospitality, neighborliness, extended family, Sabbath, circumcision, *lobola*, levirate, tithing, feast of Tabernacles, community consciousness and the role of blood in the covenant.

##### **4.1.1 *The value of Hospitality***

The value placed upon human beings is portrayed in the welcome and acceptance of sinners by God who willingly accepts them to show that He is hospitable. Hospitality is a virtue that is significant in the Bible showing its positive impact on missionary activities.

###### **4.1.1.1 *Hospitality Defined***

By definition hospitality is an act of being hospitable, which includes the reception and entertainment of strangers, visitors and guests. According to the Readers' Digest Great

Encyclopedic Dictionary (1962:423) hospitality is explained as “friendly and liberal reception of guests or strangers.” Although the researcher may have opted for current sources, the Great Encyclopedic Dictionary conceptualized hospitality as having receptive power to accommodate guests and strangers in a way that they feel embraced by the host. The New Interpreter’s Bible (1991:464) defines hospitality as acts of benevolence toward those outside of one’s usual circle of family and friends.

#### ***4.1.1.2 Hospitality in the Bible***

The Bible is very emphatic about the practice of hospitality. The overruling commandment that forms the foundation of this obligation as pronounced by Christ is, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). In this passage, Christ did not limit hospitality to close relatives or friends alone but refers to all fellow human beings who are His property through creation and redemption. This principle strikes at the root of all human wickedness which is selfishness. Luke’s second book also records an incident where the hosts may not have been Christians, yet their act is noted and commended as it opened a way to the hosts that they witness the great works of God themselves. This strong argument in favor of hospitality is stated as follows: “And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold” (Acts 28:2).

In Pauline epistles, hospitality is presented as a needful virtue if one is to be a church leader (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). Perhaps the most vivid counsel given is in Hebrews 13:2, where he says, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Another character is Job in the Old Testament who testified of his attitude towards strangers. He said, “The stranger did not lodge in the street: but [but] I opened my doors to the traveler” (Job 31:32). Therefore not only does the Bible enjoin hospitality as a duty, but it presents many beautiful images of the exercise of this virtue and the blessings which it brings. Foremost among these is the experience of Abraham. The hospitality expressed by Abraham is presented here by White (1956: 50) as follows:

In the records of Genesis 18 the patriarch, at the hot summer noon tide, is resting in his tent door under the shadow of the oaks of Mamre. Three travelers are passing near. They make no appeal for hospitality, solicit no favor; but Abraham does not permit them to go on their way not being refreshed. He is an

old man, a man of dignity and wealth, one highly esteemed, and accustomed to command. Yet, on seeing these strangers, he "ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground" (Gen 18:2). Addressing the leader he said: "My Lord, if now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant" (Genesis 18:2, 3).

The kindness shown by Abraham towards night time strangers demonstrates that hospitality is a Christian value and should be practiced by both Christians and non-Christians. Abraham's hospitable actions are indicators that he is a true type of Jesus who welcomes and identifies with human being regardless of neither faith affiliation nor social status. His action further shows how through hospitality the host should treat his guests. *The New Interpreter's Bible* (1991:463) beautifully sums Abraham's hospitality as follows:

It extends to strangers, toward those who appear unexpectedly; it follows a certain protocol: seeing, running to meet, honoring, inviting, refreshing, preparing, and serving. Bowing, an everyday gesture, was appropriate for all visitors, not only for important people. Abraham gives of the best he has (calf!), makes and serves food, remains available to them and concerned about their welfare, and accompanies them on their way (v.16). Abraham depicts what the visitors may expect (vv. 4-5), in view of which they accept the invitation, and he goes beyond what he promised in providing meat – these heavenly beings eat! As the visitors stand near Abraham (v.2), so he stands near them (v.8); he reciprocates in being attentive. He understands himself to be their servant (vv. 3, 5).

A close reflection on Abraham's actions from the passage above shows that hospitality is an antidote to selfishness. Hospitality gives visitors the freedom of the host's territory. Thus the less cost effective and efficient strategy in Christian witness is to embrace and practice hospitality at home, church and work stations. The value of hospitality on mission activities which was modeled by Abraham can be further explained through two aspects namely home fellowship and self-giving love.

#### **4.1.1.2.1 Home Fellowship**

In connection with hospitality, Stutzman (2002:101) says that “the spread of the early church is linked to the fellowship of believers meeting in homes.” Like in those early days, hospitality is one of the most important customs of the church today. For instance, in those early days, members opened their homes for worship and fellowship. Here is a list of some New Testament hosts who did that: Aquila and Priscilla (1 Corinthians 16:19); Philemon (Philemon 1-2); Lydia (Acts 16:14 –15); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1 –9); and Mary (Acts 12:12). Relationships were developed with friends as people met in homes. The home contact not only offered opportunity for hearing about the love of Jesus, but they also experienced it. It is difficult, if not impossible, to attract new people to the church without the gracious hospitality of individuals and groups in the church. Stutzman (2002:102) argues convincingly that “there is no evangelistic substitute for the love of God ministered by the body of Christ.” Jesus himself mentioned it this way: “Everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another” (John 13:35).

#### **4.1.1.2.2 Self-giving Love**

These passages show that hospitality meets another person’s basic needs for rest, food, and fellowship. It is a tangible expression of self-giving love. Perhaps that is the reason why Jesus attached theological significance to hospitality when he taught that feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty were acts of service done to him (Matthew 25:34–40). Thus if the Indigenous South Africans are to know about the Seventh –day Adventist church, it must be able to see Adventists love one another. We demonstrate our Christian relationships when we minister to each other. A lover of hospitality is among the specifications given by the Holy Spirit as marking one who is to bear responsibility in the church. And to the whole church is given the injunction to use hospitality one to another without grudging: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:9, 10).

However, the ministry of hospitality should not be confused with the art of entertainment. The main goal behind practicing relationships through the principle of hospitality is to make the guest become the focus of attention, not the host. The reason is that visitors do not want to be impressed, but loved and accepted.

#### **4.1.2 The Lobola Custom**

The inclusion of the *lobola* custom, a good ancient custom, in this dissertation is meant to help us understand the importance of customs which are consistent with biblical principles in missionary activities. It is unfortunate that many questions have arisen challenging its practice particularly by Christians. This has been heightened by the general belief that the *lobola* custom is akin to selling one's daughter to a man and thus making her vulnerable to abuse.

##### **4.1.2.1 Lobola Defined**

In this section, a historical development of *lobola* dating from 1920s to twenty first century is given. Posselt (1926:51) defines *lobola* as a contract that arises from a proposed marriage by which the future husband (or his family on his behalf) delivers or promises to deliver to the father (which in all cases includes the guardian) of the future wife, stock or other property, in consideration of which the legal custody of the children born of the marriage is vested in their father (or his family) to the exclusion of any member of the mother's family. Chigwedere (1982) states that “*lobola*” which is sometimes referred to as bride wealth, is a form of payment to the bride's family, in the form of goods, money, or livestock to compensate for the loss of the woman's labor and the children she bears in her husband's family. According to Mvududu (2002) *lobola* refers to the institution where a man pays some property for the right or privilege to marry a woman. Pollard (2000) defines it as the transfer from one authority, which is the parents, to another, which is the marital home. She also adds that this is part of the formation of a relationship between two families that have previously not known each other.

##### **4.1.2.2 Lobola and Celebration in the Bible**

*Lobola* in Zulu, *mohar* in Hebrew, bride price in English and *roora* in Shona enjoys support from the Bible. There are several accounts in the bible which provide the strongest argument in favor of *lobola* and public celebration. Here are some examples:

The first strongest biblical account on *lobola* custom is recorded in Genesis 24:50-61.

Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken. When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the LORD. And the servant brought forth jewelry of silver and of gold, and raiment, and gave them to

Rebekah; he also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. And he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me back to my master". Her brother and her mother said, "Let the maiden remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way; let me go that I may go to my master." They said, "We will call the maiden, and ask her." And they called Rebekah, and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go." So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, be the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them!" Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and rode upon the camels and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

The above biblical account should be sufficient to show that biblically *lobola* was practiced. In this story, the family of Abraham on behalf of Isaac (future husband) delivers to the brother of Rebecca (future wife) jewelry of silver and of gold, and raiment as *lobola*.

In *Exodus 22:16*, the law stated

If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall give the marriage present for her, and make her his wife.

In this passage, the phrase marriage present is used and it should be understood as *lobola* in our contemporary context. The passage further suggests that the marriage present was to be given a sign of commitment to the woman who was to become his wife.

*1 Samuel 18:25*

Then Saul said, "Thus shall you say to David, 'The king desires no marriage present except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that he may be avenged of the king's enemies.' Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

Other Old Testament references such as Genesis 34:12; Exodus 22:15-17; 1 Samuel 18:25 are in agreement that the father of the bride received a bride price “*mohar*” which was an amount of money or the equivalent in kind. A law in Deuteronomy 22:29 imply a minimum of fifty shekels which would translate to about US\$502. According to Epstein (1927:78-79) the most satisfactory explanation of the “*mohar*” is to be found in the essential purpose and significance of gifts among the ancient Semites. Here the principle of compensation finds its earliest expression. The gift given was not necessarily equivalent to the bride except in a general way. It was simply an object of value given to enhance the prestige of the giver, to express and confirm a social bond with the receiver of the gift. The significance of the bride wealth is clearly explained by Burrow (1938:41) who said, “For the Israelites, as for many other peoples, the significance of the gift was not exhausted by such considerations as these. The gift established a bond not merely by creating good will or a sense of obligation but actually conveying something of the life of the giver to the recipient.” From this point of view a gift serves to establish something comparable to a blood – covenant between giver and recipient, and the bond is made complete when there is a fair exchange and compensation.

It is further noted that “a marriage is not merely an incidental transaction between the two families; it creates and cements a relationship of alliance between them. One family gives a very precious possession, a daughter; the other, ‘to put things on an equal footing’ gives a valuable present. The *mohar* thus establishes the prestige of the husband and his family, gives him authority over his wife, makes the contract binding on both parties, and creates and alliance between the two families” (Burrow, 1938). Booker (1995) states that “the bride price is high as a means of compensating the family for the financial liability of raising a daughter as well as being an expression of the young man’s love for his hoped for bride.”

It should be noted that the bride price “*mohar*” should not be confused with gifts that were given to brides. One of the gifts given to a bride by the prospective husband was known as “*mattan*.” There was no standard for this one, it was just a gift from the heart. The other gift was called “*shilum*” (a parting gift) which the father of the bride usual gave to his daughter as a parting gift. The reason why the father gave this “*shilum*” (parting gift) is based on the suggestion that this was to be the daughter’s share of the inheritance since she was parting with the family and the

rest of what has been paid would remain falling to the sons. Some biblical accounts of the “*shilum*” gift is when Caleb gave his daughter a field and springs of water (Joshua 15:18; Judges 1:14) and Pharaoh who gave his daughter the wife of Solomon the city of Gezer (1 Kings 9:16).

Since “*shilum*” was a gift from the heart, there is no stipulation of price. This explains why Lea and Racheal complained to their father Laban that he had sold them (Genesis 31:14-15). A close analysis of verse 14 showed that the complaint stemmed from the inheritance issue. It is important therefore that this passage should not be used to advocate the idea that asking for a bride price is selling a child. This is the reason why *lobola* custom is practiced because it was regarded as a safeguard to the marriage relation and the father had confidence to entrust the happiness of his daughter to the future husband who managed to pay the bride price. Since *lobola* had been paid, public celebration immediately followed. Thus the next section reviews public celebration in the Bible.

#### **4.1.2.3    *Public Celebration in the Bible***

Like *lobola*, the Bible approves and encourages public celebration which is rendered as *mishteh* in Hebrew. Public celebration followed soon after the payment of *lobola*. For example:

*Genesis 29:21-22*

<sup>21</sup> Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed."

<sup>22</sup> So Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.

*Judges 14:10, 15*

<sup>10</sup> And his father went down to the woman, and Samson made a feast there; for so the young men used to do.

I concluded by saying the scriptures do not condemn *lobola* and public celebration customs but rather affirm them with examples taken from people like Isaac (Genesis 24:50-54), Jacob (Genesis 29:16-20) and David (1 Samuel 18:17-27) practicing these customs. The Bible values cultures and cultures reflect different ways of handling different situations. Through *lobola* and public celebration, people in Bible times could cement their relationships resulting in the creation of platforms for mission endeavors.

#### **4.1.3 The Levirate custom**

This section attempted to revisit the levirate custom and investigate its principles properly in order to fulfil other needs within the society as well as provide more light on certain theological issues in light of mission.

##### **4.1.3.1 Levirate defined**

Levirate is a form of marriage in which a woman marries one of her husband's brothers after the husband's death. Solleh (2012) observes among the Kono in Sierra Leone that "levirate marriage is known as 'marriage transference within the clan or Damby traditional branch'... this means transferring the marriage to an elder or younger brother or a female patrilineal of the deceased's generation (in the Kono tradition) is considered good form."

##### **4.1.3.2 Levirate custom in the Bible**

The custom concerning the levirate marriage custom is found in Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family: her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. "And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. "But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.' "Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,' "then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.' "And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'

In order to understand the issues associated with the levirate custom, three major questions need to be considered in this Old Testament custom: (1) Was the levirate marriage custom merely a sexual union, or was it a formal marriage? (2) What was the purpose for this custom? (3) Was it

an obligatory, or an optional custom? Let us use the Bible to respond to each of the three questions in order to appreciate why God established the levirate custom.

#### *4.1.3.2.1 Sexual union or formal marriage custom?*

According to Deuteronomy 25:5 it says specifically that the woman's "husband's brother shall go in to her and take to himself as wife." The Hebrew phrase (leqachab lo le ishshah) frequently appears in the Old Testament and its rendition is used for a marriage (Genesis 24:4, 38; 28:6; Deuteronomy 21:11). Deuteronomy 25: 6 also affirms a permanent marriage by mentioning that only the first born from this marriage union was responsible for the name of the dead husband, indicating that there are other children that are born in this formal union. In addition, Ruth 4:1, 2, tells us that the levirate custom was not purely for sexual union only but it was a formal marriage as it involved 10 elders who served as witnesses. From my study, I recognized that the custom propagated the marriage institution which provided a platform for Christian witnessing if either one of the parties or both parties were believers.

#### *4.1.3.2.2 Care for widows or to have a son?*

Some scholars have concluded that the levirate marriage custom among the Israelites was approved by God for the purpose of providing care to widows. One such scholar is Harrison (1986:901-902) who postulated that

The Levirate custom was actually a humane way of dealing with what was frequently the desperate plight of windows by keeping them within the family and tribe, without which they would almost certainly have starved or been, callously exploited.

The conclusion is that the social security of the widow required that the immediate appropriate male relative (whether married or not) in the event of death of the wife's husband fulfill his obligation. If this is true, this then resulted in the promotion of polygamy practice which has no biblical mandate. What I need to note is that widows were provided through a good plan that

God put in place for their basic necessities of life: food (Deuteronomy 14:29), clothing (Deuteronomy 24:17), and shelter (Leviticus 22:13).

Reading Deuteronomy 25 especially verses 6, 7, and 9 shows that the only purpose for this levirate custom was to perpetuate the name of the deceased male, that is, “his name not be blotted out of Israel.”

Commenting on Genesis 38:8, Nichol (1980:108) states that, “such levirate marriage was practiced widely (cf. Hittite and middle Assyrian law codes) and was later regulated for Israel by Moses (Deuteronomy 25:5). The first born of the new marriage was reckoned as heir of the deceased brother, continuing his name.”

The point above suggests that the Israelites were not isolated culturally from the surrounding nations. The fact that levirate marriage was later regulated (Deuteronomy 25:5) implies as in the context of this dissertation that cultural practices (including African customs and values) from the surrounding nations which were not evil were adopted and practiced. Biblically, when Onan refused to do, that which was culturally his duty, the Lord was displeased and “killed him” (Genesis 38: 10). This action by God seems to suggest that God operates within human cultures to further His cause. Thus God is not against culture if it is in harmony with biblical principles.

There is also a second account in the Bible to show the importance of the levirate custom in dramatizing the story of salvation. In Ruth 4: 1-5, 10, it is stated.

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother ElimelechAnd I thought to inform you, saying,`Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if you will not redeem *it*, then tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it*, and I am next after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem *it*." Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth

the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance." Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You *are* witnesses this day.

According verse 4, Boaz is the next near kin, which in Hebrew is *goel*, meaning kinsman-redeemer. The *goel* concept used in this passage is very important because it was a provision of the levirate law which was designed to preserve the name of a dead relative or to buy back land lost when a relative was forced to sell because of financial or other hardships. Of paramount is that the *goel* was expected to look after the helpless members of the family. Reading this passage, Boaz then becomes the *goel*. The whole scene is a beautiful one as it unfolds. Observe as Boaz, the *goel*, gently spreads his garment over Ruth in the ancient symbol of redemption and here are the deductions. In Boaz, the *goel*; (1) Ruth is safe from all that would harm her. In Boaz, the *goel*, (2) her every need is supplied. In Boaz, (3) the *goel*, life's meaning and purpose has been restored. Finally, in Boaz, the *goel*, (4) Ruth is no longer a foreigner, but a full member with all family rights.

The *goel* concept which emanates from the levirate custom is very theological and salvific. White (1942:327) states that, "the work of redeeming us and our inheritance, lost through sin, fell upon Him who is '*near of kin*' unto us. It was to redeem us that He became our kinsman. Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Savior. "Fear not", He says, "for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine" (White 1942).

#### 4.1.3.2.3 An obligatory or optional custom?

Westermarck (1921:41-42) understood the levirate custom as an obligatory practice, where a man was "compelled to marry his childless brother's widow whether he be married or not."

When Deuteronomy 25:5-10 is summarized, the following can be deduced: There are two stipulations. One –third of the custom lays down the expectation, while two-thirds explains the formal procedures to be followed in case the brother-in –law refuses to marry his deceased brother's wife. The point being suggested here is that this custom allows the brother the option of refusing. According to verse 7, the element of refusal is entertained: "But if the man does not desire to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders." By

going to the gate to the elders, the wife of the diseased intended to tell the elders that the man could not take up the responsibility of her diseased husband. Hence her actions affirmed that the levirate custom was optional. While it was embarrassing for a man to refuse to marry the childless widow, it is paramount to note that the law legitimately allowed him to excuse himself.

In summary, it can be said that the levirate custom was established by God to teach valuable mission insights on the importance of a formal marriage as well the provision of a redeemer through the *goel* concept to those who had become hopeless.

#### **4.1.4 The blood Covenant custom**

While the sin problem is well narrated using themes as the Great Controversy (Revelation 12) and Fall of Man (Genesis 3), the same Bible also presents the blood covenant custom as a solution to the sin problem. Blood is significant to the central theme of scripture (Exodus 12:13; Leviticus 17:11). As a leitmotif, it weaves through the fabric of holy writ and consequently Christian doctrine and praxis (Leviticus 16:3; Matthew 26:28; John 6:53-55; Hebrews 9:22). On account of the brevity of this section, only a cursory, but hopefully sufficient, engagement with the biblical theme can be afforded.

##### **4.1.4.1 Blood covenant custom defined**

In defining covenant, Lugira (2009: 91) state that, “this is an agreement made between an individual and the spirit, family with ancestral spirit, tribe with tribal spirit, and ..... nation with national guardians mostly arrived at by shedding of blood for protection, prosperity.”

##### **4.1.4.2 Blood covenant in the Bible**

In *Leviticus 17:11*, the law stated that,

For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.

Writing to the believers in Rome Paul says,

being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed

over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:24-26).

To the Jewish believers who were familiar with the blood covenant custom, He states:

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22).

These passages show that the blood covenant custom is one of the common features in the Bible and it constitutes measures that had profound religious significance. This custom served different mission like purposes as summarized below:

1. That remission of sins can only be by blood as seen in the Old Testament sacrificial system, thus the custom involves the shedding of animal blood as type and the shedding of Christ's blood as antitype. In reference to the role of blood in the covenant, Mbiti (2010:1) states that, "... But where and when blood is shed, it is a very serious affair. Life is in the blood, and blood can save life."
2. The process of sacrifice is illustrated through Greek terms like *proetheto* meaning to present or display or set before something else. At Calvary Jesus like an innocent lamb was presented as a sin offering for the world. Another word is *hilasterion* which is a temple related term for sacrifice of sin. In the context of the blood covenant custom, Christ the innocent lamb was both a good propitiation and a good expiation to deal with the sin problem (Hebrews 9:5).
3. Thus the role of blood in the covenant is the only anatomy for the sin problem.

In light of the role of blood in covenanting parties, the SDA church can use this as missional approach in order to enhance its presence among indigenous South Africans.

#### **4.1.5 Neighborliness custom**

There are many evangelistic opportunities that neighborliness custom offers to Christians in order to present Christ and great truths they profess. The strength of neighborliness is that it

gives Christians the opportunity of being social and coming close to the people, unlike sermons delivered in the open air sometime with no neighbors in attendance.

#### **4.1.5.1 *Neighborliness defined***

Ndlovu (2014:93) states that, “Neighborliness refers more to relationship where one’s attitude or actions may be termed neighborly. It is being friendly, having kind feelings towards or willing to act to increase the good fortune of the neighbors (good will).”

#### **4.1.5.2 *Neighborliness in the Bible***

There are several accounts in both the Old and New Testaments which support the neighborhood custom. The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18). The helper (Hebrew *ezer*) is one who offers encouragement and strength in the human realm just as God provides help and support as our divine Helper (Deuteronomy 33:7,26, 29; Psalm 70:5; 121:1,2). The neighborliness custom in the Bible followed the divine recognition of the human being’s solitary situation. Life is about sharing and learning to share more. Life is about teamwork. As Solomon writes, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return of their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). The point here is that there is no human existence outside a neighborly way of living and that an exclusive way of living is a threat to one’s life. Therefore this custom provides a platform for human beings to interact and to share their faith as they testify God’s provisions in their lives.

Life’s meaning is fully realized when we live neighborly with fellow human beings by avoiding those things that hurt them. In His teachings, Jesus emphasized the importance of living harmoniously with other people and said, “So in everything, do to others what you would like them to do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12). It is unchristian to hold a grudge with your neighbor, but very Christian to reconcile with him or her. The value of forgiveness is taught in the Lord’s Prayer when Christ prayed, “Forgive us our debtors, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12). The power of evangelism lies on Christians’ willingness to forgive those who offend them as illustrated in Luke’s gospel. “If your neighbor sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive. If he sins against you seven times a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent, ‘forgive him” (Luke 17:3,4).

Now let's consider good neighborly management conflict lifestyle as expressed in King Solomon's writing. The wise King gives this counsel, "If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man's confidence" (Proverbs 25:9). Solomon further gives another counsel in favor of neighborly custom. He says, "Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you – better a neighbor nearby than a brother faraway" (Proverbs 27:10). Neighborliness is a way of obeying one of the commandments given to the Israelites. The message was given to them by Moses that the Lord their God, "a great God, mighty, and a terrible," do execute the judgement of the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger," (Deuteronomy 10:17-19). Therefore He commanded in verse 19, "Love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." He then gave the measure of loving the stranger or neighbor by saying, "You shall love him as yourself" (Leviticus 19:34). If we do not embrace neighborliness, we shall be ignorant of our neighbor's faith and we could therefore misrepresent such faith.

Through the neighborly custom, the Bible is clear that man is not an island. Man needs other people to remain a social being. The sole purpose of the existence of man is to create and maintain sound relationship with fellow human beings. Regardless of the social status, achievements, rich or poor, man needs a neighbor. Neighborly custom consideration is not something people do at certain times and in certain places, but it is part of the fabric life. In the story of the Good Samaritan, the question "Who is my neighbor?" is put to rest by Christ expressed through the beautiful words by White (1946:503) below:

Christ has shown that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is everyone who is the property of God.

Therefore to live happily with one's neighbor is in essence biblical and evangelistic as Christ through the story of the Good Samaritan presented a picture of Himself and His mission.

#### ***4.1.6 The extended family custom***

The extended family is one of the highly cherished customs in the Bible. Such families existed to cater for the less and marginalized members in families or communities. The extended family also allowed the young ones in that particular family to draw from the riches of the experience of family members in their clan and community. A person was not allowed to live for himself or for his own family but for the whole community and hence it was the duty of the community to instill values into the young ones. Today, as during the Bible times, there is need to embrace extended family custom since that would be fulfilling the Christian requirement of “Love your neighbor as you love yourself” (Matthew 12:37-38).

##### ***4.1.6.1 Extended family defined***

It is generally agreed that two or more brothers (in the patrilocal societies) or sisters (in the matrilocal societies) establish families in one compound or close to one another (Mbiti 1969:104). This means that members of such a family extend beyond the immediate family, consisting of grandparents, aunts, uncle, and all those living nearby or in the same household. An example could be a married couple that lives with either the husband or the wife's parents.

##### ***4.1.6.2 The biblical view of the extended family***

The extended family custom is biblical.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you...And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions which they had gathered, and the persons that they had gotten in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan" (Genesis 12:1, 5).

The nuclear family does not include the brother's child or children, except the extended family. If this is true then for Abraham to take Lot with him (his brother's son) he must have believed in the biblical extended family custom which is also very African. The story of Mordecai and Esther is yet another biblical example of the extended family and its impact on missionary activities. In Chapter 2:5 -7, the author records,

Now there was a Jew in Susa the capital whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite, who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away. He had brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother; the maiden was beautiful and lovely, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai adopted her as his own daughter.

The power of extended family in Christian witnessing is well articulated in the passage above. The young Esther learned the Jewish religious customs, which included the fear of God, and the power of fervent prayer in crisis, right in the house of Mordecai, her uncle. When the time of crisis came, which demanded that Mordecai and the Jews be killed, it is through the influence of Esther that Mordecai and the rest of the Jews survived. Therefore Esther became instrumental in preserving her Jewish people, and through this act many people from non-Jewish provinces accepted the Jewish faith.

#### **4.1.7    *The Sabbath custom***

The Jews recognized the Sabbath as a day of rest and enjoyment. The Sabbath was one of the Jewish festivals which commemorated creation and exodus, that is, their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage.

##### **4.1.7.1       *Sabbath defined***

The Bible also says on the seventh day God “rested and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:17). The word “rested”, *Shabbat*, means literally “to cease” from labor or activity (Genesis 8:22). The *Seventh day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs number 19* defines The Sabbath as “God’s perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God’s creative and redemption acts” (Cress 2010:248)

##### **4.1.7.2 *Sabbath in the Bible***

It is of great significance that Jesus opened His ministry with recognition of one of the important Bible customs. Luke beautifully records this:

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on Sabbath day, and stood up to read (Luke 4:16).

Jesus, while among the Jews, was culturally sensitive to the Sabbath custom. He respected the Sabbath custom which required every Jew to regularly participate in worship services on the Sabbath. The significance of the Sabbath custom is further emphasized through the use of the Greek word *euthus* (immediately) in Mark 1:1-28. This word carries a sense of urgency and refers to an action that takes place without delay. In connection with the Sabbath custom, Mounce (1994:35) emphatically says that worshipping God is our number one priority. So the first thing Jesus urgently did on Sabbath as His custom was and as a custom again among the Jews is that He went to the synagogue (Mark 1:21).

In response to His recognition of the Sabbath custom, Luke again records the positive missional response from the Jews in the Nazareth synagogue as follows:

And there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:17-19)

Because Jesus appreciated and respected the Sabbath custom which was of theological significance to them, they also recognized and accepted His missionary activities and allowed Him to preach to them. This becomes a lesson and challenge to all missionaries that those whom we desire to evangelize can recognize and accept any mission activities only when we appreciate and respect their cultural values and customs especially when those customs and values are consistent with biblical principles.

#### **4.1.8 The Circumcision custom**

Circumcision is one of the oldest Jewish customs which was practiced widely in the Old and New Testament. The fact that circumcision was widely practiced by the Jews implies that this

cultural practice was not evil in and of itself. To reach the Jews with the gospel, all who worked among the Jewish people were seen performing circumcision (Acts 16:3).

#### ***4.1.8.1 Circumcision defined***

Circumcision was a Jewish religious rite which required that every male Jewish child on the eighth day of his birth be circumcised (Genesis 17:12-13).

#### ***4.1.8.2 Circumcision in the Bible***

The parents of John the Baptist, Zechariah and Elizabeth, and the parents of Jesus, Joseph and Mary, were faithful keepers of Jewish religious values and customs which included the circumcision custom. The circumcision custom according to the Mosaic law required that every Jewish male child be circumcised on the eighth day. This was a symbol of their admission into covenant relationship with God (Genesis 17:12-13; Leviticus 12:3). In fulfilling this custom, Luke's gospel recorded both the circumcision of John the Baptist and his cousin Jesus as follows:

About John the Baptist, "So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child" (Luke 1:59).

About Jesus, "and when eighth days were completed for circumcision of the Child, His was called Jesus the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21).

The circumcision custom was very significant to the Jews but not to the Gentiles in that it preceded the naming of the Child as indicated in the case of both the circumcision of John the Baptist and Jesus. Theologically, the circumcision custom was a symbol of their admission into the covenant relationship with God (see Genesis 17:12-13; Leviticus 12:3). Because of its strong spiritual connotation, circumcision custom was not only limited to members of the Jewish families but God also extended it to servants in those families who were not Jews by birth. In Genesis 17:14, Moses reported that failure to circumcise resulted in exclusion from the Jewish community. This means that for both John the Baptist and Jesus' missionary activities to be recognized and accepted among the Jews, they had to fulfil the circumcision custom requirements.

#### ***4.1.8.3 Paul and the circumcision custom***

Later during the apostolic era, the missionary team of Paul and Silas appreciated fully the Jewish circumcision custom particularly when working among the Jews whom they intended to evangelize. Luke records in Acts 16 how Paul accommodated the circumcision custom by adding Timothy to the missionary team.

And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1-3).

The inclusion and acceptance of Timothy into the missionary team of Paul and Silas in their ministration among the Jews solely depended in his fulfilment of the Jewish circumcision custom. The Jewish circumcision custom was theological because it admitted the one who had been circumcised into the Jewish community.

#### ***4.1.9 Feast of Tabernacles custom***

God required the Jews to assemble in Jerusalem to participate in the Feast of Tabernacles which continued for seven days. The Feast of Tabernacles custom was one of the three national assemblies which offered the Jews quality time to associate as brothers and sisters while contemplating on God's goodness.

##### ***4.1.9.1 Feast of Tabernacles defined***

The Feast of Tabernacles was also rendered "Feast of Booths" (Leviticus 23:42). The booths were temporary shelters to remind the Israelites of their wilderness experience when God provided for them (Leviticus 23:42-43). The Feast of Tabernacles was the closing gathering of the year. It was God's design that at that time the people should reflect on His goodness and mercy (White 1956: 447).

##### ***4.1.9.2 Feast of Tabernacles in the Bible***

Concerning the Feast of Tabernacles custom, God gave these instructions to Moses when He said, "Say to the people of Israel, on the fifteenth day of this seventh month

and for seven days is the feast of booths to the Lord” (Leviticus 23:34). This passage forcefully demonstrates that the Tabernacles is a feast of the Lord. The Hebrew word used in Leviticus 23:34 is *chag* meaning feast. Thus *chag* as used in Leviticus 23:34, 39 and Numbers 28:17 refer to a festival and it stresses the character of the feast. *Chag* comes from the verb that has, as one of its possible meanings, “to make a pilgrimage”, “to take a journey to an object of reverence.” The Arabic related word to *chag* is *haj* which describes the sacred Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca. According to the word *chag*, God says to His people, the Israelites: You are to make a pilgrimage or to take a journey to an object of reverence, that is, to the feast of Tabernacles. Here are four mission insights taken from the Bible to show the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles custom.

#### ***4.1.9.2.1 Feast of Tabernacles was a commemorative feast***

Like the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles was a commemorative feast. In recognition of God’s care and protection in the past year, once in a year the Israelites were required to leave their homes, and go for the feast of Tabernacles where they would dwell in tents or booths, arbors, formed from the green branches “of goodly trees, branches of palm – trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook” (Leviticus 23:40, 42, 43). The commemorative feast spirit was experienced through doing two things:

##### *1. The Israelites were to leave their homes or houses.*

The idea of leaving homes or houses imply that the Israelites homes were only temporal shelters as they were pilgrims waiting for “better or a permanent home in heaven” (Hebrews 10:16). By asking them to leave their homes and all belongings behind God intended to plant faith in them as He is able to watch those who trust Him. David says, “...unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain” (Psalm 127:1). In addition, true commemoration required an environment free from the confusion, noise and disturbances of city life in order for the Israelites to have quality time with God.

##### *ii. The Israelites were to dwell in booth or tents.*

The LORD commanded the entire Israel community and said, “You shall dwell in booths for seven days” (Leviticus 23:42). The Israelites dwelt in natural shelters rather than live in real houses or dormitories in order to experience the spirit of the Feast of Tabernacles custom. The idea of booths or tents with no secure elements taught them total dependence on God for

protection. The Psalmist says, “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God” (Psalm 20:7). Dwelling in booth also reminded them that their life in the desert was temporal hence motivating them to continue moving till they reached their permanent home in Canaan.

#### ***4.1.9.2.2 Feast of Tabernacles custom was a typical feast***

The word, type comes from the Greek word *tupos*. The translated meaning of the word *tupos* is pattern, example, model, type, and figure. In respect of Romans 5:14, *tupos* is a model or example which anticipates or precedes a later realization archetype, figure or symbol. *Tupos* is used in several New Testament passages and is concerned with the connection between Old Testament and Christianity. The general meaning of *tupos* includes words like pattern, image, mark, model, and example. The earthly sanctuary, for instance, was a type of the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:1, 2).

Thus Feast of Tabernacles custom as a *tupos*, not only points back to the Israelites’ earthly wilderness experience, but, as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send angels as reapers to gather the wicked together for destruction, and to gather the righteous into everlasting life. At that time the wicked will all be destroyed. They will become “as though they had not been” (Obadiah 16). Looking forward to the Lord’s great day with a heart full of praise, John prophesied that:

On that day every creature which is in heaven, and the earth , and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and into the Lamb forever and ever” (Revelation 5:13).

Through attendance to the Feast of Tabernacles, the righteous were being gathered for eternal life, while those who chose to be complacent were gathered together for eternal destruction when the Lord comes again.

#### ***4.1.9.2.3 Feast of Tabernacles custom was a harvest thanksgiving gathering feast***

God through Moses said to the Israelites, “When you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord for seven days” (Leviticus 23:39). Israelite attendees at the feast

of Tabernacles were required to bring what they gathered from the land to express their thanksgiving to God. The instructions given in Leviticus 23:39 suggests that this feast was held after harvesting so that every Israelite was afforded an opportunity of coming with a gift to thank God. The same lesson taught through the feast of Tabernacles is applicable to believers today that they should not come empty – handed when they meet to worship God, but like the Israelites during the Feast of Tabernacles, both old and young, rich and poor, are to come with some gift as a tribute of thanksgiving to their God who has crowned the year with goodness, mercy and love. The psalmist reminds us as follows: “Come to the presence of God with gifts” (Psalm 95:8).

#### ***4.1.9.2.4 Feast of Tabernacles custom was a “one anotherness feast”***

At this yearly feast, the children of Israel associated as children of One Father from different quarters of the country and from different homes in order to be together and support one another. The one Anotherness experience created by the Tabernacle festival custom strengthened the ties that bound them to God and to one another. In reference to the Tabernacles and its spirit of togetherness God said:

When all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which he chose, you shall read this law Torah before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law Torah, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land which are going over the Jordan to possess (Deut. 31:11 -13, cf. 20:10 15).

Certainly, this yearly feast offered the Israelites who had been apart for a year the opportunity to be together for fellowship for seven days. Thus today the Feast of Tabernacles custom has been replaced by what is referred as Camp meetings in the Seventh day Adventist church. Like the Feast of Tabernacles, the Camp meetings can be used as missional tool by the Seventh day Adventists to attract indigenous South African since the feast offer the opportunity to be together which resonates with Africans. Camp meetings are a joyous occasion for all campers. They are altogether the happiest occasion of the year, when friends, parents, children, relatives and neighbors must renew fellowship and harmony. Camp meetings, therefore, offer members

quality time for associating together thereby contributing towards qualitative and quantitative church growth. Camp meetings, being an annual event especially for Seventh day Adventists, offer quality time to bless one another, to sharpen one another, to encourage one another, to pray for one another, and to stimulate each other's faith. Commenting about religious customs that offer an opportunity for members to be together, White (1954: 455-456) mentions that,

We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God. He who shuts himself up to himself, is not filling the position that God designed he should. The claims of God and of humanity are upon us. It is the proper cultivation of the social elements of our nature that brings us into sympathy with our brethren, and affords us happiness in our efforts to bless others.

The strength of a believing community is in its ability to associate together despite being diverse culturally and racially. Therefore the Feast of Tabernacles offered that opportunity to the Israelites and similarly the Camp meetings offer that privilege to members of the Seventh day Adventist community which should be extended to indigenous South Africans..

#### ***4.1. 10 The Tithing System***

In the book of Genesis tithe paying appears as an already-known biblical practice. For example, Abraham paid tithe to Melchizedek, king of Salem and a priest of God Most High (Genesis 14:18-20). It should also be noted that the Israelites were late commanded to tithe all the yield of their seed, “which comes forth from the field year by year” (Deuteronomy 14:22).

##### ***4.1.10.1 Tithing defined***

Tithing system seems to have been practiced by different groups of people. Milgrom (1990:432) records that the residents from the city of Ugarit (14<sup>th</sup> century BC) paid tithe to the temple, a kind of tax, and the king also received a royal tax (a tithe) from the people. Neo-Babylonian documents reveal that Babylonians were familiar with tithing practice (Milgrom 1976:58). Not only was tithing practiced by Babylonians but also by the Persians, Greeks and Romans. Brown (1978:851) acknowledges that fact that tithing was also known and practiced among the Persians, Greeks and Romans. In the context of this study, it is a well-known fact that tithing is an Israelite practice dating as far back as the days of Adam (1 Samuel 8:10-17; Nichol 1980:1093). A

closely analysis of what different scholars have said about tithing suggests that tithing seems to be identified with human kind in its fallen state.

#### ***4.1.10.2 Tithing in the Bible***

The mention of some key Jewish founders in the Bible with reference to tithing system suggests that tithing can only be understood and discussed as a Jewish common practice. Let's examine the biblical passages in which tithing system is discussed in both the Old and New Testaments.

##### ***4.1.10.2.1 Tithing custom in the Old Testament***

In discussing the tithing system in the Old Testament, the accounts of the Patriarchs and tithing legislation system was considered. First tithing system in the Old Testament is discussed in depth as a Jewish practice or tradition in reference to two Jewish patriarchal figures. The first reference is Abraham's tithe (Genesis 14) and the second reference to tithing is about Jacob's tithe (Genesis 28:10-22). The practice of tithing by Abraham suggests that tithing was already part of Abraham's religious value and custom. As his custom, this was certainly not the first time he had returned his tithe to God. In the case of Jacob, tithing was part of his religious value, custom and his full commitment in faith to the Lord. Just before Jacob made a promise to tithe, he said, "then the Lord will be my God" (Genesis 28:21). On the matter of tithing as a Jewish practice, Wilson (1967:357) emphatically states that "the practice of Christian tithing grows out of the Hebrew tradition and it is there that we discover its rich meanings." This means that Christians today can understand the true spiritual meaning of tithing system only within the context of the Jewish tithing tradition which is in consistent with biblical principles. Any understanding of tithing system outside the Jewish religious values and customs is a futile exercise. Therefore it adds value for the Christians today to be taught the tithing system in reference to Abraham and Jacob's tithing practice.

Second, in reference to tithing system legislation, Rodriguez (1994:7) notes that "The Lord incorporated tithing into the Israelite covenant law, making it part of the people's religious experience as a nation." This means tithing system being part of the Jewish people's religious custom then needed the tithing legislation recorded by Moses below to define what should be tithed, to explain the process to be followed when tithing:

All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. If a man wishes to redeem any of

his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it. And all the tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the LORD. A man shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, neither shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it, then both it and that for which it is exchanged shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed (Leviticus 27:30-33)

In this tithing legislation some significant facts can be extracted. Tithe is like the Sabbath custom. Both these Jewish customs are holy to the Lord (*qodesh laYHWH*; Exodus 16:23; Leviticus 27:30) and they are consistent with biblical principles. It is interesting to note that God invested tithing and Sabbath with holiness, and that is the reason why they were part of Jewish religious custom and experience. Another point is that tithe as a religious value and custom is not to be manipulated. According to Leviticus 27:32; the tithing custom did not allow the Israelites to control or influence in any way the selection of tithe from the herds and flocks. Again no person was to “pick out the good from the bad or make any substation” (Leviticus 27:33).

#### **4.1.10.2.2 Tithing system in the New Testament**

In regards to tithing system as religious value and custom, the New Testament passages (Hebrews 7:1-10; Matthew 22:23; Luke 11:42) show a conformity with the Old Testament principles of returning to God a tenth of everything people earn and remind us of its purpose and significance. The same New Testament passages also condemn tithing custom as a manifestation of self-righteousness and challenges every believer in to Christ to virtues of justice, mercy and love. Like other biblical customs and values which have been discussed in this chapter, the tithing system remains a Christian injunction to be practiced within the context of the indigenous South Africans who are to be evangelized by SDA church. In contextual ministry, the SDA church in view of the indigenous South Africans' settings should encourage tithing through the offerings of chickens, cattle, grains, indigenous fruits, and other incomes deemed relevant by scriptures.

#### **4.1.11 Community Consciousness**

Bonhoeffer (1954) underlines the need for community without eliminating times of solitude and silence. He underscores the importance of community by pointing out that those who cannot be alone should be aware of community, and those not in communities should be aware of being

alone. Thus there is need for community consciousness because the theology of community suggests that there is no life outside community.

#### ***4.1.11.1 Community defined***

Mead (1996:444) mentions the following on community:

We need to belong – to be part of a larger world. The need to belong drives us to community, a place where we know we belong. It is also a place where we will be safe – a kind of “home base” in the world’s chaotic game of tug-of-war. It is a place where you are valued for what you are in yourself, but also a place that often sees more in you than you see in yourself.

Ndlovu (2014:3) understands community as a force for social change, a best unit for service to others, a group for social, spiritual and economic action in the community.

#### ***4.1.11.2 Community in the Bible***

The Old and the New Testament is filled with accounts of community consciousness within the members of the Godhead. Bilezikian (1997:16) states that, “indeed, the first three verses of Genesis reveal that God is community of three persons in one being.” This is the first relational community ever mentioned which consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is a relational community with a purpose. Their first mission recorded in the Bible was the creation of heaven and earth in six days (Genesis 1). Genesis goes on to describe this relational community using personal pronouns. “Let us make man in our own image, according to our likeness” (Genesis 1:26); “Behold the man has become like one of us” (Genesis 3:22); and “Come let us go down” (Genesis 11:7).

The sense of community among the Godhead was also expressed in the throne vision of the prophet Isaiah who heard the LORD asking, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (Isaiah 6:8). Just like in the Genesis passages God employed a plural personal pronoun in reference to Himself. The plural suggests that there is a plurality of beings and a sense of community that exists within the Triune God. The use of “us,” not “me,” demonstrates that the triune God operates not in isolation but in a relational community that involves shared decision-making. The Hebrew word for us (*tanu*) is in objective plural form rather than singular affirming

the royal plurality of collective effort. Nichol (1980) noted that, “the plural ‘us’ was regarded by the early church theologians almost unanimously as indicative of the three persons of the Godhead. The word ‘us’ requires the presence of at least two persons counseling together.” The text in Genesis also refers to “our” not “my.” The triune God not only does things together, but collectively possess them. The “us” and “our” indicate a principle of healthy relationships that has kept the triune God together. In all their endeavors, their operative principles are: “we”; “our” and “us.” As mentioned in the introduction, the “us” and “our” in Genesis 1:26 affirm that the triune God is intensely relational and inclusive.

Certain passages in Isaiah not only refer to God the Holy Spirit, but also include him as a Third Person in God’s work of redemption. “And now the Lord God [the Father] and His Spirit [the Holy Spirit] have sent me [the Son of God]” (Isaiah 48:16); “I [The Father] have put my Spirit [the Holy Spirit] upon Him [Christ, the Messiah] and he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles” (Isaiah 42:1). These passages depict a unity of three co – eternal persons having a unique and mysterious community spirit that can be characterized as both a loving and a working community as illustrated below.

#### ***4.1.11.2.1 A Loving Community***

Christ and His Father since eternity have enjoyed a loving fellowship. The only relationship was God to Himself. God’s revealed inner working is relational (Genesis 11:7). Lewis (1980:174) notes that:

Without a Trinity, God could not be love. The words ‘God is love’ have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love.

Again this metaphor of the Trinity as loving community is expressed in the words of Ware (1995:56)

God is not just self-love but shared love. God is a trinity of persons loving each other and in shared love the persons are totally ‘oned’ without thereby losing their personal individuality...God is not just a unit but a union. God is social or dialogic; there is within him a timeless dialogue. From all eternity the First

Person addresses the Second, ‘Thou art my beloved Son’ (Mark 1:11). From all eternity the Second replies to the First, ‘Abba Father’ (Rom 8:15). From all eternity the Holy Spirit ‘who proceeds from the Father and rests on the Son’ sets the seal upon this interchange of love.

The “us” and “our” principles employed in Genesis testify Ware’s observation that from eternity, the three have lived as coeternal and coexistent with utter self-giving and love for one another. To be together for so long bespeaks the perfect, absolute love and fellowship that exists within the Godhead. When John says, “God is love” (1John 4:8) he means that each so lives for the other that they experience complete fulfillment and happiness. In addition, John is saying that love itself exists because of how the Trinity relates within itself. However, at Calvary when Christ cried out “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34), He was suffering from the estrangement from His father that sin had brought. The author observes that sin then disturbed the original *koinonia* (fellowship) which Jesus had with His father when He took our sin, our place.

#### **4.1.11.2.2 A Working Community**

The Godhead has a good economy of function with no unnecessary duplicate work. Bilezikian (1997:18) notes that “in whatever the Godhead undertakes to do, the three members of the Trinity function together – never independently of each other.” The incarnation doctrine demonstrates this working relationship model by the three persons of the Godhead as recorded in John and Mathew. The Father gave his Son (John 3:16) and the Holy Spirit gave Jesus’ birth (Matthew 1:18, 20). In this good working community, different members of the Godhead perform distinct tasks in saving humanity. For example, God the Father seems to act as a source (John 3:16), God the Son as the mediator, (1John 2:1) and God the Holy Spirit as the actualizer or applier (Luke 1:35). Thus there is a strong bond of community within the Godhead. Based on these accounts above, one can suggests that this is a relational community with a purpose, and the best working relational community that ever existed (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 28:19, 20). It is good for the SDA church to use community consciousness as a missional tool to enhance their evangelistic thrust among indigenous South Africans since Africans are community conscious.

Having deeply reviewed the theological foundation of various biblical customs and values such as hospitality, neighborhood, *lobola*, levirate, Sabbath, extended family, tithing, role of blood in the covenant and community consciousness in reference to mission. It seems good to move further and focus on mission to the Gentiles in order to draw some lessons on how the SDA church can evangelize the indigenous South Africans.

## **4.2 Mission to the Gentiles**

This section addressed mission insights from three missionary agents using case studies from the Old Testament and New Testament as well as contemporary studies. The first mission insights are from Jesus' ministry. The second mission insights are drawn from the apostles. The third mission insight focused on the African as a missionary agent.

### ***4.2.1 Mission insights from Jesus among the Gentiles***

Although Jesus spent the major part of His time among the Jews, serving them in their cultural and customary context, He made clear in His teaching and ministry that His mission was universal. Quoting the prophecy from Isaiah who wrote the prophecy with the Gentiles in mind, Matthew wrote, “Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My Soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles” (Matthew 12:18). How interesting to begin this section on mission to Gentiles with Jesus who spent so much of His earlier years in Galilee, known as “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Matthew 4:15).

The ministry of Jesus among the Gentiles present some mission insights as Christ desiring to bring to the Gentiles, a knowledge of the gospel, therefore, he sought, so far as was consistent with the faith, to remove every pretext for opposition.

#### ***4.2.1.1 The Roman army Officer***

The story of the Roman army officer recorded in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10 show us that even the largest cultural divides can be breached for the sake of the gospel. This Roman officer of centurion rank (commander of 100 men) was from Capernaum and sought out Jesus. The Jews resisted the occupying Roman army, and on the other hand many Romans hated the Jews. In spite of this vast cultural and political divide, we do see the close relationship here between this Roman and the Jews (Schantz 2015:64).

In Luke's gospel story, it is said that the centurion went to the "elders of the Jews" (Luke 7:3) to request them to bring Jesus. And, fortunately enough they did just that by requesting Jesus to come over and heal the arm officer's servant. The text does not mention who the elders were, but they seem to have related to Jesus differently than did some of the other leaders.

As a matter of fact the centurion was obviously a man of faith though he was a gentile and never had contact with Jesus before yet; his words to Jesus were, "speak the word only and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8), these were an incredible testimony to his belief in Him.

The faith of this gentile Roman army officer and Jesus's response to him is very impressive and is a lesson to the western missionaries who ministered and still minister in Africa. Writing from a missiology perspective, White (1945:317) makes this important observation about this gentile army officer:

The centurion "did not wait to see whether the Jews, themselves would receive the One who claimed to be their Messiah. As the 'Light, which lightens every man, that comes into the world' (John 1:9) had shone upon him, he had, though afar off, discerned the glory of the Son of God"

In connection with this dissertation study, it is interesting to note that the centurion who was a Gentile understood and respected Jewish religious sensitivities. Rather than undermining Jewish customs, values and traditions in order to accommodate his request, he affirmed Jewish customs. He knew that according to Jewish cultural values and customs, a Jew was not permitted to enter a Gentile's house; so, he requested that Jesus minister from a distance. The result was that the faith of the centurion was honored and the servant was healed. The faith of the Gentile centurion is what mattered as it was rewarded. In affirming the centurion's faith, Schantz (2015:63) mentions that Jesus then pointed out that the centurion was a prototype of the great day when people from all over the world would join the Jewish patriarchs at the Messianic banquet. Therefore, the lesson taught in this incident is that there is a relationship between customs, values and traditions of religious group and evangelism. In evangelism, there is no discussion that is valid if culture is excluded. So Christian missionaries who came to Africa were supposed to understand and respect African customs, values and traditions particularly those which were consistent with Christian principles than to denounce everything African as evil.

#### **4.2.1.2 The Canaanite Woman**

Another interaction of a Jew and Gentile is recorded in the narrative of Matthew 15:21-28 in order to help us understand and appreciate how Jesus related to non-Jews. In this story seeing Jesus minister to those who were not part of the covenant people, is crucial.

According to this story, the Sidonian child was “demon-possessed and suffering terribly” (Matthew 15:22). Her mother, a Canaanite, illustrated the cultural melting pot of that region. Her Canaanite ancestors seem to have been displaced from their land when Israel inherited it under the leadership of Joshua. Here, again, we see Jesus reaching out to those who weren’t of Israel proper (Schantz 2015:65)

What is paramount in this incident as observed by Schantz is Jesus’ willingness to interact with this Gentile woman as compared to the negative attitude of the disciples towards her. Rather than sending her away as suggested by the disciples, Jesus chose to talk to her. While talking to her, Jesus provoked her by using somewhat harsh words, likening her people to dogs, but this tested her faith and showed her humble willingness to get the assistance she desperately needed.

To the Canaanite woman, Jesus’ willingness to talk to her though he used harsh words mattered most and encouraged her that she was being regarded as a child of God despite her Gentile origin. She then on the strength of her conversation with Jesus exercised faith in Him. Commenting on a similar Gentile mission, Bosch (1991:89) reveals the following:

Jesus reminded them of the fact that the prophet Elijah had bestowed God’s favor upon a Gentile woman in Sidon and that Elisha had healed only one leper, Naaman, a Syrian. God was, therefore, not irrevocably bound to Israel.

In reference to the Canaanite woman’s interaction with Jesus, White (1946:401) notes that,

The Savior is satisfied. He has tested her faith in Him. By His dealings with her, He has shown that she who has been regarded as an outcast from Israel is no longer an alien, but a child in God’s household. As a child it is her privilege to share in the Father’s gifts. Christ now grants her request and finishes the lesson to the disciples.”

Therefore the lesson was that, contrary to the disciples misunderstanding, the missionary work is not just for the Jews but it goes to other nations successful, as well. In addition, Bosch (1991:92)

mentions that the Gentile mission is in no way an illegitimate offshoot of renegade Christians but deeply rooted in God's ancient covenant.

#### ***4.2.1.3 The Samaritan Woman***

Samaria was the first mission stop on the geographical spread of Christianity. The Samaritans considered themselves descendants of Israelites left behind when Assyria exiled most of the Israelites in 722BC. According to Bosch (1991: 90) in terms of Jewish religion the Samaritans were enemies not only of Jews, but also of God. Jews were forbidden to receive works of love from non-Jews and were not allowed to purchase or use oil and wine obtained from Samaritans (Ford 1984:92).

However, one of the stories that present a number of lessons on Gentile mission is how Jesus dealt with the Samaritan woman at the well. This narrative is recorded in John 4:4-27 and clearly shows how Jesus appreciated non- Jews and demonstrate that His mission was universal. The gospel of John mentions several points just to underscore that Jesus appreciated Gentile people with their customs, traditions and cultural values which are consistent with biblical principles. Firstly, by passing through Samaria and stopping by at a well in Sychar in Samaria means He appreciated the Samaritans as God's children who also must benefit from His ministration. Secondly, Jesus Himself initiated the conversation and allowed the Samaritan woman who knew well about the history of her Samaritan people to share it with Him. Thirdly, Jesus carefully selected from her questions and statements the things that would benefit her spiritually. Fourth, Jesus surprised the disciples who found Him talking with this foreign woman. By talking to a foreign woman, Jesus broke a few of Jewish customs in order to accommodate this Samaritan woman whom He had come to evangelize: first, asking a Samaritan woman to give Him a drink; second, being alone with her. Schantz (2015:63) noted that in Israel, a man could not be seen alone with a woman unless she was a family member. The good thing, which is key in missiology and which has been addressed in this dissertation above, is that Jesus and other Jewish figures when among the Jews, they followed Jewish customs strictly. However,-outside Jewish territory, in this case, in Samaria He was not bound by Jewish traditions and customs, as we have seen elsewhere.

Jesus further affirmed His appreciation of the Samaritan culture by accepting their hospitality. A rich lesson on Jesus' freely interaction with the despised Samaritans is well presented by

Christian writers. First by Bosch (1991:90-91) who wrote that, “The resurrected Lord announces that, after Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria will be the recipient of the gospel (Acts 1:8). The Samaritan mission suggests a fundamental break with traditional Jewish attitudes.” Second by White (1945:195) who succinctly wrote:

Jesus had begun to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to the world. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate with them at their tables, - partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands, - taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy.

Jesus’ willingness to be hosted by the Samaritans was intended to teach the three lessons below to all would be missionaries in other cultures. First to His own disciples, Jewish bigotry was a serious stumbling block in their mingling with non- Jews. Second to the early missionaries, euro-western ideologies and customs made them to despise and shun African cultural values and customs thereby choosing to evangelize them from their western culture. Third Christian missionaries were to follow their western customs and traditions strictly when in their territory, but when they came to Africa, outside their territory, they were not bound by western traditions in their evangelization of Africans.

Final to the contemporary gospel workers, Jesus is asking to remember His Samaritan conduct, His words, the respect and tenderness of His bearing toward these whose customs, values and traditions were considered pagan.

In summary, it can be said that Jesus set a good example during the two days in Samaria that those who call themselves His followers should emulate. He showed that in matters of salvation no human being has the right to impose his culture or customs on others and that no circumstance of birth or nationality, no condition of life can turn away God’s love from the children of men. Similarly like Jesus, it is imperative in missionary activities to distinguish between human-made traditions and the commands and precepts of God.

#### ***4.2.2 Jew and Gentile missionary activities during the apostolic era***

When they arrived in Antioch in Syria, the two apostles, Paul and Barnabas then assembled the believers and gave a report about “all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27). Their report seems to have received negative reaction from some Jewish believers who then introduced the circumcision subject to the Gentiles.

##### ***4.2.2.1 The Jewish circumcision case at Antioch Church***

According to the apostles’ report, it seems the Church in Antioch was a mixed group of believers with the Gentiles being predominant because of the fruitful labors of the apostles among the Gentiles. Then the Judaizing teachers fearing that the Gentiles would far exceed the Jewish converts in number, then certain Jewish believers from Judea “of the sect of the Pharisees” required that the Jewish circumcision custom be imposed on the believing Gentiles. They demanded that the Jewish customs and ceremonies which were not consistent with principles of Christianity be incorporated into the rites of the Christian religion led to wide-spread controversy in the church and brought consternation to the believing Gentiles.

Intimately connected to this Jew and Gentile mission issue, Paul also before his conversion to Christianity prided himself as blameless “touching the righteousness which is in the law” (Philippians 3:6). However, according to White (1946:190) his Damascus experience changed his heart and gave him a clear conception of the mission of Jesus as a Savior of the entire human race, Gentile as well as Jew, and also learnt the difference between a living faith and a dead Jewish formalism.

Therefore from the issue of Judaizing teachers seeking to impose their Jewish circumcision custom on Gentiles help us understand the potential dangers of attempting to disciple the host culture (Gentile) through a foreign based culture (Jewish). Some of the notable lessons from this case are discussed below.

The first lesson according to (Acts 15:1,2) was that the imposition of foreign Jewish customs to the Gentiles led to long debate in the church and brought disharmony to the Gentile believers. In affirming this point, White (1946: 190) observes that “in the church at Antioch the consideration of the question of circumcision resulted in much discussion and contention.”

The second point is that the question of the consideration of the Jewish circumcision custom brought confusion that resulted in more time spent discussing and debating this false doctrine rather than preaching the word of God.

The third point which is based on (Acts 15:5) was an attempt to preserve Jewish economic prosperity and cultural identity than focusing on mission expansion. Speaking on this point White (1946:189) states that “the Jews feared that if the restrictions and ceremonies of their law were not made obligatory upon the Gentiles as a condition of church fellowship, the national peculiarities of the Jews, which had hitherto kept them distinct from all other people, would finally disappear from among those who received the gospel message.”

#### ***4.2.2.2 The Jerusalem Council.***

The Church at Antioch in Syria’s immediate solution to the imposition of Jewish circumcision custom on Gentiles was the sending of Paul and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem to discuss the issue at the Jerusalem Council. The Council, consisting of delegates from Antioch and the brethren of the various churches, had to consider two central issues between Jews and Gentiles:

- 1) Does a Gentile need to go through Judaism customs and practices in order to be saved?
- 2) What are the limitations in fellowship between Jews and Gentiles?

Similarly there are two issues which Westerners and Africans have to consider

- 1) Does an African need to practice Christianity through euro-western culture in order to be saved?
- 2) What are the limitations in fellowship between Westerners and Africans in their practice of Christianity?

In solving the problem between the Jews and Gentiles and between Westerners and Africans, we have to be informed by biblical principles. In connection to the first issue, it must be understood that Christianity is based on Jesus Christ. The requirement for both Jews and Gentiles and Westerners and Africans is acceptance of Christ by faith according to scripture “for there is no distinction” (Romans 3:21, 2).

In regard to fellowship, the Christian church was a fellowshipping one, for example, it was a sharing church, a united church, and had a common meal, shared just before the Lord Supper. After this common meal, they all partook of the Lord Supper (see Acts 2:42-47).

In relation to the two central issues above, the Gentiles converts were to give up only four customs that were inconsistent with biblical principles, and these were:

- 1) Idols – Gentiles ate food sacrificed to idols (Acts 13).
- 2) Strangled animals – this meant animals being killed not according to biblical health laws.
- 3) Unchaste or sexual immorality – Gentiles were very much involved in immorality which was met with an admonition by Moses in Leviticus 18.
- 4) Blood – this refers to actual eating of blood

Biblically, I confirm that the above four Gentile customs were inconsistent with principles of Christianity hence were to be given up by the Gentile believers. The works of White (1946:195) also pointed to four Gentile customs which the early church took action against. She writes that the apostles and elders therefore agreed to instruct the Gentiles by letter to abstain from meats offered to idols, from fornication, form things strangled, and from blood.

Then it seems to make sense why this dissertation strongly attempt to identify those African cultural values and customs which are consistent with principles of Christianity in order to use them in evangelizing Africans than evangelizing them with foreign based customs. The thinking is based on the biblical view which is complimented by Christian views that there were only four Gentile customs which were inconsistent meaning other Gentile customs and values were consistent. So any custom and value which is consistent must be acknowledge and considered in promoting Christianity among African peoples. This point above is further supported by the additional instructions that were given to the Gentiles. In regard to consistent customs, God's unchangeable law of Ten Commandments, White states that they were to keep the commandments and to lead holy lives. In reference to inconsistent custom, she says that the Jewish circumcision, they were also to be assured that the men, who had declared circumcision to be binding, were not authorized to do so by apostles (White 1946:190).

#### ***4.2.2.3 Peter and the Gentiles***

Here is a brief profile of Peter before we share his mission efforts among the Gentiles. Peter was the first gospel apostle to proclaim salvation to the Gentiles. He continued to provide leadership in the church for a number of years after the church had been founded, even after Paul eventually became the missionary to the Gentiles par excellence.

The ministry of Peter among the Gentiles is impressive; he united Gentile converts, who were unaware of the finer points of Jewish culture, and Jewish converts whose customs tended to take on the character of divine absolute. Here are some of the notable lessons from Peter's ministry as a pioneer missionary: first Peter had to discriminate between unchangeable divine absolutes and those practices that are cultural and relative and of no important consequence in the life of the believer, whether Jew or Gentile. At the Jerusalem Council, it was Peter who rejected the idea of the Jews sidelining the Gentiles from God's grace through imposition of their Jewish customs. In defending the Gentiles, Peter then said that God "put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). Second, Peter accommodated cultural values and customs which did not contradict biblical principles (Acts 10:34, 35). Herewith are some of Peter's missionary activities among the Gentiles showing that no gospel worker should impose his/her own customs, values and traditions on others.

#### ***4.2.2.3.1 Peter and Cornelius's Conversion (Acts 10, 11)***

The ministry of Peter to Cornelius, a heathen Roman centurion, resulting in his conversion is a lesson to emulate on how to reach out the Gentiles with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible beautifully records this about Cornelius, "a devout man, and one that feared God with his entire house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:1, 2). The spirituality of Cornelius, a heathen Roman officer, is summarized by White (1946:133) who affectionately wrote these words:

Believing in God as the Creator of heaven and earth, Cornelius revered Him, acknowledged His authority, and sought His counsel in all the affairs of life. He was faithful to Jehovah in his home life and in his official duties. He had erected the altar of God in his home, for he dared not attempt to carry out his plans or to bear his responsibilities without the help of God.

Such a level of spirituality by Cornelius shows that even among the so called heathen lands there are God-fearing people whom God hears their prayers and make plans for them to hear His special message. Thus according to verses 3 and 4, a vision is given to call Peter to solve the Gentile issue which involved Cornelius, who was devoted to the faith, who gave alms to the poor and observed Jewish times of prayer, who however was still a non-member of the church. This call is unique in the sense that it is directed to Peter who acted as the leader of the Christian

church. Peter also was known as an ultra-conservative Jew; hence the church trusted him and was dependable upon him. In the vision, he saw unclean animals in the sheet which makes the vision symbolic about the issue of barriers of Jews and Gentiles. Something very striking is in verse 23 where it records acceptance of Gentiles into a conservative Jew's house suggesting Peter's understanding of the vision. Verse 28 now speaks about God's revelation of barriers among nations. So in Jesus, there is no wall of partition, all are accepted regardless of race, skin or gender. In Jesus, the apostle Peter understood that all are equal forming one body, Christ's church. To show his understanding of the vision, Peter then baptized Cornelius and his household and accepted them as full members of the church. He then took three Jewish men to Jerusalem as witnesses about the Gentile conversion and acceptance into the Jewish faith.

In Acts 11:1-3 accusations are levelled against Peter for accepting the Gentiles into the Jewish faith. In Figure 6 below is a summary of the issues raised in chapters 10 and 11 from the book of Acts which will be used to compare the relationship of Jews to Gentiles as well as of Westerners to Africans in mission.

*Figure 4 Comparison of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles and Westerners to Africans in mission.*

Jews regarded Gentile converts as unclean (Acts 10:14, 28).	Westerners condemned African customs and values as evil (Zvogbo 1996:111).
Gentile mission initiated by God through the voice which said, "kill and eat" (Acts 10:13).	African mission initiated by God through mission Christianity. Haskell (1921:5) wrote: "Sister More had charge of the Mendi Mission on the west coast of Africa, acting as superintendent and physician." After embracing the Sabbath, More wrote us, 'We now have a Seventh-day Adventist mission in Africa.'
Peter, a very conservative Jew and leader of	Westerners, very conservative missionaries

<p>the church, not Paul is chosen and tasked by God to go and initiate Gentile mission (Acts 10:5-6, 14).</p>	<p>were chosen and tasked to initiate African mission. About the initiation of African mission, White 1948:27) wrote:</p> <p>“The poverty of the missions in Africa has recently been opened before me. The missionaries sent from America to the natives of Africa have suffered and are still suffering for the necessities of life. God’s missionaries, who carry the message of mercy to heathen lands, are not properly sustained in their work.”</p>
<p>When the highest decision board of the church, Jerusalem Council, heard about Gentile conversion, they accepted without imposing Jewish requirements (Acts 11:22-23).</p>	<p>When the highest decision board of the Church, General Conference of SDA, heard about SDA expansion in Africa, they took this action: “We accept the proposal of an African Divisional section of the General Conference, its territory comprising all that portion of the continent at present under supervision of the South African Union Conference, and its Union Missions, with the addition of the Belgian Congo and all the western portion of Africa south of and including the Cameroons” (Crocombe 2007:17)</p>
<p>God affirmed and testified Peter’s missionary activity to the Gentiles by sending the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-45).</p>	<p>God affirmed Western mission to Africans by African’s positive response to Christianity. About Africa’s response to the gospel, David wrote, “<i>Envoy will come out of Egypt; Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God</i>” (Psalms 68:31). <i>An Outline of Mission Fields</i> (1972:71) recorded that in 1908,</p>

	Anderson also wrote: “Our work around the Zambezi is advancing. We have three outstations. I had two more opened, but had to close them when J. F. Olmstead was forced by sickness to leave. Africa is stretching out her hands to the truth.”
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The comparative figure above shows that the relationships between Jews and Gentiles and Westerners to Africans in mission are similar in many aspects. Firstly, the Jews did not adapt the gospel to the Gentile culture; they took a confrontational approach to convert Gentiles and regarded Gentiles as unclean. Similarly, the Westerners did not appreciate fully the customs and values of the African people; they also took a confrontational approach to evangelize the African people and regarded African customs and values as evil. Secondly, the Jews recognized that God was behind the Gentile mission by pouring His Holy Spirit; hence changed their minds and supported that initiative. Similarly, the Westerners recognized that God had initiated the African mission; hence changed their minds and acknowledged that Africans were responding positively to the gospel. It is interesting to further observe and state the following in both missionary approaches.

1. Both the Jews and Westerners failed to convert the Gentiles and Africans respectively.
2. God in both missionary endeavours initiated Gentile mission using conservative gospel agents to show that “what is impossible with man is possible with God” (Luke 1:37).
3. In both missionary accounts, God had to use the highest governing boards to relax their policies to accommodate the Gentile converts.
4. In both missionary activities, the Gentiles and Africans respectively responded positively to the gospel.
5. The Holy Spirit in both mission endeavours became a third partner in initiating and sealing the conversion process. This testifies that conversion is solely the Holy Spirit’s role (John 16:8).
6. Therefore these similarities about Jews’ mission to the Gentiles and Westerners’ mission to the Africans prompted an interest of what the Bible and scholarly works say about the subject of mission.

#### **4.2.2.3.2 Role of the Holy Spirit in mission to the Gentiles – Cornelius’ Conversion case**

This section attempts to use the conversion of Cornelius incident to show the pivotal role the Holy Spirit played in the Gentile mission. Consider the following points below to validate the Holy Spirit’s role in Gentile mission.

- 1) Holy Spirit given as the signal for Gentile mission that God initiated it and as a confirmation of acceptance.
- 2) Descending of Holy Spirit upon Gentiles is a sign that they are now part of the Church of God.
- 3) Gift of tongues signifies that both the Gentiles and Christians share the task of evangelising the world.
- 4) Language barriers are broken, hence enabling people to understand each other’s languages.
- 5) The Holy Spirit shows that God does not show any favouritism, that is, He is not a respecter of persons.
- 6) The Holy Spirit show that the rite of circumcision is no longer needed for new Christians, but only heart circumcision is required. In the context of this dissertation, Western culture is not needed to evangelize Africans, but African customs and values consistent to biblical principles can be used to enhance SDA mission among indigenous South Africans.

#### **4.2.2.3.3 Mission insights from Peter and Cornelius’s Conversion**

Prejudice exists in every society – cultural discrimination, gender discrimination, class division, religious prejudice, and prejudice against those who are non-Jews. In the case of Cornelius’s conversion, the Jews who were strongly influenced by their religion had easily fallen into the trap of looking down on Gentiles as shown above. Similarly mission workers, who were strongly influenced by their western culture, easily fell into the trap of looking down on the African customs and values which they quickly condemned as very evil. Missionaries need to be guided by the principles of Galatians 3:28 which say: “There is neither Jew nor Greek (Westerner nor African), slave nor free, male or female, for you are all in Christ Jesus.” Writing from a missiology perspective, White (1947: 136) says:

How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter’s mind by his Jewish training! By the

vision of the sheet and its contents He sought to divest the apostle's mind of this prejudice and to teach the important truth that in heaven there is no respect of persons; that Jew and Gentiles are alike precious in God's sight; that through Christ the heathen may be made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel.

A critical analysis of White's counsel above in relation to Peter and Cornelius's conversion shows that God used the vision of the sheet with unclean animals to excommunicate the prejudice against the Gentile. I further learnt that the gospel worker can adapt to varying circumstances and cultures without compromising biblical principles in order to make the heathen partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel.

#### **4.2.2.4 Paul and the Gentiles**

Galatians 2:7-9 reveals to us that "the gospel of the uncircumcised was committed to Paul." In other words Paul was the apostle God had chosen to preach to the Gentiles or non-Jewish people. Below are some examples of Paul's attitude towards the customs and values within which he ministered to the Gentiles.

1. In Acts 17:28 Paul is seen using a phrase from the poetry of that place to show that he was well acquainted with the culture of the locals. It can be said that Paul used the culture of the locals to reach out to them.
2. In Acts 16:3 Paul decides to circumcise Timothy for the sake of the Jews in that region. The Jews would not have taken Timothy seriously if he was uncircumcised. Paul is seen here performing a Jewish custom in order to reach the Jews with the gospel.
3. In Acts 17:22-33 rather than using the confrontational approach to the Greeks at Athens, Paul used the "appreciate people's culture first" approach and then guided them to the truth. For instance, he first appreciated and borrowed words from a poet of their own "in Him we live, and move, and have our being." Then Paul guided them by declaring that, "as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also His offspring" picturing the infinite God as a Father, whose children they were.

Referring to Paul's attitude towards cultures in 1 Corinthians 9:20-23, White (1946:56) thus comments on Paul's conduct when he was at Corinth. She writes:

We know the apostle did not sacrifice one jot of principle. He did not allow himself to be lead away by the sophistry and maxims of me...; but at the same time some features of our faith when expressed, would, by the elements with which you have to deal arouse prejudice at once. Paul could be as zealous at the most zealous, in his allegiance to the law of God, and show that he was perfectly familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. To the gentiles, he preached Christ as their only hope of salvation, but did not at first have anything to say upon the Law.

What this means is that Paul was willing to operate according to a given culture in order to win people within that culture to God. This suggests that Paul was not against culture as long as culture was not against the Word of God but rather he used culture to help in transmitting the message.

Having deeply reviewed mission insights from Jesus among both Jews and Gentiles and apostles among Gentiles; it is good also to take a closer look on how God involved Africans whom He revealed Himself to them through general revelation in missionary activities.

#### ***4.2.3 Mission Insights from Africans***

The following important question needs to be asked: “Why should Africans be included in the discussion of mission insights?” The simplest answer is that along with other peoples on planet earth, Africans are also children of the one and same father who is in heaven. “Let no one think,” observes White (1946:136, 137), “that there need not be a stroke placed upon him. There is no person, no nation that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn of another.” It follows then from the perspective of White, that Africans also not perfect yet the world can learn from their customs and values which are consistent with biblical principles.

##### ***4.2.3.1 The question of no knowledge of God in Africa***

Viewing Africa as the “Dark Continent” westerners believed that the idea of the knowledge of God was alien among Africans. In regard to Africans’ knowledge of God, Okon (2013:95) raised the following question regarding the inhabitants of Africa: “In European mentality, there is no serious difference between the African and the primates. To that extent religious instinct cannot be found in the African.” He further observes that “some of the erroneous impression which

anthropological study of Africa created was that Africans have no idea of God.” Johnson (1888:482) wrote: “The savage, with his low-grade mind, is not capable of holding rightly the abstruse dogmas of the Christian faith.... Negro rapidly masters the rule and regulations; so to speak, of the Christian religion he still continues to be gross, immoral, dishonest, and deceitful.” With such a mindset, westerners concluded that everything African was evil and backward. However the following insights from scriptures support clearly that there was good and adequate knowledge of God enjoyed by Africans before the arrival of missionaries.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.

Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.

*There is* no speech nor language *Where* their voice is not heard.

Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun (Psalm 19:1-4). for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them* (Romans 2:14-15).

#### **4.2.3.2Ellen White and God’s revelation to Africans**

The belief that there was no revelation of God in Africa before the coming of missionaries to this continent confirms the narrow view on the reading of scriptures in some scholarly works. White (1948:134) says that through nature human beings have recognized the working of the infinite power. She then commends the very Africans considered as heathens in the context of this study for heeding the voice of God through nature. So she shares a view that would be thought quite liberal within theological circles:

Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them

in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God (White 1946: 638).

The point that White is making is that before the coming of missionaries to Africa, God revealed Himself to Africans through nature and the Africans obeyed God's voice and did things that the law required of them. Again it should be noted that although White is suggesting that God revealed Himself through nature, she is not suggesting that the revelation of God in nature is enough. In reference to missionaries, she is suggesting they were to build from what Africans had seen in nature to a point where God revealed Himself in the scriptures. To sum up her points, the revelations of God in nature and in the scriptures result in the salvation of human kind. In regard to Christian missionaries' activities in Africa, they were to continue evangelizing Africans by beginning from what they already knew about God through nature and introduce what they had not known just like Paul did when he was in Athens (Acts 17:23). For instance in education, they have the adage, (teaching from the known to the unknown).

#### ***4.2.3.3 African scholars and African knowledge of God***

The works of African writers compliment the understanding that Africans had some knowledge of God before the arrival of missionaries. Amanze (2007:10) lists some African fundamental beliefs about God:

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.
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.

In connection with the question asked above, “Why should Africans be included in the discussion of mission insights?” I devoted the next pages in answering the question by using the Bible and Christian writers as references.

#### **4.2.3.4 African nations in the Bible**

The knowledge of God has always been available to the human race, as seen from the following text: “That they [all nations] should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27). Below are some “That they [all nations] should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27). Below are some references made to African nations in the Bible:

1. *Egypt*: “Out of Egypt I called my son” (Hosea 11:1). According to Bradford (1999:24) “Egypt is mentioned 611 times in scriptures.”
2. *Ethiopia*: “Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God” (Psalm 68:31). “Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia...” (Zephaniah 3:10). Bradford (1999) notes that, “Ethiopia is mentioned 20 times.”
3. *Ethiopia and Egypt*: “Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers” (Nahum 3:9). Consider what Bradford (1999) says about these two African giants in the Bible. “Ethiopia and Egypt are cited together eight times. Thus the Bible writers apparently considered these nations as close relations, to each other and to the land of God’s people. There was no lack of contact between Israel and these giants of antiquity. Even the prophets were impressed with the accomplishments, the prowess, and the strength of their Hamitic neighbours.”
4. *Egypt, Assyria and Israel*: “In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance” (Isaiah 19:24,25). Commenting on this passage, Bradford (1999:25) states that, “In the biblical record Africa figures prominently in the plans and purposes of God.” Here are some further observations about Egypt who is referred by God as “my people”:

Egypt has always been considered as Israel's worst enemy, but God through Isaiah has some commendations about Egypt. The prophet sees all nations as family whom God acknowledges:

In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt which speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD of hosts. One of these will be called the City of the Sun. In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. It will be a sign and a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; when they cry to the LORD because of oppressors he will send them a savior, and will defend and deliver them. And the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians; and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day and worship with sacrifice and burnt offering, and they will make vows to the LORD and perform them. And the LORD will smite Egypt, smiting and healing, and they will return to the LORD, and he will heed their supplications and heal them. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage. (Isaiah 19:18-25.)"

It makes sense to conclude by this beautiful prophetic message that most nations during Egypt's era were almost interchangeable branches on the same tree, known and accepted into the "neighbourhood" community of nations. Bradford (1999:83) notes:

Israel may have been a latecomer to that community of nations, but Yahweh demanded respect for her as a unique and equal member, with a special role to play. Politically, Israel never sustained status as a major player over long periods of time, but her role and function were above the politics of the region. Israel was not a nation in the sense of her neighbours, but a covenant people with a mission.

In addition, the ever-insightful White (1929:67) observes:

Often the Israelites seemed unable or unwilling to understand God's purpose for the heathen. Yet it was this very purpose that had made them a separate people and had established them as an independent nation among nations of the earth. Abraham, their father to whom the covenant promise was first given, had been called to go forth from his kindred to the regions beyond, that he might be a light bearer to the heathen. Although the promise to him included posterity as numerous as the sand by the sea, yet that he was to become the founder of the great nation in the land of Canaan.

It is vital to Ellen White that God's purpose of establishing the Israelites as a separate people was intended for the Gentiles to come to the knowledge of God. This plan was then further unfolded in God's promise to Abraham, in Genesis 12:3, "and by you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Stressing the overlooked idea that Abraham and his physical posterity were not chosen for themselves but for the world, she states that God's covenant with him embraced all the nations of earth.

#### ***4.2.3.4.1 African people in the Bible***

Africans are not something strange in the Bible. Since the time of Abraham, Africa has hosted many African believers in the monotheistic God. Here are few successful examples of God's ministry in Africa way back before missionary came:

##### ***1. Hagar, an African woman***

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar; and Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my maid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress (Genesis 16:1-4).

Several observations need to be made here. Sarai “had an Egyptian maid” Hagar an African woman who had a privilege to associate with the Hebrew people resulting in her being introduced to the God of the Hebrews. Requested by her mistress, Sarai, she bares Abraham a son before the birth of Isaac, the legitimate heir. This incident elevated her and further cemented her association with the Hebrew people and their God. Being an African woman any relationship she had with a man resulting in conception made her and the child become part of the Hebrew family. It is worth noting that through Ishmael, Africans biological are Abraham’s children and through faith are adopted into God’s family like Zacchaeus (Luke 19:40).

## *2. The Ethiopian Eunuch, an African administrator and treasurer*

The Ethiopian Eunuch is good example of African people in the Bible. “And he rose and went. And behold, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem to worship” (Acts 8:27). After this encounter with Phillip, the Ethiopian was left to embrace the Christian faith in the context of his African culture. Guided by the Old Testament and the Spirit of God, which had been working with him, for he was already a worshipper of the Lord and a believer in His word.

## *3. Zephaniah, an African prophet*

African people also served as prophet in the Bible. “Then all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah, son of Cushi” (Jeremiah 36:14). Writing about the descent of Zephaniah, Yorke (1999:50) mentions that, “We find [in his case] not only the longest geological list of any of the writing prophets in the Hebrew Bible, but also...that Zephaniah was of African descent, he being the son of Cush.” Other scholars Clark and Hatton (1989:143-144) affirm as follows:

The father of Zephaniah was called Cushi. Elsewhere in the Old Testament this name is usually found as an ethnic label, meaning a person from Cush, the Upper Nile Region which included most of modern Sudan and part of Ethiopia. Here it may mean that Zephaniah’s father was an African, and that Zephaniah himself was a Black man. This possibility gains some support from the fact that in his short prophecy Zephaniah twice (Zephaniah 2:12; 3:10) mentions the

land or people of Cush (translated “Ethiopia” in RSV and “Sudan” in TEV). A Cushite dynasty had ruled Egypt 715-663 B.C., and this no doubt led to increased familiarity with Cushites in Judith and perhaps to some intermarriage with them. It was quite possible for a Cushite to settle in Jerusalem at this period. Indeed we know that a few years later, Jeremiah was rescued by Ebedmelech, the God-fearing Eunuch from Cush (Jeremiah 38:7-13; 39:15-18).”

#### *4. The Queen of Sheba, her Excellence an African*

African people occupied notable positions of influence in the Bible like Queen Esther. Ntokozo Nyathi, a fourth year student in BA Theology as well as current Ministerial Association President at Solusi University shared this view; on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2015 he wrote:

From Genesis 10:6 we learn that Cush, which is translated latter as Ethiopia is the grand -father of Sheba through Raamah and Cush can also mean black! Maybe the problem of many lies in the fact that Ethiopians and Yemenites are of similar complexion. In my analysis am not in agreement with the view of Yemen as the then Sheba. There has been a lot of history around about Africa and its people. However this history has failed to dig into what Africa has herself said. If we look at the way the Ethiopians live, we may understand how they come to believe they are the children of Solomon. Keeping in mind that Ark of the Covenant is not a Christian but a Jewish idea, it then follows that they could have developed this system before Christianity. I believe therefore that the Queen of Sheba was an Ethiopian.

He concluded with this comment:

In my analysis am not in agreement with the view of Yemen as the then Sheba. There has been a lot of history around about Africa and its people. However this history has failed to dig into what Africa has herself said. If we look at the

way the Ethiopians live, we may understand how they come to believe they are the children of Solomon. Keeping in mind that Ark of the Covenant is not a Christian but a Jewish idea, it then follows that they could have developed this system before Christianity. I believe therefore that the Queen of Sheba was an Ethiopian.

#### **4.2.3.4.2      *Names of God in Africa***

The understanding is that Africans had some knowledge about God as evidenced by the names Africans ascribed to Him. The Zulu of South Africa who are a case study of this dissertation refer to the Supreme Being (God) as *uNkulunkulu* (the great great One) or *uSimakade* (the One Who has been there and will always be there). Shooter (1857:159) states that “The name *uNKulunkulu* could be thought of as expressing antiquity or age possible implying profound wisdom, the old, old one.” Nyathi (2001:15) says that “The Ndebele calls God *u'Mlimu*’ for they see him as the creator, protector, sustainer and provider. Rain, food, water and fertility are all generally given by Him. He can at the same time withdraw all elements to express his anger with his errant progeny.” The *Shonas* from the Eastern Zimbabwe uses these names to refer to God: *Mwari arikumsoromsoro* (God in Most High). Bourdillon (1976:321) says that “*Mwari* is understood to be the ultimately responsible for everything including the weather, forests and fields even individual personality traits are attributed to him. This means that Africans through these names, trust in God have a relationship with God and appreciate Him for His self-disclosure to them. It can be concluded that the names by which God is called in Africa are descriptive of His character and the reality of His existence.

Mbiti (1969:29), one of the gurus of African traditional religion strongly mentions that God is no stranger to African peoples, and in traditional life there are no atheists. To the Zulu people who are a case study of this dissertation and Banyarwanda, God is known as ‘the Wise One’, and to the Akan as ‘He Who knows or sees all’ (Mbiti:31). The thinking here is that African concepts of God is determined by their cultural values and customs as well as their geographical setting. It is also paramount to note that while the issue of atheism is a concern in euro-western countries, African societies are free from atheistic ideologies

#### **4.2.3.4.3 Africa's contribution to Christianity**

Serious attention should be paid to the contributions of the early African church fathers to the establishment of Christianity in Africa.

Malisha (1987:6) says that “North African church produced Augustine, Athanasius, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria who enriched Christendom with their scholarship. He further notes that African Christianity produced martyrs, monasticism, theology, and liturgy; translated the scriptures and founded the catechetical school of Alexandria.

Neff (quoted by Dirk 2016:5) states that, “Theological debates, African prayer, and African bible study” on African soil during the first centuries of the existence of the church contributed to “[t]he language we used to worship the trinity, the received definitions of Christ’s two natures, the early church’s methods for restoring repentant sinners, our fundamental approach to biblical interpretation, etc.”

Dirk (2016:1) mentions that, “Christianity in Africa was certainly not founded with European involvement like organized missions to Africa or colonialism.” Baur (quoted by Dirk 2016:1) agrees that “In those early centuries C.E., Athanasius, Clement of Alexandria, Anthony, Pachomius from North Africa, Origen, Tertullian, and Augustine were the pillars on which the universal Church were standing.”

Mbiti (1969:223) posits that “Christianity in Africa is so old that it can rightly be described as an indigenous traditional and African religion long before the start of Islam in the seventh century. Christianity was well established all over North Africa, Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, based on biblical foundation for customs and values, there is a good case for drawing a reliable foundation for mission activities. The prominence of Africa and African people in mission activities through the ages both in the Old and New Testaments cannot be dismissed as nothing more than a tradition but should be appreciated as biblical. Our exploration in this chapter has shown us that the Bible gives explicit evidence for theological foundation of customs and values in missionary activities. The next chapter is an overview of the importance of the topic contextualization in relation to SDA mission among African people.



# CHAPTER 5

## A Succinct Overview of Contextualization in the Bible

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to demonstrate that contextualization of the gospel is necessary because of major cultural and religious boundaries needing to be crossed by the Seventh Day Adventist church in order to enhance her mission endeavors. Doss (2015:6) notes that “the church is now called to carry the everlasting gospel to more people in more diverse cultures than even before... hence, the need to understand the important topic of contextualization.”

### **5.1 The Bible and Contextualization of the gospel.**

Are there cases of contextualization of the gospel in the Old and New Testaments? What models of contextualization were used by God in contextualizing the gospel? Was the gospel contextualized during the early church and reformation periods and what insights can contemporary gospel workers tap from those periods in relation to contextualization? These questions affirm the need to understand the important topic of contextualization of the gospel. In reference to contextualization, Doss (2015:6) states that,

The starting point in understanding faithful contextualization is to affirm that the Word of God is the absolute, universal, unchanging rule of faith and practice for humans in every time, place, and culture. The scriptural design for human life, summarized in the Decalogue and encapsulated in Christ’s command to “ ‘love the LORD your God’ ” and “ ‘love your neighbor as yourself’ ” (Matthew 22:37-39), applies to all.

Thus “contextualization is at the ‘mixing point’ of gospel and culture” (Moreau 2012:19). This means “just as Jesus, in His humanity, was a person of culture, so His religion is always embedded in believers of specific cultures” (Doss 2015:7). Couple with these insights, contextualization should be understood as a term used to name the process of carrying the gospel into the deeper levels of a culture. The following sections reflect on the important topic of contextualization in the Old and New Testament, in the early church, during the reformation era and some various words related to contextualization.

### ***5.1.1 Contextualization in the Old Testament***

Right at the heart of all contextualization in the Old Testament is how God adapted Himself to humanity so that He could reach people. Chibueze (2007: 116) mentions that, “From biblical history it can be maintained that “indigenization” in terms of the relationship between God and his people has been present starting with the Old Testament.” Examples found in the Old Testament are expressed in indigenous forms irrespective of the circumstances in which people found themselves. In Hosea God says, “... for I am God and not man; the wholly one in the midst of thee...” (Hosea 11:9). It is Timothy who says of God, “who only immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto...” (1 Timothy 6:16). Despite God being immortal, when humanity sinned, God stooped to rescue him from the grip of sin at the cool of day (Genesis 3:8). To the ageing Abraham, God says, “I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son” (Gen 18:10). Thus, the first missionary with the everlasting gospel is God Himself. His message to Adam who had fallen into sin was, “Where are you”? (Genesis 3:9), “... it shall bruise its head...” (Genesis 3:15). From this day forth God showed to His servants, “at sundry times and divers’ manners in time past...” (Hebrews 1:1). God Himself appeared in human form to Abraham (Genesis 18:1-8). God washed his feet under a tree, ate bread, butter, milk and meat from a calf. In the context of contextualization, God did this just to reach Abraham, Lot and possibly Sodom.

With his people Israel God used the language they spoke and understood; He spoke about rivers, mountains, cattle upon a thousand hills (Psalm 24:1), fowls of the air (Matthew 6:25-27), the wilderness (Isaiah 35:1), the crib, hyssop (Psalm 51), goat skins. In all these accounts above, it could be said of Him that God was “contextualized” in the people and their life circumstances. He also spoke of the father and mother, children, horses, chariots, a ladder and thousands of images that portrayed God putting his message in context. Daniel contextualized his book by writing in both Hebrew and Aramaic just to reach his audience. Again the Septuagint of the Old Testament is evidence of the people of God adjusting to the language of the day-Greek of course with its consequences. The above examples help us to appreciate though in a rather broad picture that God and his people understood the importance of reaching people where they are.

### **5.1.3 Contextualization in the New Testament**

Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with various forms of contextualization encounters of God among his people. Using the term, indigenization in place of contextualization Chibueze (2007:117) states that, “This indigenization of God did not stop with the Old Testament, but continued in the New. According to the letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 1:1-4), this “contextualization” then began in the person of Jesus Christ.” Other examples of contextualization in the New Testament are: Jesus speaking to the Samaritan woman about mount Garizim (John 4) and the sower and his seed to the agrarian audience (Matthew 13).

It is also befitting at this point to reach the apex. Thus the highest New Testament contextualization project ever done by divinity among man is the incarnation; when “The word was made flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:14). To reach to the human family God in Christ erected His tabernacle among us. This silences all criticism and pride of culture. Writing about incarnation as the best model of contextualization, Doss (2015:7) presents this powerful submission:

The most profound instance of God’s identification with human culture is the Incarnation. The Creator became Jesus of Nazareth, who was not a generic human being but a member of a particular cultural group, living in a particular village, in a specific time period.

The recognition of incarnation as the best model of contextualizing the gospel is also noted by Chibueze (2007:117) who wrote that,

The event of incarnation is a unique example of the “indigenisation” of God among not only the people of Israel, but all of humanity. Though this was prepared in different encounters with the fathers, judges, leaders and prophets, from then onwards, God Himself would be encountered as a human being, no longer through a human being. He became human, by taking flesh; He “indigenised” in one human culture, namely the Jewish one. Here, as in the Old Testament, He could be identified in this culture without being identified with the culture. But more than in the Old Testament, He no longer “indigenised” through but in a human being – Jesus Christ.

Thus the New Testament model figure of contextualization to be emulated by all gospel workers is Jesus Christ. Through His life, His words, and His ministry, He demonstrated what contextualization of the gospel entails. Beginning with his own Jewish people, Jesus Christ set a good example of contextualization among His Jewish people. Consider below why Chibueze (2007:119) appreciate Jesus' contextualization ministry among His Jewish people.

The life of Jesus Christ among the Jews and the way he treated Jewish culture is a standard example of the encounter between God in Jesus Christ and a culture – the Jewish culture. Here God “indigenised” in a more concrete way in the person of Jesus Christ so that he was identified in this culture but not with it. As a human being Jesus belongs to the Jewish cultural world. But as God incarnate he transcends it.

With this in mind scripture gives a blue print and clues on how Gospel could be contextualized in South Africa. Not only had the Bible recognized the importance of contextualization project as a legitimate but also a contemporary scholar also has endorsed it's essential in mission.

It may be beneficial at this point to state Doss (2015:8) several steps on the process of cross-cultural contextualization, of which five may be noted:

- 1) Study the culture carefully to perceive deep underlying worldview questions and assumptions. At this stage, judgement of apparently unbiblical parts of the culture is withheld in the search for deeper knowledge.
- 2) Study afresh the Bible with local culture in mind, asking “What does the Word say to this particular people group?”
- 3) Engage the local community of believers in a thoughtful, unhurried discussion about the local culture and the Bible. As specific issues are discussed, explore three questions: What is approved by the Bible? What is biblically neutral? What is forbidden by the Bible? The goal is to reach decisions by consensus because the local people understand their own culture best and will have and are to live with the decisions.
- 4) Identify functional substitutes to replace practices that are changed or abandoned. When people stop doing something, a disturbing vacuum exists that must be filled with something better.

- 5) Develop a transformational discipling ministry for supporting change that may include redemptive church discipline.

One may consider this example below as a reflection on Doss's five steps. The Seventh-day Adventist minister allows elements of local funeral rites that seem unbiblical because they are perceived to be connected to ancestor worship. One element which he allows is the throwing of soil on the coffin by the deceased's relatives; this also applies to plates and cup that were used by deceased to be buried next to his coffin. The SDA minister does not hurry in with prescriptive changes but begin by accommodating and discussing each element of the funeral ritual in order to understand why these members of this local community do that. With the members of the deceased family, the minister then associates each element as scripturally acceptable, neutral, or unacceptable.

When the undesirable elements and those needing some modification are identified, the members of the family, without being forced, choose functional substitutes and design a revised funeral ritual. Out of their own persuasion, they heartily introduce the revised funeral service to the church and explain why certain elements of the old service version were changed. Now when the next death happens, they implement the new funeral service and afterwards evaluate the modified funeral rite, making additional changes as deemed necessary.

#### ***5.1.4 Contextualization in the early church***

The fact about contextualization grows conspicuous at Pentecost, at the launching of the grand missionary expedition of all time. The disciples after receiving the Holy Spirit are sent to diverse people group and evangelize them in their native languages (Acts 2:4). James with Jerusalem council said "Wherefore my sentence is that we trouble not them, which from among the gentiles are turned to God" (Acts 15:19). This rebuke to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is two pronged. Firstly, there is a requirement in the practice of religion that is not relevant to some audiences or cultures. Secondly, in verse 20 he continued to say "But ... that they abstain from pollutions of idols and from fornication and from things strangled and from blood." This is a lesson to every gospel agent that while the council contextualized, the gospel carried some unchangeable absolutes.

It is interesting to note that before Paul took Timothy, he circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those quarters “for they all knew that his father was Greek” (Acts 16:3). Doss (2015:7) resonates to this stating that,

As the apostles inaugurated the earliest church, the pattern of Christ’s incarnation was followed. The eternal, unchanging gospel of Jesus reached beyond the cultural characteristics of Jerusalem and Galilee to those of Corinth, Phillip, and Rome. A Roman believer did not need to adopt the cultural styles of believers in Jerusalem, which included circumcision (Acts 15).

### ***5.1.5 Contextualization during the Reformation Era***

There were very few copies of the Bible in existence prior to the Reformation, except among the Waldensians. Nevertheless, God did not allow His word to remain in few hands. To address the problem of the Bible in the hands of the few learned, God through reformers introduced the concept of contextualization of the gospel. White (1954:79) avers that, “Except among the Waldensians, the word of God had for ages been locked up in languages known only to the learned; but the time had come for the Scriptures to be translated and given to the people of different lands in their native tongue.” Consider below how several reformers each of them being used by the Holy Spirit applied themselves to the work of contextualizing the gospel in their respective countries.

#### ***5.1.5.1 Contextualization in Europe – The Waldensians***

Wylie (1999:12) reveals this about the Waldensians in relation to contextualizing the gospel:

There is reason to believe, from recent historical researches, that the Waldensians possessed the New Testament in the vernacular. The "Lingua Romana," or Romaunt tongue, was the common language of the south of Europe from the eighth to the fourteenth century. It was the language of the troubadours and of men of letters in the Dark Ages. Into this tongue—the Romaunt—was the first translation of the whole of the New Testament made so early as the twelfth century. This fact Dr. Gilly has been at great pains to prove in his work, *The Romaunt Version of the Gospel according to John....* The sum of what Dr. Gilly, by a patient investigation into facts, and a great array of historic documents, maintains, is that all the books of the New

Testament were translated from the Latin Vulgate into the Romaunt, that this was the first literal version since the fall of the empire, that it was made in the twelfth century, and was the first translation available for popular use.

The Waldensians were among the first people in Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Hundreds of years before the Reformation, they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue (White 1954: 65).

#### ***5.1.5.2 Contextualization in German - Dr Luther Martin***

From D' Aubgne (1885), several points shall be noticed about contextualization. Firstly, for the Reformation to succeed in German, Luther had to bring the Bible in the language of the people. Why the writings and the sermons of Luther bore much fruit is the fact that he principally used German instead of Latin. He even translated the scriptures into German. Secondly, he protested against the domination of the foreign church. A time had come for Germany to have her own order of service and priesthood. Germans were going to understand Germans better than Italians. Thirdly, the church or the preacher must not focus on the vessel of the gospel but the scripture alone. When the Bible is allowed to be independent of tradition then its dictates become relevant. "Luther endeavored to make the apostles and the prophets speak to the Germans as though they have been (Germans) natives of that country. The emphasis upon the Bible and the influence of the book were typical that of the Protestants" (LaTourette 1998:719). Finally, Luther and other reformers must be commended for not using force to convert people to Christianity. Speaking about Luther and Calvin's gentleness in mission endeavors, Bosch (1991:245) says that "it is also noteworthy that they broke completely with any idea of using force in Christianizing people. The emperor's sword, Luther said, had nothing to do with faith and no army may attack others under the banner of Christ."

#### ***5.1.5.3 Contextualization in England - Tyndale***

While Luther opened a closed Bible to the people of Germany, Tyndale was impelled by the Holy Spirit and he did the same for his people in England. White (1954:246) mentioned several points emphasizing the importance of contextualizing the gospel. Firstly, Tyndale said, "It was in the language of Israel that the psalms were sung in the temple of Jehovah; and shall not the gospel speak the language of England among us?" Secondly, he said, "Christians must read the

New Testament in their mother tongue.” Thirdly, he was heard appealing saying, “Oh! If Christians possessed the Holy Scriptures in their own tongue, they could themselves withstand these sophists.”

To summarize the discussion thus far on contextualization: various concepts, such as *inculturation*, *indigenous*, and *incarnation*, have been used indirectly to complement the process of carrying the gospel into the deeper levels of a culture. Doss (2015:7) agrees on this by stating that, “Evangelical Protestants prefer contextualization.”

## **5.2 Models of carrying the gospel**

This section attempts to review various processes of carrying the gospel such as *inculturation*, *acculturation*, *enculturation*, *indigenization* and *incarnation* with the aim of identifying the most preferred models which complement faithful contextualization. Thus, if the Seventh day Adventist church desires to “Christianized” (Dirk, 2016:1) the indigenous South Africans, then it is time to understand and embrace those models that “Africanize” (Dirk: 2016:1) the gospel of Christ for Adventism to take deep roots among the indigenous South Africa.

**5.2.1 Acculturation** means the encounter with a culture other than one's own or the contact between cultures. Thus acculturation is not inculturation because there is much disrespect for culture and the borrowing of disparate elements. Shorter (2015:5) concurs to this saying, “it is whereby cultural elements are lifted from the culture and inserted incongruously into otherwise culturally foreign contexts.” He further observes, “This happens for example, when African cultural elements are incorporated in a liturgical celebration that is otherwise entirely western in character.”

Since acculturation promotes the spirit of disrespect among culture and refuses to take seriously cultural values of other peoples' culture, it seems it cannot be a preferred model to evangelize the Indigenous South Africans.

### **5.2.2 Enculturation model**

Enculturation denotes the process by which a person is introduced to and becomes inserted into his/ her own culture (Azevedo 1993:1). Wallingo (1986:11) defines enculturation as “an honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his gospel of salvation over more understood by peoples

of every culture, locality and time.” The good things that can be encultured include respect for elderly, worship, storytelling and literacy.

### **5.2.3 *Inculturation model***

Chibueze (2007:135) defines *inculturation* “as the honest, serious and critical attempt to enable the Message of Christ be understood by peoples of every culture, locality and age.” According Shorter (2015:1) inculturation is “the presentation and re-expression of the Gospel in forms and terms proper to a culture.” In the context of this dissertation, Chibueze (2007:136) states that, “Inculturation can then be understood as a process in which a culture-in this case African culture – standing on its own basic cultural patterns tries to make the gospel its own.” Upon reflection, inculturation is thought to be the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his gospel of salvation ever more understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. Through inculturation, the SDA gospel worker in South Africa continuously endeavors to make Christianity truly feel at home in the cultures of indigenous South Africans.

Further reflection shows that inculturation is thought to be key in crossing boundaries of culture with the eternal gospel by Chibueze (2007:125) who wrote the following statement:

Inculturation is based on the principle of incarnation. The “Word of God” or the gospel or the message of the divine revelation must adapt to the different cultures. It must naturalise in these cultures. St. John’s presentation of the incarnation in the prologue of his gospel – “the word took flesh and dwelt amongst us” – is a central picture of this model. “Jesus was born into a culture. He lived that culture and used it to announce His message of salvation … His mission to culture and through culture is summed up by the fact that He came not to abolish the law and the prophets but to perfect them (Mt 5:17).

This incarnational principle suggests that the gospel is inclusive in nature by its ability to accommodate different cultures. This incarnation approach also resonates with Matthew’s presentation that “God is with us” (Matthew 1:23). M’nteba (cited by Chibueze 2007:134) advances this idea saying, “This incarnation approach presupposes the ability of the word of God to be at home in every culture.” Embracing inculturation model when working in South Africa makes indigenous South African cultures recognized fully. Their African cultures are recognized

for their own sake, on their own worth, for their thought patterns, religiosity, liveliness and ability to master their future.

### ***5.2.3.1 The outcome of Inculturation***

Inculturation holds two outcomes making it the preferred model over acculturation and enculturation. According to De Gruchy (1997:38), the two inescapable outcomes attached to the realization of inculturation are:

1. inculturation results in new forms and understandings of Christianity.
2. those who take the gospel seriously and accept it, discover that the Christian faith changes the character of their culture.

As an outcome or condition, Bosch (1991:265) states that, “Inculturation suggests a double movement: there is at once inculturation of Christianity and Christianization of culture.”

What seems to emerge from De Gruchy and Bosch’s views is that inculturation creates a condition for practicing a culturally appropriate Christianity that is in harmony with the Word of God in every dimension. More so, inculturation should be embraced in mission endeavors because it allows would-be-believers to practice contextualized Christianity by enabling them to experience growth in personal behavior and lifestyle, family relationships, and personal spiritually in a culturally appropriate pattern. Based on these outcomes or the positive conditions of inculturation, it seems to make sense to suggest that inculturation can be one of the models the Seventh-day Adventist can adopt to evangelize indigenous South Africans.

### ***5.2.4 Indigenisation model***

Indigenization model means that the gospel can be incarnated into every culture (Doss 2015:8). In reference to the term indigenization, Chibueze (2007:115) notes this:

From biblical history it can be maintained that „indigenization” in terms of the relationship between God and his people has been present starting with the Old Testament. Examples found in the Old Testament are instances where the message of God tries to take root in the culture of the Israelites. This indigenization occurred in the encounters between God and the people of Israel where God’s loving care and the message of salvation found expression in indigenous.

This model empowers the believers to shun foreign cultural lifestyle in order to be authentic Christians. Another advantage of the indigenization model is that churches are planted “where people can feel culturally at home, with culturally familiar architecture, music, dress, liturgy, and communication styles that are in harmony with Bible principles” (Doss 2015:9). For example, when a Zulu walk into an Adventist church in South Africa, he should not feel that he is in Europe. The music, dress, liturgy, and even communication style should make him feel he is an Adventist church in South Africa. However, there are situations where Christianity is not legalized. In such places, biblical principles can still be practiced within the confines of that particular culture. Sometime in biblical times, Christianity was restricted but believers lived as followers of the Bible in a hidden manner within their cultural styles (Revelation 2:10). Jobes (2005:4) advocates that a Christian can “live by the good values of society that are consistent with Christian values and reject those that are not, thereby maintaining one’s distinctive Christian identity.” A good example can be Ndebeles finding something variant from Shona rituals, the Zulus finding something culturally similar and feel like they have been neither to Angola or Lesotho when they go to church.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

There can be no doubt that contextualization of the gospel is essentially legitimate, given the insights that have emerged from the Old and New Testaments as well as insights from the reformers. It will be a pity for the gospel worker to ignore contextualization since various models like inculturation, indigenization and incarnation are identified with it and can be used in carrying the gospel into the deeper levels of a culture. Mission must embrace contextualization as well as various words such as inculturation, indigenization and incarnation in order to remain relevant and attractive to its target audience. Doss (2015:9) resonates to this by stating that,

The absolutes, universal, unchanging Word of God will dwell in individuals within today’s particular cultural groups as authentically as Jesus dwelt among His own Jewish kinfolk in Nazareth. When this happens, believers will be authentically Christian and also authentically members of their birth cultures, immigrant cultures, or chosen cultures. They will be Christian and Japans, Christian Arabic, Christian and Chinese, Christians and American, or Europe, or African, or Latin American – all around God’s earth.

Since inculcation is based on the principle of incarnation and is one of the key models of contextualization, inculcation approach is an excellent model for evangelizing indigenous South Africans. The reason is that it promotes the spirit of respect for culture and accepts to take seriously cultural values of other peoples' culture. Based on its obvious strengths, it seems it can be a preferred model to act as complementary approach to contextualization in order to reach out to the indigenous South Africans.

## CHAPTER 6

### Contextualizing SDA church in South Africa

#### **6.0 Introduction**

Early missionaries and contemporary gospel workers still failed to take African religiosity seriously. The Christian faith that was and is still introduced to an African, in general, has not been enough for the religious impulse and need for the average African person. The African spiritual hunger may have been met but not within the context of African culture. Therefore it is the intention of this chapter to find some possible and practical actions that can bring Christianity in harmony with African culture with Christianity. The chapter is also a call to African Christians to rise and to put off western garments type of Christianity.

#### **6.1 An African Case: The Zulu- Ndebele cultural millieu**

The researcher chose just one group of people as a model from which the general references to the African people should be. While the Zulu- Ndebele and other component people groups in African Traditional Religion are different, there is observable interrelationships and continuity. The Zulu and Ndebele are almost identical cultures within material differences. To begin with there are general characteristics of primal religions under which African traditional religion is classified (Thorpe 1991:1-3). This religion is observable by the absence of written scriptures which mean that they were orally transmitted from generation to generation. It also does not have specific formalities though they have and make some tribal heroes revive it. There is no orthodoxy or heresy because the religion has no written creeds or dogmas. Also, there are no missionary activities and the religion is tolerant and flexible.

The strongest characteristic of African Tradition Religion is that the African religion is a way of life so that it co-exists with human beings. There is an intricate interweaving of religion and culture. Such intricate interweaving of religion is evident in the example below:

Firstly, Thorpe (1991:25) suggests that because the Zulu were so much in love with the cattle which were in the center of their religious life. They also used cattle as a representation of wealth. Secondly was the centrality of the *izibongo* (thanking names, or praise names) meaning that they valued self. *Iziqazo* (holes in the ear) were a symbol of solidarity or national identity. Thirdly, they believed in *Amadlozi* (the ancestral spirits). *Amadlozi* serve as mediators to the one

Supreme Being who is referred to as *Inkosi Yezulu* (Lord of the sky). Other Zulu names for God include *uNkulunkulu* (Great-Great), *uMvelingqangi* (the Exister), *uMenzi* (creator), *uSomandla* (Almighty), *uMnimandla* (owner of power) and many others. Their mythology through these names strictly tells of their awareness of a supreme being.

As for mythology, they attributed lighting strikes to a supreme being and therefore natural. Death and old age were considered natural. *Izangoma* (diviners), *Izinyanga* (witch-doctors) or chiefs or family and tribal heads noted as mediators between the people and ancestors who in turn spoke to the Supreme Being. Preparation for divination underscored the element of wellbeing and health as part of a human being. Anger was directly equated to witchcraft so that openness and reconciliation (*ukukhumisana umlotha*) was a common religious ritual. Thorpe (1991:27) observes that religious ritual was not a one day or weekend thing but a whole life issue. There were rituals in both celebrations and misfortunes. The life of a Zulu was pervaded by spirits and the supernatural. Besides being part of life, religion was not something one is converted into but born into. They became religious by birth.

Besides the above positive or neutral elements, Ndebele religious thought had one greatest challenge: the enigma of death. The Yoruba suggested some kind of judgment after death while the Ndebele proposed a disappearance into oblivion of ancestral spirits. Ultimately, though the grave is the separating gulf between life and death, death is the end of real and complete man (Mbiti 1969:165). This was the virgin religious mind of the Ndebele and Africa in general.

## **6.2 Effects of Missionary activity and Westernization**

It should be noted from the onset that missionaries came to Africa together with colonial rule. The observation from Zvobgo (1996:92) is that, “the image that Africans received, and to a greater extent still hold, of Christianity is very much colored by colonial rule.” In addition to this, the kind of religious life imported into Africa was different as there were Germans, Britons, French, Portuguese, and Americans. As a result, different churches and traditions emerged from them. These denominations endeavored far more to produce perfect Methodists, Baptist, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Seventh day Adventists than to make their converts good followers of Jesus Christ (Mbiti 1969:226). In addition, Gehman (1990:217) observes that the mistake that the missionaries made was the assumption that they were preaching “the gospel to

empty heads or to people living without knowledge of God” but he argues that “through God’s prevenient grace, the creator had made known to Africans a true knowledge of God.”

A sad experience is that all rituals, folk tales, beliefs and everything African was considered demonic and was then discarded. Bosch (1991:455) concurs that, “The West has often domesticated the gospel in its own culture while making it unnecessary foreign to other culture.” Maluleke (1997:7) complains that many African churches continue to be Western in policy, theology, doctrine and worship. This is a reality and “cannot be swept aside by mere enthusiasm for an African brand of Christianity.” To the missionaries who came from American, Britain, France, German and other western countries, Christianity was clothes, the ties, shoes, and bible story by uncle Arthur. Songs about snow, evilness of the African music instruments (*amakantari*, *igungu*, etc), the wickedness of the extended family, and many were seen as perversions. Christian’s names and individual names were supposed to be English; African names like *Thapelo*, *Rhulwani*, *Tatenda*, *Vimbai*, *Sukoluhle*, *Sfiso*, *Ndlalambi*, *Dumolwenkosi*, *Mandlenkosi*, *Sphiwe*, *Sakhisizwe* were replaced with names like Ellen, Sarah, John, Esther, Grace, Leornard, Thomas and Joel.

When they came to Solusi mission in Zimbabwe; they planted Jacarandas and destroyed all the African trees there such as *amagonde*, *umkusu*; and *umganu* so that nothing African would remain. All African herbs and concoctions such as *isihaga*, *umlaphazose*, *usuzwane*, and *intolwane* were done away with in favor of western concoctions. Surprisingly, we now have herbalists at a great cost who come with the same herbs, this time not from KwaZulu Natal in South Africa or Tsholotsho in Zimbabwe but from Loma Linda in the United States of America. With this in mind, I now turn consecutively to Independent churches and shortcomings of the missionary churches.

### **6.3 African Instituted Churches: A Symptom of the Shortcomings of Missionary Churches.**

It may be beneficial to begin with the strengths of missionary churches before I concentrate on their grave shortcomings. The African is grateful and pays tribute to the missionary and colonialist for the education, hospitals, dispensaries, governmental establishments and other advantages. Mbiti (1969:239) says we should also be grateful to the Christian ethics which came

with the missionaries. However, I hold the view that African Christian ethics can even be more superior to western Christian ethics. This is evidenced by a general trend of more ethical living in the less westernized rural places as compared to the more western and Christian urban populations. Some of the ethical living examples in rural areas include dressing modesty, communal living, respecting those older than you, neighborly living, Ubuntu, etc. In reference to African Christian ethics, Mbiti (1996:200) writes:

There exist, therefore, many laws, customs, set forms of behavior, regulations, rules, observances and taboos, constituting the moral code and ethics of a given community or society. Some of these are held sacred, and are believed to have been instituted by God or national leaders....Any breach of this code of behavior is considered evil, wrong or bad, for it is an injury or destruction to the accepted social order and peace.

In spite of the above advantages, Africans have reacted to this westernized Christianity of mainline churches in many ways; one of which is the advent of separatist or what is known as African Instituted churches. These are mainly from “Anglican, Lutheran and Protestant background with few from the Catholic and Orthodox churches” (Mbiti 1969:233). Of late, Independent ministries have even come from the Seventh Day Adventist church. The important features are mentioned by Mbiti (1969:235-237); they specialize in revelation and healing. Another emphasis is on ‘possessing’ the Holy Spirit. Because of their low estimate of education and books there is widespread literal interpretation of scripture. Some of their leaders are women who are well accepted. Discipline and abstinence in marriage and food is also common. Finally they also take seriously such issues as singing, preaching, praying for the sick, exorcisms and offerings to support their leaders (Mbiti 1969:236). Furthermore, Mbiti (1969:237) quotes Williamson who bemoans that “missionary effort has been directed towards drawing converts away from traditional life towards what missionaries thought was the proper, civilized and Christian expression of the new faith.”

There are several factors that have possibly led to the discontentment by Africans. Firstly, there is a need to ‘indigenize Christianity in ways that will render Christianity spontaneously practical and meaningful to them’ (Mbiti 1969:233). Secondly, an initiation of the divided missionary churches is needed. Thirdly, “a crave of independence from (political and ecclesiastical rule) by

Americans and wish to be their own masters.” There is also a reaction or response to excommunication from western-thought-dominated main lines churches.

As reasons could be many, this discontentment on the part of Africans is great but I shall look at one fundamental cause here. Missionaries failed to penetrate sufficiently deep into African religiosity (Mbiti 1969:227). Unpacking how mission Christianity has failed to satisfy African’s spiritual hunger, Mbiti (1969:228) mentioned two points. Firstly, mission Christianity has come to mean for many Africans simply a set of rules to be observed, promises to be expected in the next world, rhythm less hymns to be sung, rituals to be followed and a few other outward things. It is a Christianity which is locked up six days a week, meeting only for two hours on Sunday and perhaps once during the week. It is a Christianity which is active in a church building. The rest of the week is empty. Africans, who traditionally do not know religious vacuum, feel that they don’t get enough religion from this type of Christianity since it does not fill up their whole life and their understanding of the universe. Secondly, African Christians often feel complete foreigners in mission churches. For example, much of formal western Christianity is based on books but there are older Christians who do not read. The hymns are translated from European, English and American versions and are sung to foreign tunes which have little rhythm and without bodily movements like clapping the hands or twisting the loins as a religious expression. Worship in mission churches is simply dull and boring for most Africans.

In response to western type of Christianity, Mbiti (1969:228) contends that the Independent churches are attempts to establish new formulas which may perhaps form a substitute for the disintegrating traditional solidarity under modernization. He also states that they also provide psychological areas where uprooted men and women find some comfort, a sense of belonging together, a feeling of oneness and a feeling of being wanted and accepted. He concludes by mentioning that beneath the umbrella of independent churches, African Christians can freely shed their tears, voice their sorrows, present their spiritual and physical needs, respond to the world in which they live and empty their selves before God.

#### **6.4 Challenging issues in SDA mission work to Indigenous South African population**

Though the Adventist missionaries entered the mission field in South Africa around ninetieth century, the church have not made significant inroad into the indigenous South Africans because

of some challenging issues. Consider below some of the issues that have been identified which possess a challenge to the Seventh day Adventist mission work to the indigenous South African population.

#### ***6.4.1 Lack of being tactful***

Since the traditional worldview of African is deep seated in the life of the people, such change needs to be managed tactfully. However, it is noted that the gospel workers who minister to the indigenous South Africans have not applied tact resulting in fewer converts into Adventism. In *letters to people bound for Africa* White (1946:96) wrote: “The wisdom of angelic agencies must be imparted to human instrumentalities, else the door will be closed to the message the people need.” The need for preachers and teachers who are tactful was affirmed by Jesus who said, “Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16). Therefore the need to apply tact in reaching out to the indigenous South Africans is none negotiable by Seventh-day Adventists leaders, preachers and teachers.

#### ***6.4.2 Lack of practical gospel***

A study by Schwarz (1996:36) found that growing churches possess on average a measurably higher ‘love quotient’ than stagnant or declining ones. White (1946:16) says that “the world will be convinced, not by what the pulpit teaches, but by what the church lives. The minister in the desk announces the theory of the gospel; the practical piety of the church demonstrates its power.” Based on these counsels from the Christian writers changing from theory evangelism to practical ministry would be significant when ministering among indigenous South African people.

#### ***6.4.3 Lack of contextual SDA mission stations***

Another challenge that impacts negatively on the Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa is the lack of contextual mission stations in the form of schools and medical services. To meet this challenge, the Adventist church should aim at addressing some of the needs of the indigenous South Africans. Commenting on the contribution of mission stations in evangelizing Africans, Mbiti (1969:233) wrote:

They (missionaries) and African Christians have continued to make outstanding contributions to primary and secondary education, even when

schools have increasingly been taken over, organizationally and financially, by independent African government. The church also makes its contribution in the medical field, again pioneering this service in Africa and continuing to run hospitals and dispensaries, as well as supplying Christian doctors and nurses to work in Church.

The Seventh day Adventist Church would change its image among the indigenous South Africans if it consciously endeavors to meet the challenge of lack of contextual mission stations by providing basic human necessities such as health and education. The bulk of budget that the church today spends on public evangelistic campaigns could be diverted into establishment of church run schools and medical services. Such ministries, if adopted and backed with strong budget, can boost the Adventist church's image among the indigenous South Africans.

#### ***6.4.4 Race and relations issue***

The Seventh –day Adventist church in South Africa have been harboring racist attitudes long before the legalizing of apartheid. Du Preez and du Pre (quoted by Crocombe 2007:4) confirms that, “the Adventist Church was always far ahead of the government of the day in applying racial segregation in the church, and far behind when it comes to scrapping racially discriminatory measures. By the time apartheid was introduced in law after 1948, Adventist had been practicing it for twenty or more years.”

Fortunately the author notes that the racist attitudes cited above did not represent the church's official position on race and relations. In response to such malicious views, Crocombe (2007) presented the official position of the Seventh day Adventist church. He said that on June 27, 1985, the General Conference released a statement on racism that specifically mentioned apartheid: “The Seventh-day Adventist church deplores all forms of racism, including the political policy of apartheid with its forced segregation and legalized discrimination.”

While the author expected a change after the church issued a statement on race and relations, “Unfortunately neither of these articles on racism seem to have made any impression on the White members and administrators of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa” (Crocombe 2007).

#### ***6.4.5 SDA Christianity modes of expression insufficient***

Looking into the challenge facing the SDA Christianity modes of expression that is insufficient, I discover sooner or later that the indigenous South African shun SDA churches and opt for African Instituted churches whose Christianity mode of expression is adequate. Mathema (2011:48) states that African Instituted Churches have “incorporated aspects of the African religio-cultural heritage that appeals to many traditional Africans.”

#### ***6.4.6 Westernized Christianity***

It has been noted that “Mission Christianity retains many anachronisms, some of which even its European and American origins have begun to shed, for instance its liturgy, hymns, articles of faith, doctrines, architecture, visual aids, form of worship, division of the church and structure of the ministry” (Mbiti 1969:231). The veneer of Christianity that is deeply rooted in Euro-American culture will not make indigenous South African to be eager to embrace Westernized Christianity. An adequate response by the Seventh-day Adventist Church requires that it be aware of tapping into African customs and values discussed in chapter 4 that appeal to many traditional Africans. Thus to appeal to the indigenous South African, the Adventist Church need not just proclaim the gospel but also to disciple persons in the context of the African worldview. It is also the responsibility for the church leadership to adapt, develop and to provide available resources locally or otherwise to meet the needs of the indigenous South African.

#### ***6.4.7 SDA church children, youth and family life ministries lack the African context in raising children.***

African took care of their children and they considered ‘motherhood as a sacred calling’ (Lugira 2009:68). This meant that right from conception, children were regarded as a sacred trust. The whole family and clan was interested in the welfare of the child so much that if the mother neglected children, the uncles would take over, if the uncles failed the other family members would take over. With such a strong system of extended families, there were no orphans and widows in Africa since the child could relate with any member of his or her biological family in the absent of his or her parents through death. Mbiti (1969:110) also adds that “the child ... is therefore the concern not only of the parents but of many relatives... kinship plays an important

role here to that a child cannot be exclusively ‘my child’ but only our child.” The rites of passage also assisted parents to pass on all Ubuntu values to their offspring.

Thus a similar approach could be adopted and adapted in Christian discipleship in the Adventist values and lifestyle can be introduced to our children as part of their initiation and upbringing so as to make certain biological growth of our churches. So what is the challenge that the church is facing? It would be well if the church takes a deliberate plan to be an education centre for all positive Christian values to the children and youth. This includes lessons in the youth department on childhood, puberty and marriage. This may not need our children and youth only but include the community. Children’s stories can also revive the African story and forever revive the bustle of life in moonlight. The church can be an advocate in the community for the rights of parents. This may include advocacy workshops in the community for the care of the aged. Setting up support groups in the African context for the neglected parents or children as well as counseling for the abused and battered in the African context can be powerful in the community that can also be an entering wedge in evangelism. If the African church can use these opportunities, the church may win more souls by being relevant and desist from sermonizing alone.

Another powerful African virtue that is missing in the SDA children, youth and family life departments is honouring of parents. Here are some universal respect dictates for all children in the African family: that of not being rude, not answering back, agreeing to be sent on long errands, responding with respect, calling parents with respect, respecting the family name, consulting adults for any major decision, not picking discussions by elders. In addition honouring parents meant taking care of the parents when they were old. The youngest son had no option; the aged parents were his responsibility. And that was not negotiable.

Thus honouring parents is a good entering wedge strategy in evangelism. If the Adventist children, grown up or young could embrace these time tested African virtues, they could be welcome, especially by the elders in South Africa who are decrying the frightening levels of social decadence. Many parents wish for a restoration of those old time values. It may be necessary to calculate these through the children, youth and family life departments. Non believing parents may admire a church that brings back children who do not answer back, who can take errands again, who can respond with respect, children who honor the family name,

consulting adults on important issues such as marriage, and many other laudable virtues in children. One virtue that many an aged parent long for is when they are old and frail, their children take care of them. This could build confidence and make Adventism utilitarian at least in this sense among the indigenous South African. In the process, parents may be attracted to a church that works. And this could be an entering wedge in reaching out to them. White has written extensively on honouring parents but for the purpose of this study I shall confine myself to some her quotations. She counsels,

He who rejects the rightful authority of parents is rejecting the authority of God... in these last days children are so naught for their disobedience and disrespect that God has especially noted it... there are many children who profess to know the truth who do not render to their parents the honor and affection that is due to them" (White 1945:293).

Another key statement on the same volume warns that, "Let children carefully remember that at the best aged parents have but little joy and comfort... they should bring all the cheerful and sunshine into the life of the aged parents... they should smooth their pathway to the grave" (White 1945:230).

#### ***6.4.8 Lack of contextual campus ministries in public university/college campuses***

I would like to begin by stating that the SDA church has a most solemn responsibility and obligation to care for the Spiritual and Social well-being of its young people or members that are studying on Public University/College Campuses. And while, the church has not always recognised its obligation to the thousands of young Seventh-day Adventist students on Public University/College Campuses, it would be well to recognise them. While for too long we have been playing the 'ostrich game' of burying our heads in the sand, i.e. not willing to accept and address the issue of SDA (indigenous South Africans becoming Adventist) students attending Public University/College. And while for too long we have made Seventh day Adventist young people feel less than "good church members" because they were not enrolled or attending a Seventh-day Adventist Institution of higher learning. I am more than encouraged that recently there has been an awareness of the problem amongst church leadership and in some places significant attempts are being made to address this serious need. Thus contextual campus

ministry needs to be established and strengthened. There are no contextual campus ministries on most non-SDA campuses in many parts of South African Union Conference.

#### ***6.4.8.1 Contextual campus ministries program – proposal***

Since there are some Seventh-day Adventist young people enrolled as students in non-Seventh-day Institution of higher learning as well as many Seventh-day Adventist educators who are employed in non-SDA institutions of higher learning, and the non-SDA college/university is a promising mission field, the researcher recommends that the Seventh-day Adventist church in South Africa implement a contextual Campus Ministries program so that the following might be achieved:

1. Each non-SDA college/university campus be seen as a potential contextual mission field to reach to indigenous South Africans.
2. Qualified persons or committees be appointed to the Division, union and Conference/Field levels to direct a contextual Campus Ministries.
3. A registry of all SDA particularly indigenous South Africans on non-SDA college/university campuses be complied and a contextual ministry be established to encourage and nurture them in the faith and in the development of a Christian lifestyle.
4. SDA students and educationists be equipped for on-campus contextual evangelism.
5. Where there is an SDA presence on a non SDA campus a contextualised Adventist fellowship club be organised.
6. A contextual focus chaplain be appointed to assist the SDA on campus and non-SDA who have interest to fellowship with SDA.
7. The local SDA church in the college/university organise a contextual campus ministries program committee to:
  - i) Minister to the SDA students in attendance as well as equip them to reach out to non-SDA.
  - ii) Encourage them to organise a contextualised club.
  - iii) Provide the local church as the centre of their contextual campus ministry program activities.
8. The Union and Conference provide funds so that each SDA student and educationist on a non-SDA campus receives regularly a copy of contextual Adventist education paper.
9. Local conferences are to provide contextual facilities for the students in immediate area.

#### ***6.4.9 Poverty “bondage” membership.***

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Africa enjoys a great number of what I call poverty “bondage” membership. For some time, while I served as a church pastor and youth Director, I never stopped challenging our pastors and elders to rise above poverty evangelism. And currently serving as a Lecturer, I have continued to challenge pastors and church leaders while itinerating in various churches, conferences and unions to address this problem. Our African churches are still filled up with thousands of these members.

Perhaps it is a blessing but in a long run the SDA in Africa must find means and ways of addressing this problem. The levels of poverty at each conference or union within our Division leave much to be desired making it difficult particularly for indigenous South Africans to be attracted to the Adventist faith. With the great challenge of descendants and unemployment among baptised Seventh-day Adventist members, a foundation needs to be built in the church program. A strong technical program in the area of Adventist youth classes, children ministries classes, and women and men’s ministries are needed.

Such a program will fulfil the dream of one of the Adventist pioneers like White who called for the church to educate man in the areas of physical, heart and mind. In our conferences, our unions and even our Division which is in South Africa sad to say the church has spent too much energy in educating the heart and ignored the physical and mind. No wonder why after 100 years of Adventism in Africa the SDA are still the same with no business minded church when other denominations are business minded and care for the physical needs of their members. It is unfortunate that the SDA church in Africa smells poor and operates poorly.

#### ***6.4.10 Lack of professional indigenous church leadership.***

Indigenous South Africans leaders need to be identified, enlisted and developed in church services. It seems indigenous leadership project in most Seventh day Adventist local congregations in many parts of South African Union Conference is absent. The majority of those who serve in key positions such as elders and other leaders are foreigners and others are now permanent residents in South Africa.

Therefore there should be a strategy developed at all levels of church leadership which addresses the issue of professional local church ministry leadership. There should be a clear strategy of

professional indigenous church ministry leadership development and a clear career path for those who have been called and whose calling is confirmed. Local church ministry leadership today in South Africa calls for contextual ministry and professional people.

If SDA churches in South Africa are to meet the needs of indigenous South Africans we need to make sure those church leaders at all levels are well prepared in the areas of contextual ministry. We should pick people for local church leadership with strong background in contextual ministry. Let us avoid “He is a good Christian” mentality particularly when we put foreigners ahead of local people.

For over the past two years my mind has been bombarded by questions as these:

1. Does the Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa have an appropriate contextually ministry to meet the above challenges?
2. Are our Seventh day Adventist manuals contextually relevant to the needs of indigenous South Africans?
3. Are Seventh day Adventist worship practices contextually relevant to the needs of indigenous South Africans?
4. Are Seventh day Adventist meals and songs contextually relevant to the needs of indigenous South Africans?
5. Do our Seventh day Adventist programs address issues like, urbanisation, apartheid, changes, AIDS, apostasy, unemployment, poverty “bondage” membership? How about the youth and children classes?

The Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa has a great opportunity to attract and help indigenous South Africans, as we learn to relate to native South Africans, both in the style and substance of our message. The Seventh day Adventist in South Africa must work against common stereotype which paint churches as havens for the lifeless and the weak.

We need to place people above long-held traditions, stepping boldly away from serving trivial, man-made regulations, and placing itself in positions where compassion and love can find practical outlets of service. Seventh day Adventist leaders must learn to place a high premium on relationships – particularly on the local church level – fostering the kinds of family networks of which so many indigenous South Africans have been deprived.

#### **6.4.11 Summary**

The insignificant growth and spread of the Adventist church in South Africa is because of lack of contextual ministry in many areas. This include lack of being tactful, lack of contextual SDA mission stations, race and relations, SDA Christianity modes of expression insufficient, westernised Christianity, lack of African context in raising children within SDA ministries such as children, youth and family life ministries, lack of contextual campus ministries in public university/college campuses, poverty “bondage” membership, and lack of professional local church leadership. More than a century after Adventism entered South Africa; the church is struggling to penetrate the indigenous South Africans.

### **6.5 Building Bridges: Contextualizing SDA Christianity in Africa.**

As observed in the arguments above there are several possible bridges that could be built between the Bible and the African Adventist audience. First of all, it should be a church that acknowledges the blunders of missionaries, colonial rule, genocide in the context of Hutus in Rwanda, the evil of apartheid in South Africa, and the Gugurahundi massacres in the context of the Ndebele in Zimbabwe. Secondly, the language of the people should hold precedence over English particularly in the location and rural churches. English Bibles should be confined to city centre churches. Doss (2015:8) agrees on this by stating that, “Doing mission among peoples of varying persuasions – Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc. – requires long term service that includes knowing the language and culture in order to embed successfully Christianity within their culture.” The other challenge is our youth. While putting the gospel in context, it should not be overlooked that parents are guardians of their children and thereby the youth should be submissive and learn from them. Music should be relevant to both the young and the old Christian Africans while not undermining the absolute principles of music.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church should encourage development of a biblical-undergirded framework of ministry which includes healing, exorcism and other special services. It has been noted that the current modus operandi of the Seventh day Adventist church does not adequately meet the needs of those who profess Christianity in Africa. For example how many times have people come and gone back home with their challenges. In my gospel experience both as an educator and church professional, I have seen a need to include or re-emphasize special services like healing, exorcising demons and helping people manage crises in a Christian way. It must be

pointed out that African Instituted churches have been doing it, and it seems to be the secret of winning the confidence of many Africans. Therefore something must be done by the Seventh Day Adventist church so that all the biblical spiritual gifts should go out to edify the members of the church. This leads to the need for increased awareness and working of the Holy Spirit in the church. Dirk (2016:2) agrees that, “in response to their loss of members who joined the Pentecostal and African Initiated Churches, the mainline churches established renewal groups.” Onyinah (cited by Dirk 2016:2) states that these renewal groups: “they offered a theological response that corresponded to the religious and spiritual needs of Africans.”

The gospel of Luke 4:16 actually confirm that Jesus Christ Himself engaged in holistic ministry. The Seventh-day Adventist church need to admit that what has been considered as unbiblical for years the African Instituted churches have been embracing. For example, the African Instituted churches have incorporated healing and other special ministries and they have developed what can be called “African religio-cultural heritage,” and the Seventh day Adventist can also initiate something on those lines. We can revive a strong prayer ministry where we can lay hands on the sick and pray for them as spiritual leaders and church members so that the sick may be healed.

While I consider going this direction, there is need to note that a conservative interpretation of scripture may not accommodate non-conservative African Christians. Thus, while the participation of the church in the priesthood of all believers is important, societal age and gender roles in the church must be dealt with intelligently. Chastity and marital purity should be one of the pillars. Above all the dimension of African Christianity must come up with ways and means of dealing with people’s fears of the spiritual world. That is to say the church must do exorcisms, singing, prayer for the sick and a communal spirit.

Certainly, the Seventh day Adventist church should not lag behind in praying for the pregnant, dedication of small children, birthdays to children, weddings, success and finally death. The church also should be involved in dedication of a new car bought by a family, dedication of a new home, or property is important to Africans. These are areas where the African needs emphasis of the “centrality of life in all the affairs of humanity...in ... religion” (Magesa 1998:110). To an African it is not enough for the Seventh day Adventist church to be strong only

in preaching and teaching. The Africans want us to serve them in tangible ways and provide for warm fellowship that is an antidote against lapses to unspiritual.

Boafo (2016:34) conducted a study which showed that a common ground can be found between African traditional religion and Christianity and the following similarities were seen:

1. Both religions believe in a Supreme God who is creator – God in both religions, rules by delegated authority.
2. Both Christianity and African traditional religions have creation accounts – the creative power of God is emphasized by both religions through the names in which God is known.
3. The religions claim that the universe is inhabited by spiritual beings as well as physical beings – both religions acknowledge the existence of a head of the evil spirits who is a personal opponent to humankind and notorious for rebellion and destruction.
4. Both religions have specialized ministers who administer certain functions for the people they serve – Christianity has pastors, priests, and elders, while traditional religions have priests, priestesses and prophets.
5. Sacrifice for sin is an important theme in both religions – the two religions use sacrifice in order to appease the angry God.
6. Both religions recognise the important role of the family as the basic unit of society – the family nurtures the individual and offers the individual a sense of community.
7. Finally, both religions believe in the continuation of life beyond death – this means all embrace the doctrine of resurrection.

In summary, there is much that the church can still do to help indigenized Christianity in Africa. I said above the church can build bridges through developing a biblical-undergirded framework of ministries such as healing, exorcism and other special services that addresses the African spiritual hunger. The church also should understand that all the commonality between Christianity and African traditional religions discussed above demonstrate some resemblance on what is general believed by the two religions. It is these resemblances that can facilitate a dialogue between the two religions in order to promote Christianity among African people.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

While the above ideas and suggestions on how to put the gospel in context cannot be prescriptive, they are both descriptive and provocative. They leave behind a challenge and task on which every religious (Christian) leader has to undertake. If possible, in the line with the above suggestions, each church leader has to come up with a deliberate plan or strategy to build bridges between Africa culture and Christianity. If we are to depart from a lethargic, docile, indolent and superficial Christianity we have to face the reality of contextualizing the gospel all rounds. The Seventh-day Adventist church can learn a lesson from the Independent African churches whose strong contextual ministry has addressed the African spiritual hunger.

Commending Independent Churches' contextual ministry, Mbiti (1969:228) wrote that, "Beneath the umbrella of Independent Churches, African Christians can freely shed their tears, voice their sorrows, present their spiritual and physical needs, respond to the world in which they live and empty their selves before God." Therefore it seems Africans spiritual hunger is met in a church that accommodates their African cultural aspects which are in harmony with biblical principles. They are excited to practice their Christian experience freely without the feeling of being foreign.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **African customs and values consistent with biblical principles and their implications for SDA mission among the African people**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

In chapter 4 I looked at biblical foundation of customs and values that have enhanced mission activities among people of different races. These biblical customs and values made a difference because they affected positively our perception of Christianity. This chapter looks at African customs and values consistent with biblical principles that can enhance the mission work by Seventh day Adventist missions among the African people especially the indigenous people of South Africa. Before reviewing several African customs and values, it is important to briefly consider and explain a few terminologies which need to be understood within the context related to this study.

#### **7.1 Definition of fundamental terms**

Before we discuss in details African customs and values, let's begin by defining the following terms that relate with the subject under consideration.

##### ***7.1.1 Culture***

Culture consists of the totality of shared language, knowledge, material objects, and behavior. Schaefer (2008:58) defined culture as “totality of learned, socially transmitted customs, material objects, and behavior. Heibert (1985:30) defines culture as “systems of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behaviors and products shared by a group of people who organize and regulate what they think, feel and do.”

##### ***7.1.2 Value***

A value is a belief that something is good and desirable. It defines what is important, worthwhile and worth striving for, Haskins (1995).

### **7.1.3 Society**

A society is the largest form of human group. It consists of people who share a common heritage and culture (Schaefer, 2008:58). This means society is a structure of relationships within which culture is created and shared through regularized patterns of social interaction.

### **7.1.4 Human beings in culture**

According to Kraft (1979:48) “Anthropologists and other behavioral scientists tell us that to be human is to be immersed in some specific culture. All human beings ‘live and move and have their being’ within a culture. Culture touches all people at every point. It is both internal to us and the immediate environment in which we live.” In other words Kraft is saying human beings cannot escape culture since people are not only in culture but culture is also in them.

## **7.2 Culture and mission**

We need culture if missionary activities are to be successful. As humans we do not operate on instincts like other species. Culture shapes our perception, knowledge, and understanding of other fellow human beings and the world around us. We do not perceive nature directly; we perceive the world around us through the lens of culture. While it is through culture that we establish relationship to the world around us and with our fellow human beings, society provides the context within which those relationships develop. African cultures among others have very interesting tenets and characteristics. The African culture is rich in terms of humanizing and Christianizing people and preparing them for this world and the world to come. Culture from an African perspective is not primarily for the individual, but it is for his entire society of which he is part. Mbiti (1969:2) states, “To be human is to belong to the whole community and to do so involve participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community.”

## **7.3 African cultural overview**

The extended family, consisting of a man, his wife and their children, is very important in the African culture. Traditional African families live in homesteads consisting of one or more dwelling. Unlike familial structures in many other cultures, the African family is closely knit at the local level and gradually broadens outwards to form a large social organization which can be termed a society.

This agnatic structure which is closely knight at its local core is strengthened by various behavioral patterns, such as how they call each other, the respect and reciprocation which are expected between members of the family and members of the larger society and particularly by the custom of refraining from using specific words in the presence of certain people.

It is true that a human being is only a human being when he is among other fellow human beings. One of the strength of African culture is to ensure that a person is socialized so that he/she develops the collective “we” attitude rather than the individualistic attitude of “I”. It is within the African culture and through African customs and values consistent with biblical principles that Christianity can be promoted among African people. It is within the African culture that inter-dependence is the order of the day and consideration for fellow neighbor (*Ubuntu*) is the way of life. African culture humanizes man in a society.

#### **7.4 Major characteristics of the African culture**

African culture aims at maintaining essential values for society by closely identifying children with the life of the group, community, family, village, or any other form of social organization. Individuals learn and appreciate in the culture of their society.

This culture emphasized the inter-dependence within the entire community. People understand that they cannot live in isolation. They value so much the importance of neighborhood and community interactions. Neighborhood projects are the order of the day and everyone is obliged to participate. The members of the community are self-motivated to come with (*amalima*) in Zulu/Ndebele for the entire neighborhood to assist in a particular project; it could be ploughing or hoeing in the fields.

Consideration for fellow citizens is valued (*ubuntu*). Despite the social status of an individual, a person is respected and treated as a normal human being who deserves respect. African culture emphasizes the “you” principle over the “me” one. From an African perspective, “you” deserve better treatment than “me” and “you” should be the first and “I” the last.

African culture also is geared to promote politeness, correctness, mutual respect, and dignity. The whole essence is to create social responsibility among the citizens. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that the dignity of the society is maintained by having a community

view which says “this thing belongs to us.” Africans understand fully that wherever they are, they represent their families and the society.

Respect for age, social status, and clearly define roles for men and women, boys and girls. The African culture provides people with common goals; it teaches them the appropriate behavior associated with particular roles (e.g. the roles of mother, father, child, teacher and neighbor); and it allows them to learn the norms of social life. Part of socialization involves learning different gender roles through different activities in order to achieve certain goals.

The citizens are socialized to starve the individualistic attitude of “me mentality” This kind of socialization is very critical process by which a value consensus is produced in a society. Through socialization the individual internalized society’s values – they become part of his personality.

One key value of African culture is the ability to transform people in a society. Proper respect is to be shown “to both the ancestors and to fellow villagers” Thorpe (1991:53). This takes the form of actions that have both ritual and practical significance, such as providing bride wealth for marriageable women seeing that totem marriage regulations are observed. The Zulu concept of (*umuntumuntu*) meaning the real person refers to someone who/ is humble, kind, ready to share with the neighbors and never greedy for more than his or her due in life.

The African culture is pragmatic. It develops from practical participation. Mbiti, (1969:15) stated that “individuals learned as they lived what they learnt.” All the aspects of it are relevant to life situations. The teaching of the culture and religion are stratified according to the levels of cognitive and physical development of the individuals. There are clear stages of training closely connected the stages of development of the learners. Thus as the individual pass from one stage to another, the activities and the attitudes changes. With such a rich culture, it seems necessary and motivating for the next section to present a good account of African customs and values which are consistent with Christian principles which can contribute immensely to SDA missionary activities among Africans.

## **7.5 Discussions: African customs and values**

This section juxtaposes African customs and values which are consistent with biblical principles in search of implications for the SDA church to enhance its presence among the indigenous South Africans. These African customs and values are directly taken from the Zulu heritage and can be used to enhance the missional agenda of the SDA among Zulus and other indigenous South Africans. This was done to try and achieve what is captured in the words of Kurgat (2011:34) when he says “the gospel message must retain the significant ideas of Christianity, enriched and made intelligibly attractive by all means by considering what is good in a cultural heritage of a people.” Expounding on the idea of ‘interculturation’, Shorter (1988:14) makes this poignant observation that “it is also the case that Christianity is transformed by culture, not in a way that falsifies the message, but in the way in which the message is formulated and interpreted anew.”

The section reviews twenty one African customs and values consisting of (1) eleven as discussed in chapter 3 and (2) ten new customs. The twenty one customs combined together in this section are meant to strengthen the study’s hypothesis that African customs and values consistent with biblical principles need to be incorporated in evangelizing indigenous South Africans in order to make Christianity attractive among African people. It is hoped that the inclusion of these twenty one Zulu customs and values, by the SDA church as missional tools, would be a significant contribution by Africans to the world and indigenous South Africans themselves in appreciating anew the message of the gospel. Thus within its system, Zulu culture encompasses customs and values like hospitality, *lobola*, levirate, neighborliness, virginity, fellowship, extended family, circumcision, Ubuntu, dating, reconciliation, music, role of blood in the covenant, sacredness of life, roles of the African (Zulu) husband, kinship, storytelling, community consciousness, marriage, and monotheistic views of God. By embracing these customs and values, SDA missionaries in South Africa can help in evangelizing South Africans and assist the maturing church in South Africa.

The discussion that follows henceforth will unpack each Zulu custom and value which SDA church can use as missional tools to foster the presence of Adventism among indigenous South Africans.

### **7.5.1 *Ukunakakela izihambi* (hospitality)**

Among the African people *ukunakakela izihambi* (hospitality) is very much valued. It is expected that everyone cultivates this vital virtue from childhood. According to Thorpe (1991:62), “the solidarity of the community is a pronounced feature of African traditional religion.” While in some cultures it is not proper to just visit an individual without prior arrangement, it is not so in the African culture. With Africans, one can just visit without necessary making bookings in advance. To Africans, the arrival of a friend or relative is highly valued so much since it means strengthening relationships. The visitor (guest) becomes the focus of attention rather than the host.

The best reception, best meal, best utensils, best room, best bed and blankets are provided. At his or her departure, he does not go empty handed. Several gifts are given to him as an appreciation of the visit. The hosts accompany the visitor, for a considerable distance as a way of extending an invitation to come again. This African way of treating a visitor like a king was also common practiced by God fearing families in the Old Testament. In Genesis 18 the treatment the three visitors received from Abraham’s family lends support to this practice.

Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead *it* and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave *it* to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate. Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way (Genesis 18: 1-8, 16).

In response to the kindness the visitors received from Abraham, the salvation of his immediate relatives were disclosed and he quickly pleaded for their redemption and his request was granted (Genesis 18:21, 22). Abraham is commended for receiving the visitors who also later accommodated his relatives during the destruction of Sodom. Nichol (1980:328) notes as he comments about Abraham's act that, "in oriental lands it is till customary upon the departure of guests to escort them on their way, the distance indicating the degree of honor and respect the host wishes to show them." It seems hospitality as practiced by Africans can be a good evangelism strategy. A Shona saying, '*Muenzihaapedzidura*', and a Zulu/Ndebele saying, '*Isisu sohambi kasinganani singangompodwana lwembuzi*', literally- translated means: 'a visitor cannot finish all the food in the granary that has always been used to mean that there is no threat that a visitor can pose even food shortages. Therefore, no visitor is treated with suspicion.

Interestingly, children in the home are trained to treat the visitor with respect. It is a taboo not to greet people when they enter the home, the young have to give seats to the elderly, or excuse themselves by leaving the room. They are taught to be ever ready to offer their services by bringing drinking water as well as food for the visitors. By this, Africans use their homes as a training ground in instilling Christian values to their children. Christians can employ the African way of practicing hospitality in order to promote Christianity. Thus let the African way of practicing hospitality be extended to the church circles and many people who visit churches will be attracted to Christianity. The lack of hospitality in churches are a major drawback to church growth. Citing the lack of concern often manifested in churches, Ray (1982:137) shares this unfortunate experience.

In a world full of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture and country, from their neighbors, friends, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found. It is possible for men and women, and obligatory for Christians to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers cast off their strangeness and become our fellow human beings.

This call means if strangers are to cast off their strangeness in the SDA churches in South Africa, Adventist Christians are to deliberately provide meaningful hospitality standards. The way we

receive and entertain strangers must be excellent because this has a direct effect on their response to the message we preach, the environment they find themselves should make them not feel but be part of the community and belonging. In the Seventh day Adventist church, visitors are recognized as important members in the church services. It is only unfortunate when hospitality is practiced using western culture in SDA South African churches rather than done the African way. It seems good to note that hospitality in Africa is not an event, it is a way of life; it can also be called a lifestyle.

#### ***7.5.2 Umsebenzi wegazi kusivumelwana lasekufakazeni ngezekolo (role of blood in the covenant and its implications for Christian witnessing)***

In Africa the role of blood in the covenant is important. Blood is used in reconciling two warring parties who have vowed not see each other again. “The majority of Africans.... Believe that the human soul has its seat in the heart and the blood which is also believed to be the vehicle through which the manifestations of the essence of being are transmitted to every part of the human body” writes Nabofa (1985:390). Thus the link between the soul that comes from God and the blood, then blood is considered to be life itself. In the mindset of the African then, Nobofa (1985) mentions that, “in order for a person to receive life, health and happiness, he has to treat blood reverently.”

It is this strong blood background that provides a fertile context for rituals which often involves blood sacrifice. Mbiti (1969:59) points to the Akamba and Gikuyu who make sacrifices “on great occasions, such as the rites of passage, planting time, before crops ripen, at the harvest of the first fruits...and most of all when the rains fail or delay.” To an African human life should be appreciated and no one has the right to take it except God. Hence Onah (2014) states that, “Life is sacred. It comes from God and God alone has the right to interrupt it at any stage. Spilling of human blood defiles the murderer and the earth.” On the role of blood in the covenant, Mbiti (2010:3) says it succinctly, “the blood of an innocent animal is shed to serve as the blood of reconciliation and peace. The blood of an animal saves, replaces and stops further shedding of human blood.” Thus the SDA church can use the role of blood in the covenant as missional tool to emphasize the role of the blood of Jesus Christ in effecting reconciliation between indigenous South Africans and God.

### ***7.5.2.1 Umsebenzi wegazi ekuvikeleni lase kubuyisaneni (role of blood in protection, unity and reconciliation)***

It would seem African culture is replete in its history with this symbolism of blood covenants. Giving closer attention to “these primitive rites” than they had yet received, (Trumbull (1893:4) notes that blood-covenanting “throws light on many important phases of bible teaching.” He further describes it as a “form of mutual covenanting, by which two persons enter into the closest, the most enduring, and the most sacred of compacts, as friends and brothers, or as more than brothers, though the inter-commingling of their blood, by means of its mutual tasting or of its inter-transfusion,”

Presenting an account of blood brotherhood in a Central African people, the Azande of the Nile-Uelle Divide, Pritchard (1933:370) discloses that among this particular group ‘bakuremi’ is the term for address for blood brothers. He observes that “in a primary sense this term of address refers to the person who has drunk the speaker’s blood, but it is extended in a secondary sense to embrace all members of this man’s clan.”

What is impressive is the nature of the relationship that develops after blood covenants. According Trumbull (1893:7), these covenants could take place between strangers and in such cases the relation is held as a closer tie than that of birth. This confirms Solomon’s statement when he said, “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24). This covenant is the most extreme and most sacred of the covenants found in the cultures and communities that practice blood covenants. “As it is the inter-comingling of lives, nothing can transcend it” says (Trumbull 1893: 6). This means the covenant was insolvable, irreversible, and no ‘divorce’ was possible.

These blood covenants often had diverse material benefit. Kenyon (1969:11) observes that in the ‘cutting of the covenant’ there is usually an exchanging of gifts, which indicates “all that one has the other owns if necessary.” The idea of mutual providence is enshrined with the covenant. Pritchard (1933:372) points to one of the reasons for the cutting of a blood-covenant being that a man who is traveling in foreign countries would make a blood covenant with a native who would be responsible for his safety and protection and operated as a traveler’s passport. To protect another person was as good as protecting yourself, and by the exchange of blood, life was preserved.

These blood covenants provide an opportunity for a new appreciation of the blood covenant that has been established by God in the person of Jesus Christ. The similarities as well as the differences between African blood covenant and the new covenant in Jesus' blood may help the SDA church to help the indigenous South African to appreciate the depth of the meaning of the covenant God has made with human beings.

The nature of the changed, deepened and enriched relationship of 'blood brother' gives us much to appreciate in our relationship with Jesus. After cutting their wrists, the two would either put their tongues to their wounds or put their wrists together so their blood would mingle. Because they understand that life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11) this exchange effectively meant the two men shared their lives and, as it were, became one. So the appreciation that life is in the blood is motivated by the idea that blood is significant in the African cultures.

To this end, Kenyon (1969) says "The vilest enemies become trusted friends as soon as the covenant is cut." In John 6:53 Jesus says "unless ye ... drink his blood ye have no life in Him." While this not literal, 'rituals' like the Communion Service can have a deepened meaning for person's who have understood or are familiar with these blood covenants.

Understanding that blood brothers by extension have relation with clans of their '*bakuremi*' (mediator) makes it easier to see how Jesus being our '*bakuremi*' opens up relations with His clan thus we are adopted as children of His father too. The material benefits of gifts, possessions, and protection are truly available in Jesus for Christians. Similarly strangers from a distant land are given a traveler's passport by way of the covenant with the native Prince of that particular country for them to travel without hindrances.

Moses says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it (the blood) upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11, 12). This is the message that can be presented through the role of blood in covenant as we promote Christianity among African peoples. Therefore I submit that through the role of blood in the covenant the gospel of Jesus Christ and His blood that was shed on the cross could be appreciated by Africans. It seems sensible to conclude by saying that the evidence shared above shows that there is much consistency (similarities) - between Christianity's view of the blood of Jesus and the significance of blood in the African cultures.

### **7.5.3 *uKwakhelana* (*Neighborliness*)**

It has been the culture of Africans to value a neighbor. The most important person to a traditional African is his or her neighbor. Way before missionaries came into Africa; Africans have had the understanding that man is a social being who needs other people around him. Africans understand that we are what we are because of other people who are around us. A person who is anti-social is regarded as a threat to the society from an African perspective. Africans do not ascribe to the Western type of an exclusive way of living which is too individualistic. Lugira (2009:16) reflecting on the basic beliefs of Africans stated that “people believe in sharing their property and services, and they expect the other members of the community to share with them. Whatever happens to the individual affect the whole group. Each individual lives for the entire group.”

Influenced by the neighborly spirit, African culture does not accept deviance, that is, non-conformity to given set of norms that are accepted by a significant number of people in a community or society. Any deviants are brought before the community leaders and are dealt with accordingly. Giddens and Sutton (2013:922) postulated that “all social norms are accompanied by sanctions promoting conformity and protecting against non-conformity.” If someone persistently defies the community neighborly norms, they are expelled from that community. Africans believe that each societal member has deliberate responsibility to foster peace and tranquility within the community. The happiness and success of one’s neighbor is depended upon the treatment they receive from their neighbor. Ndlovu (2014:79) said that, “in traditional African, community is the arena for interaction, forgiveness and reconciliation.” It is a taboo in the African culture to hold a grudge against your neighbor. In fact, it is believed that he who holds a grudge against his neighbor will not prosper; even the ancestors will turn against him and frustrate all his plans. Africans are by nature “notoriously religious” (Mbiti 1969:1). Before any written documents about divine precepts were brought to their attention, they already practiced them.

Africans believe that it is not the right way to hastily take your neighbor to court if you have an argument. They believe that issues can be settled between neighbors without the involvement of the larger community. They also encourage confidentiality in matters that pertain to one’s neighbor. It is very difficult to get confidential information from an African. No wonder they

have such a proverb in Zulu/Ndebele (*isifuba esakhatshwa lidube*, literally a chest that was kicked by a zebra) referring to a person who cannot keep secrets. Lugira (2009:17) postulates that, “Among African people community, culture, and religion are tightly bound together.” You cannot separate an African from his neighbor. An African is never an alien as long as they are people around him. Unlike the Western cultures that are too exclusive and hardly accommodate other cultures, it is very easy for an African to create friendship with anyone from any culture. That is the reason why African culture is said to be accommodative and tolerant. Many cultures owe a lot to the African culture in the area of interdependence, respect, industry and skills for peace and stability in the society. Thus, if well practiced by the SDA church, the African neighborhood custom, because of many Christian virtues embedded within it, then makes a good Christian witnessing strategy among the indigenous South Africans.

#### ***7.5.4 ukuqatheka kokumanyana kusendo labaSundu (community consciousness in a traditional African context)***

There is so much emphasis on community and humane living in traditional African life that in a tradition African life, community is the arena for interaction, forgiveness and reconciliation. To an African, whatever disturbs the community, such as prostitution, indecent dressing, theft, murder, witchcraft and isolation, is not accepted; thus, to them sin is anti-community. According to Mbiti (1969:104) a visitor to Africa is soon struck by the frequent use of the first person plural, ‘we’ and ‘ours’ in everyday speech. This strong sense of community among Africans is highlighted by the belief that there is no existence outside community. Again Mbiti (1969:106) underscores the important belief and sense of the community among traditional Africans by stating that:

In traditional Africa, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. Whatever happens to the individual is believed to happen to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual ... The individual can only say: “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am. This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man.

Another feature about community consciousness in traditional African life is that most African activities are community orientated. Death is communal; wedding is communal; ploughing is communal; playing is communal, worshipping is communal, eating is communal, raising children is communal, hunting is communal; and eating is communal. This explains why an African community may have poor people but it does not have beggars. With such a strong community consciousness, Seventh-day Adventist missionary activities can be enhanced among African peoples and elsewhere, if the church embraces the African community concept. The church in Acts 2 grew rapidly because of embracing a strong sense of community. According to Acts 2:42-47, the community spirit motivated the early church members to carry each other's burdens as God added daily those who believed the gospel.

### ***7.5.5 **Ukumanyana kwabaSundu (The value of unity among Africans)*****

It is also amazing to note that in the western culture they treat only symptoms of a disease, but Africans say the cause of the illness ought to be known. To an African, disruption of unity among community members causes illness in the sense that the spirit of unity promotes peace. Louw (1994) recognises that among Africans humanity must be approached as a unity. The understanding about the sick person in an African context could be explained as follows: The whole person, together with his network of relationships, is sick because the person experiences an imbalance.

#### ***7.5.5.1 The value of unity and its implication on Christian witnessing***

Jesus recognized the relationship between unity and Christian witnessing. In John 17, He dedicated the entire chapter praying for unity among His disciples. He gave an illustration how Him and His father are united and prayed that the disciples be united in order to present the beauty of the church to unbelievers. To the unbelievers, the spirit of unity among Christians means they value each other, they prefer each other and they love one another. The SDA church can use the value of unity among Africans to champion its evangelistic thrust among the indigenous South Africans.

### ***7.5. 6 **Ubuzalwane (Fellowship in Africa)*****

*Ubuzalwane* (fellowship) is an African coined word which is derived from the Greek word *koinonia* whose English equivalent is fellowship. *Ubuzalwane* within African Instituted

Churches seem to be one of the greatest dimensions of promoting a strong and sound Christianity among African peoples. It is a known fact that African Instituted churches strive on the *ubuzalwane* for their growth both quantitative and qualitative. To a Christian African, there is a bond of fellowship or communion with God and with one another. God Himself establishes this fellowship. John also observes that there is *ubuzalwane* with God the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3). Jesus Himself declares that He is in His Father, and the Christians whether from Africa or Western are in Him, and He is in them (John 14:20). The same message comes from John 15:1, 5 where Jesus says that His Father is the vine-dresser while He is the vine, and Christians are branches. Through fellowship Christians are to live together according to this image of being members of God's community of faith in Jesus Christ. It is this community of faith bonded by fellowship which is designated as the church.

A review of the literature reveals that in their worldview Africans strongly believe that human beings are part of a community; hence an individual cannot operate in isolation. The work of Louw (1994:27) by confirming that, "We could relate to the African's understanding of himself in roles and societal relationships, by referring to the church as a body with *koinonia* (*fellowship*) ties. *Koinonia* imparts a role of loving service amongst believers." In a Traditional African context, a relationship also exists between sickness/health and community. With regard to this relationship, Louw (1994:27) states that "illness implies the harmony of societal order being disturbed. A person can therefore only be cured if his relationships have been repaired and if the community is healthy." This means healing cannot take place in isolation from the community, the family system or the tribal system. Saayman and Kriel (1992) advance the same idea. "What has to be healed is not a disease but a community." A writer on pastoral care within an African context agrees that pastoral care must be seen as a social and community issue. In his book, *Pastoral Care to Black Africans*, Eybers (1991:207) writes that:

In an African context, pastoral counseling must undergo a metamorphosis, as the community and network of relationships are in the centre and the individual at the periphery. Caregivers must always be aware of the connection between the care-receivers, who form part of their relationship to the society.

Certainly fellowship is one of the classic activities of pastoral care in Africa. Another specialist in pastoral care Lartey (1997:31) states with clarity that: "Fellowship has to do with the provision of opportunities for social interaction within communities. Such communal activities include meals, games, celebrations and commemorations. Here the social nature of human existence is recognized and affirmed." Traditional Africans also place emphasis on kinship structure in relation to fellowship. They suggest that religion should not work against social structure by pulling the individual out of the extended family and isolating him. To a Traditional African, the kinship structure is very important because it affects all relationships. To an African, to be human is to participate in all the activities of the community group: be it social, communal or belonging. It is prudent for the SDA church not only to focus on proclamation but to also to embrace fellowship aspects as missional tools to increase its presence among the indigenous South Africans.

### **7.5.7 *uKungena* (Levirate custom) in Africa**

In the practice *uKungena* (levirate custom), African people almost emulate the biblical practice which focuses mainly on three areas. These are: (1) *ukungena* formal and permanently with the wife of the deceased, (2) *ukungena* to perpetuate deceased's name and (3) *ukungena* is optional. Each of these focus areas are discussed in details below.

Firstly, in Africa, *ukungena* is a formal, public and permanent exercise done in the presence of mature members of the family. What makes this marriage formal is that the marriage is not between individuals but between families. To avoid *umasihlalisane* (cohabitation) by just two individuals, the marriage is arranged without much input of the two individuals but parents or families arrange for the two to get formally married but with the consent of the couple to be married. This is solely done just to make a statement that this is not a sexual union but a formal permanent marriage with the blessings of both families. This African way of parental involvement to formalize a marriage was also practiced by Abraham who sent Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac as recorded in Genesis 24. Speaking on the role of parental involvement on matters of marriage whether levirate or not, White (1930) insists that, "Parental guidance should be sought for because children cannot trust their own inclinations which are full of selfishness and immature judgement." Thus parental involvement also demonstrates that the levirate custom is designed not solely for sexual union but for a full and regular marriage.

Secondly, in Africa, *ukungena* is also mainly to perpetuate the deceased's name though an arranged marriage called *kugaranhaka* (Shona) literally meaning the handing over a widowed woman to one of deceased husband's male relatives as a wife. In Zulu/Ndebele, it is called *ukungena* meaning "entering" into your brother's house to marry his widow to perpetuate his name. This practice preserves the clan or name of the deceased from extinction.

Thirdly, in Africa, *ukungena* (levirate marriage) would only happen at mutual consent of the concerned parties without coercion. Solleh (2012) interestingly notes that "sexually, a woman can continue to marry within the clan after her husband's death, no matter how many husbands she has had... Therefore there are no widows or widowers in the Kono society except by choice or the widow." This affirms the biblical position of optional mentioned in chapter 3 subheading 3.1.3.2.3 as African Kono widows are not coerced to remarry if they do feel like. It is done with their full consent. Widows can marry as many times as they wish with the same clan. However, it must be acknowledged that all cultures have fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Therefore African Konos, Vendas, Sothos, Shonas, Zulus and Ndebeles cultures because of the effects of sin have been distorted. What this means is that there are some cultural elements in every culture that are not in harmony with biblical principles and such elements must be discarded.

#### **7.5.7.1 *Ukungena* custom and the issue of property ownership**

In Africa property is owned by the husband and wife only when the husband is still alive. It is commonly believed that after the death of a husband their property remains with the wife if the couple had children. However, childless couples face serious problems in the African culture. Since all couples are expected to have children, therefore childless couples are viewed as failures and a man in such a situation is belittled in the society. The childless crisis may force a non-Christian man to become polygamous in search for the male child. In addition, property sharing or ownership becomes even more complicated if the husband dies without children. Phillips (2006) concurs by saying "a childless widow finds herself in an awkward position because ownership of property of her deceased husband is through the children." Properties such as land in the village areas is usually owned by families and not individuals per se, hence it becomes awkward for a childless widow to take a piece of land that belongs to her late husband and make it her private property. In rural areas also cattle and goats are kept in one family kraal without

emphasis on whose they are but reckoned as family property and used communally in the family. In such instances it becomes difficult for a childless widow to claim her deceased husband's cattle though she can identify them. Such scenarios lead to many squabbles if the childless widow demands her husband's property as sometime the situation on the ground may force her to wish to go back to her family members to begin life again.

Thus to address such property ownership cases among the Israelites similar to the above mentioned African case on property ownership, God says, "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside the *family*" (Deuteronomy 25:5). The stipulation "shall not be *married* to a stranger outside the *family*" is given to the widow for the benefit of several parties. Those parties who were to benefit from the levirate marriage include the brother-in-law and the widow. So this is significant, especially when considering the defenseless situation the widow experiences after the death of her husband when it comes to matters of inheritance. To have certain parties benefit, God then instructs her not to marry a stranger outside the family. Africans are commended for practicing a biblical custom which is a plausible solution in resolving issues of property ownership. The richness of the African levirate custom in matters of inheritance has been recognized by Cotulla (2007) who states that, "the levirate preserves male property rights, while enabling widows to continue to access land after the husband's death."

#### **7.5.7.2 Advantages of ukungena in Israelite and African cultures**

Having reviewed *ukungena* custom in Israel and African cultures above, I now turn to the advantages from both cultures as discussed below:

1. In both cultures, *ukungena* avoided young widows who are prevalent these days. We have the Biblical example of Ruth (Ruth 4) who through the levirate custom got married and lived happily again. Speaking about widowhood among young women, the apostle Paul gave this counsel: "So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander" (1 Corinthians 7: 14).
2. It perpetuated the deceased's name through his heir.
3. The brother-in-law would acquire a wife without the need to pay the bride-price (*mohar* in Hebrew)

4. The widow stood a second chance of having a child.
5. The widow did not have to join a new family altogether; she would remain in the family of her first choice since in Africa families are married and not just two individuals.
6. Property inheritance problems were avoided through this custom.
7. The widow would not return to singlehood again to start searching for a husband all over again.
8. The problem of married men being tempted by young widows was avoided
9. It would not be difficult for the brother of the deceased to take his brother's widow because as a family they would have recommended her and her family to the deceased brother. He was part of the decision making process which made the first marriage a success.
10. The *Levir* (in Latin is the brother-in-law) inherited his brother's property and the widow retained her property in the new marriage.
11. Children born from this formal union bore the name of the family.

In summary, the African levirate custom whilst not perfect or the ultimate solution to various issues like property inheritance and ownership is at least a reasonable option. I strongly recommend to the SDA church that this custom be revisited and revived to promote permanent formal marriages which are scarce these days, to perpetuate the lineage of the childless deceased man, to resolve matters of inheritance, and other levirate related issues. With the African levirate custom in place, and practiced the biblical way, this can be another missional contribution the SDA church can make to the global community as well as to appeal to the indigenous South Africans considering the eleven benefits associated with this custom.

### **7.5.8 *Ukusoka (circumcision custom)***

*Ukusoka* (circumcision) is one of the African customs that has been practiced in order to initiate young men to become adult men and prevent them from sexual transmitted diseases. The missional relevance of *ukusoka* is considered below and supported by modern cases.

#### **7.5.8.1 *Jewish and African circumcision custom and HIV virus***

The Jewish and African circumcision custom has become a modern preventive method in the fight against the AIDS pandemic. The website [www.israel2/c.org/isreal](http://www.israel2/c.org/isreal) accessed on 2016,

January 15 carries this powerful statement about the Jewish circumcision custom: “An ancient Jewish religious rite turns out to be a critical weapon in the war against the spread of the HIV virus in South Africa reports to Kloosterman. In addition, Kloosterman observes that, “some estimates suggest that more than half of all HIV infections could be stopped if men are circumcised.”

Moreover from the same website [www.israel2/c.org/isreal](http://www.israel2/c.org/isreal) accessed on 2016, January 17, Maureen Malowny, a medical historian, reports that, “circumcision is one of the interventions that reduce the risk of transmission.” In affirming the strength of circumcision on the fight against AIDS, she states emphatically that “so compelling is the evidence of circumcision as a protection against AIDS that physicians there are all but competing to remove the highest number of foreskins per day.”

Coupled with startling statistics, Maureen Malowny shared this experience on the actual field in South Africa:

Learning the age-old practice from top-notch Israel surgeons and nurses, some 100 trained doctors and in South Africa have so far taken their skills back to their own hospitals. Up to 50 circumcision operations can be performed per surgeon per day, according to the protocol. The evidence is always about context and good science. KwaZulu-Natal has a huge HIV/AIDS challenge. If the government and the King are willing to stand up and say that our men need to be circumcised, then that’s a pretty good argument for delivering male adult circumcision.

Truly there are some customs and values among the African people which may be considered ancient and evil but if brought to the public eye through research as is the intention of this dissertation, they can meet both modern human and missional needs. It is a joy to the researcher that the African and Jewish circumcision custom though ancient has become a solution to modern human needs according to insights from experts cited above. Any SDA gospel worker who wants to promote Christianity to the African people, particularly among the above mentioned tribes, should not condemn the circumcision custom but should appreciate its good side and use it as an opportunity to further mission activities.

### **7.5.9 *Lobola* custom**

Africans again must be commended for practicing *lobola* custom which is very biblical. In Africa, *lobola* has a very important place in the sealing of a marriage relationship. *Ukulobola* is the legal exchange which validates a marriage and confirms the consent of both parents of the bride and the bridegroom. Without *lobola*, no marriage is recognized as valid. Kottak (1994) agrees that, “In Africa, before one gets married there is dowry charged and payment may be before or after the marriage. In most African marriages, dowry is paid by the marrying family. Parents of the marrying boy and relatives bring wealth together and make it ready to be surrendered to the in-laws of their child.” Mbiti (1969) says, “The gift or dowry elevates the value attached to the bride both as a wife and a person. He further says, “this practice is the most concrete symbol of the marriage covenant.”

#### **7.5.9.1 Parallels between the Jewish and African *lobola* custom**

Rather than promoting divergent views on *lobola*, it is interesting to note that there are some parallels between the Jewish and African customs of *lobola*. The very obvious one is the giving of *amalobolo* to the bride’s father and the bride given to her husband. Hence the bride’s husband should not be seen as having no gift. His bride is probably the biggest gift because the Bible, says “He who has found a wife has found a good thing” (Proverbs 14:18). To those opposing the custom of *lobola* who asks what the young man and his family get, the simple answer is that the bride is the biggest gift to her husband and his family.

The second parallel is the involvement of the family in the marriage. This is not a personal affair; it involves whole families which includes the relatives. In the case of Samson after finding a prospective bride among the Philistines he had to request his parents to conduct the negotiations (Judges 14:1-3). Abraham was pivotal in Isaac’s marriage (24:2-9). Jacob negotiated with the father of the daughters (Genesis 29). Similarly in Africa, parents or relatives play a pivotal role in who final marries their child. The two young people are not able to conclude without the involvement of parents. Consensus has to come from the members of the family. The seriousness of *lobola* in African minds is noted by Chigwedere (1982) who insists that he does “not doubt that if *lobola* is abolished, marriages will tumble to the ground like ripe fruit.” So both the Jewish and African cultures are in harmony in that *lobola* which is essential for the well-being of people both historically and programmatically. Further related literature supports *lobola*

payment. Bullock (1912:21-22) states that, *lobola* is not ‘the mere purchase of a wife’; it is, inter alia, ‘a safeguard for her good treatment by the husband’ and her family must ensure that she is well treated. Bourdillon (1976:41) emphatically mentions that the wife is not simply bought as property and further points out that the husband’s family have obligations towards the wife’s family that transcend the *roora* payment. White (1956:189) strongly commends the *lobola* custom. She writes: “This ancient custom, though sometimes abused, as by Laban, was productive of good results.” She cites reasons such as prevention of a hasty marriage, testing the depth of affections of the young man and the young man’s ability to provide for a family why she condones this practice.

It is not only courtship which is a public affair but also the wedding. The whole community is invited to a public celebration. Even cats and dogs come to attend this public ceremony.

Therefore the richness of the communal aspect of marriage in Africa could be a good strategy for the SDA church witness. The SDA missional programs, like evangelistic crusades, should not be commercialized but it must be a public celebration where people from that particular community with regards to their various statuses benefit from it physically, socially, economically, and spiritually. It needs to be stressed that the African culture of *lobola* and public celebration is not extended to the *umasihhlisana* (concubine). Biblically also, *lobola* and public celebration are not mentioned in connection with taking a concubine.

#### **7.5.10 Ukuhlabelela lendosela yoculo kosiko lwabasundu (Singing and influence of music in the African culture)**

Alter (1985:25) submits that music in an African society is part of life. Life without music is incomplete. It is also considered an art and carrier of information. The art aspect referred here calls for creativity, beauty and aesthetic value; this aspect calls for giftedness on the part of the composer, and choreographers who lead in creative dances, and body movements that accompany singing in Africa.

In my interaction with Africans, I have observed and concluded that Africans sing with their spirit, emotions, body and vocal chords. A song leader begins the song (be it at church or during any ceremony) then the rest follow. This idea has influenced the way they sing even church hymns and this must not be discouraged at the expense of ‘anything African is evil.’ Thus

singing and influence of the African culture should be considered an effective missional tool to promote the presence of the SDA church among the indigenous South Africans.

#### **7.5.10.1 *Ukuhlabelela emsebenzini* (music in work places)**

In Israel, music played a major role in motivating and uniting them together at work (2 kings 3:13). In the African society, music is a unifying force too. Like the Israelites, Africans sing songs when working in the fields, as they hoe their fields, (*ukuhlakula*) songs are sung to divert the attention from the burden to a completed task. This indeed creates unity and rhythm; they also sing as they pound, shell and winnow their crops, “*ukubhula, ukuhulula lokweba*” that helps to rejuvenate the tired and to maintain the same working pace for everyone. Kamien (2002:584) states that “there are work songs to accompany digging, grinding, chopping, and harvesting.” It should be noted that music in work places by Africans which motivates and unites them together can be employed as missional tool to reach out to Africans.

#### **7.5.10.2 *Ubuciko lobuhle bokuhlabelela kwabasundu* (creativity and beauty in African singing)**

There is a lot of creativity and beauty in African singing that needs to be appreciated and encouraged. Music aids the memory, so it is a vehicle for education among the Africans. One can easily recall things learnt a while ago if were learnt through music. Hence Africans creatively teach infants values, new information and history through music. The same is true for their elderly people as well. Kamien (2002:582) noted that in Africa, music making is a social activity in which almost everyone participates. The major reasons why African package their values in music is because they are easily grasped and remembered with passage of time. Africans also creatively designed sacred songs, such song like “*Inxhwala*” meaning taboo, which were only sung during sacred ceremonies and (*ukweluleka*) the rite of circumcision for boys entering manhood. In addition, Africans have special songs and dances for special moments, such as “*Iqhuzu*” (dancing by bringing both feet together) and “*makoti phuma sikudlalele*” (bride come out we dance for you), *angisozengilale ngohayezi mina umakoti ekhona*” (we will not have porridge for supper when the bride is there).

Finally, it must be appreciated that Africans are noisy in their singing and the researcher assumes even the day they shall get to heaven it shall be felt and heard that they have arrived. This background influences the way people sing. So Africans cannot be still while singing and

worshipping their God. Africans have loud vocal chords. Thorpe (1991: 35) noted that theatre, dancing; singing and music are communal forms of religious expressions. They may act as a prelude to war, celebrate a good harvest, and mark a birth, a marriage, or a death. It was noticed that African dancing and singing sometimes are planned and formal, but often they are simply spontaneous expressions of emotions. The African pattern is life – affirming and life – sustaining.

Another thing which must be considered in African singing is the use of musical instruments. African instruments are condemned as evil whereas those from the west are considered good. Turbull (1976:171) admits that the marimba, in a Shona culture, for example, is thought to represent a soul that can do away with the evil spirits. It has its equivalent in the piano that is generally acceptable in the worship of God in church. Again Africans are community conscious, hence audience participation, a type of communal singing has greater importance in African music than in most western music. Interaction is closely related to the ceremony and ritual. Mbiti (1969:67) God is often worshipped through songs, and African peoples are very fond of singing. In Africa many of the religious gatherings and ceremonies are accompanied by singing which not only helps to pass on religious knowledge from one person or group to another, but helps create and strengthen corporate feeling and solidarity. This too is a ritual, but the behavior is generally restricted to a stylized expression of appreciation at the conclusion of a performance, and a spontaneous response at other times is prohibited by tacit agreement.

The collective participation characteristic of music is retained in African music when it is performed among the communities. Lugira (2009:111) points out that African music presents religious, usually Christian, sentiments in a distinctly African style. Hand clapping, finger popping, vocal prompting, and foot tapping during performances are not considered offensive but viewed as signs of ardent approval that help to motivate the performing artist. In addition, Karmen (2002:580) says, “Music permeates virtually every aspect of African life. It is used to entertain, to accompany dances, plays, religious ceremonies and magic rites, and to mark such events as birth, puberty, marriage and death.”

Basing on the submissions above, in traditional African society, with its emphasis on community experience and involvement, music has remained essential to institutional life. Therefore the church in Africa is encouraged to accommodate Africans to express themselves to God as

Africans in order to be missionally relevant to them. God decorated the world with diversity; we need not blend in everybody but celebrate diversity and simply rid both Western and African music from demonic elements.

### **7.5. 11 *Umdeni* (*The extended African family*).**

*Umdeni* (the extended African family) is a large family that includes parents, children and relatives from both the husband and wife side. *Umdeni* promotes a strong sense of fellowship and community among family members and is a good antidote for individualism. On defining *umdeni*, Mbiti (1969:106) mentions that:

For the African peoples family has a wider circle of members than the word suggests in Europe and North America. In traditional society, family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters who may have their own children and other immediate relatives.

In the article, *African Traditional Religion and the Promotion of Community-living in Africa*, extracted from [www.Africa.net](http://www.Africa.net)/ufred Ijizu (2015, November 5) agrees with Mbiti and adds:

The networks of relationships among human beings are remarkably extended and deep. In fact, the words ‘family,’ ‘brother’, or ‘sister’, etc. define far more for Africans than what they mean today for the average European or North American. The family for the traditional African usually includes one’s direct parents, grand and great grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews. And normally, a child would refer to any of his uncles or aunts as his father or mother, his nephews and nieces as his/her brothers and sisters. People generally do not ask a child his/her personal name. Rather, a child is identified as ‘a child of so and so parents’. The extended family is the model.

In the African culture, a person does not live life as he wishes, nor does he mind his own business. According to Thorpe (1994) one is tied to the family first then to the extended family or village, and finally to the clan. This set up allows for the thorough education of the younger members of the clan by many elderly people found within the extended family and clan. A child in the African society does not belong to the biological father or mother alone but to every member of the extended family. The aunts and grandmothers were given the responsibility of

teaching or evangelizing the young girls, while uncles and grandfathers were in charge of imparting manly values to the young boys. In fact, the actual parents had very little role as far as their child's training was concerned. With this kind of setting, even the orphaned children had equal opportunities to education with those whose parents were living.

#### **7.5.11.1 *Umdeni* and educational activities**

One of the roles of *umdeni* is educating members of the family. Education was done in the home and also through various rites and rituals in the community. The young ones of the clan pass through various stages of growth and at each stage there are rites to be observed. Through these rites and rituals, important skills of life to be used in the next stage of life are imparted. Senior members with a wealth experience in the extended family all participate in equipping their children with useful skills of life. Even in ancient cultures, extended families through senior members played a major role in training the young ones. Consider the following words of wisdom spoken from an extended family setting by an elderly person:

My son, keep my words, And treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You *are* my sister," And call understanding *your* nearest kin, That they may keep you from the immoral woman, From the seductress *who* flatters with her words" (Proverbs 7: 1-5).

However, with the exodus of western cultures the extended family is negatively affected. Davis (2011) notes that:

Following colonialism...many traditional African rituals have been distorted and misused now we see problems that are common place in western cultures are also common among African people. Not to insinuate that African cultures are perfect, as all human societies have what can be perceived as problems, but having a complete set of devices that preserve cultural values can prevent conflicts between various groups including the systematic ill treatment of children, women and elders. In many western societies the boundary between childhood and adulthood is blurred, so that adulthood is seen as a status

achieved at a designated age or upon graduating high school and is not necessary tied to specific responsibilities to the community or maturity.

Thus in grooming the young one, the elders of the extended family made sure that each one goes through all the rites and ritual of passage. These are very critical in the formation of key values and identity in young people. These rites do not only serve to form values in young people but also serve as a way of preserving values and identity in adult members of the family and community.

In addition Davis (2011) further observes that

Rites of passage thus serve a double purpose; preserving the ongoing community as a symbol of collective immortality and permanence as well as providing a clear and guided means for transition from one life stage and sphere of responsibility to another. They thus confirm the hierarchies of values of the community and project an ideal sequence of personal development the individual can look forward to and upon reaching each stage, evaluate his or her maturation against a collective standard. Initiation rites are proven to be a necessary extension of many communities and are as necessary and natural as are arms and legs are a natural and necessary extension of the human body. Rites of passage provide the African with the foundation of his or her being; identity.

It seems to make sense therefore to say that these activities vary in their purpose. Some focus on bravery and toughness, others spiritual aspects or practical education. Some activities includes singing and dancing, in some instances the elders would sit down and tell stories that bear some practical lessons called *inganekwane* (African folk). Practical lessons were also carried out, like hunting, ploughing, building, sewing, and household duties. No matter the ritual, the underlying purpose remains the same; fundamentally dealing with transformation and guiding the person from one stage or maturity level in life and development to the next from birth to death. Amanze (1998:21) notes that the primary purpose of these rites is “to develop young boys and girls into manhood and womanhood.” He adds that these ‘initiation ceremonies are schools in which young people are taught self-restraint, morality, reverence for elders and obedience to the law.’ On the other hand, there are incentives and punishments employed to encourage the young

people to obey set rules. On offering incentives and use of punitive measures, Ijizu (2004) states that:

Many traditional African groups have in addition, motivational features and incentives through which compliance to the norms of approved behavior and social ideals are encouraged. There are equally rituals of purification, as well as punitive measures that try to deter and curb the tendency to deviate.

It is unfortunate that African societies who have rejected or lost traditional rites of passage demonstrate lack of achievement, loss of motivation, confusion, chaos, uncertainty and loss of focus and identity in relation to the larger community. Such young people who have not had a privilege to go through these rites have a premature adulthood thrust upon them, resulting in the creation of a society with no concrete value system and direction. Embracing of African rites of passage which are in harmony with biblical principles will promote Christian virtues such as virginity and integrity in preventing current evils that young people are faced with today.

#### ***7.5.11.2 Umdeni and its impact on Christian witnessing***

According to Mbiti (1969) Africans are notoriously religious, and each people have its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it. Lugira (2009) maintaining Mbiti's thought further states that in African tradition, whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and what happens to the group happens to the individual.

With these facts at hand, one can see that a careful study of African religions and culture was and is still necessary for Christian missionaries for the gospel to be embraced in Africa. Taking advantage of the notoriousness of the people of Africa in religious matters, Christianity would easily permeate through all family ties by targeting at the most influential members, since what affects one member affects the entire family. Generally speaking, an African extended family consists of an average of ten to fifteen members, thus if one family accepted Christianity, we would be looking at a minimum of eight converts per family, and consequently if a hundred families were converted in a year, at least eight hundred souls would have been brought to Christ. This is faster, cheaper and yet effective method of Christian witnessing.

We know that Christian witnessing is not an event where it ends with bringing people to Jesus but a process as it goes further by taking care of the vulnerable members of society. In every community there are people that are needier than others. The African culture through its extended family custom has ways of taking care of the needy people in society. Among the needy people, are orphans, widows, the physically challenged, the mentally challenged, the aged, the poor and the terminally ill. None of these are to be left to languish alone. There are uniting statements that keep the people of Africa together and some of them are, “Man is a family” meaning man belongs to a community; “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am” (Mbiti 1969:108). This is a cardinal point that means I exist because of others and they exist because of me. The giving of names have to do with the care and promotion of humanity, for example a *Lozi* name, *Munukayumbwa*, means a human being cannot be thrown away, whether born crippled or blind, a human being is a human being. In addition, the value of the extended family or community in Africa in developing, defining the individual and his place in the community is well presented by Mbiti (1969:108). He states emphatically that:

In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group

Embracing this African cultural notion would be fulfilling the Christian requirement of “Love your neighbor as you love yourself” or “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

In the African culture, care for the needy is a duty of every individual and the entire community. Here are three living testimonies of the effectiveness of the extended family in mission expansion: Aunty Mercy Rudedhla, as she is affectionately called, a lecturer at Solusi University reported stories how she has been involved in the lives of her immediate and extended family members. On June 8, 2016 she submitted the following five faith based stories:

#### *My Maternal Relatives*

1. When I was on Teaching Practice, I offered to take back to school my cousin sister who had been impregnated while she was in form 3. I decided to take care of her child while she was going to school. I looked for a maid for the

child. I found a job as a shopkeeper for her. My cousin sister died prematurely in 1991 when her son was a year and a month old. I adopted the child who, by God's grace, managed to complete a degree in Chemical Engineering at Harare Institute of Technology (HIT) and graduated in November 2015. I am grateful to God that I managed to pay all tuition fees and all the other needs of a child.

2. I have been praying for my six cousins whose mother was not so responsible and she ultimately died, leaving the children disadvantaged academically, morally, mentally and spiritually. I took the third born son to supplement his O' levels when he had passed none. He passed six subjects in two sittings in 2006. I encouraged him and assisted him to do temporary teaching. He was really against the idea of doing this but with much motivation that I gave him, now he is intending to join teaching on a permanent basis.

I also went on to take his sister (the last born) and stayed with her so that she too could sit for her O' levels. She managed to get a job as a desk attendant while she was studying. Unfortunately, she eloped and left the job. However, when she was still working, I kept on encouraging her to financially and morally help her unemployed siblings.

I also assisted the fourth born of my cousins' family and paid for him to train as a security guard. The main idea was to empower and enable them to learn to help each other since they lost both parents and they were from different fathers.

3. When my brother returned home from the United Kingdom, his two sons were still young. However, when the two boys were due for school, we observed that the schools that were near their farm were not so good. For the purposes of good education and raising the standard of the children's education I agreed to take care of the children who had to stay with me from pre-school to grade seven. The two boys (first and second born) are now with their parents since they are now doing the secondary education. I still have the grade seven one and the last born who is in grade two and is wheelchair-bound. I usually do not

find it difficult to buy his callipers and pampers since he is incontinent should the parents fail to contribute. I keep on doing the best that I can.

#### *My Paternal Relatives*

1. I once took care of my half-brother for four years while he was doing his degree in Environmental Health at Solusi University. I am also glad that my paternal brothers and sisters look up to me for assistance in cash and kind and have often commended that they have often found a good example in me and feel inspired to continue with school. My step mother is not learned and so she relies on me for advice. Even as he was growing, he would send messages for some provisions and I would make sure that I provide as much as I could. This included anyone who would make a request.

#### *Outside The Biological Families*

When I started teaching at Chikwariro Adventist Primary, I met and befriended a very poor and dirty woman during our witnessing activities. During the times that this lady would visit, my friends would run away saying, ‘There comes your dirty friend.’ She lived in a small hut with her husband, two daughters and a son. As they slept, the fireplace would separate the children from the parents. One of the children had a child from a failed marriage. I later encouraged her to build another hut, start a garden and be smart. She even called me mother although in terms of age she was a little older than my own mother. She felt that I had done for her more than what a mother would do. We also worked together to change her monthly groceries so as to meet their monthly requirements.

Helping others is like planting a fruit tree. There may be challenges but once the flowers blossom, the coming of the fruits is sure. When we empower our relatives and friends, we remove them from our budgets and multiply ourselves as they too can help those whom we used to help.

Another African volunteer who requested to remain anonymous narrated this spirit filled story which shows that the power of the African extended family in Christian witnessing cannot be under estimated.

An African boy was born in a polygamous family, the mother being the second wife. At the age of two the mother separated with the father. When the mother got remarried, he was left in the hands of grandparents. When he qualified to high school, the grandparents could not afford paying for his fees. He was then picked by the young brother to the mother, who worked as a soldier in Zimbabwe Army. Unfortunately the uncle passed away leaving two his two children behind as well as the boy when he was in form 4 with no one to pay for his O'level national examination. Then God miraculously handpicked a brother-in-law who came in and paid the national examination fees for the boy to write them. Amazing, the boy is current a successful Seventh day Adventist District pastor in West Zimbabwe Conference. He has since been able to take care of the late uncle's two children to school up to diploma and degree levels respectively. Interestingly to note is that the two boys are now baptized members of the Seventh day Adventist church even though they parents died before accepting the Adventist faith.

#### **7.5.11.3 Advantages of *umdeni***

It must be stated that the family size has serious repercussions when it comes to meeting the needs of its members. In the western world families tend to be smaller as opposed to African extended families. In small families, families adapt to the needs of the children; in African extended families children adapt to the needs of the family. Writing about the advantages of *umdeni*, Bashir (2009) shares the following experience below:

I can deduce the advantages of the extended family as follows: first, living in an extended family has taught me more of my history, the history of the family and made me understand my language better. Normally, my parents went to work and so they had little time to teach us all these things. But having my aunties and uncles around helped me learn so much about my history. I was never lonely while my parents were away, my aunt would narrate folk stories to me in Fulfulde and because of my curiosity, I would ask to know more about

her background and by so doing I got to know more about the family history as a whole. Secondly, in an extended family, one has the opportunity of multiple parents. One is being cared for by different people and this gives me the feeling of being loved by everyone. You never feel dejected or depressed, because if you are rejected by one person, you are rejected by the other. Due to the large number, one has opportunity to learn the values and norms of the society from different people.

Therefore, it gives children much more experience and exposure than in a small nuclear family where you learn only from your parents and no one else to help. Your parents cannot teach you everything. Even if they know everything, they cannot teach you because of the little time they have. Thirdly, children who grow in extended families learn cooperative work and develop a sense of brotherhood and caring for others so that when they go to the outside world, they become attached to the community and by so doing take all people in the community as his siblings. This helps us to become good leaders of the society. In addition, there is unity among members and thus one can seek protection from his immediate family members. Finally an important benefit is seen when there is a new birth, the presence of aunts make it easy for the mother since they take turns in taking care of the baby while the mother get some time to rest. For this, I am a witness and I can't even imagine how the sufferings would be if everything is left for the mother to do on her own.

It seems *umdeni* (African extended family) has more advantages on Christian witnessing than disadvantages, if any. The advantages that emerge from the points raised above with regard to the African extended family could summarized as follows: It does not provide room to orphanages but everyone belongs to a family tie; it does not promote old people's homes because the aged in the community are taken care by their immediate families; it eliminates the problem of street kids so common in African countries also; it gives opportunity to poor and orphaned children to go to school; it provides a sense of security, belonging, love and care; where the guardians are Christians; and finally it becomes an easy way of Christian witnessing to the members of the extended family.

### **7.5.12 Umsebenzi wedoda eSundu kunkosikazi (The role of the African husband to his wife)**

The roles of an African husband to his wife is fourfold better understood using four *Ps* namely as a protector, provider, player, and priest.

#### **7.5.12.1 African husband as a Protector of his wife**

Among the many tasks for an African husband is the task of protecting his wife. This view shared by Ayisi who writes that, “the truth is that marriage in the African sense conferred status and dignity.” He further asserts that it conferred certain rights on the wife and corresponding duties on the husband and vice versa. This means that the man has to protect the wife and children (Ayisi, 1997:8, 9). Similarly in Christianity, Jesus commands all husbands to protect their wives as He protects the church (Ephesians 5:28).

#### **7.5.12.2 African husband as a Provider to the wife**

Basic wife necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter are provided by the African husband. Quality food mainly African which include *ipapa* (cooked mealie meal), *amasi* (sour milk), *inkobe/ubotshisi* (cooked beans) are part of African traditional food. The African husband works hard in order to provide for his wife. His love for his wife is a measure of his strong inclination towards providing goodies for his wife. His husbandry is seen through the physical appearance of the wife; the wife is healthy emotionally, spiritually and physically. Providing for a wife is a Christian injunction, The apostle Paul says that, any husband that does not provide for his family has denied his faith and is worse than an infidel (1 Timothy 4:8).

#### **7.5.12.3 African husband as a player with his wife.**

African husbands are good players in their families. Playing is part of them and they do it through different games with their wives. The husband does it in ways that makes the wife married rather than feeling married. African husbands are game lovers and they use games to make their wives experience love. Husbands who play with their wives are affirmed by scripture which teaches about the importance of sporting with your wife. Commending Isaac’s sporting aspect, Moses wrote that, “Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife” (Genesis 26:8).

#### **7.5.12.4 The African husband as a priest of the family.**

African husband understand very well the seriousness of religion in relation to protection and success. The African husband understands that it is his role to bring blessings by taking an active role on religious matters. On the other hand he also understands that his being passive on religious issues result in curses to his family. Consider an excerpt from Rob Flood over at family life which was extracted from the website <https://www.blogger.com/t> February 8, 2017 in reference to the priestly role.

The Husband as Priest: As we love our wives, we must serve as priest. Our wives and marriages need prayer. We have the privilege and duty of petitioning God on their behalf. We should pray for their purity, their protection, their joy, their faith, and their burdens. We should pray for their success as a wife, as a mother, and as a woman of God.

The priestly role by an African husband is a complimentary of Peter's counsel to husband wherefore he says, "Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered" (1Peter 3:7).

#### **7.5.13 Inganekwana (African story telling)**

*Inganekwana* is African's oldest way to teach and pass down ethics, or right behaviour, to the next generation. Gangel (1974:17) states that, "storytelling is one of the oldest forms of transmitted culture." In my culture, *Inganekwana* was also used by my parents to bring family members and through it each member experienced a sense of warmth and belonging. Below is a list of some of the characteristics that best describe *inganekwana* from the perspective of Gangel (1974:18).

1. meaning is implied.
2. story is open-ended.
3. story arouses enthusiasm and project flights of imagination.
4. story brings pleasure, develop a feeling of fellowship and fix attitudes of appreciation to those listening.
5. In terms of developing children, the story offers a chance to build their personality.
6. In communicating concrete truth, the story explains those concepts with clarity.

7. the story is characteristically experiential by allowing children to belong into the situation as its being told.

Writing about the contribution of storytelling toward African history and culture, Nyabola (2011:25) states that

Historians often tell us that the main way through which African history was transmitted across generations was through storytelling, and that one of the ways in which African cultures were constituted and bound was through the myths of common ancestry that these stories contained. In this way, storytelling in many African communities was about more than just passing time or entertaining after a long day of work. It was a way of drawing and keeping people together, a way of situating oneself in the community and at large as well as a record of key events in that community's history.

The following points seem to emerge from Gangel and Nyabola observations about the significance of the African folk. Stories are the African way to transmit history and religious traditions by spoken rather than written means. The *inganekwana* help persons appreciate themselves and help them define their identity. The African oral tradition, with its myths, legends, stories, and proverbs, instills the important elements of religion and culture in the minds and hearts of the African people all the way across the continent. *Inganekwana* are based on values passed down by older generations to shape the foundation of the community. Story-telling is used as a bridge for knowledge and understanding- allowing the values of self and community to connect and be learned as a whole. African stories brought families together; and also contributed to a sense of warmth and belonging. SDA Elders, parents, and grandparents could be involved in teaching the children cultural ways, along with history, community values and teachings of the land; this would enhance the influence of the church among its target indigenous South Africans.

#### **7.5.14 ukulodolwozwa kosuku lweSabatha gcwele ngabaSundu (Africans and the observance of the Sabbath day holy)**

The Bible gives this command with regards to the Sabbath day,

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it (Exodus 20:8-11)

This commandment requires Christians regardless of race, tribe and faith community to keep the seventh day of the week holy. The Sabbath day according to the Bible is the seventh day of the week (Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-12, Ezekiel 20:12). During the dark ages (598-1798), the Sabbath day which God has commanded to be kept by Bible believing Christians was not kept in some parts of the world. However, it has been noted that the Waldensians, the Central African churches and the Asian Armenians are the three Sabbath heroes who courageously decided to continue keeping the Sabbath day holy as commanded by God in His word. What makes the story fascinating in relation to this study is that Africans are among the Sabbath observance heroes. Many Christian writers have dedicated chapters, papers and books to recognize the Africans' stance of remembering to keep the Sabbath day holy during spiritual darkness. White (1954:577-578) emphatically records that,

The churches of Africa held the Sabbath as it was held by the papal church before her complete apostasy. While they kept the seventh day in obedience to the commandment of God, they abstained from labor on the Sunday in conformity to the custom of the church. Upon obtaining supreme power, Rome had trampled upon the Sabbath of God to exalt her own; but the churches of Africa, hidden for nearly a thousand years, did not share in this apostasy. When brought under the sway of Rome, they were forced to set aside the true and exalt the false sabbath; but no sooner had they regained their independence than they returned to obedience to the fourth commandment.

Although White is from the western world, she recognizes the African continental for upholding the fourth commandment which enjoins people to remember the Sabbath day to keep holy. She is

not embarrassed to make reference that it was the churches of Africa not of America that refuse to apostatize.

Commending the stance taken by the Ashanti of Ghana with regard to Sabbath observance, Nortey (1989:30) wrote that, “In the Ghanaian context, especially within the people forming the Ashanti or Akan nation, Saturday has been a traditionally accepted holy day, a day for worship of God. Someone may ask why the Ghanaians kept the Sabbath day holy. The simple explanation is that the Ashanti in their practice of true worship kept the Sabbath day holy because they were committed to God’s revealed will (the Ten Commandments which include the commandment to remember to keep the Sabbath day holy). They also were following in the footsteps of Christ Jesus (Luke 4:16, John 15:14)

Awoniwi (1989:52) strongly advances this point, that “among the Yoruba people, the Seventh day of the week is a day when no work, no marriages, no festivities should be performed. It is known as the forbidden day.” Like the Ashanti of Ghana, the Yoruba people publicly declared their allegiance to observe the Sabbath day as commanded in Exodus 20:10-11). Their faithfulness amid spiritual darkness demonstrates that they were completely uncorrupted by false teachings.

Another interesting view from Ethiopia, Heye (1968:47) shares this powerful experience about the observance of Sabbath. He emphatically wrote that “The history of Seventh day Sabbath is deep rooted in the culture of Ethiopian people. There is no record at any time in the history of the Ethiopia Orthodox church that this church has officially given up Sabbath observance.

Bradford (1999:11) presents an interesting statistics on Sabbath observers in Africa. He mentions that,

According to reliable estimate, the African continent is the home to the largest concentration of Sabbath observance in the world. As many as 20 million people hold some measure of allegiance to the Sabbath. The Sabbath has vital roots in Africa, an African connection, if you please, carried forward by a people who bear, in some mysterious way, visceral memories of the Sabbath, however faint.”

Bonwick (1983:412-413) discovered the following about Egyptian reference to Sabbath observance from a British explorer and scholar:

The pious authoress of ‘Mazzaroth’ wrote: The Babylonians, Egyptians, Chinese, and the natives of India were acquainted with the seven days’ division of time, as were the Druids.’ Bailly says, ‘It is to the Egyptians that is attributed the idea of dedicating each day of the week to one of the planets.’ Sonnerat considered Saturday the Indian Sani or Saturn. Jahn says: ‘Egyptians consecrated to Saturn the seventh day of the week.’ He further notes that ‘the Egyptians seem to have observed it very regularly.’

Finally, White (1954:63) credits Africa for being a repository of knowledge of God suggesting that “in lands beyond the jurisdiction of Rome there existed for many centuries boards of Christians who believed in the perpetuity of the Law of God and observed the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Churches that held to the faith and practice existed in Central Africa and among the Armenians of Asia.” These Christian writers are in agreement with Mbiti (1969:1) who recognized that Africans are adamant on religious matters and affirmed that by his popular statement that “Africans are notoriously religious.”

#### **7.5.15 Ubuntu value**

Ubuntu which is a Zulu word serves as the spiritual foundation of African societies. It is a unifying vision or world view enshrined in the Zulu maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, i.e. "a person is a person through other persons" (Shutte, 1993:46). According to website [www.everyculture.com/wc/Rwanda-to-Syria/Zulu.html](http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Rwanda-to-Syria/Zulu.html) accessed on 2015, October 22 *Ubuntu* means (literally, "humanness," "good moral nature," "good disposition." *Ubuntu* one of the ethics and moral codes of African culture is embedded in values, customs, and taboos. God is seen as the ultimately giver of morality. Moral offences which lack *Ubuntu* include disrespect or rudeness toward elderly people, sexual transgressions (like incest, rape, intercourse with children, adultery, or persons of the same sex), murder, stealing, robbery, telling lies, deliberately causing bodily or property harm, and the use of sorcery and witchcraft- (Lucas 1971:53). African communities punish such acts by making the offender and his or her family suffers shame by paying a fine, by ostracism, or by beating, stoning or burning the offender to death because they do not promote *Ubuntu* value.

On the other hand, Ubuntu value is expressed through virtues like kindness, friendliness, truthfulness, politeness, generosity, hospitality, hard work, caring for the sick or elderly parents, respect for elderly people and the weak and retarded, and protection of children and women. In addition, women are regarded and treated as full moral agents; hence society protects women against maltreatment by men. The reason for this is that Ubuntu says they are generally less able to defend themselves physically, especially when they are pregnant or aged. Ubuntu is a priceless value in the African culture. African communities demonstrate Ubuntu through participating in community projects like digging a community dam, attending community member's funeral, weddings, ploughing together (*amalima*), herding cattle together, children playing together, and many other positive community activities. To be anti-community in reference to the above community based activities is a sin. Therefore, Ubuntu concept because of its theological richness should be employed to promote Christianity among African people and other people of the world with less if no costs at all. The researcher then submits this premise that Christianity without Ubuntu values is dead; Christianity with Ubuntu values is Christ like.

#### **7.5.16 Ubuntombi (virginity)**

In African culture *ubuntombi* is valued very much and African girls are encouraged to enter in marriage as virgins. Mbiti (1969:141) presents the following strong arguments why *ubuntombi* is an important value in Africa.

The blood of virginity is the symbol that life has been preserved, that the spring of life has not already been flowing wastefully, and that both the girl and her relatives have preserved the sanctity of human reproduction. Only marriage may shed this sacred blood. Virginity at the wedding is greatly respected in some African societies. Virginity symbolizes purity not only of the body but also of moral life; and a virgin bride is the greatest glory and crown to her parents, husband and relatives.

The value attached to *ubuntombi* in African culture can be used to promote many Christian values such as purity, moral uprightness, blameless, and holiness. Many social evils that are prevalent among Christian teenagers such as teen pregnancies and abortion can be prevented if sexuality issues are approached from an African *ubuntombi* perspective. Christian teenagers through African's view that *ubuntombi* is a virtue can be encouraged to keep their sexual

mystery for three reasons, namely for marriage, till death and till the second coming of Jesus. Sexual education for girls is not a new practice to Africa yet modern trends are influencing it to be an outdated practice in communities. However it is still encouraging that there are still some voices that advocate for maintaining virginity at whatever cost. Tamale (2011:618) postulates that, “Sexual initiation traditions across the continent that are espoused by erotic cultures, such as the Ssenga among the Banganda of Uganda, the tete among the Shona of Zimbabwe, the alangizi among the yao of Malawi, and the Chewa/Nyanja of Zambia,...all carry empowering messages for young girls.”

The reason why Tamale and Mbiti still promote sex education lessons is to empower girls to remain *intombi* (virgin) before marriage. They should know that sex may result in a pregnancy and learn how to avoid situations that may lead them into having sexual intercourse. Girls are also taught that they are capable of becoming pregnant following the ovulation circle. Traditional African culture promotes conduct not condoms on matters of sex so that a girl gets married as a virgin. However, we live in a society that has abandoned certain cultural practices which have been considered uncivilized by modern influence. For instance some African parents mainly those in urban areas, because of western influence on sex now promote condoms rather than conduct because it is considered as a backward and an outdated practice. The aim of African valuing *ubuntombi* was to prevent rather than deal with a problem as illustrated in the case study below.

#### **7.5.16. 1 A case study from Nigeria**

Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, there is a ceremony carried out by the family on the day of marriage of a boy and a girl. This ceremony motivates all girls to keep their *ubuntombi*, because if they do not, it will be discovered by the whole community on the day of her marriage and thus bringing great shame to her. Consider what Ellis (1994) says about this ceremony.

The marriage-feast is held at the house of the parents of the bridegroom, and the bride is conducted there by a procession of women, who sing an epithalamium. The bride is put to bed by a female of the bridegroom's family, who remains concealed in the apartment till the bridegroom has joined the bride; after which she secures the “tokens of virginity,” and, coming out of the room, displays them to the assembled company. She then carries them to the

house of the parents of the bride, who never attend a daughter's wedding-feast, and next morning they are hung on the fence for edification of the public.

It should be noted that in this ceremony the girl's virginity status will represent her whole clan therefore; it is the duty of the whole clan to preserve the virginity of their young girls so that they will not be disgraced on wedding day. The Yorubas, our fellow Africans' emphasis to guard jealously the virginity of their girls is commendable. Such high moral standard by the Yoruba people of Nigeria enjoys the support of scripture that teaches plainly that *ubuntombi* is a Christian virtue. Challenging the immoral Corinthian Christians to remain both physical and spiritual pure, Paul writes "For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ" (2Corinthians 11:2). The prophet Isaiah commended Mary's moral uprightness that led her being considered to be the mother of baby Jesus then wrote that, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son" (Matthew 1:23). Since *ubuntombi* is a Christian virtue, therefore Africans must be applauded for promoting this Christian value whose emphasis is moral purity before marriage and after marriage. Thus the SDA church can use *ubuntombi* virtue to be attractive to the indigenous South Africans.

#### **7.5.17 *uBunye buka Nkulunkulu* (monotheistic view of God)**

Another strong value of African religiosity is the *ubunye buka Nkulunkulu*. African monotheism understands God as being the eternal Creator and Sustainer of all things. They believe that His unique nature and essence makes Him a distinguish Creator from all other beings. They say other beings are created, whereas God is self-existent. The Zulu (South Africa) point this out clearly, when they call God, *uZivelele*, which means: "He who is of Himself, the Self-existent One" writes Thorpe (1991:34). God is eternal, without beginning and without end, all knowing, all powerful, both distant and near.

Writing on self-existence of God as propagated by Africans, White (1945:356) wrote that "in Jesus we have life, and life unborrowed." The monotheistic view of God is further strengthened by the singular form African people ascribe to the various names they assign to God. They acknowledge no other being of the same nature or equal status as though there would be more than One. God is God and does not entertain the unimaginable idea that there is or could be more than one God that made the heavens and the earth, who created the sky and the mountains, the waters and the light, the stars and the moon, who still creates babies and heals the sick. The

singular names of God in Africa should be used by the SDA church to enhance and promote Christianity among African people as these names do not tolerate polytheism but are monotheistic in nature. Most African names of God cannot be rendered in plural form. Here are some few Zulu and Ndebele names of God which are all in singular form: *uThixo* (most high God), *uSimakade* (everlasting God), *uSomandla* (the all Powerful One), *uNkulunkulu* (the Great, Great One), *uMdali* (the Creator), *uVelingangi* (Creator God). The Shona people of Zimbabwe call Him *Mwari wokumusorosoro*, implying “God who is on high.” They also call Him *Musika vanhu*, the Creator of humanity.

#### **7.5.18 *ukugana* (*The Dating System*)**

*Ukugana* as a preoccupation in the minds of the young people has tremendous impact if cultures remain silent on dating. The unfortunate thing is that at this stage success or failure is measured by how well one is chosen or accepted as a date. Value is placed on how popular one is whereas emphasis is on physical appearance. For example, those who lack pleasant personalities and pretty faces quickly but wrongly learn that they may compensate by delivering sexual favors and dressing seductively.

In response to all these challenges above, the African culture offers possible solutions to address *ukugana*. First and foremost, *ukugana* in the African culture is a parental affair with the help of relatives. Parents sit with their grown up boys and girls and presents qualities of a prospective spouse. The issues that are raised include moral values, home management experience, economic stability, household duties, diligent, manual labor, country life, physical and mental maturity, respect and God. Affirming parental involvement in the choosing for one to marry, White (1930:190) insists that, “Parental guidance should be sought for because children cannot trust their own inclinations which are full of selfishness and immature judgement.” Mbiti (1969) records that, “In Wolof tribe in Africa, when a young man meets a girl whom he intends to marry he tells his father about the matter.” In addition, Jewish marriages were arranged by the father or mother. Yamauchi (1978:242) concurs, “Marriage was arranged by the parents; a mother could play a role (Gen. 21:21; 27:24), but a father could act alone (38:6).”

Secondly, dating also focuses on *ubuntombi* (virginity) and *ukusoka* (male circumcision). *Ubuntombi* is seriously emphasized and guarded jealously. Girls are taught that if she loses her virginity, her *lobola* will be lowered if not requested from her husband. Virginity is considered

like a seal on a new product and business terms are used to explain its value. For example, merchandisers say if the seal is broken from a newly bought product, the consumer must retain that product. If he decides not to retain it, he must use it at his own risk. Similarly, if a boy marries a girl who has lost her virginity he knows it well that it's at his risk. Boys are taught not to dare date another man as this is taboo, *kuyazila*. Boys are required particularly among the Zulu, Xhosa and Ndebele to go through circumcision as per each of the tribal custom.

This researcher's father was circumcised according to the Ndebele custom during his teenager age. According to his father, the purpose of circumcision was twofold: to initiates a boy into another status, that is, *idoda sibili* (man indeed). The second reason was a health reason and sexuality because both the foreskin and the vein beneath are cut. Hence male circumcision is considered paramount because it separates boys from men. With the benefits associated with the circumcision custom, the researcher recommends it and that it should be done in an African way with modern safety methods considered. On the other hand, the circumcision custom must not be enforced to those who do not desire to practice it.

The third aspect is that both boys and girls are discouraged from having secret dating; rather they are encouraged to take their date either to an aunt or an uncle. The courtship can develop but is allowed to mature only after both the boy and the girl have assured themselves that the relationship has parental approval. Recently, the strength of the African culture and involvement of parents on dating issues has been noted by media. The website <http://www.myzimbabwe.co.zw/news/6642-five-reasons-ndebele-girls-make-the-best-wives.html> published on 10 May 2016 presented that Ndebele girls are "well cultured." The reporter further revealed that Ndebele parents are mostly disciplinarians and they give least or no chance for their daughter or even sons to misbehave. They always make sure that they instill basic and fundamental life principles into their children and that it encourages them to take life seriously. Finally, the African culture provides a platform for group dating in order to deal with *isigwadi* syndrome. *Isigwadi* syndrome refers to a young person that is struggling to be chosen or accepted as a date. The group dating then provides a platform for the young people to be together for the purpose of knowing each other better as well as protecting them from engaging in sexual activities. When group date is organized a matron or patron is asked to go with the young people to supervise them during their group dating activities. We conclude by saying the African dating

custom is rich, hence because of its rich values, the SDA church can use it as a platform to dialogue with would-be African Christians.

### ***7.5.19 uKuhlonitshwa kwempilo (The Sacredness of life)***

From an African perspective, the shedding of blood is abhorred. People who were killed were those whose continued existence was a threat to the life of others and to the peace of the community. In such cases, the principle that it is better for one man to die than for all the community to perish, applies (Idowu 1980:56). War was only engaged in as a last resort when all formal and normal courses of action to search for peace had failed. Murder was not encouraged, especially within the clan. If a man consciously killed people within the community, he was killed himself. But if he killed a kinsman inadvertently, he was exiled for a period of time.

In addition, the sacredness associated with the life goes to explain the rigidity with which the Africans treat and regard sexual intercourse and the sex organs. It must be noted that sex taboos and the demand for virginity before marriage stems from the fact that Africans believe that: “The blood of virginity is the symbol that life has been preserved, that the spring of life has not already been flowing wastefully, and that both the girl and her relatives have preserved the sanctity of human reproduction” (Amadi 1982:58). This thought is categorically stated, in Exodus 20 when God orders the children of Israel never to murder. The African values life more than anything else.

Again, this idea of sanctity of life makes it an abomination for anyone, under any circumstances to take his own life. Suicide was never permitted. Punishment for it was such that the person was not buried since his corpse was also believed to be abominable to mother earth. The African prizes life above every other thing. Amadi (1982:86) states that, “the Igbo saying *Nduka* – life is supreme – is expressive of the African regard for life. Therefore, any form of materialism which ultimately leads to the destruction of life is alien and destructive of the African culture and concept of human life and should be avoided.” The insights shared above reveals that sacredness of life is an African value which can be an entering wedge for the Seventh-Adventist Church missions among African people.

### **7.5.20 uMtshado (Marriage)**

What does it mean to be married to an African? Who is involved in an African marriage? Should African girls steal their way out of their father's houses secretly and get attached to a boyfriend without the knowledge of parents and relatives? Marriage is important to the African as it was during the biblical times. In Africa marriage is sacred because it solidifies relationships that enrich communities and nations by bringing forth new life and new hope. African cultures celebrate marriage as a community; marriage is a public affair where the whole community is invited. Parrinder (1954) confirms that,

Marriage in Africa is a social affair, concerned as much with the contracting families as with the man and wife. The highly individualistic, and often irreligious, form of many modern European marriages, with two people uniting without the presence of the families, and strangers as witnesses would be incomprehensible to most Africans. The instability of such marriages, and the high divorce rate, would be taken by them as inevitable.”

Marriage is that cultural process which ushers in new life. The departed count on being taken care of by, and or are assured of their incarnation through their descendants. Lugira (2009:70) states that, “A person with no descendants disrupts the chain of reincarnation to the great annoyance of the ancestors.” It is a cherished and most afforded by communities, between man and woman for those who meet the criteria.

#### **7.5.20.1 Preparation for marriage**

Mbiti (1969) notes that, “preparation for marriage is the key moment which may be marked with rituals, when a child has been born physically, it must also be born ritually or religiously in order to make it a social member of the community. At a later age, it goes through a series of initiation rites. These initiation rites are like the birth of the young people into the state of maturity and responsibility.” Since marriage is a lifetime event, Africans take the preparation element seriously. Immaturity in all spheres of life by parties is not allowed. On the other hand, maturity is fostered through a series of rites so that the parties are exposed to post marriage activities.

Parrinder (1954) asserts that, “the aim of the initiation is to prepare the person for sex life; marriage is its logical outcome. Girls in particular may marry any time after the completion of

the puberty rites.” The importance of initiation rites is also recognized by Lugira (2009) who shares these valuable insights: “the approach, timing and places for the rites of initiation vary from people to people. Young people may be initiated through either physical or instructional retreats. Physical initiation usually means circumcision. The initiation rites give them instruction in matters of sexual life, marriage and procreation and family responsibilities. Parents play a very important role in marriage. For example, elders take young people to the retreats away from home where they learn the arts of communal living. They are introduced to the basic facts of adult life. They are taught the sharing of privileges, rights, duties and responsibilities of the community.” It should be appreciated that Africans recognized the godly counsel in order to contribute to the success of marriage. It will be a futile exercise for African young people to ignore parental counsel on marriage related issues. It is a blessing to African young people who are contemplating marriage to be guided through these initiation rites as they offer young people a platform to learn valuable marriage lessons. Such lessons exclude female circumcision since the Zulu/Ndebele culture has no place for that.

African view of marriage is in harmony with the teaching of scripture with maturity being a key requirement to those who contemplate marriage. Writing to young people who are preparing for marriage, White (1956:135) gives this counsel: “early marriages should not be encouraged. A relation, as important as marriage and, so far reaching, should not be entered upon hastily. There is need for sufficient preparation and development both mentally and physically.” The Bible also speaks about a man not a boy in reference to marriage. The assumption is that early marriages by immature parties have not biblical basis. Moses wrote that, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). One can therefore conclude that, in line with the teaching of scripture, maturity is a clear indicator for marriage which is also the African thought.

#### **7.5.21 *uBuhlobo* (kinship custom)**

There is much emphasis placed on kinship in traditional marriages, clans and family structures. Life in Africa strives on a social structure which is known as *ubuhlobo* system. Pulling out of the *ubuhlobo* isolates the individual. One of the best study or work on the *ubuhlobo* custom is by Mbiti (1969:104) explains that:

The deep sense of kinship, with all it implies, has been one of the strongest forces in traditional African life. Kinship is recognized through blood and

betrothal (engagement and marriage). It is kinship which controls social relationships between people in a given community: it governs marital customs and regulations; it determines the behavior one individual toward another... Almost all the concepts connected with human can be understood and interpreted through the kinship system.

The importance of *ubuhlobo* has also received some attention from anthropological and sociological studies of African people. Mbiti (1969:104) has drawn some aspects of *ubuhlobo* from the study done by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and D. Forde in their book *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*. Below are some few observations from their work.

The kinship system is like a vast network stretching laterally (horizontally) in every direction, to embrace everybody in any given local group. This means that each individual is a brother or sister, father or mother, grand-mother or grandfather, or cousin or brother-in-law, uncle or aunt, or something else, to everybody else. That means that everybody else, and there are many kinship terms to express the precise kind of relationship pertaining between two individuals. When two strangers meet in a village, one of the first duties is to sort out how they may be related to each other, and having discovered how the kinship system applies to them, they behave to each other according to the accepted behavior set down by society. If they discover, for example, that they are 'brothers', then they will treat each other as equals, or as an older and younger brother, if they are 'uncle' and 'nephew', then the 'nephew' may be expected to give much respect to the 'uncle' where this type of relationship is required by society. It is possible also that from that moment on, the individuals concerned will refer to each other by the kinship term of, for instance, 'brother', 'nephew', 'uncle', 'mother', with or without using their proper names. Such being the case then, a person has literally hundreds of 'fathers', hundreds of 'mothers', hundreds of 'uncles'.

The networks of relationships created by *ubuhlobo* are remarkably extended and deep. In fact, the words 'family', 'brother', 'sister', 'uncle', 'aunt', etc. in African culture refer to someone you can relate with and someone you can share burdens with. According to Shorter (1975:98) the

family for the traditional African, "...usually includes one's direct parents, grand and great grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews. And normally from a kinship perspective, a child would refer to any of his uncles or aunts as his father or mother, his nephews and nieces as his/her brothers and sisters..."

## 7.6 Conclusion

Africans are linked by their strong customs and values that are fundamental features of African identity and culture. These, for example, are Ubuntu, hospitality, neighborliness, fellowship, virginity, role of blood in the covenant just to mention a few. These customs and values typically underpin the variations of African culture and identity everywhere. The existence of African identity is not in doubt regarding personality characteristics he believes to be inherent in the African mind, identifies and discusses sociality, patience, tolerance and acceptance.

African people and their societies are not wronged if one can safely say they strive in African customs and values which have been found to be consistent with biblical principles. The significance of each African custom and value discussed in this chapter is seen in the activities they do and to promote operation amongst themselves. For example, disunity is not even a theme in the African culture, and more so to be anti-community is a sin in Africa. It should be understood that African customs and values discussed are in line with biblical customs and values. Hence it will be a joy to the researcher to see the SDA gospel agents use African customs and values to promote Christianity in South Africa within the context of these African customs and values.

## CHAPTER 8

### Data presentation and analysis

#### **8.0 Introduction**

To know more about the needs of indigenous South Africans, I conducted a survey which incorporated the following items such as the subjects, method, data presentation and analysis, descriptive statistics and findings.

#### **8.1 The Subjects**

The subjects for this study were members of Seventh-day Adventist church in South Africa. The testing of members offered a number of unique opportunities; a large number of people were available and they had comparable backgrounds and status. They were all under some degree of calmness as it not during worship exercise and still did not experience the pressure of concentrating on the preaching. Opportunities to compare the western-ness and African-ness Christian practices, African customs and values, contextualizing Christianity in South Africa, contextual SDA mission stations and local SDA church programs and leadership over a number of variables in the survey were available. There was also opportunity to check the relative strength of African customs and values in terms of its attraction factor of indigenous South Africans to Jesus.

#### **8.2 Method**

The population for the study consisted of all the 150 members of the Seventh - day Adventist church. However, only 85 members were used for the analysis because some target sample group did not return the questionnaires on the collection day. The survey was administered in September and participants were told that their views were to be treated with confidence. The survey questions were handed to the researcher team which distributed the questionnaires in various churches. The participants were told to fill the forms and bring them next Sabbath. The survey forms were framed in a way that it sought responses mainly to the following questions.

- (a) What members value most in promoting Christianity among indigenous South Africans? (b) Which Christian practices are influential in soul winning and soul retention of indigenous South Africans? (c) Is the SDA church Christian image is South Africa western or African? (d) Do African customs and values Christian practices attract indigenous South Africans to Jesus? (e)

Are contextual SDA mission stations key in church growth in South Africa? (f) Is it important for the SDA church to identify, appoint and develop indigenous South African as leaders in order to grow and spread Adventism in many parts of South Africa?

### **8.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The data collected was coded and scored for each factor which was added for all respondents and then analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. The SPSS was the relevant computer software (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003:183). The frequency score was used to determine the overall views of the respondents on each item as a measure of central tendency while standard deviation was used to measure dispersion.

In this survey, I investigated the differences between western type of Christianity and African type of Christianity, and differences between foreign led and indigenous led churches and as well as views of respondents on African customs and values Christian practices. I expected the differences to appear as follows in the questionnaire.

1. A strong sense of fellowship is found in less westernized African churches than in more westernised African churches.
2. Contextually relevant philosophy of SDA ministry would score higher than western type of Christianity in reaching indigenous South Africans.
3. African customs and values Christian practices would enhance SDA mission by attracting and retaining more indigenous South Africans to Jesus.

The results of the analysis are displayed in Tables 1-64 showing the frequency scores in the questionnaire and highlight the fact that differences between western-ness and African-ness, African customs and values are significant.

**Table 1: Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	55	64.7	64.7	64.7
	Female	30	35.3	35.3	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 show that more men than women participated in this study because their spiritual tone is sometime higher than that of women. The study also reveals that in South Africa more men are regular and active members of the SDA church.

**Table 2: Language**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Zulu/Ndebele	72	84.7	84.7	84.7
	English	5	5.9	5.9	90.6
	Other	8	9.4	9.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The high score of 72 is a significant number that the Zulu language is preferred over other languages in SDA churches. Since the study was carried in Zulu predominate church and community, this suggests that indigenous South Africans prefer their local dialects such as IsiZulu, Sotho, isiXhosa, Venda, Shangani, etc in all church services than English or other foreign based languages. The bold statement communicated by the respondents is that they don't want to be foreigners in SDA churches by using English and other languages as the medium of communication. It seems the SDA churches in urban areas should use English as a medium of communication where it's necessary or probably cut number of English speaking churches and promote indigenous languages.

**Table 3: Denominational Affiliation**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adventist	84	98.8	98.8	98.8
	Non-Adventist	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

As illustrated on Table 3, the highest score of 84 points shows the involvement and commitment the Adventists put forth towards the success of this study. This becomes strength since the study

sought to hear the views and opinions of the Adventist on why there is insignificant growth of the church among the indigenous South Africans.

**Table 4: The Christian image that Indigenous South Africans received from the missionaries and practice today in the Seventh day Adventist church is very much Western?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	No	10	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

As shown on Table 4, it seems that the SDA Christian image practiced by indigenous South Africans is very much western because of the higher rate of selection. The difference (65 points) is significant showing an absence of a contextual ministry in South Africa by the SDA church. This could be one of the reasons why there is insignificant growth of the church in South Africa.

**Table 5: Worship programs**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	African-ness	10	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

A strong dynamic worship is one of the keys of an effective church. It is sad to note that 88 percent of respondents say their worship programs in SDA churches in South Africa are very western in nature. Mbiti (1969:228) stated that, “Mission Christianity has come to mean for many Africans simply a set of rules to be observed, promises to be expected in the next world, rhythm less hymns to be sung, rituals to be followed and a few other outward things.” With such a strong westernised worldview, the indigenous South Africans find it difficult to practice Christianity leaving them spiritual hungry.

**Table 6: Wedding celebrations**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	70	82.4	82.4	82.4
	African-ness	15	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

According Table 6, it seems the dominate customs of the wedding procedures are those from the western world with 70 points. Adventist Africans feel at home whenever there is a church wedding if practices, procedures and significance of the wedding and marriage customs are African-ness as long as they is no violation of biblical principles. However, this scenario makes them feel foreign in their own local church making it difficult to attract non-Adventists.

**Table 7: Singing**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	74	87.1	87.1	87.1
	African-ness	11	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Africans love singing especially when it's from the African perspective. Africans have songs for every event; however Table 7 presents a bleak future for music from the African perspective in Africa. It seems the singing in most Adventist churches is a western type of singing with 74 points over 11 points African-ness. To reach out to the majority of indigenous South Africans, the SDA church needs to be aware of this challenge in order to indigenise its singing. Lugira (2009) posits that music usually accompany African rituals and was also used in prayer to the spirits. Africans had songs that were sung during rites of passage ceremonies, for instance, (*ukweluka*) the rite of circumcision for boys entering manhood.

**Table 8: Dress code in church**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	78	91.8	91.8	91.8
	African-ness	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Western-ness is considered more superior than African-ness on matters of dress code in church as validated by the 78 points. According to Chibueze (2007:83), “The fatal equation of Western Christianity with civilisation meant that Africans were uncivilised.” The understanding is that African-ness is backward even on matters of dress code. Mission Christianity taught that formal dress code for church should be suit and neck tie. It will be a joy to this researcher if the SDA can be culturally relevant by discouraging such thinking and encourage indigenous South Africans to values their African attire to the point of using them for church.

**Table 9: Meals**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	73	85.9	85.9	85.9
	African-ness	12	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

As illustrated in Table 9, Adventist meals have been westernised with 73 points higher than 12 points for meals with an African-ness flavour. While the target people group by Adventist are the indigenous South Africans who mainly are Africans, it is difficult for this group to be attracted to a church that advocate for western type of food at the expense of traditional African meals. This information serves to equip Adventist to change from promoting westernised meals which most of them are too refined opt for traditional African meals that are indigenous in order to be attractive to the indigenous South Africans.

**Table 10: Dating custom**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	73	85.9	85.9	85.9
	African-ness	12	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

There is an outcry that dating custom in Adventist churches tend to follow the western type with 73 point rather than the African style with only 12 points. It should be noted that the African dating custom embraces the idea of parental involvement as advocated in the Bible (Genesis 23). Mbiti (1969:143) concurs with that idea by mentioning that “marriage negotiations are initiated and arranged by parents.” It will be a good strategy by Adventist to encourage young African Adventist who are contemplating marriage to involve their parents in order to win the confidence of those Africans who value the biblical and African way of dating.

**Table 11: Do you agree that Christianity the way Adventists in Africa were oriented means denouncing everything that makes us Africans which include the African songs, African foods, and African customs and values?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	66	77.6	77.6	77.6
	No	19	22.4	22.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

There is overwhelming evidence with a score of 66 points as shown on Table 11 that the orientation given to Africans is that anything African should be discarded. African Christians often practice Christianity in the context of Western culture. This includes names given to their children, meals, singing, dress code, customs and values. Chibueze (2007:82) states forceful that, “European culture was taken to be identical with Christianity and what was not European was seen as not Christian. African religiosity and cultural standards were judged then by Western theological standards. As a result Africans were seen as godless heathens.”

**Table 12: In the Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa, the universal need for African customs and values such as community and fellowship are felt acutely in the practice of Christianity. Do you agree or disagree?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	62	72.9	72.9	72.9
	Disagree	23	27.1	27.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Since community in Africa is an arena for fellowship and reconciliation, it seems the score of 62 points validate that these key African values are absent in the Seventh-day Adventist church. The Acts 2 church grew fast because of the presence of fellowship and community that the church embraced. People carried each other's burden. In traditional Africa, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. The essence of the African personality is not entirely individualistic. The being of an African can be truly understood as “being-in-relation” (Donkor 2011:77). It is high time the SDA church be the intimate community in order to attract the indigenous South Africans.

**Table 13: Indigenous South African peoples, Zulus included, are being stripped of their practice of African culture in the name of anything African is evil.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	65	76.5	76.5	76.5
	Disagree	20	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

A high score of 65 points is a clear demonstration that missionaries set a stage for degrading African culture. Chibueze (2007:82) mentioned that, “The Africans, in this sense, represented the antithesis of true humanity, for the standard of participation in humanity was determined by how near they stood to the European culture.” Through inculturation and incarnational ministry, it

should be the burden of the SDA to correct such negative views about the African culture in order to win the confidence of the indigenous South Africans.

**Table 14: How would you rate the image of the Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa mainly among the indigenous dominated communities?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Strong	9	10.6	10.6	10.6
	Strong	25	29.4	29.4	40.0
	Weak	37	43.5	43.5	83.5
	Very Weak	14	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The image of SDA in South Africa mainly among the indigenous dominated communities is negative. It seems the church has gone to hibernation with a score of 51 points confirming that status. The weakness of the church could be associated with its western type of Christianity on issues such as worship, singing, meals, and ethics. The weakness may be as a result of being culturally irrelevant in terms of ministry among the indigenous South Africans. This information serves to challenge the church to work on reviving its image so that it can be culturally relevant to its target people group.

**Table 15: The language of the local people should hold precedence over any other language**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	80	94.1	94.1	94.1
	Disagree	1	1.2	1.2	95.3
	Undecided	4	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The diversity of languages among the indigenous South African have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel by the Seventh-day Adventist church. To deal with this hindrance, 94.1 percent endorses the idea that the language of the local people should hold precedence over any other language. Speaking about the importance of the local language in mission activities, White (1946:39) states that, “Every known tongue was represented by assembled. This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles.” In addition, Luke 2: 34 records that,

Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and was confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?”

The example above shows the importance of being language relevant in order to accommodate different ethnic group with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Table 16: The SDA church should be a church that acknowledges the blunders of missionaries, colonial rule, e.g. Apartheid, etc.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	63	74.1	74.1	74.1
	Disagree	15	17.6	17.6	91.8
	Undecided	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Successful organisations including churches always take a bold stance of owning the mistakes of their predecessors in order to win the confidence of those who were hurt by the previous system. The SDA church according to Table 16 needs to acknowledge the blunders of missionaries during the apartheid era with 63 points in favour of and 15 points against that position respectively. The 63 points are significant indicator that the church needs to make a public

statement about the evils of apartheid and clearly show through its lifestyle that it is now an inclusive church by promoting unity among different races, tribes and nationality.

**Table 17: The SDA church in South Africa should desist from a superficial and weekend Christianity**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	59	69.4	69.4	69.4
	Disagree	15	17.6	17.6	87.1
	Undecided	11	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

A score of 59 points is in agreement with Mbiti (1969:1) that Africans are notoriously religiously. Religion is a way of life among Africans. They find it difficult to practice Christianity only on weekends since mission Christianity “the rest of the week is empty. Mbiti (1969:228) further observed that, “Africans, who traditionally do not know religious vacuum, feel that they don’t get enough religion from this type of Christianity.”

**Table 18: Music should be relevant to both young and old South African Christians while not undermining the absolute principles of music as believed by Adventists.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	Disagree	6	7.1	7.1	95.3
	Undecided	4	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The Seventh-day Adventist church as a denomination started in America. The culture there seems to define worship styles of the church worldwide, and Africa in particular. This trend seems to be alienating other cultures like African music as pagan and primitive and does not fit for worship in the Adventist church. However, according Table 18, responses up to 75 points are

making a statement to church leaders and African worshippers to appreciate that God accepts praises and worship in any culture. This means that music genre, music notation, rhythm and the use of instruments should be relevant to both young and old African Christians while not undermining the absolute principles of music as believed by Adventists. The Seventh-day Adventist church must use this information to understand that Africans are influenced towards worship through music; hence their worship systems are full of singing.

**Table 19: The SDA church should construct a biblical- undergirded framework of anointing, healing, exorcism and other special services**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	55	64.7	64.7	64.7
	Disagree	15	17.6	17.6	82.4
	Undecided	15	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

African people value miracles in their daily lives. Meister and Capan (2007:29) observe that for the African person miracles are “direct outcomes of the activities of the supreme being.” As shown on Table 19, there are 55 points urging the SDA church to construct a biblical-undergirded framework of anointing, healing, exorcism and other miracle related special services. According to Pinn (2013:25) Africans are more likely to embrace a religion that will talk of miraculous powers. Hence for the SDA church to appeal to Africans there is need to consider and respond positively to the views of 55 respondents who are calling for a bible based miracle ministry.

**Table 20: Chastity and marital purity should be encouraged and preserved**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	79	92.9	92.9	92.9
	Disagree	4	4.7	4.7	97.6
	Undecided	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

A score of 79 point over 4 points is a strong statement that chastity and marital purity should be encouraged and maintained by both married and unmarried members of SDA. Such a lifestyle is the best sermon the church can preach. Jesus said, “Therefore by their fruits you will know them” (Matthew 7:20).

**Table 21: Would you like to see revived the biblical and African custom of church members addressing one another as “brother” and “sister”?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	71	83.5	83.5	83.5
	Disagree	9	10.6	10.6	94.1
	Undecided	5	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

One of the theological concepts that was born during the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus is the terminology ‘brother.’ Luke records it this way, “And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul (Act 9:17). It is this encounter that formulated Paul’s theology on the significant of brotherhood as he then refers to all saints as brothers and sisters. It is interest that with a score of 71 points the respondents are calling for this old biblical custom to revive in all our SDA churches.

**Table 22: Special areas of needs among African people such as dedication of a new car, a new house, or property, etc should be emphasized**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	57	67.1	67.9	67.9
	Disagree	21	24.7	25.0	92.9
	Undecided	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

The concept of power is predominant in the African culture. It is the spirit of power that African people value dedication of a new car, a new house, or property with 57 points in preference of that. The power aspect can be amplified by Hebrews 12:1 in which the diseased believers are described as a cloud or multitude of witnesses who encourage us to live in harmony with all people (Hebrews. 12:14). So the SDA church should present God as a powerful being over all demonic forces rather underrate the power focus as they evangelizes indigenous South Africans whose worldview is predominately power packed.

**Table 23: Christianity in South Africa can be better than what it is now, especially when it is divested of its foreign and western garments and is arrayed in the African customs and values?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	64	75.3	75.3	75.3
	Disagree	14	16.5	16.5	91.8
	Undecided	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

There is a call to African Adventist Christians in South Africa to rise and be real and to put off western garments and be arrayed in African customs and values according to Table 23. This high score of (64 points) suggests that there is an urgent need to bridge the gap in between biblical Christianity and African religiosity. The process that can facilitate in Christianity putting off western garments and be arraying in African customs and values includes contextualization, inculturation and indigenization.

**Table 24: Christian names and individual names in South Africa are supposed to be African names e.g. Senzo, Nolwazi, Sakhisizwe than English names such as Joel, Martin, Peter, or Paul.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	61	71.8	71.8	71.8
	Disagree	24	28.2	28.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Mbiti (1969: 115) notes that, “Nearly all African names have a meaning. The naming of children is therefore an important occasion which is often marked by ceremonies in many societies.” The reason why 71 percent are in favour of African names over English names among Africans is because of the meaning attached to that particular name. Price (1997:94) also observes that, “names tend to reflect a unique cultural setting in time.” So if Africans are giving their children African names that means they are taking ownership of their culture and desire to appreciate God through their African names. Thus it seems good for the SDA church to promote Christianity among the indigenous South Africans by encouraging them to tell the story of salvation through African names.

**Table 25: African herbs such as *intolwane* and *isihaqa* are to be encouraged in favor of Western concoctions for medical reason.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	69	81.2	81.2	81.2
	Disagree	16	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The use of African herbs has received highest score of 69 points over Western medications with a score of 16 as indicated in Table 25. The strength of African herbs such as *intolwane* and *isihaqa* is because they are natural remedies with less or no side effect at all. Since most African herbs are extracted from trees, the Bible also speaks about the tree of life (Revelation 22:12-14). Whose leaves will be for the healing of nations. It seems good to promote physical well-being through usage of African herbs like *intolwane* and *isihaqa* because of their ability to cleanse the human system with no trace of side effects.

**Table 26: African herbs and concoctions should be studied in our churches and schools and those herbs good for natural remedies be recommended for usage by church members**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	Disagree	10	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

A score of 75 points over 10 points is a significant number that is advocating for the study of African herbs and concoctions and those herbs good for natural remedies be recommended for usage by church members. Bowen (1988:671) stated that Hippocrates along with herbs he encouraged the use of fresh air, rest, and proper diet “to help body’s life force eliminate health problems.” This scientific proposal is what White (1942:127) later termed “natural remedies” which includes sunlight, air, water, rest, temperance, exercise, nutrition, etc.

**Table 27: Joyous times**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	83	97.6	97.6	97.6
	Disagree	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

A score of 83 points indicate that Africans are united and they celebrate joyous times as a community. Africans understand that they are one people with one purpose. They serve one God and hence rejoice together as a community.

**Table 28: Difficult times**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	74	87.1	88.1	88.1
	Disagree	10	11.8	11.9	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

Africans are known to work together during difficult times as represented by 74 responses. The spirit of unity is what motivates them to support each other during tough times. In the spirit of COSATU in South Africa, Africans say “an injury to one is an injury to all.” The individual is not allowed to struggle alone, but the entire community comes in to support. This is the reason why most African activities are communal in nature.

**Table 29: Raising children**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	68	80.0	80.0	80.0
	Disagree	17	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

A score of 68 points means a child in Africa belongs to the entire community. With such a system of values, the SDA church can do well in membership retention. It is sad to note that the SDA has a weak membership retention system because it has not embraced the African collective way of raising children. It will be a joy to the researcher when the SDA church in South embraces the African strategy of raising children. Mbiti (1969:104) stated that, “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am. This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man.”

**Table 30: Laboring times**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	71	83.5	83.5	83.5
	Disagree	14	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

There are 71 points in Table 30 showing that Africans work as a team. They have what is known as *Ilima* (plough together). *Ilima* means they pull their resources together for a particular cause which includes harvesting, ploughing, and fencing. They is no competition but work as one united force in a particular neighbour’s field. When they are done, they pull their resources again and move to the next till everyone in that group have been serviced.

**Table 31: Death times**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	84	98.8	98.8	98.8
	Disagree	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

African manage death as a united community as represented by 84 responses in Table 31. They mourn with those who are bereaved and support the bereaved by providing fibrewoods, water, food stuffs and being physical present. They set clubs to alleviate financial challenges when death strikes.

**Table 32: Ukwamkela izihambi (hospitality)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	85	100.0	100.0	100.0

Hospitality is Christian virtue and an African value. As illustrated in Table 32, hospital is a top priority with a score of 100 percent. In the African culture hospitality is very much valued. It is expected that everyone cultivates this vital virtue even from childhood. According to Thorpe (1991:62), “the solidarity of the community is a pronounced feature of African traditional religion. The phrase, “I am because I belong” is the basic essence of religious experience throughout Africa.” The African concept of community informs all the other relational virtues including hospitality. In this concept, African value of the next person, thereby understanding their rights and striving to help them exercise them. Even in the growing hospitality industry in Africa, the warmth extended tourists is enriched with the African taste.

**Table 33: Ubuntu (*being human*)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	85	100.0	100.0	100.0

The significant of Ubuntu in African is demonstrated by 100 percent appeal for its presence as illustrated in Table 33. Ubuntu concept is manifested in Africa through acts of kindness, friendliness, truthfulness, politeness, generosity, hospitality, hard work, caring for the sick or elderly parents, respect for elderly people and the weak and retarded, protection of children and women. Wiredu (1983:11) refers to evils to the Africans as vices such as killing, stealing, adultery, and disrespect for elders, telling lies, incest, cruelty or harm in any way to other people.”

**Table 34: Ukulobola (*lobola custom*)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	78	91.8	91.8	91.8
No	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Table 34 deals with the institution of *lobola* with 78 points indicating that it is a good African custom that should be encouraged among indigenous South Africans. This custom, which is almost universal in sub-Saharan Africa, seems it should be recognised. Tanzania Union Committee minutes of 1965 (quoted by Hoschele, 2007:306) states that, “We encourage early marriage after the dowry has been paid.” *Lobola* is a good evangelistic tool the SDA church can use to impact the indigenous South African.

**Table 35: *uKungena (levirate custom)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	70	82.4	82.4	82.4
	No	15	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The levirate custom received the highest score of 70 points as shown in Table 35. This significant score is because of its advantages in Africans such as promotion of permanent formal marriages which are scarce these days and resolving matters of inheritance. The other advantage of this custom is that the widow remains in the family of her first choice since in Africa families are married and not just two individuals.

**Table 36: *Ukusebenza ndawonye (community consciousness)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	80	94.1	94.1	94.1
	No	5	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The significant of community consciousness in Africa is shown by 80 points as presented in Table 36. Mbiti (1969:56) highlights the importance of community consciousness in Africa. He writes:

The individual can only say, ‘I am because we are: and since we are, therefore I am.’ This sense of inseparable bond with the community goes together with the sense of sharing, hospitality and a strong desire for truth and reconciliation when conflicts and fights occur.

In Africa, to be anti-community is sin and there is no life outside community. Community is arena for reconciliation, forgiveness and interaction.

**Table 37: *Umdeni* (extended family system)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	82	96.5	97.6	97.6
	No	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

As illustrated in Table 37, the extended family system is very appealing to Africans with the highest score of 82 points. The attraction factor of the extended family system lies on its ability to offer a strong sense of community and fellowship among Africans. It also offers a good support system in this modernised society that is bombarded with individualism. Throughout Scripture, we find that extended family idea was a virtue highly encouraged. The two examples are that of Abraham (Genesis 13) and Mordecai (Esther 2).

**Table 38: *Ukwakhelana* (neighborhood)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	84	98.8	98.8	98.8
	No	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Neighbourhood is both a Christian virtue (Luke 10) and an African value with a score of 84 points as shown in Table 37. Thus embracing neighbourhood will enhance SDA mission among indigenous South African who according to the statistics above value it so much. Being neighbourly is to be African; hence Africans can only embrace a church that promotes the spirit of being neighbourly. Ndlovu (2014:73) posits that, “through neighbourliness Adventists have a chance with their neighbourly families to present Christ and great truths they profess.”

**Table 39: *Ubuzalwane (fellowship)***

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	85	100.0	100.0	100.0

The indigenous South Africans must experience and testify that Adventist Christians care for each other. The Lord said: “If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples” (John13:35). The indigenous South Africans must experience that Adventist Christians belong to a new family, the family of God (Ephesians 2:19). This new family must be characterized by a strong sense of *ubuzalwane*, that is, 100 percent as illustrated in Table 38. The indigenous South Africans must experience *ubuzalwane* in the way Adventists care and support each other in times of stress and distress. They must hear *ubuzalwane* in the way Adventists pray for each other and with each other in times of sickness, financial need and family strain. They must see how Adventist Christians value each other’s gifts and how we take responsibility for one another to make sure that everyone’s gifts are developed and used to the full. They must even experience it the way Adventist discipline each other since discipline is a part of our love for each other. Thus indigenous South Africans must experience *ubuzalwane* that bridges all the barriers of race, class and education – *ubuzalwane* which is only possible because Adventists have *ubuzalwane* with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ through the indwelling *ubuzalwane* of the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:3). Omondi (2007) notes the value of *ubuzalwane* among Africans:

Africans are good either at home or in church in coming up with activities that create sense of belonging, family, an awareness of being a part of a loving community. Fellowship among African people in their churches is expressed through greetings, (mostly shaking hands), having a cup of tea, welcoming visitors, and during Holy Communion.”

This is the reason why Church growth gurus associate growing churches with a strong sense of Christian fellowship; hence Adventist must aggressively embrace and cultivate the spirit of fellowship to reach Africans.

**Table 40: Ubuntombi (virginity)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	81	95.3	95.3	95.3
	No	4	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Virginity is highly regarded among Africans since it is associated with morally purity. To underscore its significance among Africans, according to Table 40 there are 81 points in favour of it. Throughout Scripture, virginity is a virtue highly esteemed (Exodus 20: 14; Numbers 5:11-29; 2 Samuel 13:1-39). Furthermore, even the Gentile king Xerxes of Persia, when looking for a new bride, specified that she be a virgin (Esther 2:1-4). It makes sense for SDA gospel workers to appeal to indigenous South Africans through what they general hold in high esteem. Affirming the African position of morally purity, the Theological Advisory Group (1994:59) states that, “Marriage should be entered with purity and maintained with purity.” Amadi (1982:58) further observes that, “The blood of virginity is the symbol that life has been preserved, that the spring of life has not already been flowing wastefully, and that both the girl and her relatives have preserved the sanctity of human reproduction.”

**Table 41: Umtshado wesintu (African traditional wedding)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	79	92.9	92.9	92.9
	No	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Table 41 shows that Africans do not want Christian marriage that has been borrowed from the West, but they want an African traditional wedding. In the same vein, the *Theological Advisory Group* (1994:11) affirms by stating that “Christian marriage in our churches should have a distinctive mark of African customs, whenever such customs are not contrary to the teaching of

Scripture.” Marriage, in African as shown by the responses in Table 41 is a public and social recognised institution. Taking a woman as a wife in Africa, it is something that is done in public and during the light. There should be human witnesses in the form of parents, relatives and friends. It should be noted also that marriage in Africa is a community affair, the whole village or community attends and celebrates with the two families whose children are getting married. Thus African traditional wedding with a score of 79 points is another missional tool the SDA church can employ to enhance the presence of Adventism among indigenous South Africans.

**Table 42: *Ukudla kwesintu (African traditional food)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	No	10	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

African traditional food is considered health and natural since it is not refined. In Table 42, the respondents are recommending African traditional food with 75 responses over 10 who said “No.” It seems most people who run food outlets prefer serving their customers with African traditional meals rather than westernised meals. One food outlet owner who the researcher interviewed said, “most customers who frequent our place prefer *inkukhu yamakhaya* (chicken runner) over broiler chicken.” She further mentioned that customers like *amasi* from indigenous African cows than sour milk from the western dairy cows.

**Table 43: *Ukusina kwesintu (African traditional dance)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	69	81.2	81.2	81.2
	No	16	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

African traditional dance is highly regarded among African with a score of 69 points according to Table 43. This type of dance is neither suggestive nor immoral like most modern type of dances. African traditional dance accommodates different events such as wedding, rites of passage, and graduation in African style.

**Table 44: *Ukukhonza kwabasundu (African worship style)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	74	87.1	87.1	87.1
	No	11	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Table 44 shows that African has a tremendous appetite for spiritual things. There are 74 points that are appealing for African worship style in order for Africans to satisfy their spiritual hunger. Mbiti (1969) argued that Africans are worshippers not only once or twice a week but their lives are full of worship. He calls them “notoriously religious” some worship shades manifest themselves during their many different rites and rituals. This is seen in various rites such as rites of birth, initiation, marriage, and death. African worship style should be embraced by the SDA church in order to foster the presence of Adventism among the indigenous South Africans.

**Table 45: *Impilo yasemakhaya (country life)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	78	91.8	91.8	91.8
	No	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

One of the most exciting life style for most Africans is living in rural areas. This is done to formulate view of life, values, and morality based on the country lifestyle. According to Table 45, there are 78 responses that are appealing for country life since it has a potential to create a good spiritual environment. This is in contrast to urbanism which according to Mathews

(2005:265) is describing: “as a way of life that is generally viewed negatively. Big cities are seen as places of wickedness, corrupters of youth and health, and destroyers of family and community ties. City life is considered to be artificial, glamorous, and impersonal.” By promoting a country life style which is free from city vices, the SDA church can win the confidence of indigenous South Africans according to the score of 78 points.

**Table 46: *Ukusoka (male circumcision)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	73	85.9	85.9	85.9
	No	12	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

*Ukusoka* is one of the customs that have survived in Africa and it continues to gain ground even among the post-modern minds. In Table 46, there is a high score of 73 points in favour of *Ukusoka* a sign that the custom has not lost its significant. Throughout scripture, male Jewish boys were circumcised both for spiritual and physical purity.

**Table 47: *Ukuqomisa ngokwesintu (African dating)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	76	89.4	90.5	90.5
	No	8	9.4	9.5	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
	Total	85	100.0		

While there are mixed voices on dating from different scholars, African dating remains closer to the teaching of scripture in the sense that it calls for the involvement of parents. There is a score of 76 points which shows promotion of African dating over western style of dating. Since young

people have no experience on marriage issues, it is wise that they seek the guidance of their parents on who to marry. Thus Africans advocates for parental guidance as in the example below according Mbiti (1969:134).

The two men go home and inform their children; and a few days later, the boy's parents visit those of the girl, taking with them at least two calabashes of beer... The four parents engage in a long conversation about various topics until, finally, the boy's father makes a formal request, He says, 'I have come to be born in this home, to be a son, to be a servant if you like, to take cattle to the river to drink, to make the cattle shed, to buy you clothes, to help alleviate your needs. I am prepared to do all these things and many more, if you give me a wife for my son.'

In Mbiti's perspective, parental involvement is what is advocated in *ukuqomisa kwesintu*. One elderly Zulu woman said, "idlela ibuzwakwabaphambili" meaning the way is asked from those who are ahead the parents who are mature on matters of marriage.

**Table 48: *Ukukhumisana umlotha (reconciliation)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	79	92.9	92.9	92.9
	No	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 48, the highest score of 79 points is significant confirming that reconciliation is a virtue in Africa. In Africa, when members of the family anger each other they are encouraged to reconcile by slaughtering a crock and use its blood to effect reconciliation. Africans are preoccupied with peace and reconciliation. Mbiti (2010:5) notes that:

In African Religion there is more action on peace and less speculation about it.

This functions all the time at many levels of life. These include peace and reconciliation in person-to-person relations, in the family, in the neighborhood, in the community, and among peoples (tribes) that may have disputes or fights

with one another. Peace is not taken for granted; the fact that people quarrel, have disputes and serious differences, fight and even injure or kill one another is a tragic reality of life.

With such an African peace and reconciliation mindset, the SDA church can be attractive to indigenous South Africans if peace and reconciliation platforms are available in all church levels.

**Table 49: *Ukunakakela intandane labafelokazi (caring for orphans and widows)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	82	96.5	97.6	97.6
	No	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

As shown in Table 49, it seems that caring for orphans and widows had the higher rate of selection than an uncaring attitude in terms of what respondents value in South Africa. With such a good value system, there will be no street children in our communities. With so many orphans and widows throughout South Africa, the SDA church needs to embrace this African value. This makes the SDA church appealing among the indigenous South Africa who are struggling to address issues of orphans and widows.

**Table 50: *Ukuhlabelela kwabasundu (African singing)***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	81	95.3	95.3	95.3
	No	4	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

*Ukuhlabelela kwabasundu* can be an effective missional tool for the SDA church to win the indigenous South Africans. Music is a unifying force in the African society. Africans sing songs when working in the fields, as they hoe their fields (*ukuhlakula*) songs are sung to divert the attention from the burden to a completed task. This creates unity and rhythm; they also sing as they pound, shell and winnow their crops, Miller (1940) submits that singing inspires the soldiers to want to take the challenge and defend their country at whatever cost, the Zulu regiments sang as they marched to war. Thus there is high score of 81 points advocating for African singing as illustrated in Table 50. Music aids the memory, so it is a vehicle for education among the Africans. Miller (1940) noted that the power of music is in repetition of concepts, the antiphons and responsorial elaborate melodies. Values packaged in music are easily grasped and remembered with passage of time. Kamien (2002:98) observed that music is also used in schools of dancing because human beings are rhythm driven. Singing is heavenly, the Bible in the Old and New Testament records music in the heavenly places, among the angelic hosts and during the worship of Jehovah (Revelation 4). The New Testament also uses a lot of amen, alleluia and the holy, holy and the lamb hymns of the revelation. Dunstan (1980:230 submits that humans were not carelessly jumbled together but were carefully arranged under proper themes, so that the hymnal is in effect a little body of experiential and practical divinity. Music plays a very important role in Christianity as it does in African culture, it can create a context conducive for worship. Music in worship varies from culture, responses to music stimulus varies culturally and generationally. The African culture is deemed satanic, while many things can be emulated from their rich culture. Webber (1982:175) argues that no apology needs to be set forth for the use of sound in the church. Nevertheless controls about sound in worship should be in order. He generally advocates for a judicious balance rather than an uncontrolled noise. He continues to say that they offer praise to the Father. Singing together brings about the essential mystery of the church in fellowship. The unity and diversity of the church is brought together in a unique way through song as noted by the church father John Chrysostom AD. 380.

**Table 51: Umsebenzi wegazi ekubuyisaneni (role of blood in the covenant)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	63	74.1	75.0	75.0
	No	21	24.7	25.0	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

Blood is significant to the African culture particularly on its role in the covenant. The role of blood in the covenant received 63 points as illustrated in Table 51 and these results agrees with Kurgat (2011:34) who said, “the gospel message must retain the significant ideas of Christianity, enriched and made intelligibly attractive by all means by considering what is good in a cultural heritage of a people.” This aspect of the African culture, if embraced by the SDA church fits well in search of implications for Christian witness to the African person in their cultural context. The presence of the SDA church can be promoted through the role of blood in the covenant as blood plays significant role in reconciling estrange parties in Africa.

**Table 52: Ukwembatha enkozweni (African attire in the church)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	68	80.0	81.0	81.0
	No	16	18.8	19.0	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	V b
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

African attire in the church is a symbol of modest and respect that the individual is in the presence of a holy God. The score of 68 points in Table 52 is motivated by the spirit of respect Africans give to God. African elderly women cover their heads when they go to church and sit in

a posture that their thighs are not exposed. The African attire is meant to instil high moral values among its members and indecent dressing is condemned with strong terms. Thus African attire in the SDA church could be used to fight immorality so prevalent in our communities today as well as making the church respective and attractive to the indigenous South African.

**Table 53: *The African Christian ethics seem to be more superior to Western Christian ethics***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	46	54.1	54.1	54.1
	No	39	45.9	45.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

As illustrated in Table 53 a score of 46 points prefers African Christian ethics more than Western Christian ethics with a score of 39 points. It seems true as observed by Pretorius et al (1996:125) who mentioned that the traditional peoples of Africa behaviour in judged, not so much according to a code of ethics, but according to what is beneficial to the community. With such a strong code of ethics, the SDA church has a viable missional tool to appeal to the indigenous South Africans.

**Table 54: *There is a general trend of more ethics living in the less westernized African rural areas as compared to the more western and Christian urban populations.***

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	61	71.8	71.8	71.8
	Disagree	24	28.2	28.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

African ethics, according to Table 54, is considered better than western type of ethics with a score of 61 points and 24 points respectively. Pretorius et al (1996:124-125) commend such

virtues a harmonious social life, respect and honour another's position, a strong sense of community, and spirit of competition is discouraged. For example, it is said of the Venda, "the virtues of honesty, reliability, sincerity, determination, firmness of principle and perseverance are pursued" (Pretorius et al: 1996). Thus African ethics with a score of 61 points is a powerful missional tool to foster the presence of SDA church among indigenous South Africans.

**Table 55: Chastity, moral purity and abstinence is valuable in the less westernized African families than in more western and Christian urban families**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	58	68.2	68.2	68.2
	Disagree	27	31.8	31.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

As illustrated in Table 55, chastity, moral purity and abstinence is well appreciated and embraced in the less westernized African families. This shows the beauty of less westernised environment in relation to character formation. In less westernised settings, teenagers hear one unified voice than in westernised areas. For high moral standard, it is good to raise our children in less westernised areas because teenagers do not hear conflicting voices. Thus less westernised African families' emphasis on chastity, moral purity and abstinence is a viable strategy to enhance the presence of the church among indigenous South Africans.

**Table 56: Virginity as a virtue receives serious attention and more campaigns in less westernized African communities as compared to more western and Christian urban population.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	65	76.5	76.5	76.5
	Disagree	20	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Virginity is another African value that can be used as missional tool to enhance the presence of the church among indigenous South Africans because it is associated with morally purity. To underscore its significance among Africans, according to Table 40 there are 65 points in favour of it. Throughout Scripture, virginity is a virtue highly esteemed (Exodus 20: 14; Numbers 5:11-29; 2 Samuel 13:1-39). Furthermore, even the Gentile king Xerxes of Persia, when looking for a new bride, specified that she be a virgin (Esther 2:1-4). It makes sense for SDA gospel workers to appeal to indigenous South Africans through what they general hold in high esteem. Affirming the African position of morally purity, the Theological Advisory Group (1994:59) states that, "Marriage should be entered with purity and maintained with purity." Amadi (1982:58) aptly stated that, "The blood of virginity is the symbol that life has been preserved, that the spring of life has not already been flowing wastefully, and that both the girl and her relatives have preserved the sanctity of human reproduction."

**Table 57: Would you like to see the establishment of contextual SDA mission stations in both the education sector and medical field throughout South Africa?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	81	95.3	96.4	96.4
	No	3	3.5	3.6	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
	Total	85	100.0		

The appealing of establishment of contextual SDA mission stations in both the education sector and medical field is important and urgent as evidenced by a high score of 81 points. It seems this will make the SDA church both visible and accessible. The establishment of such institutions should boost the SDA in terms of evangelism.

**Table 58: Would you like to see the introduction of culture education in SDA institutions of learning, especially those aspects of African culture that are consistent with biblical principles?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	77	90.6	90.6	90.6
	No	8	9.4	9.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

As illustrated in Table 58, there is need for the introduction of culture education in SDA institutions of learning with 77 points in favour of this idea. Speaking on the importance of culture, Zimbabwean National Army Commander Lieutenant General Phillip Valerio Sibanda from website [www.chronicle.co.zw/zna-commander-sibanda](http://www.chronicle.co.zw/zna-commander-sibanda) extracted on November 28, 2017 mentioned that, “A people without a culture are indeed a people without a soul. Our culture is an embodiment of people’s lives.” In this same article, he further said “The inclusion of culture will help underscore the importance we attach to cultural studies. This also goes to compliment the introduction of culture studies in primary and secondary schools as per the new curriculum.” The point here is that the SDA has a platform to include in its curriculum African customs and values that are consistent with biblical principles and promote them through its education system.

**Table 59: Would you support the idea of evangelizing South Africans through SDA run primary and Secondary schools and SDA run hospitals and clinics by budget provisions at local Church, local Conference, local Union and Division levels?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	79	92.9	92.9	92.9
	No	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The Seventh-day Adventist church in South Africa should embrace the idea of establishing mission stations such as schools and health facilities in order to evangelize indigenous South Africans. There is overwhelming support with 79 points lobbying the church to consider putting mechanism of establishment of SDA run primary and Secondary schools as well as SDA run hospitals through budgetary provisions at every level of the church. Mbiti (1969:233) agrees with this idea by stating that, “African Christians have continued to make outstanding contributions to primary and secondary education... The church also makes its contribution in the medical field, again pioneering this service in Africa and continuing to run hospitals and dispensaries.” Chibueze (2007:93) recognises the role of education in missionary activities by stating that, “If there is an area outside evangelisation where missionaries were active in Africa, it was in the school system.” Both literature and surveys unanimously agreed that SDA church run primary and secondary schools as well as church run health hospitals play a very important as a missional tool to enhance the presence of the church among indigenous South Africans.

**Table 60: Do we (SDA) have appropriate indigenous programs to meet the needs of Indigenous South Africans?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	19	22.4	22.4	22.4
	No	66	77.6	77.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The SDA church is operating in South Africa, but it seems its programs have no local contents according to 66 responses in Table 60 acknowledging the inappropriate of the church’s programs. This information enables the church to rebrand its programs in order to meet the needs of indigenous South Africans. The information does not ask the church to reform its doctrines and beliefs but to reform its programs with the aim of accommodating the indigenous South Africans. The church needs to be proactive in responsiveness to the various needs of the indigenous South Africans.

**Table 61: Are our (SDA) Children and Youth Manuals relevant to the needs of Indigenous South Africans?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	20	23.5	23.5	23.5
	No	65	76.5	76.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The SDA children and Youth manuals are irrelevant to the needs of the indigenous South Africans with 65 responses affirming that position. “While change is inevitable, growth is optional”, so said an organizational behaviour expert. The SDA church because of this statistics need to aggressively put in place a highly contextualised ministry to win the confidence of the indigenous ethnic groups such as Zulus, Xhosas, Tongas, Vendas, Sothos, Shanganis, etc. The manuals must be written in predominate languages of that particular people group if the local people are to be attracted to Adventism. Certainly the SDA should ensure that the children and youth manuals are culturally relevant to the indigenous South African children and youth. Logan (1989:68) said it this way:

When Paul was with Jews, he was himself. He wore Jewish clothes, ate Jewish food, observed Jewish customs, and used Jewish forms of communication. But when he was with Gentiles, he was someone else. Among the Greeks, he adapted fully to their cultural styles, even employing their method of debating in his communication. Hypocritical? Not at all. The essence of his message never changed.

The SDA church’s message in those English manuals now is the same as Paul’s was then: Despite all the challenges the church is faced with, the message is that God loves indigenous South Africans and has shed His blood for them.

**Table 62: Do our (SDA) existing programs address issues like, urbanization, changes, AIDS, unemployment, poverty “bondage” membership?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	36	42.4	42.4	42.4
	No	49	57.6	57.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

As illustrated in Table 62, while the SDA church runs several programs, it is sad to note that its existing programs are not need driven as poverty “bondage” membership and such issues like AIDS continue to be unaddressed according to 49 responses who said “No.” Of critical interest to the church is the high level of poverty “bondage” membership which makes the church among the indigenous South Africans less attractive. There is need for the SDA church to devise ways to deal with the issue of poverty “bondage” membership because its immediate solution has a potential to attract its target people group the indigenous South Africans.

It seems people including the indigenous South Africans are looking for a church that is not only doctrinally sounds but also a church that addresses the day to day physical needs of its members. If members of the church are wallowing in poverty, and the church lacks resources and have no plan how to empower them economical, local members from the community shun such a church. While the SDA church cannot totally eradicate both physical and economical poverty among its members, it must manage the levels of poverty. By so doing, the church will appeal to the indigenous South Africans who are part of the communities targeted by the church.

**Table 63: Do you agree that most SDA local churches in many parts of South Africa are run by foreigners who serve in key church position at the expense of Indigenous South Africans?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	67	78.8	78.8	78.8
	No	18	21.2	21.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

There is need for the SDA church in South Africa to consider the inclusion of local people in key church position in the governance of the churches. The number 67 in Table 63 is significant showing that the inclusion of foreigners in key church position at the expense of indigenous South Africans is of concern. It seems the indigenous South Africans according to Mbiti (1969) there are foreigners in their own churches and the foreigners are at home. With such a context, the SDA church is finding difficult to attract the indigenous South Africans into Adventism. The SDA church armed with such statistics need to promote awareness. The SDA church at Conference and Union levels has set the inclusivity temperature by giving key position to the indigenous South Africans.

It is sad to note that the local churches, which are the key foundational structures of the church, are run by foreigners according to Table 63. According to Table 63, ask your church this question: “What are we doing to attract and serve the indigenous South Africans in our local church, institution, hospital, community?” Furthermore, to bring the gospel to the indigenous South Africans, the SDA should adopt an indigenous people policy to equip indigenous converts for spreading the gospel among their own people. About this policy, Crafford (1991:154) mentioned that, “their attention was specifically focused on the indigenous people and they accordingly soon employed indigenous workers in order to reach the people in the most expeditious way. This policy proved so successful that the church soon followed suit.” Consider this case that is the outcome of indigenous people policy:

During the eighties of the previous century, the Greytown congregation of the Dutch Reformed church experienced a remarkable revival, which also brought with a new interest in missionary work. People started to talk to their Zulu servants about salvation in Jesus Christ, and some of them were converted. A need was felt for a worker among the Zulus and Dr D. Dalzell, a missionary of the Scottish Mission, who was working at the mission station Gordon Memorial, kindly, lent the Dutch Reformed church the services of a man named Moses Mbele. According to A. Dreyes, Mbele had been converted on the diamond-fields. He was paid by members of the congregation and worked with great success. In 1886 it was already surmised that between 60 and 70 blacks had been converted as a result of his work.”

**Table 64: Do you think the SDA church need to identify, appoint and develop Indigenous South Africans as leaders in order to grow and spread Adventism in many parts of South Africa?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	74	87.1	87.1	87.1
	No	11	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Nothing is more mission-critical than leadership that has the context, conceptual, and interpersonal skills demanded by the indigenous South Africans. In Table 64, the 74 respondents have reminded the Seventh-day Adventist church in South Africa of the need to identify, enlist and develop indigenous South Africans as leaders in order to grow and spread Adventism in many parts of South Africa. The demand for local leadership resonates with Pollard (2005:58) who states that,

The specific mission of the SDA church is to reach “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.” This means that every village and every city, every individual and every group, every language and every dialect is included in our mission. Such a global mission requires leadership that functions locally in its service arena, but is global in its outlook.

Thus, the question before the SDA church is not whether the church will respond to indigenous leadership, but how and why should the church respond to the native leadership that defines the people group that is led and served. Through the 74 points, the SDA have been reminded of the requisite skills for local SDA leadership as missional tool to enhance the presence of the church among indigenous South Africans.

#### **8.4 Descriptive statistics**

A total number of 85 in the survey suggest that members tend to affirm African customs and values consistent with biblical principles as an effective missionary strategy and likely to foster a strong sense of attraction to indigenous South Africans. The mean for the African customs and

values practices was 1.0824 and the standard deviation was .11621. According to Tables 32 – 52 it was evident that the respondents prefer African custom and values to be considered and promoted in the Seventh-day Adventist church in order to enhance SDA missionary activities among the indigenous South Africans.

## **8.5 Findings**

In their own words, these were the responses from the members to validate findings in Tables 32 - 52 in relation to African customs and values as a result of their involvement in this study:

One member had this to say “Very few aspects of African cultures are not consistent with the Bible. The church needs to emphasize that being a Christian does not mean doing away with your identity as an African. African culture must be promoted in church. Let’s promote African way of courtship. Let’s encourage traditional ways of marrying and weddings and African singing and dancing at our feasts.”

Another excited member said “The church must publish more materials in the people’s local language including Ellen White writings which are known as Spirit of Prophecy (SOP). There is need to conscientize church members to embrace their culture as long as it is in line with God’s word. Conduct seminars on culture in association with the mission of the church.”

In addition, through African customs and values, Seventh-day Adventist members have been prepared for reaching out to indigenous South Africans. One of the members succinctly said, “African customs and values such as *ubuntombi*, *ukulobola*, *ukudla kwesintu*, African dressing, extended families to mention just a few, are ways of indigenizing the church in South Africa in order to grow and spread Adventism in many parts of South Africa.

One of the Conference administrators said “respect for elderly, community orientation and the role of the man in the home are crucial African aspects that must be embraced and promoted in families, churches, schools and communities.” He further mentioned four ways of indigenizing the SDA church in South Africa: 1) changes in the approach on how worship is done, 2) the translation of all official handbooks and manuals into indigenous languages, 3) encouragement of cultural events and seminars in order to increase the appreciation of indigenous culture to the extent that it is consistent with Adventist faith, and 4) interaction between the church administration with traditional leaders.”

## **8.6 Discussion of findings**

The researcher noted from the interviews and survey questions that the SDA church has to build a contextually relevant ministry based on African customs and values that are consistent with biblical principles can be used as missional tool to enhance the presence of the SDA church among indigenous South African population.

The researcher found that SDA run schools and hospitals mission station could be used to promote Adventism lifestyle among indigenous South Africans. The study also revealed that African-ness type of Christianity in areas like wedding, worship, meals, singing, dress code, dating, etc should be embraced by the SDA church. It was found that African herbs and concoctions should be studied in churches and schools and those that are approved be recommended for use by church members.

Contextual relevant ministry through African customs and values is shown to have significantly better attraction force than western-euro-culture, the aspects of contextual ministry which are most implicated in this study are community spirit, fellowship, local leadership, African-ness in terms of singing, wedding, meals, dating, worship, child naming, marriage, herbs and concoctions, country lifestyle, these and many more showed proportionate increases in appealing to indigenous South Africans. All these are indicators that contextually relevant ministry through African customs and values contribute to membership growth and retention among indigenous South Africans.

## **8.7 Summary**

Many African customs and values could be employed in South Africa to build relationships between Adventist and indigenous South Africans. However in the case of the ministry context of South Africa, I limited to the following African customs and values that seemed to have penetrated the large population of indigenous South Africans with increasing positive effect. These included Ubuntu, extended African family, *lobola*, virginity, marriage, African tradition lifestyle, African tradition food, fellowship, community, African-ness singing, dancing, dating, African names, respecting adults, male circumcision and caring for orphans and elderly. Though the customs and values differed in approach, all seemed to embrace healthy relationships

component as a possible effective strategy to eventually penetrate the religious and cultural barrier of indigenous South Africans with increasing effect.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **9.0 Conclusion**

It needs to be said that Adventist church can realize its full potential in reaching to indigenous South Africans only by incorporating African customs and values in order to exert a positive influence in South Africa. The church leadership at local church, conference and union, in particular, can embrace African customs and values as the SDA church seeks to penetrate the indigenous South Africans.

Time will tell regarding how the SDA church will respond to meet the indigenous South Africans' needs and provide more and better contextualized ministry. Looking at the definition of culture as well as its relationship to people as discussed in this study, it would seem fair to conclude that culture and people are inseparable; one cannot exist without the other. Since Christianity's primary concern is to make disciples of all people, it follows that Adventist Christians must make it their priority to seek to understand and appreciate the culture of the indigenous South Africans. It seems as though God in the Old Testament, Jesus in the New Testament and the early Christian church understood this principle and applied it in their mission endeavors. The western SDA missionaries to Africa on the other hand appear to have abandoned this principle and instead manifested ethnocentrism. This attitude by the SDA church to African culture in turn has led to resistance to the Christian gospel by indigenous South Africans who may otherwise have accepted it. A provisional solution to this problem would therefore be a return by the church to its former ways; the apostolic churches attitude to culture. A number of African customs and values were discussed which make it very easy to attract indigenous South Africans.

According to the findings of the study, these developmental opportunities, along with increased and wider fellowship with other church workers, and even greater support from the conference and congregation, will enhance the SDA's mission to engage in evangelizing indigenous South Africans. This has profound implications for our churches in South Africa.

If Adventist missionary activities are to be successful at the local church, the local church must be committed to indigenize its program, identify and enlist native people in leadership position, identify and employ African customs and values both in the congregation and in the local church school. It is important to begin from the known and accepted customs and values as one approach the indigenous South African minds with the gospel. Once accepted and confidence gained, new truths can then be brought forward. For this to happen with necessary intensity, within the milieu of expectations pastors and other leaders face on daily basis, Adventist Church administration must sound the clarion call for African customs and values to be as central to the work of evangelism and church membership retention. Until this takes place, dreams of reaching out to indigenous South Africans will remain just that – dream. The prominent scholar, Mazrui (quote by Akon 2013:99) aptly described the challenge before the African scholar as fourfold: how to indigenize what was foreign; how to idealize what was indigenous; how to nationalize what was sectional or ethnic and how to emphasize what was African.”

## **9.1 Recommendations**

Indigenous South Africans have particular needs which if met contextually by the Seventh-day Adventist church can attract them to Adventism. While recognizing the heavy load of responsibilities that weigh on the SDA church in reaching to these ethnic groups in South Africa, this study found that, in more ideal world, the recommendations to the SDA church would include that the church must:

1. be familiar with several African customs and values that are in consistent with biblical principles and actively embraced and employ them in evangelising indigenous South Africans.
2. be willing to promote Christianity among indigenous South Africans through processes such as contextualization, incarnation, inculturation and indigenization.
3. be willing to promoted the Adventist church campus ministry by being visible at all public universities and colleges where some Adventist students are learning, interacting appropriately with school personnel, students, and parents in casual encounters, worship, seminars, spiritual instruction and so forth.
4. pastors and all those involved in Christian witnessing should take a course in African traditional religion (ATR) to be familiar with the general basics of African culture, its customs and values, worldview, goals and objectives, rites, structures, content,

instructional methods, ethnic groups, kinship and the individual, and communicating the gospel to peoples of African traditional religion as primary requirement.

5. put aside meaningful budgets at Conference and Union level towards the establishment of SDA run primary and secondary schools and hospitals as means of Christian witnessing.
6. lead in advocating for the provision of resources for the establishment of SDA run schools and hospitals from the local church budget, private donors, and sources at the higher levels of church organisation for providing teachers, school facilities, student transportation, and so forth,
7. be familiar with particulars of the African traditional such as African traditional food, African traditional medicine, African traditional wedding, African traditional dance, African dating, African worship style, African singing, African attire in the church, African country life, etc. with a clear understanding of what should be the topmost priority within the local context.
8. be knowledgeable of the indigenous South Africans' needs for ministry, quantitatively and qualitatively.
9. involvement of the church in the discovery of her nature, mission and moving towards utilizing all her resources and personnel in fulfilment of her mission of making known God's love among the indigenous South Africans.
10. "at every level (local church to General Conference) there needs to be a renewed focus on the value of belonging to and supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Without denominational loyalty, parents are less likely to support Adventist education."
11. promote the church by allowing ethnic group to practice Christianity "within their own culture, using local languages and thought patterns" (Doss 2015:7).
12. be willing to address issues like urbanisation, changes, AIDS, unemployment and poverty "bondage" membership.
13. identify, develop and enlist the services of native South Africans in leadership position in order to grow and spread Adventism in many parts of South Africa.
14. Encourage institutions of learning in Africa have departments or units of African studies or centers for African studies so that students in those institution acquire the necessary equipment to minister effectively among in their African people.

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## APPENDIX 1

I, Dr Herbert Ndlovu have been granted the privilege to conduct a Doctoral research on the topic:

## **African customs and values that can enhance Seventh-day Adventists missions to South Africans with specific reference to the Zulu cultural heritage.**

**Instructions:** Your cooperation in this research dissertation is greatly appreciated. Your contribution in a research dissertation of this type helps the SDA church in South Africa to gain knowledge and insight on its mission to Indigenous South Africans.

Please tick or fill as appropriate. Since your name is not required, please be as honest in your answers as possible.

## I. Biological Information about Yourself

1. Gender ( )                      Female ( )

2. Language ( )    Zulu/Ndebele ( )        English ( )        Other ( )

3. Denominational Affiliation: Adventist ( )                      Non Adventist ( )

## **II. Seventh day Adventist Church Christian Image among Indigenous South African peoples**

1. The Christian image that Indigenous South Africans received from the missionaries and practice today in the Seventh day Adventist church is very much Western?  
Yes ( )                          No ( )
  2. What is your evaluation of the following Seventh day Adventist Christian practices among the Indigenous South African peoples on their Western-ness or African-ness?

<b>Item</b>	<b>Western-ness</b>	<b>African-ness</b>
Worship programs		
Wedding celebrations		
Singing		
Dress code in church		
Meals		
Dating custom		

3. Do you agree that Christianity the way Adventists in Africa were oriented means denouncing everything that makes us Africans which include the African songs, African foods, and African customs and values?

Yes ( )                  No ( )

4. In the Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa, the universal need for African customs and values such as community and fellowship are felt acutely in the practice of Christianity. Do you agree or disagree?

Agree ( )                  Disagree ( )

5. Indigenous South African peoples, Zulus included, are being stripped of their practice of African culture in the name of anything African is evil.

Agree ( )                  Disagree ( )

6. How would you rate the image of the Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa mainly among the indigenous dominated communities?

Very strong ( )    Strong ( )    Weak ( )    Very weak ( )

### **III. Contextualizing Christianity in South Africa -The Seventh day Adventist Church**

1. In contextualizing Christianity in South Africa, the Seventh day Adventist church should do the following:

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>
A	The language of the local people should hold precedence over any other language			
B	The SDA church should be a church that acknowledges the blunders of missionaries, colonial rule, e.g. Apartheid, etc.			
C	The SDA church in South Africa should desist from a superficial and weekend Christianity			
D	Music should be relevant to both young and old South African Christians while not undermining the absolute principles of music			
E	The SDA church should construct a biblical- undergirded framework of anointing, healing, exorcism and other special services			
F	Chastity and marital purity should be encouraged and preserved			
G	Would you like to see revived the biblical and African custom of church members addressing one another as “brother” and “sister”?			
H	Special areas of needs among African people such as dedication of a new car, a new house, or property, etc should be emphasized			

I	Christianity in South Africa can be better than what it is now, especially when it is divested of its foreign and western garments and is arrayed in the African customs and values?			
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2. Christian names and individual names in South Africa are supposed to be African names e.g. Senzo, *Nolwazi*, *Sakhisizwe* than English names such as Joel, Martin, Peter, or Paul.

Agree ( ) Disagree ( )

3. African herbs such as *intolwane* and *isihaqa* are to be encouraged in favor of Western concoctions for medical reason.

Agree ( ) Disagree ( )

4. African herbs and concoctions should be studied in our churches and schools and those herbs good for natural remedies be recommended for usage by church members

Agree ( ) Disagree ( )

5. Through community consciousness in joys, in difficult times, in raising children, in labors, and even in death Africans work as a community

Item	Agree	Disagree
Joyous times		
Difficult times		
Raising children		
Laboring times		
Death times		

6. The Seventh day Adventist churches need to be aware of African customs and values listed below and embrace them to be relevant and facilitative among South African peoples. Would you like to see the following African customs and values

considered and promoted in the Seventh day Adventist church in order to enhance SDA missionary activities among South African peoples:

7.

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
A	<i>Ukwamkela izihambi</i> (hospitality)		
B	<i>Ubuntu</i> (being human)		
C	<i>Ukulobola</i> (lobola custom)		
D	<i>Ukungena</i> (levirate custom)		
E	<i>Ukusebenza ndawonye</i> (community consciousness)		
F	<i>Umdeni</i> (extended family system)		
G	<i>Ukwakhelana</i> (neighborhood)		
H	<i>Ubuzalwane</i> (fellowship)		
I	<i>Ubuntombi</i> (virginity)		
J	<i>Umtshado wesintu</i> (African traditional wedding)		
K	<i>Ukudla kwesintu</i> (African traditional food)		
L	<i>Ukusina kwesintu</i> (African traditional dance)		
M	<i>Ukukhonza kwabasundu</i> (African worship style)		
N	<i>Impilo yasemakhaya</i> (country life)		
O	<i>Ukusoka</i> (male circumcision)		
P	<i>Ukuqomisa ngokwesintu</i> (African dating)		
Q	<i>Ukukhumisana umlotha</i> (reconciliation)		
R	<i>Ukunakakela intandane labajelokazi</i> (caring for orphans and widows)		
S	<i>Ukuhlabelela kwabasundu</i> (African singing)		
T	<i>Umsebenzi wegazi ekubuyisaneni</i> (role of blood in the covenant)		
U	<i>Ukwembatha enkozweni</i> (African attire in the church)		

#### **IV. African Christian Ethics and Western Christian Ethics**

1. The African Christian ethics seem to be more superior to Western Christian ethics  
Yes ( )                  No ( )
2. There is a general trend of more ethics living in the less westernized African rural areas as compared to the more western and Christian urban populations.  
Agree ( )                  Disagree ( )
3. Chastity, moral purity and abstinence is valuable in the less westernized African families than in more western and Christian urban families  
Agree ( )                  Disagree ( )
4. Virginity as a virtue receive serious attention and more campaigns in less westernized African communities as compared to more western and Christian urban population.  
Agree ( )                  Disagree ( )

#### **V. Contextual SDA mission stations**

1. Would you like to see the establishment of contextual SDA mission stations in both the education sector and medical field throughout South Africa?  
Yes ( )                  No ( )
2. Would you like to see the introduction of culture education in SDA institutions of learning, especially those aspects of African culture that are consistent with biblical principles?  
Yes ( )                  No ( )
3. Would you support the idea of evangelizing South Africans through SDA run primary and Secondary schools and SDA run hospitals and clinics by budget provisions at local Church, local Conference, local Union and Division levels?  
Yes ( )                  No ( )

## **VI. Local SDA Church Programs and Leadership**

1. Do we (SDA) have appropriate indigenous programs to meet the needs of Indigenous South Africans?  
Yes ( )                          No ( )
  2. Are our (SDA) Children and Youth Manuals relevant to the needs of Indigenous South Africans?  
Yes ( )                          No ( )
  3. Do our (SDA) existing programs address issues like, urbanization, changes, AIDS, unemployment, poverty “bondage” membership?  
Yes ( )                          No ( )
  4. Do you agree that most SDA local churches in many parts of South Africa are run by foreigners who serve in key church position at the expense of Indigenous South Africans?  
Yes ( )                          No ( )
  5. Do you think the SDA church need to identify, appoint and develop Indigenous South Africans as leaders in order to grow and spread Adventism in many parts of South Africa?  
Yes ( )                          No ( )
  6. Kindly list such aspects of South African culture which are consistent with biblical principles that must be embraced and promoted in churches, families, schools and communities.
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7. Kindly mention ways of indigenizing the church in South Africa in order to grow and spread Adventism in many parts of South Africa.

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## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Frequencies**

#### **Frequency Table**

##### **Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	55	64.7	64.7	64.7
	Female	30	35.3	35.3	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

##### **Language**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Zulu/Ndebele	72	84.7	84.7	84.7
	English	5	5.9	5.9	90.6
	Other	8	9.4	9.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

##### **Denominational Affiliation**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adventist	84	98.8	98.8	98.8
	Non-Adventist	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**The Christian image that Indigenous South Africans received from the missionaries and practice today in the Seventh day Adventist church is very much Western?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	No	10	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Worship programs**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	African-ness	10	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Wedding celebrations**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	70	82.4	82.4	82.4
	African-ness	15	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Singing**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	74	87.1	87.1	87.1
	African-ness	11	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### Dress code in church

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	78	91.8	91.8	91.8
	African-ness	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### Meals

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	73	85.9	85.9	85.9
	African-ness	12	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### Dating custom

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Western-ness	73	85.9	85.9	85.9
	African-ness	12	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Do you agree that Christianity the way Adventists in Africa were oriented means denouncing everything that makes us Africans which include the African songs, African foods, and African customs and values?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	66	77.6	77.6	77.6
	No	19	22.4	22.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**In the Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa, the universal need for African customs and values such as community and fellowship are felt acutely in the practice of Christianity. Do you agree or disagree?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	62	72.9	72.9	72.9
	Disagree	23	27.1	27.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Indigenous South African peoples, Zulus included, are being stripped of their practice of African culture in the name of anything African is evil.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	65	76.5	76.5	76.5
	Disagree	20	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**How would you rate the image of the Seventh day Adventist church in South Africa mainly among the indigenous dominated communities?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Strong	9	10.6	10.6	10.6
	Strong	25	29.4	29.4	40.0
	Weak	37	43.5	43.5	83.5
	Very Weak	14	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**The language of the local people should hold precedence over any other language**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	80	94.1	94.1	94.1
	Disagree	1	1.2	1.2	95.3
	Undecided	4	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**The SDA church should be a church that acknowledges the blunders of missionaries, colonial rule, e.g. Apartheid, etc.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	63	74.1	74.1	74.1
	Disagree	15	17.6	17.6	91.8
	Undecided	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**The SDA church in South Africa should desist from a superficial and weekend Christianity**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	59	69.4	69.4	69.4
	Disagree	15	17.6	17.6	87.1
	Undecided	11	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Music should be relevant to both young and old South African Christians while not undermining the absolute principles of music**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	Disagree	6	7.1	7.1	95.3
	Undecided	4	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**The SDA church should construct a biblical- undergirded framework of anointing, healing, exorcism and other special services**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	55	64.7	64.7	64.7
	Disagree	15	17.6	17.6	82.4
	Undecided	15	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Chastity and marital purity should be encouraged and preserved**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	79	92.9	92.9	92.9
	Disagree	4	4.7	4.7	97.6
	Undecided	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Would you like to see revived the biblical and African custom of church members addressing one another as “brother” and “sister”?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	71	83.5	83.5	83.5
	Disagree	9	10.6	10.6	94.1
	Undecided	5	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Special areas of needs among African people such as dedication of a new car, a new house, or property, etc should be emphasized**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	57	67.1	67.9	67.9
	Disagree	21	24.7	25.0	92.9
	Undecided	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

**Christianity in South Africa can be better than what it is now, especially when it is divested of its foreign and western garments and is arrayed in the African customs and values?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	64	75.3	75.3	75.3
	Disagree	14	16.5	16.5	91.8
	Undecided	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Christian names and individual names in South Africa are supposed to be African names e.g. Senzo, Nolwazi, Sakhisizwe than English names such as Joel, Martin, Peter, or Paul.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	61	71.8	71.8	71.8
	Disagree	24	28.2	28.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**African herbs such as intolwane and isihqaq are to be encouraged in favor of Western concoctions for medical reason.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	69	81.2	81.2	81.2
	Disagree	16	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**African herbs and concoctions should be studied in our churches and schools and those herbs good for natural remedies be recommended for usage by church members**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	Disagree	10	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Joyous times**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	83	97.6	97.6	97.6
	Disagree	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Difficult times**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	74	87.1	88.1	88.1
	Disagree	10	11.8	11.9	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
	Total	85	100.0		

### **Raising children**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	68	80.0	80.0	80.0
	Disagree	17	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Laboring times**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	71	83.5	83.5	83.5
	Disagree	14	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Death times**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	84	98.8	98.8	98.8
	Disagree	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Ukwamkela izihambi (hospitality)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	85	100.0	100.0	100.0

### **Ubuntu (being human)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	85	100.0	100.0	100.0

### **Ukulobola (lobola custom)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	78	91.8	91.8	91.8
	No	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Ukungena (levirate custom)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	70	82.4	82.4	82.4
	No	15	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Ukusebenza ndawonye (community consciousness)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	80	94.1	94.1	94.1
	No	5	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Umdeni (extended family system)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	82	96.5	97.6	97.6
	No	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
	Total	85	100.0		

### **Ukwakhelana (neighborhood)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	84	98.8	98.8	98.8
	No	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Ubuzalwane (fellowship)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	85	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Ubuntombi (virginity)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	81	95.3	95.3	95.3
No	4	4.7	4.7	100.0
Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Umtshado wesintu (African traditional wedding)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	79	92.9	92.9	92.9
No	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Ukudla kwesintu (African traditional food)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	88.2	88.2	88.2
	No	10	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Ukusina kwesintu (African traditional dance)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	69	81.2	81.2	81.2
	No	16	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Ukukhonza kwabasundu (African worship style)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	74	87.1	87.1	87.1
	No	11	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

### **Impilo yasemakhaya (country life)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	78	91.8	91.8	91.8
	No	7	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Ukusoka (male circumcision)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	73	85.9	85.9	85.9
	No	12	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Ukuqomisa ngokwesintu (African dating)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	76	89.4	90.5	90.5
	No	8	9.4	9.5	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
	Total	85	100.0		

**Ukukhumisana umlotha (reconciliation)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	79	92.9	92.9	92.9
	No	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Ukunakakela intandane labajelokazi (caring for orphans and widows)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	82	96.5	97.6	97.6
	No	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

**Ukuhlabelela kwabasundu (African singing)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	81	95.3	95.3	95.3
	No	4	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Umsebenzi wegazi ekubuyisaneni (role of blood in the covenant)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	63	74.1	75.0	75.0
	No	21	24.7	25.0	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

**Ukwembatha enkozweni (African attire in the church)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	68	80.0	81.0	81.0
	No	16	18.8	19.0	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		85	100.0		

**The African Christian ethics seem to be more superior to Western Christian ethics**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	46	54.1	54.1	54.1
	No	39	45.9	45.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**There is a general trend of more ethics living in the less westernized African rural areas as compared to the more western and Christian urban populations.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	61	71.8	71.8	71.8
	Disagree	24	28.2	28.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Chastity, moral purity and abstinence is valuable in the less westernized African families than in more western and Christian urban families**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	58	68.2	68.2	68.2
	Disagree	27	31.8	31.8	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Virginity as a virtue receive serious attention and more campaigns in less westernized African communities as compared to more western and Christian urban population.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	65	76.5	76.5	76.5
	Disagree	20	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Would you like to see the establishment of contextual SDA mission stations in both the education sector and medical field throughout South Africa?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	81	95.3	96.4	96.4
	No	3	3.5	3.6	100.0
	Total	84	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
	Total	85	100.0		

**Would you like to see the introduction of culture education in SDA institutions of learning, especially those aspects of African culture that are consistent with biblical principles?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	77	90.6	90.6	90.6
	No	8	9.4	9.4	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Would you support the idea of evangelizing South Africans through SDA run primary and Secondary schools and SDA run hospitals and clinics by budget provisions at local Church, local Conference, local Union and Division levels?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	79	92.9	92.9	92.9
	No	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Do we (SDA) have appropriate indigenous programs to meet the needs of Indigenous South Africans?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	19	22.4	22.4	22.4
	No	66	77.6	77.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Are our (SDA) Children and Youth Manuals relevant to the needs of Indigenous South Africans?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	20	23.5	23.5	23.5
	No	65	76.5	76.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Do our (SDA) existing programs address issues like, urbanization, changes, AIDS, unemployment, poverty “bondage” membership?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	36	42.4	42.4	42.4
	No	49	57.6	57.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Do you agree that most SDA local churches in many parts of South Africa are run by foreigners who serve in key church position at the expense of Indigenous South Africans?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	67	78.8	78.8	78.8
	No	18	21.2	21.2	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

**Do you think the SDA church need to identify, appoint and develop Indigenous South Africans as leaders in order to grow and spread Adventism in many parts of South Africa?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	74	87.1	87.1	87.1
	No	11	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

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q16h,q16i,q16j,q16k,q16l,q16m,q16n,q16o,q16u).

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### Descriptive Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ukwamkela izihambi (hospitality)		85	1.00	.000
Ubuntu (being human)		85	1.00	.000
Ukulobola (lobola custom)		85	1.08	.277
Ukungena (levirate custom)		85	1.18	.383
Ukusebenza ndawonye (community consciousness)		85	1.06	.237
Umdeni (extended family system)		84	1.02	.153
Ukwakhelana (neighborhood)		85	1.01	.108
Ubuzalwane (fellowship)		85	1.00	.000
Ubuntombi (virginity)		85	1.05	.213
Umtshado wesintu (African traditional wedding)		85	1.07	.258

Ukudla kwesintu (African traditional food)	85	1.12	.324	
Ukusina kwesintu (African traditional dance)	85	1.19	.393	
Ukukhonza kwabasundu (African worship style)	85	1.13	.338	
Impilo yasemakhaya (country life)	85	1.08	.277	
Ukusoka (male circumcision)	85	1.14	.350	
Ukuqomisa ngokwesintu (African dating)	84	1.10	.295	
Ukukhumisana umlotha (reconciliation)	85	1.07	.258	
Ukunakakela intandane labajelokazi (caring for orphans and widows)	84	1.02	.153	
Ukuhlabelela kwabasundu (African singing)	85	1.05	.213	
Umsebenzi wegazi ekubuyisaneni (role of blood in the covenant)	84	1.25	.436	
Ukwembatha enkozweni (African attire in the church)	84	1.19	.395	
Valuesave	85	1.0824	.11621	
Valid N (listwise)	81			