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A Strategy to Increase Membership Among the Xhosa-speaking people in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

A STRATEGY TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP AMONG

THE XHOSA-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE

by

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

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Title: A STRATEGY TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP AMONG THE XHOSA-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE

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Problem

Seventh-day Adventist membership among the Xhosa-speaking people in

Zimbabwe (a minority ethno-linguistic group) is very low. The Seventh-day Adventist

presence among the Xhosa-speaking people in this particular area has been minimal. This

trend has led to a lot of frustration in the planning and implementation of outreach

programs among this people group. The problem is that in spite of the outreach programs

conducted for the Xhosa, the response of the community remains relatively low as

compared to other ethnic groups in the same area.

Method

A theological study on reaching the unreached was developed and formulated

from a review of literature from both the Old and New Testaments. Seventh-day

Adventist authors, other literature and the Writings of Ellen White were also surveyed in

order to ground the project both theologically and practically. In implementing the

project, I first organized a focus group to discuss what had been done in order to map out

a relevant strategy. Second, I met the Xhosa community leaders and assessed their needs.

Third, two evangelistic meetings were held, one by the researcher and another by a

Xhosa-speaking guest speaker.

Results

As a result of this intervention, 20 Xhosa Bibles were distributed, 30 Xhosa Voice

of Prophecy lesson sets were completed, a mobile eye clinic was organized, and

government eye specialist gave free services to the community. Two Branch Sabbath

Schools were organized at Engxinweni and Mantanjeni. A one-day church building was

erected for the Xhosa community at Mantanjeni. A total of sixty-six (66) new members

were added from the Xhosa community after the intervention.

Conclusion

This pilot project has shown the possibilities and opportunities available in a

specific ministry focused on the minority groups in Zimbabwe. The project challenges

the church in Zimbabwe in general and the West Zimbabwe Conference in particular to

pay attention to the pockets of these people groups. There is a need for the church to

deliberately channel both material, financial, and human resources into such ministries in

order to realize effective and lasting results. Similar projects could be replicated in other

parts of the West Zimbabwe Conference among the minority groups like the San in

Tsholotsho, the Venda and Suthu in Ganda and Beitbridge, the Nambya and Nyanja in

Hwange, and the Kalanga in Plumtree.

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THE XHOSA-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

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I dedicate this work to my parents who taught me to love and serve my Lord Jesus Christ. To my wife Duduzile Ndlovu who suffered and deprived herself of many comforts of life in order for me to realize the completion of this project. I sincerely dedicate this work to my three lovely daughters, Nomqhele Nokusa, Yomusa Nobukhosi Thabolwethu Ntombizodwa and all who have dedicated their lives to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. Maranatha!

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Xhosa people belong to the minority groups found in various parts of the West

Zimbabwe Conference. As a minority group the Xhosa community is often neglected as

far as focused people group outreach is concerned. Therefore, a project which focuses on

the Xhosa community will help to highlight the need for such a specific ministry not only

among the Xhosa but to other minority groups too.

The Xhosa community has been in Zimbabwe for more than a century and still

maintains its cultural and traditional values. One of the most prominent traditional values

practiced by the Xhosa-speaking people is the circumcision of the male members of their

society. As a result of this cultural practice anyone who is uncircumcised is regarded as a

boy or *ikwenkwe* by the Xhosa and will not be easily accepted by them. History shows

that the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries made contact with the Xhosa in the early

1920s through the efforts of missionaries like Sparrow and Jim Mayinza. One of the first

Xhosa converts to Adventism was Samuel Kona, a chief's son, who later became a pastor

who had a tremendous influence on the growth of the church in Mbembesi.

Problem

Seventh-day Adventist membership among the Xhosa-speaking people in

Zimbabwe (a minority ethno-linguistic group) is very low. This trend has led to a lot of frustration in the planning and implementation of outreach programs among this people group. The problem is that in spite of the outreach programs conducted for the Xhosa, the response of the community remains relatively low as compared to other ethnic groups in the same area.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement a strategy to increase membership among the Xhosa-speaking people in the West Zimbabwe Conference.

Significance of the Project

The Seventh-day Adventist missiological mandate is to reach every people group with the gospel of Jesus in the context of the Three Angels' Messages. Since the Xhosa-speaking people reside within the West Zimbabwe Conference they are a people group which needs to be reached by the Adventist message.

There is need to focus on minority groups like the Xhosa-speaking people because without a specific focus they can easily be neglected. Without a specific focus it would be difficult to develop reading materials, programs, liturgy, and personnel that are sensitive to the language and culture of the Xhosa-speaking people.

Personal Basis for Ministry

Introduction

Self-understanding is very critical to an effective ministry. This self-introspection allows the leader to explore both strengths and weaknesses. According to McNeal, "Self-awareness touches all other disciplines because it is foundational to every other element

of greatness" (McNeal, 2006, p. 11). Consequently, without a genuine self-assessment, the leader is bound to misfire in other areas of leadership. Self-awareness means developing good discipline and self-management and being in touch and control with feelings and emotions such as anger, hostility, grief, and loss on the part of the leader. Learning to deal with such emotions and expressing them appropriately demands a deep and thorough understanding of self on the part of the leader. If a leader has a clear self-understanding, it then follows that the followers will be clear as to what is expected of them. Again, self-understanding means accepting vulnerability and genuine humanity. This awareness helps the leader to strategically combat temptations through specifically disclosing them to God in prayer, fleeing from temptation, being accountable to someone who can be helpful in moments of weakness and human frailty.

Arguably, self-awareness is also linked to self-development which is a process of both learning and unlearning for the leader. The leader has to learn new systems of operation and discard the ones which have become irrelevant and archaic. Therefore, self-development includes locating the leader's area of giftedness and polishing it to the point of excellence. It means that the leader will not waste time in areas of less giftedness, but rather delegate those assignments to those of the followers who can give their best contributions in those specific areas. Consequently, the leader will accomplish the mission and change the world for the better.

Further, the leader must have a sense of understanding within the community. As a result, leadership takes cognizance of one's family, friends, co-workers, and the larger community as part of the process of authentic and serious self-understanding. At the same time self-understanding calls for the leader to take time alone with God and allow the

arrows of His righteousness to penetrate and cleanse the heart.

General Background

I was born in a Seventh-day Adventist family, did my primary education in Lupane Zimbabwe, and proceeded to high school at Ndangababi secondary school where I did my Junior School certificate and subsequently progressed to Inyathi Mission High school, Bubi district under Matabeleland province in Zimbabwe where I obtained my Ordinary Level Certificate. I was then employed by the government of Zimbabwe as a teacher from 1988 to 1991. It was during that time that the call to the pastoral ministry came upon my heart with the strongest intensity that I had ever experienced. After communication with the Western Zimbabwe Field I was posted to the Gwayi district in Tsholotsho, Matabeleland North province as a district leader from 1992-1996. I witnessed the hand of the Lord while I served in that district. In 1995 I was joined in holy matrimony to a God-fearing girl, Duduzile Nkomo by name. We have three children, Nomqhele Nokusa, Yomusa Nobukhosi, and Thabolwethu Ntombizodwa. It was after our marriage that the West Zimbabwe Conference sent us to Solusi to train for ministry. When I graduated in 1999, I was deployed to the Magwegwe North district in Bulawayo (1999-2002). In 2003, I was transferred to the Bulawayo City Center district and I pastored that same district until the end of the same year. Subsequently, I was relocated to the Barham Green district which is a multi-racial district and I served in that area from 2004-2011. Currently, I am working at the West Zimbabwe Conference as the director for Stewardship, Church Development, and Trust Services.

Six Subplots

McNeal (2000) in the book, *A Work of the Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders,* discusses the leader's spirituality under the following subplots: culture, call, community, communion, conflict and commonplace. These six subplots help in shaping the leader's heart for ministry and service. I will discuss my own spiritual journey using the six subplots.

Culture

I was born in a family of eleven children composed of five boys and six girls and was shaped and influenced by my family in my early years of development. The religious atmosphere at my home, stemming especially from my mother, played a decisive role in my choices and the formulation of my character and personality. The school environment, friends, relatives, the church, and the whole community at large each made a tremendous contribution in shaping and molding me to what I am today. Little did I realize that the humble beginnings in a small village would lead me to permanently influence and change the world. In retrospect, as I reminisce on my past experience, I clearly recognize the leading of God's hand in my life. Understanding my cultural roots helps me to appreciate myself and also to be patient with others who might not share the same worldview as I do.

Call

I realize that life is a complex journey with no rigidly defined contours and dichotomies separating the physical from the spiritual. I cannot pinpoint a specific phase in my life as the genesis of God's call. My call to ministry was both a gradual and a

progressive process. Again, I pause and give credit to my mother who helped me to love the church at a very tender age. I vividly recall that my grade five teacher asked me to write a composition on what was a very common topic in those days: "What would you like to be when you grow up?" I remember that I wrote that I wanted to be a pastor. However, this does not mean that that single incident defined and constituted the call. Nevertheless, it adds to the sum total of numerous other events which solidified and concretized God's call in my heart. Since, I wrote that composition some twenty-seven years ago, I can still 'hear' that call even now. Consequently, I realize that the call is far greater than an assignment. I should continuously maintain an attitude of listening as God continues to unfold His divine will for my life.

Community

As I look back on my life I realize how the community has shaped me. Starting with my immediate family, relatives, friends, teachers, pastors, and the community at large, I realize that my journey in life has been consciously or unconsciously influenced by those who rubbed shoulders with me along the way. Even now, I appreciate that I am not a lone ranger; neither do I need to be. It is a very consoling thought to recognize that I am surrounded "by a cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12:1). Community helps me in understanding that self-disclosure to a caring community is not a weakness but a strength. Again, community reminds me of the fact that I am not alone. I need the support of my loving brothers and sisters when I am weak and weary like Moses (Exod 17:12).

Communion

I learned to sing, pray, and even to recite memory verses from my early childhood

years. However, it was only when I began to realize what Christ had done for me that I began to have a meaningful devotional life. I have not arrived yet, as Paul said, "not that I have already obtained this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on (Phil 3:12). I think I will need to prioritize my communion with God since it is critical in shaping me into the divine similitude.

Conflict

I have experienced conflict since my childhood years. Growing up in the village as a little boy I learned to fight for survival. Conflict was not optional but a mandate if one was to endure the storms of bullying. All through my life and ministry, I have been confronted by numerous wilderness experiences. Through it all, I have learned one simple lesson; the wilderness is God's university of excellence. McNeal (2006) demonstrates that the greatest leaders who changed the world went through the wilderness. Reflecting on Moses' experience, Ellen White (1970) affirms that, "the long years spent in desert solitudes were rich in blessing, not alone for Moses and his people, but to the world in all succeeding ages" (p. 259). Consequently, I have learned not to view the wilderness as a negative experience but as a lesson for me to experience God better. It also means learning to forgive my fellow human beings who may have contributed to my wilderness wonderings. Indeed, a wilderness experience is painful, but it is indispensable. One only realizes this fact after the experience. I have learned that conflict is inevitable in this life. Consequently, the greatest dexterity a leader gains in the wilderness is the capacity to handle and resolve conflicts.

Commonplace

God has constantly amazed me by using the common things of life to reveal His

will to humanity. My greatest fear stems from the possibility of my failure to recognize

the hand of God in the simplest interactions of life. Through the casual comments of my

friends calling me pastor, the simple prayers of faith when my father's cattle went

missing, and the very common but casual happenings in my life, I realize that these are

sub-plots contributing to the greatest drama of God's will in my life. It is through the

common things of life that God sometimes calls for our attention. It may not be a burning

bush like Moses experienced, the light that struck Saul on his murderous mission, or the

fire of Elijah, but it could be a still small voice. Therefore, I have learned from McNeal

(2006) that I need not to despise the common things of life. God still uses very simple

things to accomplish His mission and purpose in our lives. To buttress this point, Zech

4:10 warns us not to look down upon little things.

Specific Personal Assessments

Conversion and Assurance

Having grown up in an Adventist home, I can safely say that I experienced a

gradual conversion. I give all the tribute to my mother who took me to Sabbath School

and church every single week. It was during that time that I enjoyed singing choruses,

reciting memory verses, attending children's classes, and even listening to the sermon

that I grew to love the church. I do not remember everything that was said in those

sermons, but I vividly recall the verses and the gestures used by the different preachers.

The first chapter of the book of Psalms was repeatedly emphasized to us as a

moral and ethical compass for almost all our behaviors and associations. Even today,

that Psalm has remained my favorite dictum in warning my own children to avoid the company of the ungodly. Through this Psalm and many other verses of Scripture, I was made aware of the perils of choosing ungodly friends, visiting places that would soil my character, or playing dirty games.

Despite my love for the church and my active participation in activities and programs, I had not made a deliberate choice to follow Jesus. However, I think the Holy Spirit had already begun to warm my heart towards the love of Jesus. I remember that Sabbath when I was between seven and ten years of age, the preacher made a call and I was the only one who stood up and went up front. To my great amazement and chagrin, my brothers and their friends interrogated me on the way home. They wanted to know why I had stood up. As far as they were concerned, I was just portentous for nothing. They felt that I had embarrassed them by just standing in public without fully internalizing the depth and content of the message. According to their judgment, I had not comprehended the implications of the altar call. I felt very bad, humiliated, and discouraged on that Sabbath as we walked home. I do not remember ever responding to any alter call thereafter.

However, it was at high school that I began to enthusiastically participate and enjoy church. I gave my life to Jesus and joined the baptismal class. As a result, at the age of nineteen, I was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I will never forget the joy which filled my heart. I had peace and the calm assurance in my heart on that day. In retrospect, I have full confidence in Jesus as my Savior, advocate, and Lord. Jesus has demonstrated His love to me throughout my spiritual journey. I would not claim that I have arrived, I still press towards the mark like Paul (Phil 3:14). I still long

for a deeper spiritual experience with Jesus in my spiritual journey. The greatest spiritual struggle I face is to surrender *all* to Him day by day. Whatever challenge I may face, I know that Jesus loves and cares for me.

I have the assurance of salvation. Jesus is my only strength, hope, and comfort. I have experienced and tasted His love, even in my struggle with my own weaknesses. I have no fear because my salvation is guaranteed through the blood of the lamb. Had it not been for the hand of Jesus which has led me every step of the way, I would not be where I am now. As the song writer says, "I've come this far by faith." I want to pause and thank God for this sweet and blessed assurance which only comes through Jesus our Lord and Savior.

Margin

Swenson (2004) argues that "margin is the gap between rest and exhaustion, the space between breathing freely and suffocating" (p. 69). Consequently, when a leader's schedule is congested to the detriment of time, physical fitness, finance, and emotional energy, the results are catastrophic. Accordingly, in this section I will discuss my spirituality in relation to the use of these resources.

Time

I have discovered that time is a non-renewable resource in my life. However, I have also realized that I have so much to do and very little time to do everything. Unless I learn to prioritize, my spiritual life, family, and work will suffer. I have learned that saying no is not always impolite but will save the frustrations caused by lack of margin. Even gadgets such as cell phones, computers, and television sometimes steal my margin

for my quality time with God, my family, and the community in general. I have observed that if I do not deliberately set limits to these time wasters, I may end up running on empty. Consequently, I have decided to jealously guard my time with God, family, and prioritize my work.

Finance

With one's limited resources I have learned that I will never have enough. However, Swenson (2004) and Paul challenged me to learn to be content (Phil 4:12). I will have to shun debt and live within my means. Perhaps I will have to increase my financial base with activities which do not interfere with or tarnish the image of my ministry. Finally, living within my margin means that I should plan for my retirement. I do not wish to be a pathetic and disgraceful sight to the ministry after retirement.

Physical margin

I do not often experience major physical challenges. Nonetheless, I find very little time for rest except on Sabbath. Honestly speaking, even the Sabbath turns out to be a very busy day for me. My physical energies are always stretched to the limits. Again, I find it a bit challenging to find enough time for physical exercise on a regular basis. I guess that physical energy is directly related to my time schedule which definitely needs to be improved.

Emotional margin

I think I am not doing very badly in this area. I try to create time to be available for my children especially on Sundays and I enjoy the company of my wife and children.

Spiritual Path

Schwarz (2009, pp. 26-27) suggests that human beings experience God or feel closer to God through the utilization of their senses. Each person has one or two locations more dominant than the other. Schwartz identified nine locations of human spirituality. The nine categories are as follows: the sensory, rational, sacramental, doctrinal, Scripture driven, sharing, ascetic, enthusiastic, and mystical. I discovered that the most dominant category for me was rational, doctrinal, and Scripture-driven. The assessment helps me to be patient with those who may fall under categories that are different than mine. Further, it means that in my project I need people who experience God in ways that are dissimilar to mine.

Another way of attempting to understand my spiritual journey in life and ministry comes from the psychiatrist Scott Peck (as cited in Dybdahl, 2008, p. 127). Accordingly, Peck suggests four stages in spiritual development, namely the chaotic, or antisocial stage, the formal institutional stage, the skeptical individualization stage, and finally the communal or mystical stage. In the chaotic or antisocial stage people are perceived to be self-centered. Spiritual development at this level is still very immature. Most young children and a few adults find themselves at this level. As a result, more often than not, religious conversion occurs at this stage because individuals realize the purposelessness and the void in their lives. Subsequently, the people at stage two become attached to the religious institution, which give meaning to their lives. Logically, they move to the second stage which confines them to institutional thinking. Anything that seems to alter or disturb the structure of the institution distresses the people in the second stage. Arguably, anyone attempting to disrupt the religious institution is perceived as

retrogressing to the first and chaotic stage. Most of the church members are found at the second stage. However, children who grow up in stable homes may not necessarily go through the first rebellious stage. They rather naturally follow their parents and conform to the religious institution. At the second stage, religious principles are internalized and children from stable families find comfort at this stage together with their parents.

Unfortunately, some remain in the second stage while others move to the third stage. Often this transition is witnessed at adolescence. At this stage young people begin to question the assumptions of the institution. They begin to look for answers to some of life's perturbing challenges. Actually, they even begin to doubt some of the rudiments of their faith and the legitimacy of the religious institution itself. These skeptics become a source of disappointment to parents, acquaintances, and friends. Nonetheless, with understanding, patience, and nurture, many are able to resolve their uncertainties and move on to the last and final stage which is the mystic level. Peck's mystical level should be understood in the sense of a resolution to appreciate the mysteries of God. This means the acknowledgement of our human limits in providing all the answers in this life. It simply means that we need to live our lives in complete trust in the omniscient and omnipotent God. People at this stage have moved from self-serving to serving others.

In retrospect, my spiritual journey resonates very well with the stages suggested by Peck. Having grown up in a Christian environment, I moved to the second stage without any hassles. I am not sure if I experienced much to the second stage which seeks innovation and paradigm shifts. I think I am overly cautious when it comes to change in liturgy or any other aspects of the institutional church. I also passed through the interrogation stage of my own faith. Gradually, I accepted the mystical side of life and

came to accept the reality of the issues beyond the scope of human control. Peck's stages of spiritual development help us to be patient with ourselves and others in this spiritual journey. The most consoling factor is that the grace of God is sufficient for anyone at any stage of spiritual development.

<div align="center">Spiritual and Devotional Life and Devotional Plans</div>

My devotions consist of prayer and the reading of the Bible. However, I also realize that sometimes I do not have a systematic Bible study method. Due to certain circumstances and a tight work schedule it becomes difficult for me to have a disciplined life in daily reading of the Scriptures. I deeply appreciate that I definitely need to improve in this particular area. I will have to join the daily Bible reading program as advocated by the world church. This will mean that I will read at least a chapter a day. I have one special day in the week whereby I fast and contemplate my relationship with the Lord. I have found this exercise extremely helpful in my spiritual growth and ministry. The challenge always comes when I am away from my home, then it becomes hard to adhere to my schedule of prayer and fasting. I strongly feel that I need to review and jealously guard the margin of my devotional life. More importantly my challenge is the need for balance between my spiritual development and other activities of life. Samaan (1995) presented me with a challenge when he advised,

> We must make sure that we play neither the all-consuming role of a monk in the mountains, nor that of a missionary among the multitude. Instead, we must have both a mountain experience and a missionary experience. However, one experience is not detached from the other, but must always lead to it. (p. 117)

Arguably, Samaan advocates for the mutual inclusivity of devotion and service. To bolster this argument he points to the ministry of Jesus as one that shuttled between the

mountain and the multitude. It is needless to emphasize that Jesus is the model par excellence as far as a balanced ministry is concerned. After this assessment I am challenged to seek a deeper and more meaningful devotional life. It is clear that personal devotion and character development are inseparable. "Character is a by-product of hunger for a deeper relationship with God" (Miller, 2000, p. 156).

Worldview

Howell and Paris (2011) in an analogical symbolism liken culture to a fish and water. Their argument is that the fish swims in the water without any logical analysis of what kind of a liquid is being dealt with. Similarly, they compare culture with glasses which help us view the world. This metaphor probably captures what constitutes a worldview. Without a clear analysis and attempt of self-understanding this reality is often taken for granted and subsumed in my daily interactions. Consequently, it is of paramount importance for me to locate my spiritual development in the context of the worldview through which I perceive the universe. Dybdahl posits that worldview is the "hidden shaper of my life and ministry" (personal communication, 2012). It is the "deep underlying mostly unconscious concepts that influence life." Worldview does not only provide eyes to experience the natural reality but it also extends itself into the supernatural realm of life. Therefore, to understand myself and evaluate my spiritual journey, I also need to carefully examine my personal worldview so as to be as objective as possible. Humanity generally holds different outlooks in relation to the supernatural realm. This reality has to do with how human beings experience and encounter God. The theological understanding of the activity and involvement of God in human affairs contributes to our personal theological worldview.

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Dybdahl (2008, p. 102) using a model proposed by Hiebert (1983) suggests three

levels that impact a religious worldview system. The Western religious worldview

resonates with the enlightenment era paradigm which views God through scientific

glasses and sees Him separated from everyday life. Hiebert suggests that Westerners

struggle to embrace the reality of spirits, demons, ancestors, and angels as active in the

middle level. These levels impact one's personal worldview.

First, the atheistic or agnostic worldview accepts only what can be empirically

verified. The existence of God is not a reality for this worldview. Second, the deistic

worldview affirms God as the Creator of the universe but sees Him as an absent landlord

as far as the affairs of the world are concerned. Third, the magical worldview basically

views deity in mechanical and manipulative ways. Fourth, the medieval or mystical

worldview perceives God in ritualistic and animistic perspectives. The fifth and final

perspective is the Christian theistic. This view embraces God's active involvement and

control over the natural world. I appreciate the four perspectives however I still feel that

they do not adequately articulate the reality and active involvement of God in human

affairs. Therefore, after a careful analysis of the five possible worldviews I realize that I

am a Christian theist. I believe that God is in control of the universe and my life as well.

Consequently, my understanding of God, the cosmos, and my interpretation of reality is

grounded in theistic presuppositions. This awareness helps me be wary of my blind spots

and always to maintain humility and tentative alternatives in my interpretation of life.

Temperament

One of the methods of doing self-assessment is to take a temperament test. Many

experts on personality and behavioral scientists have designed tests in order to determine

personality types in order to predict behavioral patterns and interpersonal communication styles. One such test is the Kersey temperament sorter and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. According to the results of this test I am an Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging person.

The test or assessment confirms what and who I am. I get more energy from working by myself than from social interaction. This self-understanding of my personality has exposed both my strengths and weaknesses. In order for me to balance the equation and for my project to be completed, I will need some people who are extroverts on the team, in order to complement my temperament type.

Damage Factor

Seamands (1981) maintains that human beings have damaged emotions. The emotions could be damaged by our own fallen state, willful disobedience, or by other factors. Whatever the case may be, these damaged emotions can result in perfectionism, depression, and low self-esteem. Pipim-Korateng (2009) explains that

> scars tell stories, and the stories can be painful. They include lasting effects resulting from missed and neglected opportunities, broken hearts, failed relationships and marriages, painful betrayals and hurts, disappointing outcomes, and dashed hopes. The scars also expose the hidden rejection, fear, doubt, ruined health and finances, loss of innocence, shipwrecked faith, lifelong regrets and more. (p. 9)

As I look back into my own life, I can easily relate to the damage of my self-esteem. I recall the unkind criticisms first from my own immediate family members, teachers, and sometimes from society in general. However, I think the most damaging ones came from those who were very close to me. Those who should have loved, cared, and affirmed me betrayed that trust. Instead, they starved me of those nourishing nutrients needed to build a well-balanced and assertive human being.

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Reared in a low income bracket of society, and wriggling from the fringes of poverty, I learned the painful reality of scorn and ridicule. It was not easy to interact with children from the rich stratum of society. The comments of those who hailed from wealthier families were not only humiliating, but dehumanizing as well.

By the grace of God, my experience taught me patience, industry, and thriftiness. However, the damage had already been done. I believe that I can assertively participate in the process of those who need to be healed. I appreciate the work of the Spirit of God and the ministry of restoration. I believe that God forgives us and even those who might have caused pain in our lives. The healing process calls for both the perpetrator and survivor to embrace each other under the cross of Jesus and hear Him say, "forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

<center>Assessment in Relation to Others</center>

Spiritual Gifts

The apostle Paul reminds us and demonstrates that the church of God is composed of members who are spiritually gifted by the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:10-13). These spiritual gifts are meant for both the benefit and edification of the church. Numerous publications on spirituality have attempted to provide some means of assessment in order to determine the spiritual giftedness of each person. The greatest challenge facing both missiology and ecclesiology is to assign specific responsibilities to the members in keeping with their area of giftedness. The challenge is more acutely felt in large or multicultural churches or districts. In very huge districts the pastor or district leader has to delegate a lot of responsibilities to the members. Hence, the spiritual gifts inventory, test becomes a necessary tool for understanding church members and

assigning them responsibilities they are gifted for.

Dick and Dick (2011) in their book, *Equipped for Every Good: Building a Gifts-Based Church,* have designed a spiritual gifts inventory test meant to help church members discover their gifts. Since part of my self-assessment includes a need for knowledge and appreciation of my spiritual gifts, I took the test. The results demonstrated that my highest gift is helping and assistance, followed by shepherding and servant hood. Perhaps my spiritual gift is best described by Elmer (2006) who declares that

> when God chose to connect with humans, he did so as a servant. It was a most unlikely way to connect, for servants are usually invisible. They wear white uniforms, perform lowly tasks, remain largely silent and, if effective seem not to be there. People look past them and rarely acknowledge them until needed for a chore. Their rights are few, their power negligible and their status as the dust. (p. 21)

Dick and Dick (2011) also observe that the helping gift means the ability of making sure that everything is ready for the work of Christ. Helpers assist others to accomplish the work of God. These unsung heroes work behind the scenes and attend to detail that others do not like to be bothered with. Helpers function faithfully, regardless of the credit or attention they receive (p. 38).

Shepherding is the gift of guidance. Shepherds nurture others in the Christian faith and provide a mentoring relationship to those who are new in the church (Dick & Dick, 2011, p. 42). In a generation in which those who appear in the limelight make the news, who wants to be assigned to work behind the scenes? Evidently, these gifts describe who I am, and I am very comfortable with them. My conviction is that no assignment is too menial in God's mission. I have been blessed in working under many circumstances even when the spot light is not facing my direction. I think this realization has helped me to come to terms with myself and strive to excel in what God has already

put at my disposal rather than striving for what I do not have. As far as my project is concerned these gifts will help me in organizing materials to reach out to the rural community. However, I will still need to have people with complementary spiritual gifts in my team in order for the project to be effective.

Leadership/Interaction Styles

Dick & Dick classify leadership interaction styles into four main categories. The categories are thinker, director, pleaser, and dreamer. Since leadership is about the capacity to influence people to act in a certain direction, interpersonal relationships and leadership interaction styles are critical for the leader to remain effective. More importantly, the leader should be aware of his or her interaction style. This kind of self-awareness creates a critical self-consciousness which can assist the leader especially when under pressure. Therefore, in order for the leader to stay in touch with feelings of anger, frustration, happiness or sadness, self-awareness in interpersonal interactions remains critical.

In my assessment and analysis of the leadership interaction styles, I discovered that I fit well in the director interaction leadership style. According to Dick & Dick this means that I am task oriented which entails some degree of self-confidence. Again, the leadership interaction test demonstrated that I am decisive, which means that I act quickly, that I am highly organized, and focused. On the negative side of the continuum I am high opinionated. The result of the test closely describes my leadership interaction style. The assessment has helped me to appreciate my strengths and weaknesses as a leader. This self-awareness will help me in conducting my project and also in interacting with people of a similar or different leadership disposition.

Task Type Preferences

According to Dick and Dick "the Task Type Preferences Survey explores four ways to gather together to do the work for which we are equipped" (2011, p. 87). From interviews conducted within United Methodist congregations, Dick & Dick observed that people work more efficiently and effectively if they are allowed to perform a task they enjoy most. In their research, they identified four types of task preferences: the project, work, process, and fellowship types. According to the analysis made by Dick and Dick, I fit into the Work type people who want "to be active in the frontline" (p. 90). However, for the success of this project I will need to engage those who fall within the process category in order for them to help me work on the project, plan the activities, monitor the process, and evaluate all the other aspects of the project.

How Self-Assessment Will Affect the Project

The assessments opened and widened my horizons to my self-understanding as well as helping me appreciate other people. It is possible for one to be quite oblivious of one's strengths and weaknesses. Without any structured, standardized, or reliable form of assessment, it would be difficult to know one self and to ascertain how one relates to others people. Self-understanding is very critical especially when one considers that all human beings have a *hidden self.* This is what may be termed the *blind spots* in one's life. Consequently, assessments of this nature have the capability of exposing these hidden and latent qualities.

Therefore, the tests I took help me to be aware and appreciative of the baggage I bring to this project. The baggage includes my presuppositions, assumptions, worldview, and a plethora of other cultural issues. As much as objective analysis is expected from a

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project of such magnitude, it is both professionally and academically prudent for one's strengths and weakness to be assessed. Such an assessment allows me to be honest with myself and all those involved in the research project.

In addition, for this project to be completed as scheduled, one needs personal and leadership interactional skills. Through these assessments, I was able to understand my leadership interactional style vis-a-vis others. Consequently, this project will not be conducted without the participation of various stakeholders and my interaction skills will assist me to facilitate the process as needed. Without adequate support and cooperation from all the stakeholders, the success of the project would be highly compromised if not doubtful. Fortunately, the leadership tests have equipped me to harness both the cooperation and participation of the stakeholders regardless of their personality traits.

Furthermore, the assessment of the resources at my disposal is very critical in the management of this project. This realization compels me to plan my time wisely, budget efficiently and safeguard my physical energies until the completion of the project. I am also aware of the challenges of budgeting time, especially since the project is conducted within my work and family schedules. On one hand, it would be tragic to work so much for this project and lose the love of one's family. On the other hand, it would be unethical to prejudice the work in favor of completing the project. So what does this mean? It means that I need to be disciplined and well balanced in the use of these resources without prejudicing anyone or anything.

Finally, the assessment of my spiritual experience has a huge bearing this project. Such an assessment reminded me to rely on divine power when I am weak. Adversely, it is very easy to conduct a project of this magnitude as a human endeavor. I am cognizant

of the fact that this kind of mindset is analogous to that of the Babel tower builders (Gen 11). Why did their project meet with such dismal failure? The answer lies in their basic assumption and project proposal: " and they said, Come let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens, let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:4). Unfortunately, these tower builders had all the skills of engineering, brick laying, and architecture, but not God. Needless to say, their project was aborted. Therefore, a conscious awareness and admission of my own spiritual weaknesses serves as a constant reminder of the fact that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

Overview of the Project

Chapter 1 states the problem to be addressed by the project, gives the background, and outlines the proposed strategy. The chapter also highlights the intended activities and the time frame needed for the accomplishment of the project. This chapter acts as a roadmap for the whole project. In Chapter 2, theological principles to guide in reaching the unreached are developed and formulated on the basis of both the Old and New Testaments. Both Adventist and non-Adventist authors are consulted in order to formulate the principles. The writings of Ellen G. White conclude the discussion of the chapter.

Chapter 3 covers the political, social, cultural and religious contexts of the Xhosa people. A brief description of the geographical location of the Xhosa within Zimbabwe is given. The chapter also covers the social and the religious contexts of the Xhosa. The last part of the chapter deals with the context of the local church for the past five years and the need for analysis to implement the project.

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Chapter 4 deals with the implementation of the project using a Logical

Framework Analysis (LFA) and a Gantt chart. The Logical Framework acts as the master

plan for the project cycle. It outlines the objectives, indicators, and the evaluation of the

project.

Chapter 5 gives a summarized report of what the project achieved. The successes

and the challenges of the chapter are briefly highlighted with a view of making

improvements. In the narration of the chapter the whole project is evaluated in terms of

its impact and achievements. Conclusions are drawn on the basis of the results achieved

and recommendations are made for the replication of the project in other parts of the

conference. Lessons learned from the project are used to improve learning curves for both

the implementers and those with a desire to replicate the project.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF REACHING THE UNREACHED

Introduction

The theology of reaching the unreached, of necessity must be rooted and grounded in the Bible. Glover (as cited in Fanning, 2009) correctly asserts, "From cover to cover the Bible is a missionary book, so much so that, as someone expressed it, one cannot cut out its missionary significance—without completely destroying the book" (p. 3). Both before and after the fall of humanity, God is portrayed as the one seeking a relationship with the human family.

Throughout various generations the Old Testament depicts God constantly and persistently in pursuit of a deeper and closer relationship with those who choose to be on His side. The missionary nature of the triune God becomes even more apparent after the fall of the first human beings. Indeed, the mission of the trinity reaches a crescendo on the cross (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8 NKJV, used throughout). God's love and concern for humanity overarches racial, tribal, political, economic, social, and any other boundaries erected by sin. The call first directed to Adam and Eve is currently focused on all humanity within the spheres of God's voice. "Where are you?" is the most striking theological question whose missiological overtones may not be ignored (Gen 3:9).

God Is the Creator of All Nations

The creation of humankind marks the crown and the climax of God's creative

acts. As Lasor, Hubbard, and Frederick (1982) postulate, "Mankind's relationship to God, unique among created beings, is expressed by the deliberately ambiguous phrase the image of God" (p. 72). Hence, the creation of humanity in the image of God, both male and female, introduces the human race into the cosmos (Gen 1:26, 27). Consequently, some scholars detect the great commission in the assignment committed to the inhabitants of the earth to "be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen 1:28). For example, Beale (2005) contends that

> the commission was to bless the earth, and part of the essence of blessings was God's salvific presence. Before the fall, Adam and Eve were to produce progeny who would fill the earth with God's glory being reflected from each of them in the image of God. (p. 118)

Evidently, all the nations can safely trace their source of origin from the Creator God. The apostle Paul affirms this theological and historical fact when he states: "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times and set for them the exact places where they should live" (Acts 17:26).

Kaiser (2000) echoes similar sentiments when he avers "that God is the Creator of the universe establishes his concern for the people he creates. That concern is not limited by racial, political, gender, economic, or religious boundaries" (p. 28). As a result, God's care for the nations is apparent from the creation account itself as from the very genesis of all things because "he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else" (Acts 17:25). Furthermore, Paul explicitly states the missiological dimensions in the very purpose of the creation of humanity; namely, "that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27).

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God Desires to Fellowship With Humanity

Evidently, no other creature is created with the desire to seek fellowship with

God. According to Paul, humanity is created with the deep and intense need for a close

and meaningful relationship with the Creator God. This point is further elucidated by

Greenway (1999), who observes that

> human beings are distinct from all the rest of God's creation according to the creation
> story in Genesis. Human beings are made in the image of God. This means that
> humans were given the ability to know God, to live with him in a relationship of love
> and obedience. However, the first seeker after humanity is God himself. (p. 33)

Shea (2000) confirms that "God is an emotional being. We have abundant

evidence for this in the Bible. He loves his creatures. He is not cold, dispassionate, and

removed god of the deists; He is the present and active God who is in touch with His

creatures" (p. 424).

Throughout the Bible and the history of humanity, God as the Creator of the

nations is represented as one who is concerned, moved, and also seeking after the nations.

The creation account actually draws a sharp contrast between the God who created the

human family and other gods. Consequently, Wright (1996) notes that

> the creation account challenges those of Canaan and Babylon with their politico-
> religious systems. And the exodus from Egypt is the paramount model of redemption,
> pitting the kingdom of Yahweh against that of Pharaoh and delivering from slavery
> into freedom. (p. 11)

God Created the Nations Out of Love

The table of nations (Gen 10) further reflects the character of God as the source,

the Creator, and the sustainer of the nations. Eventually, after the flood (Gen 9), God

made a covenant with Noah, the preacher of righteousness (2 Pet 2:5) and the progenitor

of the human race. However, God more specifically made a covenant with Abraham from

the line of Shem. The covenant made between God and Abraham delineates and focuses

God's love and care for the nations through the instrumentality of a specific individual in

particular and the Jewish nation in general. Lieland, Wilhoit, and Longman (1998) affirm

that "while these are two covenants (Adam, Noah), the covenant of redemption and grace

that governs the Bible begins with Abraham, and it is here that the main image patterns of

the covenant become firmly established" (p. 177). More interestingly, Abraham is

destined to be the father of all nations (Gen 12:1-3).

God Blesses the Nations Through the Seed of Abraham

The nations receive blessings through Abraham. To be more precise, this promise

is repeatedly emphasized to Abraham and all those who share in his covenantal blessings

(Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). According to Kaiser (2000), the Hebrew phrase

for all families is *kolmispehot,* which is rendered in the Greek Old Testament in Gen 12:3

and 28:14 by *pasai hai phulai*, "all tribes" (p. 177). On the other hand, Richard (1985)

observes that another Hebrew word for nation is *goy* which "indicates a geographically,

politically, or ethnically defined group of people. While God's Old Testament people

existed as a nation and are at times designated as *goy*, it is most used in the Old

Testament of the pagan peoples surrounding Israel. The context indicates it" (p. 454). In

addition, the *SDA Bible Commentary* explains that in the phrase "all families of the

earth," the word *earth* is translated from the Hebrew word *adamah* meaning the ground

or soil" (Nichol, 1978, vol. 1, p. 293). This essentially locates the origin of humanity

from the soil regardless of race, gender, nationality, tribe, ethnicity, political affiliation,

or religious persuasion. Therefore, the blessings promised to Abraham have an inclusive

implication. Hence, the *SDA Bible Commentary* further asserts that

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the blessing vouchsafed to him (Abraham) would finally unite the divided families on the earth, and change the dread curse pronounced on the ground because of sin into a blessing to all men. All further promises to the patriarchs and to Israel either clarified or amplified the promise of salvation offered the entire human race in the first promise made to Abraham. (Nichol, 1978, vol. 1, p. 239)

It is instructive to understand the covenant and promise to Abraham in the light of the global mission in the Old Testament. Abraham is but a conduit in God's mission to the entire world. The *Missio Dei,* meaning God's salvific acts in history and endeavors to reconcile and restore humanity to Himself, utilizes the faithfulness of Abraham and his posterity to bless all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3; Gal 3:8; Rom 4:13). Kaiser (1996) agrees that "looking at the context, clearly God intended to use Abraham in such a way that he would be a means of blessing to all the nations of the world. Clearly, he was to be the instrument in the redemption of the world" (p. 2). In unison, Grisanti (1998) notes that "the Abrahamic Covenant, which gives Israel an exalted place in God's program for the world promises that Israel will be a channel of blessing to all the people on earth" (p. 40). Apparently, neither Abraham nor Israel sought for God to fulfill the cosmic agenda, but God is portrayed as the one always seeking after humanity in order to accomplish the mission.

Consequently, Dybdahl (2006) rightly observes that "Abraham did not seek God, but rather God found Abraham. By and large the story is one of God seeking Israel. Israel rarely looked for God except when she was in dire straits, like suffering under slavery or persecution" (p. 23).

God's Care for Israel as a Nation

The covenant between God and Abraham extended to the Hebrew nation. God specifically called and elected the Jewish people from the line of Shem, through

Abraham, to be the depositories of His grace to the entire globe. Israel as a nation was "to

be set apart not only in their lives, but also in their service. Through them all the families

of the earth were to receive the blessing God had in store for all who believed" (Kaiser,

2000, p. 23). Consequently, the Jewish nation was not just a recipient of God's favor over

against other nations. On the contrary, the election and call of Israel should be understood

both in theological and missiological terms. It is more of a call to service and mission

than to a special status and redemption. Further, while the covenant on Mount Sinai

(Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:9) to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" seems to speak in

exclusive terms, it should be appreciated from a missiological perspective.

God Manifests His Love Through the Particularity of Israel

The particularity and holiness of Israel, based on the covenant promises initially

made to Abraham and renewed throughout their generations, pointed beyond nationhood

to a global mission perspective. As far as the blessings promised to Abraham were

concerned (Gen 12:3), the focus included the whole cosmos (John 3:16). Richardson

(1992) rightly observes that "the failure lay in the Jews' idea of their solidarity with

Abraham. They had interpreted God's promises to Abraham in a narrow, literalistic

way—they had, in effect put God in a box" (p. 7). Evidently, the failure of Israel to

understand their call and election in inclusive terms led to national pride, bigotry, and

missionary miscarriage.

God's Love and Inclusion of Other Nations

God's inclusiveness in ministry and outreach is clearly set out in the Old

Testament. A few examples will suffice to make the point Melchizedek (Gen 14:18;

Heb 7:1-4), Jethro (Exod 18:1, 2), the mixed multitude which came out of Egypt with the Israelites (Exod 12:38), Balaam (Num 22:5), Rahab (Josh 2:1), Naaman (2 Kgs 5), Ruth (Ruth 1:4), and the widow of Zarepath (1 Kgs 18:8) all attest to the inclusiveness of God's missionary agenda. Cohen and Halverson (1958) capture the concept well when they argue:

> The whole "history of redemption," from Abraham to our own day, could be well understood as God's effort to reconcile man to himself, to God, and to his neighbor. To this end was the exodus and the covenant, the law and the prophets, and the whole controversy of God with His people, culminating in him who lived and died in freedom from man's universal subjection to the power of death, sin, the devil, and the world. (p. 22)

A careful study of God's dealings with Israel demonstrates the theology of reconciliation to humanity through a chosen instrument. Unfortunately, a parochial understanding of Jewish connectivity to Abraham led to a narrow view of God's plan of salvation for all humanity. One could argue that God could have chosen anyone from the line of Japheth or Ham to spread the light about the true God. Nevertheless, God chose Abraham and his descendants from the line of Shem to be light bearers to the world. Gleason (1974) reiterates this concept by affirming that

> at the foot of the holy mountain, Israel permanently committed itself to be of the Lord's people, whose national goal-unlike the self-seeking nations-was to be sincere and give complete obedience to His will, walking in fellowship with Him, and making Him the object of its highest worship. (p. 20)

Thus, Israel's position over against other nations is that of a missionary.

While other nations had committed themselves to the worship of idols, Israel was to promote and advance a unique monotheistic faith in Yahweh (Deut 6:4). Consequently, intermarriage between the Jews and other nations was emphatically forbidden (Deut 7:1-7). The other nations were to learn from the Israelites about the true God and not the

other way round. Theological failure always came as a result of the chosen nation's desire to copy the habits and worship patterns of their neighbor states. The whole theological idea of setting Israel apart was to arrest idolatry and cause other nations to turn back to the one and only true God. Wright (1996) correctly observes,

> There was a universal purpose in God's election of Abraham and of the people of Israel. They were called and brought into existence only because of God's missionary purpose for the blessing of the nations. Indeed God's commitment to Israel is predicated on his commitment to humanity as a whole. (p. 39)

God Sends Israel as a Missionary to the Other Nations

The question one may pose concerns the nature of this missionary assignment: What kind of outreach programs was expected of Israel to other nations? In other words, Was Israel expected to go out and evangelize other nations? Martens (2006) argues that perceiving the Old Testament as centripetal to its missionary approach and the New Testament as centrifugal creates a dichotomous understanding of mission in both Testaments. The centripetal approach assumes that Israel attracts other nations to come see what Yahweh is doing for and through His people as an encouragement to join them.

On the other hand, the centrifugal methodology expects Israel to go out and evangelize other nations about the true and only one Creator God. Evidently, both images permeate the Old and New Testament theological and missionary thinking. While in the centripetal approach, "the nations are portrayed as 'observers' of what God is doing in Israel" (Wright, 1996, p. 42), this should not be overemphasized at the cost of outreach programs. In reality, a careful analysis of both the Old and New Testaments indicates that both centripetal and centrifugal approaches have been used in mission. While it may seem as if the Old Testament relied much on the centripetal mode, whereas the New

Testament appears to advocate the centrifugal approach, one does not work at the exclusion of the other. The presence of God fearers and proselytes to Judaism can be attributed to both direct and indirect Jewish missionary endeavors.

Contrary to Wright's (1996) assertion that "the chief requirement on the people of God is that they should be what they are; live out their identity" (p. 41), the Bible portrays a theology of mission which utilizes both the centripetal and the centrifugal approaches. To summarize, God's plan to save humanity through the agency of the Jewish nation stretches from the very first promise ever offered to sinners (Gen 3:15) and spans the whole canon, reaching to the end of time. It would be enigmatic to set boundaries of continuity and discontinuity. The best theological and missiological approach is the appreciation of the beginning to the conclusion of the redemption story as a whole compendium. A misunderstanding of the overall plan led the Jewish nation to view other nations with disdain and contempt. Nevertheless, the Old Testament is replete with God's overtures to the nations outside of Israel. The Bible presents a comprehensive, inclusive, and global plan for reaching the human race. God sent various prophets and messengers to declare His constant love and care for the other nations. For the purpose and scope of this project, one needs to survey the books of Isaiah and Jonah.

God's Inclusive Mission in Isaiah

Isaiah begins with a vision of God in which the seraphs declare that "the whole earth is full of the Lord's glory" (Isa 6:3; 40:5). Isaiah's vision enshrines an inclusive agenda. Thus, the glory of the Lord is foreshadowed as covering the whole earth. Indeed, this is a global mission impetus. As the *SDA Bible Commentary* (Nichol, 1980, vol. 4, p. 128) states, "Isaiah looked forward to the hour when the whole earth will be covered

with God's glory" (cf., 60:2; Rev 18:1). The gravity and extent of the cosmic nature of

mission which engulfs the whole world cannot be overemphasized. Fanning (2009, p. 4)

correctly asserts that the message of both the minor and the major prophets is consistent;

namely, that "God's authority is over the world, especially in judgment. If people do not

listen to His word then He will do a strange work" (Isa 28:21; 28:22-23).

Martens (2006) observes that "the first half of Isaiah has largely to do with Israel

as a sinful society, but also with neighbor nations" (p. 1). For example, the

"encroachment of Syria and Assyria" and the "announcements to surrounding nations and

to the rogue nation of Edom" point beyond the nation of Israel (Isa 7:36-37; 13-23; 34).

Martens says Isa 40 and onwards points to a highway. By this term he is thinking of

God's openness to the Gentiles in the plan of salvation. On this highway God's project

for the nations is explicitly expressed. Actually, "the nations are a drop in a bucket before

God" (40:15, 17), "God gives Egypt as a ransom for Israel, and Ethiopia and Seba for

you (Isa 43:3), "God enlists Cyrus, the Persian Empire builder, as his handyman to carry

out his purpose" (Isa 44:28, 45:13). Furthermore, Isaiah promotes the exclusiveness of

Yahweh over against the idols of the nations (44:18; 45:21; 44:7; 46:9). The climax of the

monotheistic faith culminates in the appeal for the nations to "turn to me and be saved, all

the ends! For I am God, and there is no other" (45:22). More importantly, Isaiah portrays

God as the "Redeemer" (43:14; 44:6; 52:9; 54:5-8).

> Given the strong emphasis that God is a Redeemer for Israel, the way is surely
> prepared for the announcement that his redemptive activity would reach beyond Israel
> to the nations. The divine passion for righteousness and the willingness to act as
> Redeemer is not limited to one ethnic segment of humanity. Rather God's intense
> involvement with Israel in redemption becomes a paradigm for God's activity with
> people other than Israel. (Martens, 2006, p. 4)

To summarize, Isaiah portrays Israel as missionizing beyond its borders in

unambiguous terms. For example, "God will send survivors, apparently Israelites, to the nations (Isa 66:19a), to nearby nations, such as Javan (Greece) but also distant nations such as Tarshish (Spain), Put and Lud (likely places in North Africa), and also to the coastlands" (66:19b, v. 21).

Finally, Isaiah declares that "foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant" (Isa 56:6). More succinctly, God through Isaiah proclaims, "In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance" (19:24, 25). Martens (2006) is right in affirming that while myriads of voices sound the global nature of mission yet "Isaiah has a prominent place" (p. 4).

God's Inclusive Mission in Jonah

Perhaps the most striking mission to the nations outside the borders of Israel is that of the prophet Jonah. The prophet is instructed to "go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me" (Jonah 1:2). Nineveh was the capital city of the great Assyrian empire, which had previously harassed Israel militarily. Jonah is sent to preach to a pagan nation. The flight and refusal of Jonah as a messenger to accomplish the assignment confirms that Jonah knew God as "a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity" (Jonah 4:2b-3; cf., Exod 34:5-7).

Apparently, Jonah's reluctance to accomplish the Nineveh mission stems from his knowledge of the compassion of Yahweh, even towards heathen nations like Assyria.

Interestingly, even as Jonah flees from the post of duty, he is "compelled" to witness to the mariners, "I am a Hebrew and worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land" (Jonah 1:9). Thus, he witnesses to the pagans by default—the very mission he abhorred.

Of paramount importance is Jonah's Hebrew monotheism. While the mariners were polytheistic, Jonah proclaims a God who distinguishes Himself as the Creator of heaven and earth (Gen 1:1; Rev 14:6, 7). The announcement of monotheism over against polytheism, as embraced by pagan nations, forms the thrust of the prophet's message. Bosch (2011) argues that the "dialectical tension between judgment and mercy comes into play—judgment and mercy of which Israel and the nations are the recipients" (p. 18).

Whichever way one views the message of Jonah, the compassionate character of God towards the nations outside the confines of Israel clearly stands out. Nevertheless, Bosch contends that

> Jonah symbolizes the people of Israel, who have perverted their election into pride and privilege. The booklet does not aim at reaching and converting the Gentiles; it aims rather, at the repentance and conversion of Israel and contrasts God's magnanimity with the parochialism of his own people. (p. 18)

While one needs to appreciate the thrust of the message of Jonah to Israel as a nation, the centrifugal drive of the book cannot be overlooked.

When Jonah preached, "the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust" (Jonah 3:6). In fact, the response to the preaching of Jonah was that "the Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth" (v. 5). God repented of what he had proposed to do to the people of Ninevah. Could one not consider this forgiveness given to the people of Nineveh as an example of

God's compassion towards the Gentile nations?

The most intriguing aspect of the king's proclamation was the call for a fast for both beasts and human beings. In addition, the king declared, "Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence" (Jonah 3:7-8). The language employed by the king suggests a theological understanding of the conditions and prerequisites for repentance and forgiveness. The climax of God's love towards the Ninevites is epitomized thus: "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened" (v. 10).

The compassion of God towards the people of Nineveh was a source of frustration to Jonah. Instead of rejoicing over the positive response displayed by the Ninevites, Jonah was disillusioned. Obviously, Jonah's reluctance concerning the Ninevite commission presents objects lessons for Jonah as an individual and the Israelites as a nation. Without any doubt the care and love of God are displayed as far above national pride and prejudice.

The book of Jonah, while focusing largely on the prophet, stands as a rebuke to any parochial theology of mission. Conversely, the compassion of God for His people outside the Hebrew nation indiscriminately seeks the lost. When Jonah "was greatly displeased and became angry" (Jonah 4:11), God reiterates that He was more concerned about Nineveh which had "more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who could not tell their right hand from their left and many cattle as well" (v. 11).

God Sends His Church to the Nations

Mission to the nations outside Israel becomes explicit in the birth, life, ministry,

death, and resurrection of Christ as narrated in the four Gospels. Bosch (2011) observes

that although Jews received Gentile converts as God-fearers and proselytes, "frequently

their concern was not even with all members of their own. For several centuries prior to

the birth of Jesus, the conviction was gaining ground that not all Israel but only a faithful

few would be saved" (p. 25). Evidently the missionary focus of Judaism just before the

birth of Jesus was not strongly evangelistic in nature. However, Bosch surmises that the

preaching of John the Baptist began "to underscore the fact that all Israel were Gentiles in

the eyes of God, outside the covenant, the repentant had to submit to the rite of baptism

in the same way Gentile converts to Judaism did" (pp. 25-26). Nonetheless,

> what amazes one again is the inclusiveness of Jesus' mission. It embraces both the
> poor and the rich, both the liberated and the oppressor, both the sinners and the
> devout. His mission is one of dissolving alienation and breaking down walls of
> hostility, of crossing boundaries between individuals and groups. (Bosch, 2011, p. 28)

Consequently, the risen Christ sends the church and emphatically declares, "Peace be

with you! As the father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

Jesus Gives the Great Commission to the Church

The Great Commission, as the magna carta of the church, is pointedly articulated

in the Gospel according to Matthew. The universality of the great commission, as

enunciated in Matthew 28:18-20, is reminiscent of the blessing of Abraham, and is meant

to cascade to all nations (Gen 12:3, Isa 45:1-8; 49:1-6). In the Great Commission, Jesus

sends the church to disciple the nations. The Greek phrase used to denote "all nations" is

panta ta ethnē. According to Gaebelein (1984) *panta ta ethnē* occurs eight times in the

gospel of Mathew (Matt 4:15, 6:32; 10:5, 18, 21; 20:19, 25). Gaebelein (1984) and Bosch

(1991) contend that *panta ta ethnē* includes both Jews and Gentiles. The *SDA Bible*

Commentary also arrives at a similar conclusion: "Make disciples of all nations, including both Jews and Gentiles in every nation" (Nichol, 1980, vol. 5, p. 557). Furthermore, "This commission is sometimes referred to as the charter of foreign missions. . . . Christianity was the first religion to assume a truly international character" (p. 557). The universality of the commission is unambiguously spelled out.

In addition, Bosch (1991) notes that the use of *panta ta ethnē* occurs towards the end of Mathew's Gospel "where the Gentile mission comes into focus ever more clearly" (p. 64). The universal intent of the *Missio Dei* in the Great Commission, especially in the use of *panta ta ethnē,* forms the embodiment of a global mission which includes "every nation, tribe, language and people" (Rev 14:6). The inclusiveness of the Gospel Commission demands a deliberate strategy to ensure that every segment of humanity is given a chance to hear the message. More importantly, the Good News need to be proclaimed clearly in a way that does not addresses the audience in ambivalent terms. Before Jesus ascended to heaven He reiterated the magnitude, scope, and inclusiveness of the mission of the church.

The disciples were to "to go to the entire world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15), "and repentance and forgiveness of sins (would) be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Luke states that "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Disciples Embrace a Global Mission

Although the break from Judaism into Christianity involved a gradual and somewhat painful process, it had to embrace the inclusiveness of mission. Hence, Roberts

comments that "the disciples witnessed across national and ethnic boundaries not because they were powerful, but because they were faithful to the vision of the Kingdom of God they had glimpsed in Jesus Christ" (Roberts, 2005, p. 20).

The dramatic fulfillment of the church's inclusive mission beyond the borders of Israel and Judaism finds its initial accomplishment on the day of Pentecost. On this decisive day, people marveled that "Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" (Acts 2:9-11). Bevans and Schroeder (2004) point out that "it is often thought that this internationality, which implied the reversal of the curse of Babel (Gen 11:1-9), was a sign of the birth of the church" (p. 17). Therefore, the mission of the church in the New Testament and more specifically in the book of Acts should be viewed in ever widening concentric circles. Hellenistic Jews like Stephen break Jewish parochial mission theology (Acts 6:48-51), Samaria is also reached after the stoning of Stephen, (8:4-8), Cornelius becomes a believer (10), and the first Gentile church is founded in Antioch (11:25-26).

More than any other evangelist, Luke in the book of Acts describes the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem into every geo-political entity of the then-known world. The universal nature of the commission compelled the church to break barriers of race, tribe, and nationality in order to reach everyone. However, Luke's narrative also highlights the challenges faced by the church as it travelled to different cultures.

Paul Intensifies the Global Mission

More importantly, the call and conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9; 22; 26)

marks a paradigm shift in the church's pursuit of the Gentile mission. Paul's theological

understanding of mission to both Jews and Gentile is quite instructive (1 Cor 9:19-23).

Paul's basic theological approach to mission to those outside the covenant of Israel is

epitomized in the Greek phrase *pasin panta pantos,* translated as "I have become all

things to all men" (v. 22b). Reading this theological principle, some may rush to the

conclusion that Paul is advocating a compromised stance in the presentation of the gospel

to fit each audience. What does he really mean by *pasin panta pantos* or becoming all

things to all people? In the same vein, Garland (2003) poses the question: "Did Paul

adopt the pose of a flatterer who masquerades as something that he is not in order to

ingratiate himself with potential converts?" (p. 434).

Blomberg (1995) extrapolates that Paul's theological principle of becoming all

things to all people basically deals with two extremes: "pure separatism or pure

indulgence" (p. 187). A careful reading of Paul and a general study of his theology will

help one to maintain a proper balance and accept the creative tension. Therefore,

Blomberg concludes that "neither of these courses of action is in the gospel's interest.

Paul's athletic metaphors of self-discipline make plain that he is calling us to the far more

rigorous approach of proceeding on a case-by-case basis with morally neutral matters"

(p. 187).

Apparently, Paul is flexible in matters which do not violate principle while

allowing nothing of a frivolous nature to hinder his mission. Pollard (2000), explains the

seemingly paradoxical theological principle by the fact that while Paul was already a

biological Jew, "to the Jews he became a Jew" (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5; Gal 1:1). However,

> Paul in this passage instrumentalizes his intimate experience as a Jew is vehicularized so that he can be a Jew. Paul will work for his own racial and ethnical group, but only as an ambassador from another kingdom (2 Cor 5:20). He adapts himself to the customs of the Jewish people when working among them. (Pollard, 2000, p. 20)

To buttress this point, Pollard (2000) cites examples of Paul's cross-cultural adaptations. For the sake of the Jews, Paul takes a Nazarite vow (Acts 18:18) and circumcises Timothy (Acts 16:3). In addition, he takes part in the purification rituals and pays the Nazarite expenses for the sacrificial offering (Acts 21:23ff). On the other hand, the same Paul "can be as one without the law to the gentiles (Gal 2:11-14; Col 2:11, 16). Pollard (2000) argues that "while Christian Paul was not Judeo-centric, he was deeply Judeo-sensitive. In the same way, as leaders we are not called to be ethnocentric, but to be Christ-centered and ethno-sensitive" (p. 20).

Conclusively, the principle applies to cultural sensitivity for the sake of effective communication in the context of the gospel. Petersen (2007) has this principle in mind when arguing that "Paul willingly adapted his lifestyle and cultural practices in order to communicate and relate successfully to his target audience. However, regardless of the cultural group he was addressing, he never compromised his commitment to obey the laws of the Lord Jesus Christ" (p. 117).

Obviously, Paul did not allow unnecessary barriers to be stumbling blocks between himself and the audience if no moral principle was at stake. Meanwhile, Collins (1999) views Paul's *pasin panta pantos* or "all things to all man" as reflective of "a rhetorical and political topos that portrays populist leaders as enslaving themselves to the people they are to lead" (p. 352). In this metaphor Paul voluntarily opts to be a slave for the sake of the gospel. He foregoes his legal rights in order "to save some" (1 Cor 9:22b).

Paul's adaptation is a close imitation of the incarnation of Christ, who "became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14; Phil 2:7). This is a very strong theological model for ministry.

The missionary needs to adopt a posture of willing submission in any specific culture. This is especially important when missionaries move from one culture to another. This means that they should be ethno sensitive rather than being ethnocentric. God sends his church to go to the world in humility like its Lord. The church cannot afford to maintain a posture of superiority and still hope to present the lowly Jesus.

Whiteman (2004) explains the implications of incarnation in mission:

> At the cross in Incarnation for Jesus led to crucifixion, and this means for us that they will be many things in our life that will have to die-our biases and prejudices, our lifestyle, our agenda of what we want to do for God, may be for some of us our physical life. When we take incarnation seriously in ministry it means we bow humility before we wave the flag of patriotism. The incarnation model for mission means we must give up our own cultural compulsives and preferences, and we must not insist that the cultural expression of the gospel in another culture be the same as our own. (p. 84)

Consequently, as O' Brian (1995) correctly observes, Paul's use of *doulos* literally *slave,* expresses the radical nature of the depth of adaptation he was willing to undergo for the sake of the gospel (p. 10). Paul's theological understanding, which led to his missiology, helped him to translate the covenantal blessings promised to Abraham to all humanity through Christ. As much as it was problematic for an average Jew, including Peter, to bring the Gentile converts into the church, Paul's missiology shows that he embraced a broader perspective of an inclusive outreach. Paul refuses to view the election of Israel in parochial terms. Therefore, he declares, "understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance" (Gal 3:8). To bolster his point,

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Paul points to the call of Abraham (Gen 12:3) as a precursor to the salvation of Gentiles as well as Jews. Paul's theology and missiology reach a crescendo when he identifies a new humanity as a result of the new birth (2 Cor 5:17). For that reason, Paul asserts:

> You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:26-29)

For that reason, the children of Abraham are more than those born of the flesh, but more importantly, the spiritual ones born through faith in Christ (John 1:12; Gal 3:7).

Principles From Ellen G. White

The writings of Ellen G. White, demonstrate that the plan of redemption is inclusively universal. The human family was created by God because of His love and care. As a result, "man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character" (White, 1970, p. 16). The *imago Dei* concept is brought into sharp focus, meaning that God created humanity in His own image for the sake of His glory (Gen 1:26, 27). God's love and care for the cosmos is epitomized by both creation and redemption. However, because of the fall humanity was alienated from the Creator. White (1970) explains that "Adam, in his innocence, had enjoyed open communion with his Maker; but sin brought separation between God and man, and the atonement of Christ alone could span the abyss and make possible the blessing from heaven to earth" (p. 44). Consequently, the plan of redemption was meant to reconcile humanity to the Creator.

"After the dispersion from Babel, idolatry again became well-nigh universal, and the Lord finally left the hardened transgressors to follow their evil ways, while He chose Abraham, of the line of Shem, and made him the keeper of His law for future

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generations" (White, 1970, p. 107). Evidently, the call of Abraham had a purpose far beyond himself and his posterity. The call had both Christological and missiological implications. Therefore, the call of Abraham points to the climatic and all-embracing mission of Christ.

White (1942) correctly observed that

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow me." (p. 143)

Clearly, Christ's method included mingling with the audience in a bid to understand their specific needs in order to provide a relevant ministry. Is this far from contextualization? Obviously, Christ was not irrelevant to the needs of the specific groups which needed His ministry. For example, to the Samaritan woman He says, "Give me a drink" (John 4:7). To the educated Pharisee, Nicodemus, He declares, "most assuredly unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). "Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, "this man receives sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:1, 2). More importantly, after mingling with the people He gained their confidence and then asked them to be His disciples.

Evidently, Jesus did not practice an ascetic or ivory tower theology of mission. It is difficult, if not impossible, for a specific group of people to follow an outsider, unless they have identified with that particular stranger. Sometimes missionaries are tempted to request people to follow them before enlisting their interest and confidence. Such a course of action is a complete reversal of the method of Jesus. This methodology can be neglected only at the peril of mission theology. It is further established that

Jesus saw in every soul one to whom must be given the call to His kingdom. He reached the hearts of the people by going among them as one who desired their good. He sought them in the public streets, in private houses, on the boats, in the synagogue, by the shores of the lake, and at the marriage feast. He met them in their daily vocations, and manifested an interest in their secular affairs. He carried His instruction into the household, bringing families in their own homes in their own homes under His divine presence. His strong person sympathy helped to win hearts. (White, 1942, p. 151)

Christ did not wait for people to seek for Him. Instead, He went out of His comfort zone to find them. Jesus respected the cultural context of the audience. Ellen White (1966) made the most passionate plea when she pleaded for the people in the South. Historically, the colored people in America at this time were segregated and neglected by the state. Unfortunately, the church also succumbed to the politics of the day. The church only joined the status quo, and ignored the colored group in the South. This led to a scathing rebuke from White (1966):

Sin rests upon us as a church because we have not made greater efforts for the salvation of souls among the colored people. It will always be a difficult matter to deal with the prejudices of the White people in the South and do missionary work for the colored people. But the way this matter has been treated by some is an offense to God. (p. 15)

While the prophetic rebuke dealt with other issues, including prejudice, its essence was that the church was neglecting the colored people as a racial group. Ellen White uses two strong words to chastise the church, namely, *sin* and *offense*. Consequently, the question which confronts mission theology today is whether the church is not committing similar sins and offending God by its neglect of some minority people groups.

Although Ellen White does not explicitly use the term people group, the concept can be gleaned from her writings. She convincingly writes about the need for work to be done among the Jewish people. Apparently, she saw this as an important and promising

mission field. Again, she strongly admonishes workers to labor for the Jewish people. In fact, White (1911) views the ministry to the Jewish people in eschatological terms. She prophetically declares that "in the closing proclamation of the gospel, when special work is to be done for classes of people hitherto neglected, God expects His messengers to take particular interest in the Jewish people who they find in all parts of the earth" (p. 381). Apparently, this statement assumes that there could be a *class* or people group, including Jews, which is *neglected* for whatever reasons. Unless deliberate strategies are put in place such people groups will remain untouched by the gospel message.

Interestingly, White observes the wisdom applied by Paul on Mars Hill in dealing with philosophers. Paul did not just preach the gospel without context or tact. Rather, the apostle met the Greeks on their cultural ground and gained a hearing. As White (1911) eloquently states, "Paul's words contain a treasure of knowledge for the church. He was in a position where he might easily have said that which would have irritated his proud listeners and brought himself into difficulty" (p. 241).

Obviously, the basic principle one can extrapolate from this incident is that tact and wisdom are especially necessary when dealing with sensitive religious issues. This is critical if one is to witness in those communities, among which the mere confession of Christ may result in ostracism, persecution, and even death itself. A lack of wisdom and discretion in such matters may close the door of witnessing prematurely.

Principles From Seventh-day Adventist Literature

Dybdahl (as cited in Bauer, 2005, p. 1) contends: "Theology and mission should go together. True theology should move us to mission, and mission rightly practiced should lead to theology." There is a dialectical interaction between theology and mission.

Whichever way one decides to begin, one point is clear: orthodoxy and orthopraxis have a direct bearing on each other and mission. Whether mission informs theology, as Dybdahl argues, or vice-versa, it is clear that there is a direct correlation between the two. One could simply put the argument to rest by viewing both mission and theology as the two sides of the same coin. Consequently, for Dybdahl (as cited in Bauer, 2005), "the disciples and Paul were called by Christ to pursue a mission, and not to create a theology. Their theologies arose out of obedience to the mission commission. In the process of doing mission, they were led to do theology" (p. 2). The discussion brings the issue of theology and cultural context into sharp focus. Theologizing without mission is not profitable. Theology helps mission to be relevant and compatible with the audience. Oosterwal (as cited in Maier, 2005) argues that there is "no *theologia perennis*—meaning that, there is no theology for all times for all places" (p. 68).

Every cultural context is unique and specific. It would be naive for mission theologians to assume that the one size fits all philosophy would be useful in mission thinking. Mission theology of necessity has to adapt to ever changing circumstances and environments. Nunes (as cited in Bauer, 2005) maintains that "one of the priorities in mission strategy is the study of the intended audience, their religious and cultural backgrounds and their worldview" (p. 83).

Obviously Nunes (2005) is referring to the need for a study of the cultural context for both theological and missiological relevance. While basic principles and fundamental beliefs as espoused by Seventh-day Adventists maintain the theological self-understanding of the church, the mode of transmission can change to meet varying circumstances.

The gospel is eternal (Rev 14:6) but the strategies and methodologies of presenting the gospel need not be eternal. Therefore, the need to study cultural variations remains a constant challenge to mission. Consequently, Nunes (as cited in Bauer, 2005) recommends: "In any case, it is necessary to study the audience's worldview to identify communication bridges and also religious and cultural obstacles" (p. 83). To assume that every audience is the same and needs to be approached in the same way is tantamount to theological and missiological naiveté.

The principle presented here is in harmony with the method used by Jesus and Paul in presenting the gospel under varying circumstances. Again, Oosterwal (as cited in Maier, 2005) correctly points out that, "there is no *theologia perennis,* no eternal theology, for all time and all places. Only the gospel of Jesus is eternal" (p. 68). Wherever the gospel is preached, it will confront new frontiers, cultural and demographic challenges.

Adaptation, enculturation, and contextual relevance remain the ever-daunting task of mission theology. Consequently, the contextual framework should be considered whenever mission strategies are formulated and implemented. Paulien (as cited in Bauer, 2011) says that "it is the obligation of the one presenting the gospel to cross the divide between the presenter and those who need to hear the gospel. It is not the obligation of the hearer to bridge the gap" (p. 99).

The most formidable challenge faced by members whose conversion leaves their worldview untouched, is the sufficiency and relevance of the gospel in meeting the exigencies of life. This is exactly what Mathema (as cited in Donkor, 2011) means when he states:

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The veneer of Christianity that does not reach the African at the core of his or her being will not do, because, in times, the superficial adherent to this new religion will abandon the new faith and resort to that which is at the core of his or her being. (p. 47)

Richardson (1992) avers that "Adventists have for many years, through the Institute of World Missions acknowledged the importance of meeting people on their ground, in their culture, in their language, and to a large degree, on their terms" (p. 13). It is encouraging to note that the church appreciates the need for cultural considerations as part of its missionary theology.

Principles From Other Literature

Sanneh (2008) observes that praxis and theology go together. He correctly avers that "the message, the specific and concrete foundations of mission are set in cultural and particularity and historical specificity" (p. 33). Furthermore, Van Engen (2004) also suggests that reflection and interaction are compatible with concrete theology and orthopraxis. Evidently, the contextual framework is the basis of mission theology.

By focusing our attention on integrating themes, we encounter new insights as we re-read Scripture from the point of view of a contextual hermeneutic. These insights can then be re-stated and lived out as biblically informed contextually appropriate missional actions of the faith community of time, worldview, and space of particular context in which God's mission happens. (Van Engen, 2004, p.50). Mission strategies should focus on people groups rather than being generalized, for when you aim at everyone you will probably miss everyone (Robb, 1989, p. 7; Tippet, 1987, p. 152).

Missiological Implications

The discussion demonstrates that God is concerned and loves the entire cosmos.

Deism, which views God as an absent landlord, is an antithesis to mission theology. On the contrary, the thesis of mission theology is that God loves human beings because they were made in His own image (Gen 1:26, 27, 1 John 4:8; John 3:16). Commencing from creation, through the fall of humanity and the flood, God initiates and makes covenants with humanity.

However, the covenant made with Abraham and renewed through his posterity forms the basis of mission to the entire globe. God decided to reach out to the idolatrous world through the line of Shem. A historical survey of the Old Testament especially pertaining to the Jewish people demonstrates their parochial understanding of mission. On the other hand, the prayer of Solomon indicates a universal general understanding of mission from the outskirts into the center (1 Kgs 8:41-48). Unfortunately, the majority of the Jews came to believe in a self-centered soteriology. Nonetheless, the conversion of God-fearers and proselytes is a testimony to mission in both the centripetal and centrifugal mode.

The climax of the mission as entrusted to Abraham is the cross of Jesus. The Christ event clarifies and further validates the universal care and love of God for the world including the gentile nations (John 3:16; Rom 5:8; Rom 6:23). Consequently, God sends the church to witness about His love. The church is the instrument, the servant, the missionary and the vanguard of the message. The *Missio Dei* is by nature the reason for the existence and commission of the church. The church is sent to cross boundaries of race, class, tribe, gender, nationality, ethnicity, political, religious and any other barriers of separation. The simple reason for breaking down all the walls of prejudices is that, in Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female" (Gal 3:28).

Finally every people group should be reached by the gospel (Matt 24:14; 28:18-20). One way of ascertaining that every segment of the human population is covered is to identify and reach each people group in its social context.

Bruce Moyer in Dunton, Pfeiffer, and Schantz (1990) acknowledges,

One important reason for viewing the task in terms of people groups is conceptual. It enables us to see what has often been hidden. We tend to see what we are used to seeing or what we expect to see. Even as missiologists we are apt to overlook people who are not within our circle of activity. (p. 40)

At the end of time, John the revelator saw, "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (Rev 7:9).

Conclusion

The outreach to the Xhosa-speaking people of Zimbabwe is done on the theological basis of reaching all segments of society with the gospel. The Xhosa-speaking people are unique in their own cultural context, including the language and way of life. Evangelistic or other outreach projects among the Xhosa have usually been conducted in the Ndebele language, without taking into account the context of the local people. As a result, this project seeks to take cognizance of the Xhosa cultural context in its outreach. The next chapter describes the geopolitical, social, economic, and religious contexts of the Xhosa-speaking people in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND RELIGIOUS

ANALYSIS OF THE XHOSA

Introduction

The Xhosa-speaking community occupies a unique historical and religious space in Zimbabwe. This community owes its origin to the colonization process, which saw it cross the South African boarder into present day Zimbabwe. The Xhosa people have kept their cultural identity intact despite all the forces militating against it. As a minority group, the Xhosa community needs special attention and specific ethnographic studies so that it can be reached and evangelized.

Description of the Project Context

The population of Zimbabwe is presently estimated to stand at 13,182,000 as of July 2013 (Joshua Project, 2008). The Xhosa community is located on the northeastern part of Bulawayo, the second largest city of Zimbabwe. Xhosa speakers are estimated to number up to 8,354,000 members throughout the world. Zimbabwe is believed to host a total of 28,000 members of this community. The context of the Xhosa will be described in detail since it is closely linked to both its inception and tribal identity. A detailed description of this nature is paramount since this project attempts to identify a strategy consonant with the Xhosa specific cultural context.

Geographic Description

The Republic of Zimbabwe is located in the southern part of the African continent between Victoria Falls, the Zambezi River, Kariba dam, and the Limpopo River. Its neighbors are: South Africa to the south, Botswana to the west, Zambia to the north, and Mozambique to the east (CIA World Factbook). Zimbabwe has a total area of 390,580 sq km. Of this area, 386,670 sq km is land while 3,910 sq km is water.

The Xhosa community is located in the Mbembesi area in the northeastern part of Bulawayo, which is located in Matabeleland North province of the Republic of Zimbabwe. Although, this people group may be found in different parts of Zimbabwe, the Mbembesi area is host to the majority of the Xhosa-speaking people.

History of the Nation/Region

The history of Zimbabwe, spanning from both pre-colonial and post-colonial days, locates the arrival of the Xhosa people with the entry of the pioneer column (colonialists) under the leadership of Cecil John Rhodes and Star Jameson. The Xhosa people belong under the umbrella of the Bantu people who moved from southern Zaire, which is central Africa down to the south of the Sahara. Historically, the Xhosa speaking people found themselves in the Eastern Cape of the Republic of South Africa. They belong to the Nguni clan, which is sparsely distributed across Africa, and especially south of the Sahara.

Several explanations have been given for the presence of the Xhosa people in Zimbabwe. According to Nyathi (2005), the Xhosa community came as immigrants into Zimbabwe. Some came as workers such as teachers, nurses, and pastors. Some of the Xhosa people came into Zimbabwe through marriage, and this was true mostly for Xhosa

women who got married to Zimbabwean. However, most of them migrated into Zimbabwe "as drivers of ox-wagons plying the route between Zimbabwe and South Africa" (Nyathi, 2005, p. 58). Some believe that "the Xhosa community in Zimbabwe is well established and arrived with Mzilikazi after fleeing from Shaka and established themselves and kept their language dialect intact, slightly distinct from original Zulu" (Velaphi, 2011, p. 1). These people subsequently settled in the Mbembesi area as "a homogeneous people comprising several ethnic groups, such as the Hlubi, amaBhele, amaNtambo, amaZizi and amaTolo" (Nyathi, 2005, p. 60).

The Xhosa community in the Mbembesi area has managed to preserve its language and culture for the past century. The Xhosa are sometimes referred to as *Fengu* or *Fingo*—a term derived from the Xhosa noun *ukufengula* meaning "to beg or ask for a place to settle" (Ranger, as cited in Nyathi, 2005, p. 58). However, it is also correctly observed that the people concerned would rather to be recognized as Xhosa than *Fengu*.

<div align="center">Demographics</div>

Zimbabwe is a land locked state in Southern Africa with a population estimated between twelve and thirteen million inhabitants (Johnstone & Mandryk, 2001, p. 688). The population growth rate is estimated at 4.357% (CIA World Factbook). Harare is the capital city with a population of about 1,606,000 and Bulawayo is the second largest city with a population of 700,000. It is estimated that 38% of the Zimbabwean population are urban dwellers while the rest are found in the rural parts of the country.

Zimbabwe hosts different ethnic, racial, and tribal groups. The largest group is the black Zimbabweans who form 98% of which 82% is Shona, 13% Ndebele, and other 3% Asian, and mixed races 1%, while Whites make up less than 1% of the entire population.

The Xhosa-speaking people are numbered within the 3% minority groups in Zimbabwe. Maybe this could be the reason for their neglect in terms of literature and programs, which are specific to their needs. This project aims at providing materials, which are specific in terms of language and the context of the Xhosa speaking people. As shown on the map, the Xhosa people are sandwiched between the Runde and Savi rivers as indicated in Figure 1.

Even though Xhosa-speakers in Zimbabwe can be found in various parts of the country, the Mbembesi area is here this people group is concentrated. As a result, this specific project will be conducted in this area. Therefore, the success of the project in this area will mean that it can almost be replicated in other parts of the West Zimbabwe Conference with specific minority language people groups such as the Tonga in Binga, the Suthu and Venda in Beitbridge, Shangaan in Mwenezi, Dombe, Nambya and Nyanja, and also in Hwange, and the Kalanga in Plumtree. All these minority groups should be able to benefit from the results of the project conducted among the Xhosa-speaking people of Mbembesi area.

A project of this nature helps to focus and allocate resources in a meaningful way. The mapping of the population concentration not only helps the coordinators to be deliberate and accurate in planning, but it also benefits all the stakeholders to locate the area and appreciate the need for concerted efforts.

Political Organization Among the Xhosa People

Owing to its colonial legacy, Zimbabwe has always maintained its tribal rural chieftainship. Each tribal community is allowed to have its own kraal leader, village leader, and chief. These leaders are the vanguards of both cultural and political

Figure 1. Map of Zimbabwe. Taken 17 July 2013, from ww.getamap.net/maps/
Zimbabwe

spheres of influence among the rural population. A ministry of the local government

oversees their functions and provides the necessary guidance for their duties. Any project,

be it governmental or non-governmental, owes its success or failure to the support of the

chiefs and their co-officers. The chiefs are not voted into power through the ballot box,

but inherit the chieftainship from their clan forbearers.

The king (*inkosi)* is the tribal authority (*ingubayabantu lesizwe).* Under the leadership of the king, tribal chiefs are assigned administrative duties for specific particular areas of the tribal land. Chiefs also work with councilors known as *amaphakathi* (Pauw, 2002, p. 5). These chiefs and councilors are involved in administrative duties. Then, the tribal area is subdivided into smaller units known as *iilali* under the leadership of an elected headman (*usibonda).* Therefore, the community in which this project is conducted is not different from the rest of rural Zimbabwe.

The Xhosa still have a strong allegiance not only to the chief but to the king as well. This allegiance has recently been confirmed by several visits made by King Zwelonke to the Mbembesi area in Zimbabwe to see his Xhosa compatriots. The King was met and welcomed by the headman of the Mbembesi area.

<div align="center">Socio-Cultural Context of the Xhosa Community</div>

One of the distinct customs of the Xhosa community is the circumcision of the male members of their communities. This initiation rite has survived among the Xhosa people for over a century. Circumcision is closely tied to the Xhosa identity. As a result, a Xhosa male who never undergoes the circumcision rite is regarded as a boy (*inkwenkwe*). Nyathi (2005, p. 60) observes that the ceremony of "male circumcision— *ukwelusa amakhenkwe*" is still valued by the Xhosa-speaking people of Mbembesi.

Unlike the surgical circumcision performed by nurses and doctors, the Xhosa ceremony is filled with a lot of cultural and religious values. "Just before the circumcision ceremony is performed, an *ikhwenkwe* takes part in the ceremony called *ingxelo* during which he announces to relatives his intention to be circumcised" (Nyathi, 2005, p. 60). According to Mills (2009, p. 2) a male who has not undergone circumcision

is not only considered as *ikwenkwe* but he is subjected to ridicule and humiliation before women as well as men. Such a man may well be referred to as a *boy* no matter how old he may be.

This has significant implications for doing mission and ministry among the Xhosa people. Is it possible for the Xhosa man and women to reject the message on the basis of cultural background? In my conversation with one of the Xhosa leaders, he indicated that the Xhosa community had a lot of tolerance for those from outside their community even if they were not circumcised. However, the major challenge around the level of acceptance for such people if they were Xhosa.

Xhosa men would not expect total acceptance in the community without circumcision. Of course values continue to change as societies cross-pollinate each other. Otherwise, it would be problematic if not impossible for a traditional Xhosa family to wed their daughter to an uncircumcised man.

The Xhosa people place so much value on circumcision because it is a deeply embedded value of this culture among the Xhosa people. That may be one reason it survived the onslaughts of cultural revolutions. According to Ngxamngxa (as cited in Papu & Vester, 2006) there are three stages in circumcision: (a) the surgical operation, (b) seclusion, and (c) coming out of the ceremony or reincorporation into the community.

It is the entire process in its totality that not only identifies the Xhosa people, but continues to transmit and perpetuate their values from generation to generation. For example, before the initiates are reincorporated into the society they are taught to avoid addictions from drugs and alcohol, learn good social habits towards others, to be responsible, take family life responsibilities, learn a job (farmer, herder, thatcher, etc.), to

provide for their children, avoid covetousness, to be faithful in marriage, go to church, and not to fight (Powe, 2007, p. 6).

Powe suggests that the ceremony is not done for hygienic reasons as compared to modern discourses on circumcision. For the Xhosa people, this is not just a rite of passage from puberty to adulthood; circumcision embodies the cultural, religious, and other ethnic values, which distinctly mark the Xhosa as a different group from other communities. This is the reason for their insistence on having maintained their culture for more than a century in Zimbabwe (2007, p. 1). It has been suggested that among other things that:

> The cutting of the prepuce (done without aesthetic), followed by the period of seclusion, is viewed as demonstrating bravery and instilling endurance and discipline in initiatives. The bulk of the seclusion period is used to teach initiates how to be proper men in accordance with societal and cultural expectations. On leaving the bush, the hut where the initiates lived during the initiation, clothing worn during the initiation period and other artifacts used during the rite are burnt. This is a symbolic act to signal the parting with the past. (Ndangam, 2008, p. 212)

As a result of this Xhosa cultural rhetoric and discourse, those who prefer to do circumcision at the hospital with little experiences of pain, devoid of the elders' instruction (*ukuyala)* are not acceptable as a fully-grown *man* within their Xhosa community. Logically, if they would be accepted how could they become teachers (*inkhankatha)* for the initiates (*abakhwetha)* without themselves having experienced the pain, discipline, and instructions from this rite of passage?

Therefore, it should be understood, at least from this perspective, that a Xhosa boy faces tremendous cultural and social pressure to undergo the traditional circumcision rite. Maybe the greatest question to be asked concerns the religious significance attached to the circumcision rite. While Papu and Vester (2006) offer various reasons and

functions of the rite of circumcision, one of the major religious roles concerns the pact

entered between the new initiate and the ancestors (Papu & Vesterr, 2006, p. 184).

Consequently, the foregone conclusion is that

> as can be seen, the ritual of circumcision is fraught with meaning for the traditional Xhosa-speaking people. Some have also argued that it is because of the strict observance of such rituals that the Xhosa as a people have been sustained and kept from extinction. (p. 184)

In the execution of this project the rite of circumcision plays a significant role

since it is the embodiment and the vehicle through which the Xhosa religious, cultural,

social, political, and physical life is also expressed. The missiological significance of this

ceremony cannot be overlooked if any serious socio-religious cultural analysis of the

Xhosa people is to be established. The tenacious grip of the African Traditional Religions

upon the people like the Xhosa should not be lightly dismissed. It is particularly

imperative for this project to pay close attention to the Xhosa cultural context which may

not only affect the new converts but may even seduce the old ones to revert to

syncretism. This concern stems from the observation that

> the whole process is deeply entrenched in the traditional system of the belief. It cannot be separated from the incantations and prayers offered at the initiation. Christian parents should ask themselves whether it is in order to leave such an important facet of education in the hands of traditional doctors. (Papu & Vester, 2006, p. 192)

The analysis of the Xhosa socio-cultural context is not only descriptive of the

situation, but it specifically dictates and guides the type of theological and missiological

mitigation needed. Any meaningful strategy has to be formulated within the context and

framework of the Xhosa worldview. If strategies fail to address the intended audience,

one would not expect to attain favorable results. Dayton and Fraser correctly analyzed the

situation when they stated,

Right methods and tools do not guarantee a rich harvest. But the wrong methods and tools can be a quick road to failure. When the seed is misplanted or an apple orchard harvested with a tomato picker, the results are disastrous. (Dayton & Fraser, 1990, p. 174)

This project more specifically explores the Xhosa socio-cultural life in the context of rites such as circumcision, marriage, and gender for the purposes of mission. This is done specifically, in order to formulate outreach programs in sync with their cultural context. The custom of the Xhosa language as a transmitter of cultural values, beliefs, and customs is also explored in the light of its implications for mission.

Language

According to CNN (2008), the first post-apartheid president of the Republic of South Africa, Nelson Mandela once remarked, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." This statement confirms a profound reality concerning the power of one's mother tongue. According to this assertion, one's mother tongue reaches deep into the heart of the individual. For this reason, a basic understanding of the construction and the style of the Xhosa language is important in understanding both their cultural thoughts and religious persuasions. It is in this very kind of context that literature and other materials will need to be secured, designed, and tailor-made to meet the needs of the Xhosa community in the Mbembesi area.

**The Historical Construction
of the Xhosa Language**

The Xhosa language, which is known as *isiXhosa* among its speakers, broadly belongs to the East African Bantu family. Xhosa borrows largely from the Khoison

language which has become extinct today. The clicks found in this language are especially a direct result of the Xhosa interaction with the Khoisan in the Eastern Cape (Pauw, 2002, p. 1). Further, it is observed that Xhosa also successfully borrows some words from both the English and Afrikaans languages. Anthropologists collectively identify Bantu-speaking groups in the broader category of South African Bantu, namely, the Nguni, the Sotho, the Venda, and Lemba, the Changana Thonga (also in Mozambique), the Herero-Ovambo (Namibia) and the Shona. On the other hand, the Nguni can be subdivided into Cape Nguni, the Natal Nguni, the Swazi, the Ndebele, amaNdebele (Zimbabwe), the abaGwaza, and the Angoni of Malawi (p. 2).

The Xhosa people linguistically belong to the Nguni people group. The Xhosa language is an agglutinative tonal language family. This language is clearly distinguishable by its click sounds.

Language plays a critical role as the vehicle and a transmitter of cultural values, proverbs, and myths. Therefore, it is important for one to familiarize oneself with it. In this project, the Xhosa language is viewed as the transmitter of the Good News of salvation. Therefore, an attempt to communicate the Three Angels' Messages in the context of the Xhosa people of Mbembesi is not an exercise in futility; it is rather a strategy, which takes the local context seriously.

Recent developments in Zimbabwe would dictate that the minority language groups need a sensitive consideration of their languages if they are to be seriously engaged in any project or program. Their voices and concerns for the need for the government and other institutions to recognize them are growing louder and more distinct each day. The Xhosa community of Mbembesi has also sounded its cry, loud and clear.

When government officials intimated their plans to visit the Mbembesi area for a consultative meeting in the area concerning the new constitution, the Xhosa community vowed to boycott the meeting as long as it was not conducted in their language.

Gender and Sexuality Among the Xhosa

A brief sketch of the Xhosa community on the issues of gender and sexuality in their context is of paramount importance in order for one to fully appreciate their self-identity and understanding. Therefore, examining the rites of initiation helps in establishing the links of these ceremonies to the issues of gender and sexuality. The rite of circumcision for the males and the initiation of the girls known as *intonjane* in the Xhosa language provide a basis for analyzing gender and sexuality issues among the Xhosa people. These rites of passage among the Xhosa people may be useful in understanding the Xhosa definition of manhood and womanhood and the other social dynamics involved.

An understanding lays a better foundation in interpreting the dynamics involved in relation to evangelism and outreach. Most researchers point to the Xhosa rites of passage for both male and female initiates as the potential centers for categorizing and defining manhood and womanhood in the society. For example, Mtshiselwa (2011) avers that the last part of the circumcision ceremony (*umeluko)* when the male member of the Xhosa society is just about to be re-admitted into the society is important because at this stage "the principles of manhood are entrenched" (p. 289). What becomes clear in this discourse is that, the gender roles are constructed by the Xhosa society during the initiation ceremony. The kind of personality constructed at this stage can only be ascertained by a close examination of the contents of the instructions given to the man

before he is accepted as an "integral part of the community" (Mtshiselwa, 2011, p. 289).

The sole aim of the instructions given to the male initiates during the rites of passage has a definite purpose in sight. One of the clearest objectives of this school is to instill courage, fearlessness, and endurance in the core of the initiates (p. 289). "Endurance of physical and emotional pain is a great virtue for the Akamba people as indeed it is among other Africans, since life in Africa is surrounded by much pain from one to another" (Mbiti, 1969, p. 123). Accordingly, once the foreskin is severed, "each boy has to shout, I am a man!" (*ndiyindoda*). This declaration marks the transition from boyhood to manhood and it also points out the reality of the authority invested in the person of such a status. Similarly, the *intonjane* rite of initiation, which is performed for the Xhosa girls as soon as they reach the puberty stage, culturally constructs their womanhood. Mtshiselwa (2011) explains:

> It is here that she is taught by elders in her family, how to behave as a young woman, on how to look after herself, her responsibilities as a young woman and how to act in the company of young men. This custom and teaching lays the foundation for the type of wife that she will become, and her understanding of being a woman. (p. 290)

A study conducted among the Xhosa demonstrated that culture and tradition largely contribute to the gender roles and categorization. Therefore, it is strongly argued that the power balance in the traditional family favors the man since the woman "becomes a member of the groom's family" (Cain, Schensul, & Mlobeli, 2010, p. 5). Consequently, in this kind of set up, it seems as if decision-making is transferred to the husband and his family instead of being shared by both spouses (p. 5).

**Kinship and Marriage Among
the Xhosa-Speaking People**

Kinship is defined through blood or marital relationship. If kinship is established

through blood it is known as consanguineal and if it comes through marriage it is referred

to as affinal. These relationships define individuals and set boundaries between clans,

tribes, and races. Among the traditional Xhosa-speaking people marriage is not an

individual issue but it concerns the whole clan. Mbiti (1969) succinctly observes that

> therefore, marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and rhythm of life in which everyone must participate. Otherwise, he who does not participate in it is a curse to the community, he is a rebel and a law-breaker, he is not only abnormal but 'under-human'. Failure to get married under normal circumstances means that the person concerned has rejected society and society him in return. (p. 133)

While the assertion advanced by Mbiti (1969) may seem to be over generalized, a

close study of the Xhosa community and any other African society could possibly present

the same pressures for those who for one reason or another seem unable to marry or get

married. Obviously, the articulation of the situation could be varied due to the ever-

changing global environment. At the same time, one needs to realize the communal

nature and implications of marriage as far as the two families are concerned.

Both the family of the bridegroom and that of the bride have to be involved in the

bonding of these two individuals even before the consummation of the relationship in a

marriage. Accordingly, "before a marriage, the family of the future husband has to pay an

amount to the family of the bride, this amount is called *lobola* in the Xhosa language"

(Caracciolo, 2010, p. 2). The *lobola* is not a *bride price* as some may think or conclude.

Actually, it seems correct to assume that the word *bride price* itself gives the

wrong impression of buying and selling. However, this is not what is intended for by the

lobola among the Xhosa speaking people. The bride's parents are not *selling* their

daughter and the groom is not *buying* the wife. Nonetheless, cases of extortion, avarice,

covetousness and the abuse of the *lobola* custom have also contributed their negative

impact to this cultural practice. However, it should be understood that in the Xhosa cultural context it is contested that "lobola is not a bride price, but a means of establishing a link between two families" (Caracciolo, 2010, p. 2). Therefore, the word bride prize itself is not only misleading but also gives a distorted reality of both the purpose and intentions of the *lobola* custom among the Xhosa-speaking people. Most African writers and theologians prefer the word "bride wealth" (Mbiti 1969, p. 140; Caracciolo, 2010, p. 2). Mbiti furthermore extrapolates that the gift was a statement declaring that the bride "is a valuable person not only to her family but to her husband's family. At marriage she is not stolen but is given away under mutual agreement between two families" (p. 140).

For the traditional Xhosa people who still practice ancestral veneration, the relationship is expected to extend to the clan ancestors as well. For those who believe in ancestral spirits the agreement between two families is accompanied by rites and ceremonies including the shading and pouring of blood and other acts of ancestor appeasement. The understanding of the cultural attachment of the Xhosa community helps to locate the people within their context. Further, such information is useful in helping the missionary to appreciate the cultures within this community, which could be a hindrance to the acceptance of the Gospel among the Xhosa people if not understood. It would be more helpful to recognize potential elements in the Xhosa culture, which could lead new converts into syncretism or a split religious perspective.

Economic Context of the Xhosa-Speaking People in Mbembesi

The Xhosa community basically subsists on agricultural products. A brief sketch on the means of production and exchange among the Xhosa-speaking people indicates

that, the main sources of livelihood are maize, round nuts, and rearing of animals such as cattle, goats and pigs. Some of the community members are gainfully employed in South Africa. The Mbembesi area remains largely rural in spite of the urbanization of the whole country and the introduction of growth points. Most of the households lack electric power and running water. Again, most of the homesteads are made from mud and thatch. The only homesteads which seem to have a higher standard of housing are those whose family members are employed abroad.

<div align="center">Religious Context</div>

The religious context of the Xhosa community needs to be examined to formulate relevant and effective strategies. Therefore, it is very critical to describe the Xhosa traditional belief system before attempting to relate them in the Christian context. Traditional Xhosa people believe that there is a Supreme Being called *Qamata* or *umDali* who "created the world and maintains the cosmos" (Pauw, 2002, p. 7). The Xhosa community also frequently uses the word *uThixo* for the Creator God. This same word is the one which is used in the Xhosa translation of the Bible. However, the challenge with the Xhosa traditional religious worldview concerns their belief, which postulates that the Creator God (*uThixo)* created the cosmos and abandoned it together with its inhabitants. As a result, the Xhosa traditional belief system does not accommodate the idea of praying directly to God. Due to this assumption, the Xhosa believe that they can only access God through the ancestral spirits (*izinyanya).* Arguably, the ancestral spirits play a central role in the daily existential worldview of the Xhosa community. However, it should be noted that Christianity in general has made discernible inroads into the Xhosa cultural and traditional worldview. This is the very context in which the project among the Xhosa

speaking people of Mbembesi is being conducted and evaluated.

The strategy of increasing membership among the Xhosa people will of necessity need to take cognizance of the already existing religious structures and affiliations. The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is this area can be better appreciated in the light of what other Christian faiths have contributed in the Xhosa-speaking community. The Joshua Project conducted an analysis of the religious context of the Xhosa people in the Mbembesi area as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of the Xhosa Community According to Religious Affiliation

Religion	Percentage Affiliation
Christianity	90%
Ethnic religions	7%
Hinduism	1%
Non-religious	1%
Other/small	1%

Note. Retrieved 16 July 2013, from www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile

After analyzing the affiliation of the Xhosa people to the major world religions, the Joshua Project (2012) further broke Christianity into smaller segments among the Xhosa speaking people in the Mbembesi area. This segmentation precisely locates the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the Xhosa community. Further, such an analysis is helpful in the formulation of the strategy that helps the Seventh-day Adventist Church in converting Xhosa members from other Christian denominations as well. While it may

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seem unreasonable to identify the Xhosa community as largely unreached, it is the missiological self-identity of the Seventh-day Adventist church, which propels it to proclaim the gospel even among other Christian denominations (Rev 14:6-12). Consequently, Table 2 shows the segmentation of Christians according to denominational affiliation.

Table 2

Segments of Christianity Among the Xhosa at Mbembesi

Denomination	Percentage of Adherents
Anglican	0%
Independent	30%
Protestant	50%
Orthodox	0%
Other Christians	0%
Catholic	20%

Note. Retrieved 16 July 2013, from http://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile .php

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mbembesi

The history of the Seventh day Adventist Church in Zimbabwe in general is traced and more importantly the historical account of the church in the Mbembesi area in particular is outlined. More importantly, the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church as it relates to the work among the Xhosa-speakers in Mbembesi is very relevant to the success and proper execution of this project. Such a historical perspective allows one to have a link with the past so as to determine the way forward.

History

The history of the Seventh-day Church in the Mbembesi area commenced with the baptism of Samuel Kona who later became a minister of the gospel. Samuel Kona was not just an ordinary Xhosa but he was the son of a chief. As a result, the Kona clan had a strong and powerful influence in the planting and growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church among the Xhosa people in Mbembesi. Also owing to Kona's chieftainship background, one can almost predict the amount of influence generated by such a person when he united himself with the church. While it is appreciated that the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers in Mbembesi came from the Kona family, this project seeks to widen the horizons of evangelism to the other Xhosa clans as well. For example, this project is being conducted among the Ntambo clan for the purposes of widening the evangelistic circle.

Church Growth Patterns for Five Years

An analysis of the growth of membership among the Xhosa-speaking people in the Mbembesi area under the Ntabazinduna district indicates results spanning through a five-year period (2009-2013). The pattern of growth reveals a staggering configuration in terms of membership among the Xhosa. Therefore a detailed analysis and exploration of these patterns is necessary in order to initiate any mitigation. Consequently, Table 3 illustrates the growth patterns among the Xhosa-speaking people as a result of various intervention strategies.

Table 3

*Membership Growth at Mbembesi Church in the
Past Five Years*

Year	Membership
2009	27
2010	21
2011	77
2012	58
2013	72

The local church has already been involved in a series of evangelistic activities among the Xhosa-speaking people. However, the evangelistic campaigns have not been tailor made to meet the cultural needs of the Xhosa people. Therefore, a project of this nature is not only relevant, but it is also culturally sensitive to the Xhosa context. One of the areas of emphasis revolves around the materials, which need to be produced and written in the Xhosa Language. Such a step is not only helpful in terms of readership, but it is easier for the intended Xhosa audience to identify with these materials. Second, providing a Xhosa-speaking preacher and eventually a global pioneer from the Xhosa themselves speaks volumes about the serious commitment stressed by the church in issues of contextualization. Consequently, the church will conduct evangelistic campaigns in the Xhosa area, but in a different fashion. An analysis of the church activities in the context of outreach programs and endeavors especially relevant in respect to reaching to the Xhosa-speaking community.

Community Felt Needs

In the attempt to verify the needs of the Xhosa community in the Mbembesi area, the focus group explored the needs of this community. It was realized that community-based programs would be more helpful. These programs would mainly focus on health and family life. Basically, these two specific areas have a strong potential to break down prejudice and open the door for the reception of the gospel. Unless one is deliberate in this project to assess and deal with these needs, it would be problematic to achieve the specific objectives of this assignment, which is mainly to increase membership among the Xhosa-speaking people.

Summary

Understanding the socio-political, religious, and social context of a people group is very critical for planning a relevant and effective program. Hiebert (2009) observes:

How should we communicate the gospel to people in their historical and sociocultural contexts so that they understand and believe, and so that the gospel becomes a power that transforms individuals and societies to become followers of Christ who manifest his kingdom on earth? (p. 161)

This is what this project aims to achieve by seriously engaging the Xhosa people in their social context. The next chapter outlines the activities and results of this engagement of the project. It is hoped that, if successful such a project may be replicated elsewhere around the West Zimbabwe Conference territory.

CHAPTER 4

A STRATEGY TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP AMONG

XHOSA-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE

Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the various aspects of the Xhosa-speaking

people's context in Zimbabwe. The analysis described the Xhosa-speaking people

whereby a strategy to reach them could be developed and implemented. The project will

make use of a Logic Framework Analysis (LFA) to describe the strategy. The logical

framework is a summary of what the project aims to accomplish and the methodology it

intends to employ (Grove & Zwi, 2008, p. 16). The logframe "consists of a four by four

matrix, with four rows corresponding to the hierarchy of the project (goal, purpose,

output, activities) and four columns, describing the objective, its indicators, and how to

measure them, and critical assumptions" (Darrien, Ching, Putuhena, & Sai Hin, 2011,

p. 124). A logframe is not an end in itself but is "a tool for communication" (Dearden &

Kowalski, 2003, p. 503).

**General Methodology: Logical Framework
Analysis and Gantt Chart**

Logical Framework Analysis

The elements of the Logframe are interrelated and interlocking as shown in Figure

2. Ingle (2009) rightly identifies the elements of the log as a "linked hypothesis" (p. 10).

Therefore Ingle observes that "there is a dynamic causal relationship." Consequently, the

linkages as shown in Figure 2 can be illustrated as follows: "IF the Inputs are managed

properly, THEN the Outputs will be produced, IF the Outputs are produced, THEN the

Purpose will be achieved, IF the Purpose is achieved, THEN this will contribute to the

achievement of the Goal" (Ingle, 2009, p. 11).

LINKAGES BETWEEN DESIGN ELEMENTS

OBJECTIVES

Leading to achievement of

OUTCOMES

To be used to produce

OUTPUTS

To produce

ACTIVITIES

To carry out

INPUTS

Are provided
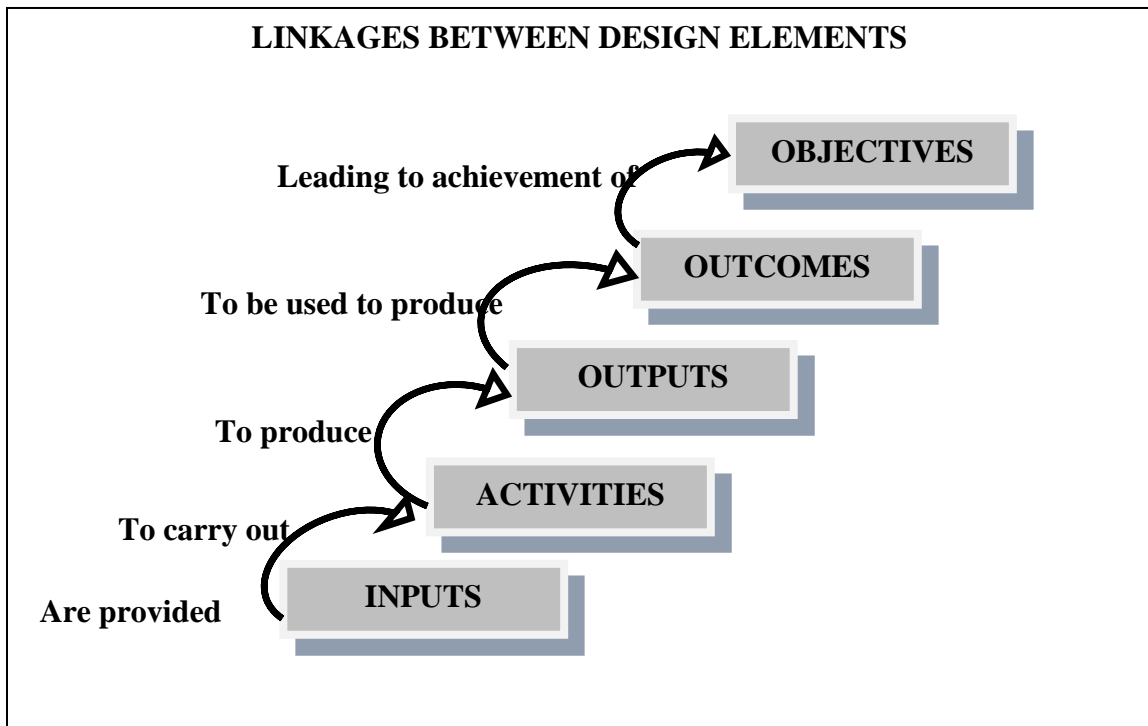
Figure 2. Linkages between elements of the logical framework matrix. Taken from
"Explanation of PCMF Logical Framework Matrix," pcmf.iaea.org/docs/pcmf2/LFM.pd

Goal

The goal is the end toward which the project's purpose is identified. According to

Lucina and Schor (2007) it is "the long term impact towards which the project is

expected" (p. 341). The goal is achieved by direct or indirect activities. Ashton (2003)

explains that activities are expressed as operational objectives with a logical link to the goal. In this particular project the goal is to make the West Zimbabwe Conference a model for reaching minority groups.

Purpose

The purpose is the specific objective or the core of the problem which the project at hand is designed to achieve and which contributes directly towards the realization of the goal. Toader, Brad, Admov, and Moisa suggest that "the success of a project can be measured by the realization of its objective" (2010, p. 452). In this particular project the success of the project will be measured by the increase in the number of Xhosa-speaking people who join the church.

Outputs

Outputs are the specific outcomes which the project aims to produce. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative. In this particular project, the increase of the membership of the Xhosa membership is quantitative.

Activities

Activities are specific actions to be performed in order to deliver the intended results and achieve the objective of the project (Schwalbe, 2007, p. 218). Identifying these specific actions helps to set the time line and the persons responsible for each specific task to be performed. "Grouping activities also helps you determine how they fit into a logical sequence for completion, which aids scheduling and enables you to assess the number of people and the skills that will be needed" (Bruce & Langdon, 2000, p. 24).

Objectively Verifiable Indicators

The Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI) are elements on the horizontal level together with the means of verification. "Indicators are the measurements that show how and by how much a project is achieving its intended results" (Chikati, 2010, p. 66). The project's relevance and consistency is tested by its cause-effect-reveal state of the project. These indicators are also defined as "the red flags" in the project (Artunian, 2006, p. 41). Indicators act as a dash board in a car to keep a constant check as to whether the project is still on course. In this project the indicators will be used at every stated period of time to check whether the project is still on course; namely, in increasing the Xhosa membership. If not, then corrective measures can be taken in time.

Means of Verification

The Means of Verification (MOV) are the identified kinds and sources of data needed to authenticate or support indicators. This project uses the means of verification such as church records and quarterly and annual reports as a means of authenticating that the project is achieving its objective and thereby delivering the intended results. They can also be described as a Source of Verification.

Assumptions

The project assumptions have to do with external factors beyond the control of the planners or implementers. The assumptions have to be noted because they affect the success of the project in terms of its desired outputs or expected results. Ingle (2009) correctly observes that "assumptions reflect our recognition that there are factors beyond our control that are necessary for our successful achievement of objectives at all levels"

(Ingle, 2009, p. 13). In the case of this project, it is assumed that the West Zimbabwe

Conference leadership, the church members, and the Xhosa community will support the

intervention strategy. Finally, it is assumed that the stakeholders will be willing to

evaluate the project for future improvements (Crossley, 2005; *Evaluation Handbook,*

2004; McFarland, 2002; Saffold 2005; Artzberger et al., 2009).

<center>Gantt Chart</center>

The Gantt chart, which is also identified as the action plan of a project, divides

various activities into manageable tasks and sub-tasks. It also helps the project

implementers to plot the tasks according to both priority and sequential order. In addition,

the Gantt chart makes it easier to monitor the project in progress and intervene with

remedial action when necessary. Furthermore, the chart acts as compass for both the

direction of the project and the placement of human and material resources. In this

particular project; namely, the evangelization of the Xhosa-speaking people, the activities

and tasks are highlighted. Also the time frame and the specific dates of the

commencement of these activities are outlined.

Below are two Gantt charts, one for the first year of my project and the second

one to outline the outputs and activities for the second and third years (see Figures

3 and 4).

ACTIVITIES	Year 2011											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Output 1: Community needs assessed												
Activity 1: Conduct focus group interviews						█	█			█	█	█
1.1 Prepare questionnaire						█	█				▒	▒
1.2 Organize focus groups						█	█				▒	▒
1.1 Interview focus groups						█	█				▒	▒
1.4 Analyze data from focus group						█	█				▒	▒
Activity 2: Tabulate statics from the data						█	█				▒	▒
Output 2: Materials developed and instructors trained												
Activity 1: Develop materials						█	█					
2.1 Translate Bible lessons into Xhosa						█	█					
2.2 Translate family life lessons into Xhosa						█	█					
Activity 2: Train Bible instructors												
2.1 Seminar on cross-cultural ministries						█	█					
2.2 Seminar on Bible studies						█	█					
Output 3: Community programs implemented												
Activity 1: Family life seminar						█	█					
Activity 2: Health expo seminar						█	█					
Output 4: Church planted in among the Xhosa												
Activity 1: Plant a church						█	█					
1:1 Conduct two evangelistic campaigns						█	█					
Activity 2: Organize Xhosa members into a branch						█	█					
Output 5: Programs evaluated												
Activity 1: Monitoring						█	█					
5.1 Quarterly information gathering						█	█					
5.2 Annual report summaries						█	█					
Activity 2: Evaluations						█	█					
5.3 Internal midterm evaluation						█	█					
5.4 External midterm evaluation						█	█					

Figure 3. Gantt chart for year 1.

ACTIVITIES	Year 2012				Year 2013				Personal Responsible			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	A	B	C	D
Output 1: Community needs assessed												
Activity 1: Conduct focus group interviews									▒			
1.1 Prepare questionnaire									▒			
1.2 Organize focus groups									▒			
1.3 Interview focus groups	█	█							▒			
1.4 Analyze data from focus groups	▒	▒							▒			
Activity 2: Tabulate data from focus groups	▒								▒			
Output 2: Materials developed instructors trained												
Activity 1: Develop materials	█	█			█	█			▒			
1.1 translate Bible lessons in Xhosa	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒					▒	
1.2 Translate family life lessons	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒					▒	
Activity 2: Train Bible instructors	█	█			█	█			▒			
2.1 Seminar on cross-cultural ministries	▒	▒							▒			
2.2 Seminar on Bible studies	▒	▒								▒		
Output 3:Community programs implemented												
Activity 1: Family life seminar			█	█					▒	▒		
Activity 2:2 Health expo seminar			█	█					▒	▒		
Output 4: Church planted												
Activity 1: Plant a church			█	█					▒			
4.1 Conduct campaign			▒	▒		▒	▒					
Activity 2: Organize church			█	█							▒	
Output 5: Programs evaluated												
Activity 1: Monitoring	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	▒			
5.1 Quarterly information gathering	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒			
5.2 Annual report summaries	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒				
Activity 2: Evaluations	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	▒			
5.3 Internal midterm evaluation	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒			
5.4 External midterm evaluation	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒	▒				▒

Key:
A=Researcher; B=Church elders (2); C=Personal Ministries Director; D=External Evaluator

Figure 4. Gantt chart for years 2 and 3.

Description of Mission Strategy

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the West Zimbabwe Conference has witnessed a steady growth in membership over the last few years. However, most of the programs, literature, and written materials do not focus on the minority language groups including the Xhosa-speaking people. The majority of the programs and activities are mostly concerned with the majority language people groups. Consequently, the Xhosa-speaking members of the community may feel that God does not speak their language and therefore their context is irrelevant.

Therefore, this project seeks to provide materials which are relevant to the Xhosa-speaking people's context. While the West Zimbabwe Conference constituency is made up of people representing at least ten languages, this project will provide a spring board for the production of lesson materials for other minority language groups within the conference territory.

In order to ensure that the project is both effective and relevant certain preparations will have to be made. First, permission to conduct the project will be sought from the West Zimbabwe Conference leadership. In addition, the possibility of replicating the same program around the conference territory will be shared with the conference president for approval and support. Second, the district pastor will be engaged and persuaded to share the vision and also support the project within the district. Third, a focus group, mostly from the Xhosa-speaking community, will be asked to lend their support to the project and contribute their views as to what needs to be done in order for the project to be a reality and success. Fourth, the entire church will be invited to embrace the project and labor for this minority group in a deeper and more meaningful way.

Application of the Logframe

The Overall Goal

This project aims at fulfilling the mandate of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to reach every people group with the Good News of salvation in the context of the Three Angels' Messages (Rev 14:6-12; Matt 28:18-20). In a specific way, this project will focus on the Xhosa-speaking people in particular. This is in line with the people-group thinking as espoused by the Hebrew word *mishpaha* in Gen 12:3, which is basically defined as clans, tribes, classes, communities, or people groups (Robb, 1989, pp. 13-14). The same conceptual framework holds for the phrase *panta te ethnē* as espoused in the Great Commission as enunciated by the Gospel according to Matthew.

The measurement of the effectiveness of this project will not present any challenge since reports are readily available. The area under study also enjoys a considerable amount of exposure to the gospel in general; it should not be difficult to win a considerable number of Xhosa. Moreover, the presentation of the gospel in the Xhosa language and the use of Xhosa literature should open the avenues of communication in a better way.

Consequently, numerical growth of the Xhosa-speaking members is expected to rise by fifty percent by the completion of the project. These concrete results should not be difficult to measure considering that the church membership records and the quarterly statistical reports provide valuable information. The success of the project will depend on a continual check on the indicators for assimilation of the new members into the life and warmth of the church and the assumption that all the stakeholders will be supportive and cooperative.

Project Purpose/Specific Objective

The preceding paragraph has highlighted and delineated the project purpose or objective. The overall goal encompasses the specific objective which the project hopes to attain. Both the overall goal and specific objective will depend on the assumption of supportive leadership at all levels of the organization. The OVIs of this project include the accession rate of Xhosa-speaking member into the church. While, spiritual growth and other areas are important in the church, the only measurable component of this project is organic. Growth that will be monitored and verified on a quarterly basis is rooted in numbers. The quarterly statistical report and the local church register will make a huge contribution in terms of providing and substantiating this statistical data. These reports will also be indicated and verified by annual reports by the district pastor.

Outputs

Hiebert argues that "the heart of missions has always been—and remains—the task of bridging the gulf between the gospel and the world" (2009, p. 179). This assertion resonates with the major outputs aimed at by this project. The outputs of this project can only be realized if all the stakeholders appreciate the need and the challenge of bridging the chasm of communication between two different and distinct cultural contexts. Therefore, the creation of materials in the Xhosa language is critical if this project is to achieve its intended objectives. Even the engagement of a Xhosa speaker for the second phase of the outreach will be pivotal in delivering the desired outcomes. In addition, Bible instructors will be recruited primarily from the Xhosa speakers before engaging others who might also have a fair appreciation of the Xhosa cultural context. These Bible instructors or Global Mission pioneers will be hired for at least a minimum of one year,

subject to renewal at the beginning of every year. The third and most important output of this project is the planting of a church in the Xhosa community of the Mantanjeni clan. The planting of this church, with great emphasis on the contextual location of the Xhosa, represents something that could be duplicated among other people groups in the West Zimbabwe Conference.

The trained Bible instructors will do both pre and post-campaign work among the new converts in order to ground and root them in the faith. These steps are taken in order to establish stability and maturity among the new members so that they are "no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph 4:15). The instructors will use Bibles, manuals, and other spiritual tools written in the Xhosa language. It is always important to use one's mother tongue or language in the transmission of the gospel. The language transmits values, worldviews, cultural norms, proverbs, parables, paradoxes, folklores, taboos, and other consciously or unconsciously transmitted norms and values. This is why the provision of hymnals, Bible lessons manuals, Voice of Prophecy lessons, and other family life materials will be written in the Xhosa language. In addition, the Bible instructors will be trained to understand cross-cultural ministries so that they can also train others in the conference as the project is replicated.

Finally, the major thrust of this project will be its impact in terms of being reproducible among the other minority groups in the West Zimbabwe Conference. Lessons learned and experiences encountered during the planning and implementation of this project will be quite instructive for the execution of similar projects elsewhere.

Consequently, the availability of literature in the Xhosa language and other minority languages will be included as a MOV and OVIs in the project.

The tabular representation of the logical flow of the components of the project is shown in Figure 5.

Practical Steps Taken in Preparation for Implementation of Strategy

Xhosa Literature Procurement

Xhosa Bibles, hymn books, Bible lesson studies, and Voice of Prophecy lessons will be procured from South Africa for the outreach programs. In addition, the handouts and banners for advertising will be printed in the Xhosa language. Any literature to be distributed for use during the project will be in the Xhosa language in order for the project's impact and effectiveness to be properly analyzed and measured.

A letter granting the permission to conduct the project among the Xhosa-speaking people will be obtained from the Ethical Review Board at the Adventist University of Africa (see Appendix A). This letter will be presented to the West Zimbabwe Conference president who needs to approve and support the project. The letter serves as a safeguard for both the researcher and the respondents as far as ethical matters are concerned. In this letter the project proposal will be spelled out and the researcher's conduct in connection with interviews is described.

Choice and Training of Assistants

The training and recruitment of assistants in this project will be done in close consultation with the district pastor or leader. By design, these assistants should come

Narrative Summary	Verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
GOAL: West Zimbabwe Conference becomes a model for reaching minority groups in Zimbabwe	Six churches in the West Zimbabwe Conference follow minority group outreach program by the 4th quarter 2014	Local churches and the Conference statistics show increase in Xhosa speaking membership	West Zimbabwe Conference Administration is supportive of the project
PURPOSE: Strategy to increase membership among the Xhosa-speaking people in Zimbabwe is developed and implemented	By the 4th quarter 2013 the WZC membership among the Xhosa-speaking people is increased by 50%	Reports Baptismal Reports	Community leadership is supportive of the project
OUPUTS/RESULTS 1. Community needs assessed	1. Two interviews conducted with community and church leaders by 1st quarter 2012	1. Seminar materials	Team members and the local churches are willing to be involved
2. Seminar materials developed and Bible instructors trained	2. Twenty-six lessons translated and 15 Bible instructors trained by 4th quarter 2012.	2. Quarterly reports	
3. Community-based programs developed and implemented	3. Two family life and two major health lifestyle programs conducted 4th quarter 2013	3.Annual reports	
4. Church planted in the Xhosa community	4. One Sabbath school branch organized by 4th quarter 2013	4. Statistical reports	
5. Programs evaluated	5. wo major project evaluations 4th quarter 2013	5. Reports on seminars Report from interviews	
ACTIVITIES **1. Assess the needs of the community** 1.1 Interviews 1.2 Focus group **2. Develop materials and train Bible workers** 2.1 Develop seminar materials for Bible study	**INPUTS** Budget Bible study materials Seminar materials Support team		1. Materials are available in the Xhosa language. 2. Churches provide the quarterly/annual reports

Figure 5—*Continued*

Narrative Summary	Verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
2.2 Train Bible instructors and dispatch them			
3. Conduct needs based programs 3.1 Family life programs 3.2 Health and welfare			
4. Church planted in the Xhosa community 4.1 Conduct two major evangelistic campaigns 4.2 Organize baptized members into a company			
5. Evaluation and monitoring 5.1 Meet with the team quarterly 5.2 Meet the team annually			

Figure 5. Application of the logframe: A strategy to increase membership among the Xhosa people.

from the Xhosa speaking members or those who are very familiar with the culture. It will

be very critical to recruit those who understand the dynamics of the Xhosa culture so as

to create a viable and conducive atmosphere.

Advertizing

All advertizing, including handbills and banners, will be done in the Xhosa

language (see sample in Appendix B). This will make it easier for the Xhosa community

to identify with the evangelistic meetings. The use of a foreign language may actually create a barrier and keep the audience from identifying with the whole program. Without a thorough and thoughtful preparation of the materials, the outreach could easily alienate the community from both the message and the church.

Lack of relevant materials may alienate the community against the presentations. The Roman Catholic Church and others who have worked among the Xhosa people already use the local language for their ministries. A letter requesting Voice of Prophecy lessons in the Xhosa language will be sent to the director of the Eastern Cape Conference in South Africa.

Implementation of Strategy

The month of May for both 2013 and 2014 will be characterized by pre-campaigns using both family and health ministry programs. In addition to the existing regular conference assessment reports, an evaluation form will be designed specifically for the evaluation of this project. This report will be used to analyze the membership accession among the Xhosa-speaking people.

As indicated in both the logframe and the Gantt chart, two major evangelistic campaigns will be conducted within the Xhosa area. One will take place from 21 October to 3 November 2012. Subsequently, from 28 July to 11 August 2013, the second evangelistic meeting will be conducted preferably by a Xhosa-speaking preacher. Both meetings will be conducted in the targeted area so that it will easier to build the work and also to follow up.

The following stakeholders are critical to the launch and success of this project: the district pastor, elders, Personal Ministries Director, Global Mission pioneers, Sabbath

School, and other departmental leaders. While, the entire project will not depend on these few, their cooperation will make the difference between success and failure. This is why it is imperative to engage these members from the onset because they are also part of the focus group. They in turn will sell the project and mobilize the entire membership to rally behind it. These members form the focus group and as such they will be able to assess the needs of the community and recommend relevant programs.

The topics presented during the two campaigns will first deal with common ground and interesting subjects before delving into deeper and more challenging subjects. Since there are a handful of Seventh-day Adventists in this area, it will be easy to connect into the already existing fabric of the Xhosa religious experience. The evangelistic team will seek to have contact with the community through Bible studies, prayer for the sick and troubled people, Voice of Prophecy lessons, and funerals. In addition, the daily evening services will include music with special Xhosa-selected choruses, the Jesus film (preferably in Xhosa), and health-focused presentation. A mobile eye clinic will form part of the community outreach program as a felt need among the Xhosa-speaking people.

<center>Evaluation of the Project</center>

The first evaluation will be done by the projector coordinator (researcher) and the project team. Based on the logframe and the Gantt chart the focus group team will have to evaluate both the strengths and weaknesses of the project. Therefore, it is very prudent for this team to make an honest assessment of the project and make recommendations on what could be done to improve and the remaining activities.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria will be set from the assessment report which will delineate and indicate whether or not there is any growth of membership among the Xhosa-speaking people. The evaluation tool will be designed according to the overall goal of this project; namely, to increase membership among the Xhosa-speaking people of the West Zimbabwe Conference.

Evaluators

The evaluator will include both internal and external evaluators. The project participants, including the local pastor, will constitute the internal evaluation team. Then, the external evaluation will be performed by the conference designee on the basis of the impact of the project in the evangelization of that part of the territory.

Linkage to the Logical Framework Matrix

The planning, monitoring, and evaluation of this project will use objectives as presented in the Logical Framework Analysis. There is an interrelatedness and interdependence between the elements which will eventually contribute to the achievement of the objective. Consequently there is a total dependence of the project goal on the implementation of the activities. As a result, the verifiable indicators of the Logical Framework Matrix serve as a yardstick to assess the relevancy, viability, and sustainability of the project.

Results of Evaluation

Both the internal and external results will be tabulated and reported so as to measure the success of the project. The results of this project will not only serve to assist

me to ascertain whether or not the objective is achieved, they also act as a learning curve for future planning.

Summary

To increase the membership among the Xhosa people in the West Zimbabwe Conference is the over-arching goal of this project. Key outputs were identified as having a significant role in the achievement of this goal. A community needs assessment will be conducted, and the development of Xhosa language literature materials, the running of community-based projects, and the planting of a church in the Xhosa community are critical activities for the success of this project. The outputs, which are interrelated and interdependent in nature, are plotted by means of the logframe in the project.

In order to make the project workable and easy to run the plan has been summarized in a logframe matrix. Furthermore, in order to make the tasks manageable, they have been broken down and placed in a Gantt chart. Consequently, the chart delineates the tasks to be performed, the time, and the personnel involved. The Gantt chart coalesces the resources and activities needed to achieve the desired objective of increasing the membership of the Xhosa-speaking people.

The strategy takes the availability of all stakeholders into serious consideration in order to maximize outputs. The cooperation and buy-in of the stakeholders, together with the fulfillment of other assumptions will make the achievement of these objectives a reality.

Should all things go according to plan the West Zimbabwe Conference will witness the doubling of the membership of the Xhosa-speaking people. The next chapter will offer a detailed report on what the project achieved and what it failed to achieve. It is

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hoped that the lessons learned will be helpful in replicating the same project in other parts

of the conference.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, LESSONS LEARNED

AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is a reflection of the project in retrospect. It briefly outlines how the strategy was implemented. The goal of the project was to increase membership of the Xhosa-speaking people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mbembesi in the Ntabazinduna district of the West Zimbabwe Conference.

The chapter also reflects on the activities of the project so as to ascertain if they helped achieve their intended purpose. It is in the actual implementation of the goal that orthodoxy intersects orthopraxy. This is where the proverbial rubber meets the tar. Therefore, the significance of the project must to be reflected upon in the light of the real audience and practical life situations in the Xhosa community. As a result, in this chapter, the implementation of the project is not merely described on a step-by-step basis, but a deeper reflection and analysis of what was done and how it impacted the whole project is made.

The strategy is evaluated and validated as to what is pragmatic and that which is simply a theoretical analysis of the situation. Any outstanding parts of the strategy will be identified so as to suggest the best way forward. In addition, the chapter summarizes the lessons deduced from the implementation of the strategy. Such lessons would in turn

assist both the project planners and other implementers to uphold whatever principles worked for the project and at the same time to circumvent pitfalls, which could hinder the success of similar projects. Lessons learned from the project are analyzed in order to help replicate the project in other parts of the West Zimbabwe Conference. Therefore, the project is evaluated in terms of its contribution to the overall goal. Finally, recommendations are made to direct the planners for future implementation as well as those who desire to replicate the project elsewhere.

Report on the Project Implementation

First, permission was granted by the West Zimbabwe Conference through the officers to conduct the project within the Mbembesi area among the Xhosa community. (See Appendix C for the letter). A focus group interview was conducted among the Xhosa community leaders in order to gauge the needs. Some of the needs included a borehole and an eye clinic (see Appendix D) for the community leaders' focus group questionnaire). Subsequently, another focus group was organized by the researcher together with the local district pastor. The structured focus group interview helped to brainstorm on what had been done among the Xhosa-speaking people as outreach programs and what still needed to be done (see Appendix E for the focus group questionnaire). The focus group indicated that some evangelistic meetings had been conducted among the Xhosa community in 2011. Of specific significance was one conducted by missionaries from different parts of the world which saw a total of one hundred and twenty-three people being baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in one quarter. In that respect, the church had been effective in reaching out to the Xhosa

community. The challenges faced by the church included lack of literature in the Xhosa language especially for the older generations.

Second, the focus group agreed on a strategy to be followed for the next two years, namely, 2013 and 2014. Materials were developed and secured in the Xhosa language. However, due to limited resources, the numbers were not enough to cover the population. One Bible study lesson was conducted on cross-cultural ministries, but it failed to reach its objective because the local Xhosa-speaking members did not attend. However, the church was finally able to engage the services of a Xhosa-speaking Global Mission Pioneer. Due to lack of financial resources he is not able to work for the church on a regular basis. The family life seminars and the health expos were not done because the needs assessment indicated that the community would rather have an eye clinic. Eye specialists from the government provided check-up services and the church assisted the community members in getting medical treatment.

Third, two major evangelistic meetings were conducted in the Xhosa community. One was conducted by the researcher, the local pastor, and other church members at Mantanjeni from the 21st of October to the 3rd of November 2012. As a result, 29 members from the community which had only two before are now Seventh-day Adventists. The second evangelistic meetings were conducted by Dr. Sokupa, a Xhosa speaker from Cape Town who is presently working at Helderberg College in South Africa. Sokupa was called by the West Zimbabwe Conference leaders to augment the efforts of this project. The campaign was held from 13-27 July 2013 at eNgxingweni. As a result, this area which had only five Seventh-day Adventists added 26 more through baptism. The results of these interventions are shown in Table 4:

Table 4

Results of the Intervention Strategy Among the Xhosa People

Year	Total Baptism	Xhosa Added	%Growth
2012	58	29	50%
2013	72	37	51%

Fourth, a church was planted in the Xhosa community at Mantanjeni and a Branch Sabbath School was immediately organized where the 29 members now attend. Maranatha Volunteers donated a one-day church structure at Mantanjeni for the newly organized Branch Sabbath School (see picture in Appendix F). The other part of the Xhosa community, Engxingweni, also has a Branch Sabbath School. Having implemented the strategy the next step was to evaluate the outcomes.

After the implementation of the project the focus group met to evaluate the project based on the criteria and the results. While the number of the Xhosa-speakers increased by half in both interventions, the overall response of the Xhosa community was low. The focus group discovered that the Xhosa decision process was patriarchal-based. This means that even if the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine is accepted by a family, they would have a hard time joining unless the patriarch also joins and accepts. Many married women understood and accepted the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but they could not make any decision to be baptized as long as their husbands were not positively disposed. It is also true that in this case, most men follow the church of their clan. If their father or grandfather or anybody in the family was never a member of a particular church they were also likely to reject it. Evidence of this kind of challenge was

observed during Dr. Sokupa's meetings. The attendance was very high but decisions to join the church were very few.

Another factor which came out clearly during the evaluation was the strength of Xhosa religious tradition. Much resistance to the Gospel came from the attachment to traditional beliefs and practices. The Seventh-day Adventist message cut across certain Xhosa lifestyles including diet. The focus group members reported that some of the Xhosa people were willing to accept the message. However, when those people learned that joining the church would mean not eating pork, they felt that the sacrifice was too much. The Xhosa community keeps pigs mainly for pork since it is highly cherished among the Xhosa people. The confrontation between the traditional life style and the Three Angels' Messages presented a stumbling block to the Xhosa in this area of lifestyles. The Seventh-day Adventist message, unlike other Christian denominations in the area, called for a radical change which was not welcomed by the community.

Lessons Learned

The use of the Xhosa language as a mode of communication enhanced attendance. More so, inviting a Xhosa speaker from South Africa did not only boost the morale of the members, but even the community members were keen to hear the gospel in their own tongue. In addition, the involvement of the members from the beginning of the project including the pastor lent a lot of weight to the whole project. Therefore, marketing the project until all the stakeholders bought into it was critical to its success. Ownership of the project made it easier for the same stakeholders to evaluate it openly and honestly. The support for the project was critically important from all the levels of the organization as the Logical Framework analysis shows. Without the support of the conference

administrators, it would be impossible to carry out the intended strategies.

Another lesson came from the Xhosa community itself. It paid a lot of dividends to approach the community with the humility of a learner. As a result, this project created a bond of fellowship between the researcher and the Xhosa people. As the needs of the community were assessed, it became easier to mix and mingle with the community leaders. It became easier to interact and learn about deeper cultural issues, understand rites of passage, and even attend their funerals. The church building is a symbol of the presence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the community. This has made a huge impact among the Xhosa people who were used to seeing Seventh-day Adventists worshipping under trees or in classrooms.

Through this project I have learned that a church structure within a community speaks volumes about the church and the seriousness of its message. It is more of the presence of the church in the community through the building which makes a whole world of difference than numerous programs done over specified periods of time. The church structure suggests both presence and permanence. The impact of the structure was so huge to the extent that even those who had left the church have since come back.

In addition, I also learned that any strategy should be both flexible and adaptable. This means that no strategy is cast in stone so as to be unchangeable because sometimes circumstances dictate a different course of action and direction. For example, I had planned a health expo when the community needs assessment indicated that an eye clinic and a borehole were the most urgent needs. Therefore, adaptability and flexibility are very critical issues when it comes to project implementation.

It was not easy to find literature in the Xhosa language, since Xhosa literature is

not available in Zimbabwe. We had to have it sent from Cape Town, South Africa. Therefore, the translation of materials into the local language was not possible. The only locally translated materials were invitation handbills. Eventually, it turned out to be cheaper to order materials directly from South Africa than trying to translate them into the Zimbabwe language. However, the project was strengthened by Voice of Prophecy lessons from South Africa and this seemed to work better than trying to translate the materials locally.

Further, the training of local Bible instructors was curtailed by lack of human and material resources. One global mission pioneer availed himself from within the Xhosa community, but due to lack of funds he could not commit to full time work. He continues to do follow ups on the new converts and Bible studies during his spare time. Basically, the implementation of the strategy exposed the fact that the realization of the long term goal needed more time and funds than allocated in the project strategy. It seemed that even more time was needed for interaction and familiarization with the Xhosa culture.

Based on this fact, I would suggest that the period for the project be longer than two years, so that the first years could be used for doing ethnographic studies, establishing relationships, and planting the seed of the Gospel. Second, I would also suggest that there is need for funding such a project so that enough global mission pioneers are engaged both before and after the evangelistic meetings. Third, I would suggest that the gathering of literature in the local language of the people be done prior to any strategic interventions. Fourth, I would recruit more groups for personal evangelism within the communities than the number engaged in the project. Personal witnessing

proved to be much more effective than just relying on the public proclamation of the message.

Furthermore, I would adjust my strategy by dealing with the people's most urgent needs rather than attempting to impose my own programs. For example, issues of farming, cattle rearing, and the need for a borehole became paramount as the project team interacted with the community at a deeper level. Another area which would need to be adjusted is the issue of regular engagement with the community instead of doing of a program once in a while. When evangelistic meetings were conducted both the community and the church seemed to come alive and join in the activities. However, once the event was over, life returned to normal and the momentum was lost. So in adjusting my strategy, I would rather insist on presence than any other activity or program. Many Xhosa people indicated that the visibility and presence of the church structure in the community added value to the message and that many more members were joining the church.

If I were to undertake this project again, I would increase the frequency of monitoring and evaluation. Instead of just monitoring quarterly and annually, I would have a continuous assessment to allow for flexibility and adaptability wherever necessary.

Future Impact of the Project

This was a pilot project in the West Zimbabwe Conference especially focused on minority groups. The initial step in replicating this project first and foremost deals with identifying the personnel from the people groups being focused on. The people from the group act as the conduit between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the unreached

people group. Taking that first vital step is helpful because in Zimbabwe churches are associated with particular regions or tribes. For example, among the minority Venda people, the Lutheran church is more prominent than any other Christian church. Within the Venda context the only church which has been known for years is the Lutheran Church. Therefore, to break with past tradition, the people from within that culture need global mission pioneers and Bible workers. This will necessitate setting aside a specific budget to provide for the needs of the minority groups.

Second, to replicate this project, there is need for the recruitment of ministers from within the minority groups themselves. A good example of this sensitivity is the Binga district where the pastor is a local tribal person who is also familiar with the language and the culture of the people. The West Zimbabwe Conference should also be commended for sending a Shangaan pastor to minister to this particular minority group. Similar programs could be replicated in other parts of the conference in places like Plumtree among the Kalanga, Beitbridge among the Venda, and Suthu as well as among the Nambya, Nyanja, and Dombe in Hwange.

Third, the use of the local language is very helpful in generating interest among the people. The Xhosa community was overjoyed to read literature and hear the gospel in their own language. This is especially relevant and well appreciated by the older generation. The minority groups usually consist of bonded families and it matters most for the leaders of families for the church to identify with the language of the specific people group. In most cases these minority groups feel overwhelmed and threatened and they always want to protect their identity. Therefore, in replicating this project elsewhere

in the conference, I would strongly suggest that relevant reading materials be developed in the local language of the specific people group.

Fourth, the provision of a good structure for shelter cannot be overemphasized. In the Hwange district where the Roman Catholic Church is dominant, almost every three or so kilometers one can find a beautiful church structure. Actually, Catholics have constructed structures even in new places with few or no members at all. Surprisingly enough, those structures do not remain empty, soon new converts occupy them. A similar phenomenon was witnessed among the Xhosa in Mantanjeni. Once a church structure was erected within their community, a lot of people from the village started to join. Coupled with this concept of a structure is the introduction of a school. In reality, building a school among minority groups would have far more impact than just sinking a borehole and even the erection of a church building. In this case, the school not only meets the needs of the entire community, it also provides a very strong foundation for a Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle for generations to come.

Fifth, when replicating this project those of influence in the society should be reached. The Xhosa women for example would not make decisions without the blessings of their husbands as the leaders of the home and the community. It is only in very rare cases whereby one would find loyalties to different denominations expressed in the same home. Very few husbands in the traditional African set up would countenance loyalty to the wife's church of choice unless they also subscribe to the same. Therefore, in such cultural contexts it would be ideal to find programs or projects of interest to the family leaders as well as the community leaders themselves. For example, in a village situation, once the chief positively identifies with the church, even if he may not be a convert, the

villagers would find it easier to respond positively to that church's message.

A major contribution of this project to reaching the overall goal was the preaching of the gospel to an unreached people group in the West Zimbabwe Conference. As a result, at least two conference sponsored projects have been accomplished. One minority pastor was appointed to the Shangaan people and the Binga district already enjoys the ministry of an indigenous pastor. So far, the project has widened the horizons of administrators, pastors, lay preachers, and members in general on the vast possibilities of breaking new ground and reaching people within their immediate context. Furthermore, the project has opened many eyes and helped them see the unreached minority groups within the conference territory.

The exploratory nature of this project has sensitized everyone who was involved of the need to plan programs which meet the specific needs of the minority people groups. This project openly challenges the status quo on outreach and compels the church to rethink its mission strategy especially when venturing into unchartered waters. The project therefore rejects simplistic approaches and challenges the church to a paradigm shift in doing mission so as to reach minority people groups in Zimbabwe. Further, the project calls for a deliberate investment of personnel and finance. Unless resources and means are put aside a huge portion of the mission field will remain untouched. Since, the overall goal of this project is to preach the gospel to everyone (Matt 24:14; Mark 16:15, 16; and Rev 14:6, 7), this project compels the church to realize that unless the small pockets of society are evangelized, the Great Commission will remain unaccomplished. It is only when such pockets of minority groups are identified and concerted efforts to reach them are made, that the Great Commission can be fulfilled.

Conclusions/Recommendations

The project was able to reach its overall intended goal and achieve its objective. The overall goal was to increase the membership among the Xhosa and replicate the same projects in other parts of the conference. The objective was to increase the number of Xhosa members by 50%. The mitigation or intervention strategy witnessed the increase of the Xhosa membership by 50% in 2012 and 51.3% by 2013. The percentage growth rate is what the project envisaged.

To anyone who wishes to implement a similar strategy, I would first recommend the need to make it longer than two years for both implementation and sustainability. Giving the project a longer life would be more helpful especially among tribal and minority groups. More time allows for more familiarization with the context for the planner and more trust and acceptance from the community.

Second, the language of the local minority group plays a significant role in the acceptance of both the messenger and the message. If both the messenger and the message are strange to the local context, the impact of the message is adversely affected.

Third, a Global Mission pioneer from the local people is not just one of the options, but a critical need for such areas. More importantly, such projects need funding so as to sustain the Global Mission pioneer with a basic stipend. In this project, it became clear that minority groups begin to identify and trust the church more when they realize one of their own is part of the church. Such a person is able to delve deeper into cultural and tradition practices as they affect spirituality.

For all the stakeholders, this project was exploratory since it was a pilot project. It meant that nothing should be cast in stone in terms of planning and implementing the

project. Flexibility in methodology helps the stakeholders to move one step at a time.

Another important aspect which would need to be considered if the program was to be

replicated would be the mobilization of resources ahead of time. These resources include

both human and material. For example, it took some time to secure Voice of Prophecy

lessons from Cape Town in South Africa.

This project has created a theological and practical framework through which to

approach various ethnic minorities in Zimbabwe. As an exploratory pilot project, it

provokes more thinking, planning, and reflection on the mission-praxis of the church in

Zimbabwe. While the project does not purport to provide all the answers in this subject, it

raises issues which point to many possibilities and opportunities available to the Seventh-

day Adventist Church in Zimbabwe in reaching the unreached with the Gospel.

APPENDIX A

LETTERS

AUA

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AUA ETHICS REVIEW BOARD

I, SIKHUMBUZO NDLOVU a student of the AUA/Andrews DMin Program, do hereby submit to the Ethics Review Board my project dissertation proposal, together with the questionnaire/survey/ interview schedule (choose one) I will use. I am hereby asking permission to go ahead with my research, with the full intention of collecting data in an ethical manner, without harm of any kind to those who will give me information.

Title of the project: A STRATEGY TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP AMONG THE XHOSA-SPEAKING PEOPLE

Place where the project will be carried out: NTABAZINDUNA DISTRICT

I agree to obtain the informed consent of the persons whom I will interview or survey. I will avoid causing any harm to these subjects. I also agree to maintain the confidentiality of those interviewed/surveyed. Finally, the information gathered will be used exclusively for my project dissertation. After my defense, I will destroy the collected data.

_____   24. 06. 11
Signature of student   Date

_____
Signature of adviser

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Permission has been __✓__ granted _____ denied.

For the ETHICS REVIEW BOARD of AUA

_____
Signature
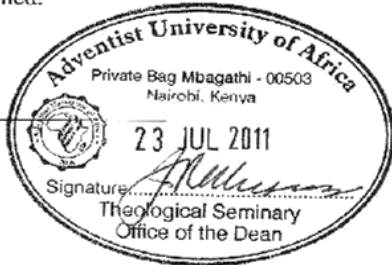
_____   Date
Position

Adventist University of Africa
Private Bag Mbagathi - 00503
Nairobi, Kenya
23 JUL 2011
Signature
Theological Seminary
Office of the Dean

106

January 10, 2012

Pastor Sikhumbuzo Ndlovu

RE: PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH

Pastor, as per your request with the West Zimbabwe Conference officers I hereby notify you that you have been formally granted permission to do your research amongst the Xhosa speaking people in Ntabazinduna district.

Yours sincerely

Pastor Qedumusa Mathonsi
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

QM/ns

Cc.   *President*

MEETINGS HANDBILL

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY LEADERS FOCUS GROUP

The purpose of interviews is to assess the needs of the Xhosa community in order to provide relevant programs.

The interviews will be conducted with five Kraal heads or village leaders.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What are the greatest needs among the Xhosa people?

2. If the Seventh-day Adventist Church wanted to provide some of those needs would they be welcome?

3. Who would be a good contact for the Church?

4. Do you have any other suggestions on how we can help as a Church?

CHURCH LEADERS FOCUS GROUP AND QUESTIONAIRE

The purpose of the focus group is to determine what has been done in the past in reaching out to the Xhosa Speaking people and get suggestions on how we could improve our methods and strategies in the future.

The focus group will of the following:

1	The District Pastor	1
2	The Sabbath School superintendents	2
2	Church Clerks (for information on Xhosa-membership)	2
3	Personal ministries directors	2
4	Women's ministries leader	2
5.	Youth leaders	2
6	Church elders	2
7.	Xhosa-speaking members	2
	Total	15

COMMUNITY LEADERS FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONAIRE

1. What activities or programs did you conduct among the Xhosa-speaking people last year?

2. How many Xhosa-speaking people joined the Church?

3   Do you think the Church is effective in reaching out to the Xhosa-speaking people?

(a)   If you answer Yes- why? And if your answer is No-why

4. What specific challenges is the Church meeting in reaching out to the Xhosa speaking people?

5. What can we do next time in order to improve our methods and strategies?

APPENDIX E

PICTURE OF ONE DAY CHURCH AT MANTANJENI

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Married	December 10, 1995 to Duduzile Nkomo
Children	Nomqhele (1997) Yomusa (2004) Thabolwethu (2007)

Education

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2002-2007	Master of Theology (Missiology), UNISA
1996-1999	Bachelor of Arts in Theology, Solusi University

Ordination

August 14, 1999	Ordained to the SDA Gospel Ministry

Experience

2012-Present	Stewardship and Trust Services Director (WZC)
2004-2011	Multicultural District Pastor, Barham, Bulawayo
2003	District Pastor, Bulawayo City Centre
2000-2005	General Conference Executive Committee Member
1999-2002	District Pastor, Magwegwe North District, Bulawayo
1992-1996	District Pastor, Gwayi District, Sipepa,Tsholotsho