Journal of AIIAS African Theological Association

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The Journal of AIIAS African Theological Association is a bi-annual peer-reviewed journal that seeks to publish quality biblical-theological papers in the context of the African Seventh-day Adventist community of faith. Focus areas shall include leadership, archaeology, historical theology, missiology and church planting. However, the ideas expressed in the articles, dissertation abstracts, and book reviews are the entire responsibility of the authors and do not represent the thoughts of the members of the AIIAS African Theological Association.

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2. Shawna Vyhmeister, *AIIAS Research Standards and Writing Manual: Requirements and Recommendations for the Theological Seminary and the Graduate School*, 2nd ed. (Silang, Cavite, Philippines: AIIAS Publications, 2014).

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Each submitted article should be 4000 words maximum or 15 to 20 pages (double spaced) in a word processor.

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VOLUME 7

Articles/Features

PARTY POLITICS INVOLVEMENT:
A CASE FOR CHURCH IDENTITY
AND MISSION IN AFRICA

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Abstract

Involvement in party politics by church members for various reasons has become a common feature for political aspirants in Africa. What this entails remains an enigmatic and topical issue for the church in Africa. Besides being a controverted subject, the quandary created by a non-definitive position given in the context of African political cultures has left church leadership in an administratively precarious position to guide church member party-political activists. Contemporary African party politics expresses itself in forms that make it challenging for the church to retain its identity and mission. An analysis of the issues at stake warrants a biblical-theological reflection to help the church retain its identity and accomplish its mission in Africa.

Keywords: party politics, identity, mission, African party politics, involvement

1. Background

The subject on party politics involvement by professed Christian adherents of traditional denominations, protestant or evangelicals such as Seventh-day Adventists, has a potential of eliciting an academically protracted discussion. Denominational movements such as the Adventist, as pointed out earlier on, cannot confront this discussion outside of their identity and mission for existence. The case of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be considered as a selected evangelical denomination that may serve as an example and case study for those traditional Christian denominations.

1.1. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church:
Mission and Identity

It has been noted that "the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church, is to proclaim the gospel of the whole Bible to the ends of the earth (Matt 28:19-20), and to carry the message of the three angels (Rev 14:6-12) to all peoples."[1] Further it also states that Adventists

> are a conservative protestant body of evangelical Christians whose faith is grounded in the Bible and centred on Jesus, with stress on the atoning death on the cross, ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, and soon return to redeem His people. They are known for their observance, for their emphasis on maintaining health as part of religious duty, and for their mission activities around the world.[2]

The constitution and by-laws of the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide, readily found in the denominations' working policy, states that "the purpose of the General Conference is to teach all nations the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the commandments of God."[3]

The milieu, causes, and contributing factors to which African party politics was born, to a great and significant extent, define African identity, politics, social justice, and 21st century religiosity. These seem inevitably connected and formative to the background of the discussion. The legacies of the past and the role or place played by colonial missionaries in the 19th century in African politics are invaluable elements that cannot be excluded from this discussion. Contemporary politics in Africa may not be understood in terms of other places around the globe, although there may be commonalities in some aspects and conceptual frameworks that define party politics. The question that arises is, is it possible for a Christian to be involved in party politics and retain the church's identity and mission in Africa?

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[1]Nancy J. Vyhmeister, "Who are Seventh-day Adventists," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology,* Commentary Reference Series, vol. 12 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2000), 20.

[2]Ibid., 1.

[3]Constitution of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, Article II (As revised at the 59th Session held in Atlanta, United States of America, June 24 to July 3, 2010). See also Working Policy of the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2015-2016 ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2015), 136.

1.2. Method

A topic of this nature, just like any other, demands both clarity[4] and selection of the most appropriate methodology to tackle it and yield best results. Historical factors and legacies of the past and the emergence of party politics, without which the study is defeated, warrant a historical reflection of party politics. This may be compared[5] to or considered in the light of biblical-theological[6] insights drawn from available data. Thus "biblical-theology collates the results of exegesis and provide the data for the systematic theologian to contextualise in developing theological dogma for the church."[7] The study calls for an ingenious use of these different but carefully interwoven methodologies.[8] In this case therefore,

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[4]Joel M. LeMon and Kent H. Richards, "Preface," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Peterson*, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent H. Richards (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), xvii.

[5]Brent A. Strawn notes that determining elements of comparison is not an easy task just as engaging in the task needs justification too. It is not easy to maintain a balance and avoid over-emphasis of similarities over differences, or vice versa. He quickly observes though that the act of comparing is neurologically encoded. Brent A. Strawn, "Comparative Approaches: History, Theory and Image of God," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Peterson*, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent H. Richards (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 115. While the last observation might create further discussion, suffice to say all other factors considered, the nature of the subject under study qualifies for this element or methodology to be made use of. Comparison of more than one element is at stake here; party politics, and the church. Can a professed Adventist Christian serve the two institutions simultaneously, keep and foster the identity and mission of the church as informed by the biblical text?

[6]William P. Brown expresses it well that theological interpretation begins with or interfaces with biblical scholarship and then makes a theological inquiry which takes into account the ancient text and the contemporary context. Even though theological enterprise involves reason, the text provides its own theo-logic. William P. Brown, "Theological Interpretation: A Proposal," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L Peterson*, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent H. Richards (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 387. Perhaps Grant R. Osborne has expressed even clearer, "Biblical theology constitutes the first step away from the exegesis of the individual passages and toward the delineation of their significance for the church today." Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1991), 263. Canale has made a historical observation though, that "for about seventeen centuries Christian theology was pursued within the confines of systematic (dogmatic) theology." Fernando Canale, "Is there Room for Systematics in Adventist Theology?" *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 12, no. 2 (2001): 114. Canale contends that there was no biblical theology from as far back as the times of Origen (c.185-253/4) and the first systematic theologian, Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274). Ibid.

[7]Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 263.

[8]Methodologies can be used in combination with other methodologies, as long as there is unity of purpose and appropriateness for doing so. Ibid., xviii. Combining methodologies is not a foreign practice to academic enterprise as is evidenced by the scholarly works of Elizabeth Block Smith, and Ziony Zevit that combine more than one method. Christopher B. Hays, "Religio-Historical Approaches: Monotheism. Method and Morality," in *Method Matters:*

this study will make use of a combination of selected methodologies. The historical, biblical-theological, and comparative approaches will be the ambit of navigation for this discussion to establish coherent principles from the study[9] and for consideration under the discussion of party politics involvement by church members in Africa.

Accordingly, a look at the historical background, the emergence, and the nature of party politics in Africa will be considered. This will include the backdrop factors that directly and indirectly led to the party politics phenomenon in Africa. Second, selected Old Testament (OT) characters such as Moses, Joseph, and Daniel will be looked at. The first two characters served the Egyptian empire, while the third served both the Babylonian and the Medes and Persian empires at different times. These will be looked at to establish biblical-theological insights or principles with respect to African party politics. Third will be a consideration of implications for identity and mission that ought to be taken into account by Adventist Christian aspirants of party politics activism in Africa.

1.3. Limits

This study will not concern itself so much with the so called "church politics;" rather, it will leave the results of the study to be self-applicable to other nuances of political practices, church or otherwise. This study will not put special focus on one African country as a case study; rather, it will make a broad overview, leaving such focussed studies for other academics. The writers recognise the volatility of the subject and, therefore, have chosen to limit the paper to establishing a biblical-theological response to the subject without becoming emotive or an intellectual political activist in the process of the discussion. This paper will not be a political scientific investigation as would be espoused by political scientists. Rather it is intentionally limited to a biblical-theological study in the context of the OT. Further, the study will seek to consider African party politics in its African context and resist the temptation to put on academic spectacles or political orientations of the western perspective, as is often the case, arguably. African politics ought to be understood or judged in its own dynamisms and not through the prisms of other worldviews.

Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L Peterson, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent H. Richards (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 169.

9Canale, "Is there Room," 131.

2. Party Politics: Historical Background and Definition

It is proper to begin the discussion on the historical background with a look at the general meaning of the word politics. The Greek word *polis* which means city or state, originates the word *politics*.[10] Kenneth R. Himes further contend that the term meant how a city conducted its public affairs as opposed to private personal issues.[11] This entails accumulation, organisation, and use of power in governance on specified terms.[12] A political party is a body or organisation that advocates for candidates to hold public office to run the affairs of a territory or state.[13] However, the critical question that arises with this definition of politics is, does this definition encompass everything that is meant by party politics in Africa, in pre, during, or post-colonial periods. In other words, does the expression have a similar meaning or connotation to both the colonised and never colonised states? A closer look at this element is justifiable because we are discussing African politics.

What was noted of politics around the middle of the 20th century seems unequivocally applicable in the 21st century. Herbert Spiro strongly notes that we should not "approach African politics as though it were European or American politics, if we want to avoid misleading answers."[14] The environment in which African political process takes place is unique.[15] This creates the necessity to distinguish between

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[10]Kenneth R. Himes, *Christianity and the Political Order: Conflict, Cooptation and Cooperation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013), 2. Himes observes that the city dwellers of Athens, Sparta, Corith, and Thebes were called *politeis.* Ibid. David Miller weighs in by noting that politics has to do with governance and consequences for breaking rules. David Miller, *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4. The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion defines politics as an "art or science of taking part in a civilised community." Paul K. Meager, Thomas C. O'Brien and Consuelo M. Aherne, *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Corpus, 1979), s.v. "politics." The challenge with this definition is the problematic quandary created by what is meant by civilised community. "Politics is the discourse of our public life," writes Jim Wallis, *The Soul of Politics* (New York, NY: Orbis, 1994), xix.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 11, rev. ed. (London, UK: Macmillan, 1987), s.v. "politics."

[13]Michael D. Harkavy, *The New Webster's International Encyclopedia*, rev. ed. (Naples, FL: Trident International, 1996), s.v. "political party."

[14]Herbert J. Spiro, *Politics in Africa: Prospects South of the Sahara* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1962), 10.

[15]Ibid. See also Sebastian Elischer, *Political Parties in Africa: Ethnicity and Party Formation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), xvii. In this book Sebastian Elischer observes that there is no room to make a comparison of African politics to another continent,

"African politics" and "politics in Africa."[16] In the post-colonial era, political differences among the different states also emerged and became very visible.[17]

The first political party was formed in Liberia in 1860[18] and, like other African countries, they all sought to fight oppression, exploitation, and inequalities created by foreign colonial imperialist rulers. Benjamin Talton informs us that Europeans set in the Berlin conference 1884-1885 held a record of 400 years experience of imperialism and exploitation in Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific.[19] They used imperialism to divide, conquer, and then rule; for often, African proxies were the face of the European colonial power that was used to fight fellow Africans.[20] Europeans warring among themselves equipped them to become a formidable military force against the poorly military-equipped Africans.[21] Thus, African party politics was born to fight and remove imperialism.[22] Legacies that would later characterise African party politics in colonial free states.[23] Political freedom was valued ahead of wealth without liberty by most Africans.[24]

What was the role of the church, represented in this case, by colonial missionaries? How did the missionaries relate to party politics of the colonisation? This is critical in showing us how the church fared in the past concerning party politics involvement, and to show us its impact on mission then. Robert D. Woodberry makes a historical observation that

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noting that it's even challenging to make political comparisons among the African countries by themsleves.

16Chris Allen, "Understanding African Politics," *Review of African Economy* 65 (1995): 302.

17Ibid., 301.

18It was the "True Wing Party." Giovanne Carborne, "Political Parties and Party Systems in Africa: Themes and Research Perspectives," *World Political Science Review* 3, no. 3 (2007): 1.

19Benhamin Talton, "African Resistance to Colonial Rule," Africana Age, Schoburg Centre for Research in Black Culture (2011), accessed 12 April, 2017. http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanaage/ essay-resistance.html

20Ibid.

21Ibid.

22Party politics therefore organised demonstrations, prolonged war and even guerrilla warfare to win their independence. Allen, "Understanding African Politics," 315.

23Alayna Hamilton, "Political Oppression in Sub-Sahara Africa" *Topical Review Digest: Human Rights in Sub-Sahara Africa,* accessed April 12, 2017. http://www.du.edu/korel/hehw/ researchdigest/africa/politicalOpression. See also Mohamed A. El-Khawas, and J. Anyu Ndumbe, *Democracy, Diamonds and Oil: Politics in Today's Africa* (New York, NY: Nova Science, 2006); Staffan Lindberg I, *Democracy and Elections in Africa* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins, 2006).

24Spiro, *Politics in Africa,* 9. An inscription on Dr Kwame Nkrumah's monument captures this value well. Ibid.

often times missionaries were drawn into politics because politics assisted their missionary objectives.[25] Often times, it has been noted that most of them wanted a *moderate* use of colonialism,[26] though it may be difficult to measure *moderate* against any standard. It was for this reason that "colonial abuses angered local people against Christianity—which is most associated with the West—and thus made conversions harder."[27] However, some missionaries fought slavery[28] and established schools that gave impetus to the rise of nationalists who became party politicians that led their countries to freedom. It has been observed that "virtually all early African nationalists graduated from mission schools."[29]

The discussion on party politics is incomplete without a look at the cold war and its effects. The superpowers used and abused the African states in their quest for political control, access to resources, and establishment of allies.[30] In the process, party politics (and rebels) was funded to support, oppose, and overthrow governments.[31] The legacy of these imperialistic party politics' influencing behaviours have outlived the cold war era to characterise African party politics directly or indirectly to this day. Thus, it can be concluded that "internal divisions, colonial legacy, history of cultural oppression, intense rivalry and competition for political power, etc., a combination of these factors constitutes the root

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[25]Robert D. Woodberry, "Politics," *Encyclopedia of Missions and Missionaries*, ed. Jonathan Bonk (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 347.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid. "Elder Mead led Jim into the water and baptised him. The date was December 1, 1901, a memorable one for the missionaries who had waited and prayed five and one half years for this first convert." Virgil Robinson, *The Solusi Story: Times of Peace, Times of Peril* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1979), 77.

[28]It has been noted that the in some British colonies, slave owners punished or restricted missionaries contact with slaves, burnt some churches of those who did not comply with their colonial agenda. In Guyana (formerly Demerara) a missionary, John Smith of the London Missionary Society was sentenced to death when slaves rebelled in 1823. Woodberry, "Politics," 348.

[29]Ibid., 352.

[30]Abdalla Bujra, "African Conflicts: Their Causes and their Political and Social Environment," in *Development Policy Management Forum*, No. 4 (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Development Policy Management Forum, 2002), 9.

[31]Ibid. Just an example, Bujra wrote about it then, "in the Congo of 1964, the Americans intervened to remove Lumumba and install Mobutu, an intervention which has set in motion serious and unforeseen consequences which are unfolding to this day. In Somalia, it led to the collapse of the state. In Angola, it has led to the long and tragic civil war. Similarly in Mozambique (through the proxy of apartheid South Africa)." Ibid.

cause of these major conflicts,"[32] in Africa today. Besides, African party politics mirrors pre-colonial historic ethnic rivalries.[33]

Party politics in Africa has a diversity of forms and remain so today.[34] It is made up of the elite, mass, nationalist, religious,[35] ethnicity,[36] electoral, movement based parties.[37] Political parties are numerous and are continuously formed.[38] Whatever the case may be, the parties formulate forms of government that fall into the following categories; military regimes, one party regimes, inclusive multipatism, and racial oligarchies (South Africa prior to its independence).[39]

First, today, party politics in Africa arguably seeks to respond to or resist economic exploitation. This is so because colonial characterisations—oppression, exploitation, and inequalities—in post-colonial era today remain in economic form,[40] making African party politics a necessity in the wake of economic exploitation of African

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[32]Ibid.

[33]African tribes, ethnic groups, fought against each other just as European states warred against each other. However, the African inter-ethnic wars remained unresolved, as a matter of fact, were used by colonialists to their imperialistic ends. Unfortunately, they remain unresolved to this day, giving party politics another undesirable feature. "When Nigeria got its independence from the British in 1960, the various contradictions and points of inter-ethnic conflict had not been resolved. The post-colonial order was founded on the same socio-economic and political structures which were already in existence." Bujra, "African Conflicts," 21.

[34]Carborne, "Political Parties and Party Systems," 5.

[35]All Nigerians People's Party has a stronghold in the Islamic north. Ibid., 12. For further reading see Geoffrey K. Ingham, *Politics in Modern Africa: The Uneven Tribal Dimension* (London, UK: Routledge, 1990).

[36]This form seems to cut across in the other forms of party politics. Carborne notes that ethnic heterogeneity is a feature that is shared regionally and it is compounded by religious divisions in some cases. Carborne, "Political Parties and Party Systems," 9. Further, it has been noted that the 'liberation factor' against colonialists, was a unifying factor, and soon as independence was attained it waned off. Ibid.

[37]Ibid. Read Giovanne Carborne for a detailed treatise on the differences in forms of party politics. However, it must be noted that the typology that has been used by Giovanne Carborne has its own limitations because it draws from the western worldview of politics. Ibid. Whatever the differences are they seem to share specific goals, in principle, to better the lives of their people. They also share, some of them, the common factor of existing prior to independence, while some of them were formed after independence as a response to the party politics of the liberating parties styles of governance.

[38]This was a result of reforms of the 90s that brought in a period democratisation in many African States. After most African states had gained independence, they opted for one partism as a way to foster quick economic growth and stability. However this was resisted by the masses and so the 90s saw a sweep of change to multipartism. Ibid., 3.

[39]Ibid., 4.

[40]Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York, NY: Groove, 1963), 27.

resources. Monetary institutions such as International Monetary Fund and the World Bank extend economic help to African states to "assist" them in their economic development. These institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) give African states economic and political conditions for loan eligibility.[41]

Second, party politics is focussed at the internal interests of its players. These include, but are not limited to, the following; holding on to power and allowing very minimal reforms that prevent meaningful changes,[42] personal rule, winner takes all, corruption and looting of the economy, endemic instability, erosion of authority, and repression and violence.[43] This is mainly so by party politics in power. Party politics in opposition sometimes organise rebellion and attempt to overthrow government,[44] which leads to conflicts and even war, notes Abdalla Bujra.[45] Violence,[46] besides being a reaction to poverty, is often between party supporters and, in many cases, ethnic and religious affiliation.[47]

Party politics in Africa is unique and cannot easily be comparable to the ones in the other continents of the planet. It has a historical background that includes the pre-colonial era, colonial, and post-colonial period. During the cold war, colonial missionaries' involvement in party politics influenced party politics and negatively impacted the mission of missionaries. A biblical-theological perspective will now be done in the next section to establish a biblical view on party politics and whether a Christian can be involved in it and retain both the identity and mission of the church in Africa.

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[41]Allen, "Understanding African Politics," 312. These include but not limited to good governance, rule of law, accountability, and administrative probity. Ibid.

[42]Carborne, "Political Parties and Party Systems," 4. See also Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982).

[43]Ibid., 308-309.

[44]In the past decades after most African states gained independence it is noted that party politics has been responsible for about "80 violent changes of government." Bujra, "African Conflicts," 4.

[45]Ibid.

[46]This must be understood to refer to the term *conflict*, which entails in this a "violent and armed confrontation." Ibid., 4.

[47]Ibid., 4.

3. Party Politics: A Biblical and Theological Perspective

As we delve into this section, it is paramount to briefly take note of what different scholars say about involvement in politics. It has been argued that it is practically difficult to offer double attention to God, to be ethical in practice, deliberately lie and resist snares of power and to do party politics.[48] Colson argues that a Christian can be an active party politician and yet bring transcendent moral values to the populace by determining to remain loyal to God no matter what party leaders may demand.[49]

Himes, a Catholic scholar, agrees with Colson. Although he does not speak directly of the individual participation or involvement of the Christian, he advocates for the church to consider politics as critical for its practice, because politics matters because people matter.[50] He notes that it is a duty of the Christian church to build the earthly city.[51] He proceeds to note the uniqueness of the Catholic Church's diplomatic relations with 176 states and that it has both voice and vote at the United Nations sponsored conferences, except the General Assembly.[52] Johannes B. Metz gives a scholarly explanation as to why the Christian and the Church must be involved in politics, resonating with Himes, and draws examples from the Catholic Church.[53]

We now turn to three OT Bible characters—Joseph, Moses, and Daniel. Moses was involved in the liberation of a nation from a bondage that can be righty described as political. The three characters worked under three different empires of the ancient world. They all lived at different time periods of chronological time. They have been selected for this study, for they seem to be a representation of God-fearing men who worked or interacted with state political powers or empires in the OT. The Bible is an indivisible union of both the divine and human, and it is the Word of God with principles that are applicable to all ages.

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[48]Charles Colson, *Political Action* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1988), 69.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Himes, *Christianity and the Political Order*, 4-5.

[51]Ibid., 5.

[52]Ibid., 12.

[53]Johannes B. Metz, "The Churches' Social Function in the Light of Political Theology," in *Faith and the World of Politics*, ed. Johannes B Metz (New York, NY: Paulsit, 1968), 2-18.

3.1. Joseph as a High Profile Political Figure

The Genesis narrative records the account of this Bible character as the son of Israel[54] or Jacob (Gen 35:24) who suffers sibling jealousy (Gen 37:11), is sold to strangers, and becomes a slave (Gen 37:27-28). Later sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian political figure (Gen 39:1), he becomes a prisoner (Gen 39:20) and explains the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams (Gen 41:16-36). This leads to his becoming an official of the Egyptian empire at the appointment of the Pharaoh (41:37-44).

Key observations to be made is how Joseph rises to an influential political position to serve in the affairs of the state of Egypt. First, Joseph is a prisoner, a falsely charged criminal or convict serving a jail sentence based on rape allegations (Gen 39: 7-19). Second, there is a crisis because the magicians of Egypt fails to assist Pharaoh (Gen 41:8). Third, Joseph acknowledges the ability of God to give explanations to dreams (Gen 41:16). Joseph explains the meaning of the dreams and informs the king that the dreams are God originated (41:25-36). Fourth, Pharaoh appoints Joseph as a high-profile state official (Gen 41: 41-44) because Joseph is full of the Holy Spirit (Gen 41:39-39). We will look at Genesis 41:41 more closely shortly. Fifth, Joseph's duties are clear—to prepare Egypt for the hunger years ahead (Gen 41:48-49). These duties seem not to include party political activism. Sixth, Pharaoh appoints Joseph second in command over the affairs of Egypt (41:41-44). Seventh, Joseph's rise to power is part of a big picture. The narrative fits well with Joseph's own dreams prior to his going to Egypt (Gen 37:1-11), which is fulfilled when his brothers and parent "bow" before him (Gen 42:6). The context of Genesis 41 is better understood when the divine hand is seen as the active agent behind the sudden rise of Joseph to power (Gen 45:7-8). In the whole narrative, there is a clear chronology of events. Later, a Pharaoh who does not know Joseph appears in the scene.

3.2. A Closer Look at Gen 41:41

A textual analysis of Genesis 41:41 is warranted for its exposure of the appointment of Joseph as a high-profile political figure in Egypt. The text

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[54]Genesis 32:28.

reads וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל־יוֹסֵף רְאֵה נָתַתִּי אֹתְךָ עַל כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם. The text has three clauses that are syntactically connected to each other. The first clause "וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל־יוֹסֵף" informs us of the main subject and the main object. It can be translated, "And Pharaoh said to Joseph." Pharaoh is the main subject and Joseph is the recipient of the action of Pharaoh. The second clause רְאֵה נָתַתִּי אֹתְךָ comprises an imperative of command רְאֵה, denoting a superior talking to a subordinate. In this case, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is commanding Joseph about his new role. Joseph is merely a recipient of what the king is telling him to assume or do. He has done nothing of his own initiative to receive what the king is giving him. The main verb of this clause נָתַתִּי from the root word נתן is a verb qal, first common singular. It is featured most frequently in the Pentateuch. It is the fifth most common verb in the OT text occurring 2010 times[55] in all OT books except in the book of Nahum.[56] Etymologically, the root word נתן is attested in Aramaic[57] and it means, "to give, to grant, bestow upon."[58] It carries the same meaning in several OT texts for example in Genesis 24:35, Exodus 23:31, Hosea 11:8, and I Chronicles 29:25. The LXX uses the word καθίστημί which is a verb, first person singular present active indicative. It is best rendered "put in charge." It is preceded by the expression Ἰδοὺ an interjection which denotes a call for serious attention. καθίστημί is then followed by two other expressions σεσήμερον. The LXX uses the expression σήμερον, an adverb meaning "today" to give emphasis to the fact that it is a declaration that was made at that very moment. The decision of Pharaoh is a sudden act and executed right there by him. נָתַתִּי can therefore be translated, "l make you in charge or appoint, ascribe or assign"[59]

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[55]Abraham Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Old Testament* (Jerusalem, Israel: Kiryat-Sepher, 1983), s.v. "נתן."

[56]Ernst Jenni, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (*TLOT*), ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westerman (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), s.v."נתן."

[57]William Gesenius, *Hebrew and Chaldean Dictionary of the Old Testament* (*HCDOT*), ed. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (London, UK: Samuel Bagster, 1979), s.v "נתן."

[58]David, J. A. Clines, *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009), s.v. "נתן." Also defined as "to give personally, to hand, to hand to, to bestow upon." Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* based on the lexicon of William Gesenius, (Oxford, UK: Claredon, 1952), s.v. "נתן." Other general meanings include "set, lay, put, present, offer, pass on, allow, permit, surrender, deliver." William L Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), s.v. "נתן."

[59]Gesenius, *HCDOT*, s.v. "נתן."

From the analysis of this text, Joseph was a high-profile political figure who did not attain his position through involvement in some party politics of the Ancient Near East in Egypt. He was an appointee of the king. He was "made in charge," "assigned," or "given" authority to execute state duties *because* the Spirit of God was evidenced before the monarch of Egypt, the Pharaoh, to be in him (Gen 41:39-39). His qualifying mark was God's Spirit in his life. There was no effort done on his part to obtain this favour besides being filled with the Spirit.

It does seem that the rise to power of this Bible character was not preceded by party politics involvement. The OT text does not tell us anything else that he did to remain in power. He was an appointee of the King of Egypt, Pharaoh, following an unexpected event.

3.3. Moses as a Liberator

First, Moses runs away as a fugitive after committing murder in Egypt (Exod 2:11-15) and settles in Median (Exod 2:15). Second, God takes note of a crisis that has affected His people in Egypt (Exod 2:24; 3:7, 9; 6:5) and reveals Himself to Moses (Exod 3:2, 4-6). Third, God's plan to rescue His people solves the crisis (Exod 3:8). Fourth, God commands Moses to liberate His people (Exod 3:10). A closer look at this text will be done shortly. Fifth, Moses makes every attempt to escape the call of God: what if they ask for God's identity (Exod 3:13) and what if they will not believe that God sent him (Exod 4:1). He gives an excuse about speech disability (Exod 4:11) and tells God to send someone else (Exod 4:13). Seventh, God delivers His people from Egyptian bondage (10 plagues, Gen 7-12) according to His word (Exod 3:8).

3.4. A Closer Look at Exodus 3:10

This text also warrants a closer look, as an example, to understand the assumption of Moses into a seemingly powerful political position that led him on a mission to confront the Egyptian monarch for equity and liberty for the oppressed and exploited nation of the Hebrews. The text that reads "וְעַתָּה לְכָה וְאֶשְׁלָחֲךָ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְהוֹצֵא אֶת־עַמִּי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם:" is made up of three clauses. Significant in the first part of the sentence " וְעַתָּה לְכָה וְאֶשְׁלָחֲךָ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה" is the use of the expression "לְכָה" a qal verb imperative masculine

singular from the root "הלך" meaning "to walk, go"[60] following an adverb prefixed with a conjunction "וְעַתָּה" translated "and now." The subject, from the previous verses, God, seems to be giving Moses a command on what he must do. The second verb "וְאֶשְׁלָחֲךָ" is qal first common singular cohortative plus pronominal suffix second masculine singular. Etymologically, the root of this expression "שלח" is attested in Phoenician and Aramaic, besides Hebrew,[61] and occurs 847 times[62] in the MT. It can be translated "to send."[63] However, it is mostly translated, "To send on a specific mission,"[64] or "to be commissioned."[65] Its meaning is attested in Genesis 24:7, 40, 32:4, 37:13; Exodus 24:5; 1 Samuel 25:40; Isaiah 19:2; and Ezekiel 23:40 for example. It is used mostly in the Pentateuch, historical books, the Major Prophets, Psalms and the book of Job.[66] This expression also carries the subject "l." In this case, God is mentioned in the previous sentences (Gen 3:6-7). The expression can be translated, "And l will send you." The object of this first part is in the words "אֶל־פַּרְעֹה" translated "to Pharaoh." The LXX adds the expressions βασιλέα Αἰγύπτου, translated "king of Egypt," to the noun "פַּרְעֹה" in the MT. The entire first part can be translated, "And come now, and l will send you to Pharaoh." A syntactical issue that arises here is that God is the sender, Moses is the one being commanded to go, and Pharaoh is the object to be confronted by the one sent. God is specific about whom Moses should go to. We will consider this aspect as we consider the entire meaning of the text, but first lets have a look at the second part of the sentence וְהוֹצֵא אֶת־עַמִּי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם.

The last verb in the sentence occurs in this last clause וְהוֹצֵא. It is hiphil imperative masculine singular. Its root is יצא and it means "bring out, come out, come forth, make to come out."[67] The expression can be literally translated, "And cause to bring out," or more smoothly "and bring out."

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[60]*HALOT*, s.v. "הלך." Also "die, flow with, go behind, go away, follow, adhere to, make, let, leadwander, move back and forth" Ibid.

[61]Jenni, *TLOT*, s.v. "שלח."

[62]Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, s.v. "שלח."

[63]*HALOT*, s.v. "שלח." Also, "let go, stretch out, let free, escort, send away, send out, be sent, be dismissed." Ibid. Also Jenni, *TLOT*, s.v. "שלח."

[64]Jenni, *TLOT*, s.v. "שלח."

[65]*CDCH*, s.v. "שלח."

[66]Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, s.v. "שלח."

[67]*HALOT*, s.v. "יצא." Other general meanings include "go forth, step forth, lead out, produce." Ibid.

This expression is followed by a direct object עַמִּי translated, "My people" because of the presence of a first common singular pronominal suffix on the word עמ. "My" is another pronoun referring to "God" referred to in the first part of the sentence as "l." This is followed by a noun masculine plural construct and a proper noun בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל translated, "Children of Israel." The last expression מִמִּצְרָיִם is a noun prefixed by a preposition and is translated, "From Egypt." The LXX adds a noun before the word Egypt, γῆς Αἰγύπτου, to give the meaning "land of Egypt." Perhaps to give the emphasis that the Hebrews is not only to be freed from slavery, but also to leave the land of Egypt entirely. Syntactical observations worthy noting are: the mission of Moses is spelled out clearly "to bring out God's children out of Egypt," the people belong to God, the action of bringing the people out is an imperative command of God to Moses, and there seems to be no other option available.

The entire text therefore can be rendered, "And come now, and l will send you to Pharaoh, and you will bring out my people, children of Israel, from Egypt." The entire narrative of Israel's freedom from Egyptian bondage presents God as the main actor of what seemingly Moses does before Pharaoh (10 plagues, Exod 7-12). Moses is involved in a "fight for freedom" for the Hebrews in response to a divine command. He might seem to be a political figure who fought to free the Hebrews from oppression, exploitation, and inequality by the Egyptian task masters. It must be noted, however, that he made about four objections to avoid a divine command to become the deliverer of the Hebrews. Those to be liberated are not anybody's property but God's children. God specifically directed Moses to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. He went to fulfill a divine task with nothing but a rod in his hand (Exod 4:2-4). When one thinks of Moses as a political figure, he might have appeared to be one who advocated, performed miracles, and won freedom for the people. However, he was not a party politician for the textual evidence seems to deny that possibility. He did what God sent him to do, following repeated refusal to do so. God performed the miracles and delivered His people.

3.5. Daniel as a High Profile Political Figure

Three narratives will be considered to establish the life of Daniel as a high-profile political figure. We shall limit our consideration to the narratives found in Dan 2, 5, and 6. Each case is unique but intertextually connected. In Dan 2, the narrative progresses. First, Daniel and his friends

find themselves as slaves who had been brought from Judah in 605 by king Nebuchadnezzar. Second, there is a crisis. Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that all the wise men of Babylon have failed to make known and explain, so they are condemned to die (Dan 2:12). Third, the crisis gets a solution when Daniel explains the dream after praying to God with his friends (2:18-45). Fourth, the king appoints Daniel along with his friends to high-profile political positions, וְהַשְׁלֵט עַל כָּל־מְדִינַת בָּבֶל (2:48-49). Fifth, though they are high-profile figures they do not compromise their religion (chaps. 3, 6).

In Dan 5, the narrative is as follows: first, the scenario concerns the same figure who is an exile from Judah living in Babylon. Nothing has changed. Second, there is an alcoholic-Belshazzar-and-a-writing-on-the-wall crisis (5: 5-9). Third, the wise men of Babylon fail to solve the crisis (5:8). Fourth, Daniel solves the crisis (5:17-28). Fifth, King Belshazzar appoints Daniel to be the third political ruler (5:29). Sixth, King Belshazzar is killed (5:30).

In Dan 6, the narrative presents itself differently. First, Daniel is still an exile from Judah who is a former political figure of the now deposed Babylonian empire. Second, rather than a crisis as in the previous narratives, there is a need for high-profile political leadership in the new kingdom (6:1). Third, Daniel is appointed as first among the top three because he had an excellent spirit (6:3). Fourth, Daniel's unwavering commitment to God is known by all others (6:4-5). Daniel becomes a target of political jealousies and evil plots (6:4-5, 6-9). Daniel obeys God rather than man. He is willing to sacrifice his political position and life than sin against God, so he continues with his prayers (6:10-11). He suffers the consequences of his loyalty to God in the hands of party politicians (6:11-7). The monarch is a self-centered man who values his political position more than doing the right thing (6:14-15). God delivers Daniel from the lions (6:21-23).

3.6. Intertextuality of the Narratives

There seems to be a thread of a commonality of aspects for all the three characters; Joseph, Moses, and Daniel. Suffice to note that they lived in different periods under different empires or dynasties for Joseph and Moses' cases. First, each case has a character who is socially disadvantaged and finds himself being part of a solution to a crisis. Second, there is appointment by a higher authority to a position of political influence or significance. God is historically active in all cases

through His miraculous interventions. The characters have clear values and identity—they worship God. Their mission while in position of influence seems to live a life that leads earthly party political monarchs to acknowledge the supremacy of God. They choose loyalty to Him rather than have political correctness and all its advantages. There is no textual evidence for their party politics involvement to rise to political heights or to retain their positions. In all cases except Moses, the appointment is from the highest authority of the kingdom. Moses comes as an external appointee of God to confront an earthly kingdoms' oppression, exploitation, and inequality over the people of God. Rather than an army to back up his liberation agenda, he carries a "rod" as directed by God.

1. Pharaoh's dream is a crisis. Joseph solves the crisis and Pharaoh appoints Joseph.
2. God hears Israelites' suffering crisis. God's plan solves the crisis and He appoints Moses to deliver Israel.
3. Nebuchadnezzar's dream is a crisis. Daniel solves the crisis, and he is appointed to a political position.
4. The writing on the wall against Beltshazzar is a crisis. Daniel solves the crisis. Beltshazzar appoints Daniel third ruler.
5. Darius' legislature to be worshipped is a crisis. Daniel defies the new law and suffers the consequences, and he is kept in his political position.

The following table will help give clarity.

	Joseph (Gen 35-41)	Moses (Exod 2)	Daniel Case 1 (Dan 2)	Daniel Case 2 (Dan 5)	Daniel Case 3 (Dan 6)
Period	MBA, Around 1733 BC	LBA	Iron Age II	Iron Age II	Iron Age II 6th century
Background	Prisoner	Fugitive in Median	Exile	Exile	Exile/Former political figure
Crisis/Need	King's dreams	Slavery of Israelites	King's Dream	Writing on the wall	1. Political position 2.Darius, object of worship
Appointing	Egypt Pharaoh	Heaven God	Babylon King	Babylon King	Medes/Persian

Authority			Nebuchadnezzar	Beltshazzar	King Darius
Position of Appointment	Second Ruler	Liberator	Governor	Third Ruler	1.First among three 2.Retains position
Identity	Spirit-filled	God's Servant	Spirit-filled	Spirit-filled	Spirit-filled
Duties	Food Storage	Deliver God's children	Sate Provincial affairs	State affairs	State affairs

4. Party Politics: Seventh-day Adventist Identity and Mission

Based on the biblical-theological consideration that has been undertaken, there seems to be a few elements worth noting. Considering that the church has a unique identity and has a divine mission to accomplish, involvement in party politics cannot be ignored. The government of the day in African States is also the ruling party. The ruling party does not exist outside party politicking as explored in this paper. This makes it another herculean task to write about, discuss, or define African party politics with a clear delineable distinction that separates party politics from the government. Politics in Africa today means, among other things, party-policking. It can be noted, therefore, that;

1. God is involved in the political history of nations as shown in the local political historical narratives (Dan 3, 5, 6) and outline prophesies of Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 11[68] that end with a cosmic Second Coming divine judgment.[69]

2. God is not dependent upon party politics and, therefore, is above it in the course of determining the political destiny of nations (Dan 1:1-2).

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[68]William Shea, *Daniel 1-7*, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier (Ontario, Canada: Pacific Press, 1996), 35.

[69]On the Second Coming as part of divine judgment read Jiri Moskala, "Toward a Biblical Theology of Judgment: A Celebration of the Cross in the Seven Phases of Divine Universal Judgment–An Overview of a Theocentric- Christocentric Approach," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 15, no. 1 (2004): 138-162.

3. Victims of all forms of oppression, exploitation, and inequalities are God's property and for whom He is jealousy (Exod 3:10). All forms of party politics must acknowledge God's ownership of all humans.

4. God is not naïve about the political victims of OEI, and those who seek to collaborate with Him must do so on His terms enshrined in the Decalogue (Exod 20:1-17)—a transcript of both His nature and character.

5. Christians who assume political positions in African political systems must do so without party politicking and must remain loyal to God in their private (Gen 39: 7-19) and public lives (Dan 3, 6) even if it will cost them their political positions or life.

6. The unique identity of God's people, distinguished by the presence of God the Holy Spirit in their lives (Gen 41:39-39; Dan 6:3), is a key element that earns the respect of political powers and advances God's mission for His church. Party politics does not foster neither.

7. African Church leaders have a responsibility to avoid double standards in matters of involvement in ecclesiastical and public party politics.[70] Administrators or frontline workers need not repeat the ills of colonial missionaries by maintaining Bible-based ethical principles that are key to accomplishing mission.

8. Appointment to a political position must be considered prayerfully and not perceived as an opportunity for personal gain.

9. The Bible characters; Joseph, Moses, and Daniel and his friends did not belong to a political party or got involved in party politics prior to their rise to political positions. Their example gives timeless biblical principles applicable to all those who are confronted by a choice to assume a political position inclusive of the African volatile party political practices in the contemporary context.

5. Conclusion

As the church seeks to advance its mission in the 21st century, it can be concluded that party politics in the African context is not the best path for a practicing Bible-based Christian. Those who are approached to assume

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[70]Innocent Gwizo, "African Worldview as a Hermeneutical Factor to African Christology: An Analysis and Appraisal" (MA Thesis, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 2009), 117.

political positions should prayerfully consider such requests, and should they accept the offer, they must give their unequivocal loyalty to God and to ethical biblical principles in the execution of their state duties. The principles underlying the words of Ellen G. White are most applicable to African party politics. "As the sons and daughters of God, we are to have nothing to do with political strife. Those who engage in these contests make Satan glad, for he knows that they will exhibit the natural attributes of unregenerate hearts,"[71] and so "we cannot with safety take part in any political schemes."[72] The church, through its workers and membership, ought to stay away from party politics involvement if it should maintain its identity and accomplish its God given mission in Africa.

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[71]Ellen G. White, *Manuscript* 75, 1898, pp. 1, 3, 4, 9. "Come Out From Among Them, and Be Ye Separate," June 6, 1898. Washington, DC. March 19, 1979.

[72]Ellen G White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Hagerstown, MI: Review & Herald, 1985), 475.

THEOCRATIC BACKDROP OF POLITICAL NEUTRALITY: A BIBLICAL INQUIRY

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Abstract

This paper presupposes two things: (1) God's plans and purposes for His church and creation is the same yesterday, today, and even tomorrow (Heb 13:8); (2) God's claim of *pantocracy* (overall authority/almighty) has not changed since creation and will never change (Rev 1:8). In the light of this understanding, the church has no mandate whatsoever to help God in running the affairs of His creation. Therefore, its attitude towards politics should be informed on its understanding of God's position regarding world affairs. If the church believes that God is still in control of His creation, there is no need for it to indulge in politics. This supposition implies that political activism is not only a betrayal of faith in God but also a challenge against His *pantokratic* sovereignty. Lessons drawn from biblical history shows that such betrayal is caused by loss of trust in Him. It usually results in anger against God, hatred against humanity, loss of religious identity, and frustration and loss of the sense of mission. Apolitical attitude fosters unity, safety, peace, and mission fulfilment. It is futile for the church to indulge in politics of all forms because God is still in total control of world affairs until the end as predicted in much of the biblical apocalypse (Daniel and Revelation).

Keywords: Theocracy, *Pantokrator*, political Neutrality/apolitical, political activism

1. Introduction

The question of whether the church should be politically active or not is not new. For ages, this is one of the issues that has fascinated historians, sociologists, and political scientists.[1] In Africa, it appears that this concern is more pronounced due to several factors that influence Christian

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1Eric L. McDaniel, *Politics in the Pews: The Political Mobilization of Black Churches* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 3, within political science, scholars identify a special class of churches known as political churches. Political churches actively engage their members in the political processes by mobilizing them for political action and providing information about issues and candidates.

practices on the continent. Such factors range from cultural orientation to theological presuppositions and from political climate to economic trends on the continent. All these factors and others determine the church's success or failure in political activism. While some of these factors may be intrinsically motivated (influence from within African context), some factors are extrinsically perpetrated (foreign influence from outside of Africa). This paper presents a brief analysis of these factors in view of the church's mission and then establishes some biblical bases for maintaining political neutrality. Some biblical examples will be drawn to emphasize the church's need to anchor its practice on biblical theology which views God as the "All-powerful One" (the *Pantokrator,*)[2] who can effectively address the political challenges in Africa.

2. Cultural Orientation and Politics in Africa

In general, culture plays a key role in most aspects of family and communal development.[3] In most African settings, power dynamics and social governance are hierarchically structured around households, community leaders known as chiefs, district leaders, and provincial governors. All these have a voice of great influence in matters of political governance in their country. From early childhood until late adulthood, Africans are socialized to respect hierarchies of power and not to challenge them. For that reason, authorities or chiefs normally leave their thrones upon death and not through communal noise from jealous aspirants. Groups of such communal structures constitute political constituencies that eventually form other higher levels of political governance. Politicians in Africa do their best to maintain these structures for their advantage. In such socio-cultural context of power hierarchies, the church and its mission are better sustained by maintaining political neutrality than activism.

In addition, "Africans are notoriously religious" as Mbiti asserted.[4] Culturally, this assumption implies that Africans strongly believe in

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2The name *Pantokrator* is one of God's titles that portrays His overall sovereignty. It means "The Almighty" or "The All-Powerful One." The word is derived from two Greek words *panta* "all, every, all things" and *krator* "mighty, powerful, dominion." In Revelation, this title is repeatedly used to emphasize God's sovereignty over His creation: Rev 1:8; 4:8; 9:6; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 16:14; 19:15; and 21:22. This title signifies divine authority that supersedes Democracy "people power"

3John W. Santrock, *Life-Span Development,* 11th ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 11. Culture encompasses behavior patterns, beliefs, and all other products of a group that are passed on from generation to generation.

4John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London, UK: Heinemann, 1969), 1.

divine intervention against evil forces that threaten their well-being. In times of crisis, the gods are consulted. Equally, that is the faith of the church in Africa. They believe in God's ability to redeem them from crisis and even protect them. Politicians know this religious assumption, and they always consider it as a weakness to take advantage of. Through the same awareness, imperialists colonized Africa.

Other cultural factors include tendencies of dividedness among Africans through tribal, language, social status, and even political affiliations. Such diversity makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the church in Africa to speak with one voice in political matters. On the other hand, there is a strong temptation to individualism[5] as manifested through greed for power, escalating levels of corruption and deception, brutality against real and alleged opponents, treacherous behaviours among politicians, and unbelief among the educated elite. This implies that the more people advance in education, the less trusting to God they become. With these factors in mind, can the church make any difference by way of political activism? No. To do so is detrimental to the very fabric of the Church's identity and mission.

3. Church Identity and Governance

The Seventh-day Adventist church is identified with the United States of America by virtue of its head office there. That identity has negative implications especially when the church attempts to meddle with issues of politics. This means, whatever the church may do in the name of politics, it will be closely associated with American influence. Such labelling would betray the church's reason for existence—mission. More so, the church's governing policies and constitution affirm apolitical stance. In view of all these factors, the church cannot aspire to change the political landscape of Africa through political activism. Such practice militates against its mission mandate. In addition, the games of politics in Africa are too rough for church organizations like the Seventh-day Adventist. For that reason, I present the notion that only God is capable of dealing with African politics and governance issues. Therefore, political neutrality is more ideal for the church in Africa. This does not imply that the church should not assist victims of war.

It is futile for the church in Africa to be enmeshed in political activism. In most cases where the church has interfered with politics, it lost its identity and mission. This was the case of our the Church during Apartheid in South Africa. This aspect is more sensitive on the continent

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5Africans are generally community conscious as portrayed in their "Ubuntu" philosophy- "I am because we are." Individualism is an alien that is dividing.

of Africa because the vessel that brought missionaries is the same vessel that also brought mercenaries. Due to such vague impression, most Africans rejected Christianity[6] and maintained their ancestral traditions or settled for African-initiated churches (AICs).

4. Misconceptions About Political Neutrality

While in some cases, political activism contributed to the outcome of political games, it appears that the motivation for doing so is not biblical. This does not suggest that the Bible blinds people until they are insensitive to political issues. In North America, McDaniel notes that "Christianity was first introduced to slaves as a means to keep them docile and disinterested in disturbing the status quo."[7] Similarly, it is assumed that the same strategy was also employed in Africa in order to colonize them. Imperialists considered it easier and less expensive to conquer Africans by using missionaries than using force. Such was the case of Cecil John Rhodes who parcelled out the land in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) to missionaries for political reasons.[8] He succeeded overwhelmingly, and the local people groups lost not only their lands but also their unity and royal identities. The reason of evangelizing was wrong. To this day, some people are still bitter about it such that they are even sceptical about missionary church institutions. Imagine what will happen if the same church institutions become politically active. The action will be considered treasonous. This paper does not subscribe to such ideology of cruelty.

In view of all these considerations, political neutrality remains the most ideal response to African politics. With political neutrality, the church invests its time and trust in God and service to humanity. By doing so, the church retains its identity and unity and remains focused on its mission. The church saves itself from untold frustration, irreparable divisions, and apostasy if it stays away from political activism.

6The case of Christianity in Zimbabwe. The Seventh-day Adventism church is unpopular in South Africa today due to its historical participation in favor of Apartheid.

7McDaniel, *Politics in the Pews*, 4.

8Solusi land was granted under such scheme.

5. Theological Presuppositions and Politics in Africa

People's perception about God and how He interacts with the environment determines their attitude even in political activities. For that reason, Mbiti's assertion about Africans' religiosity has deeper implications on political trends in Africa. Whether in regard to African Traditional Religion (ATR) or Christianity, the effect is the same. Christianity encompasses numerous churches that share diverse contemporary beliefs. Some Christian churches are easily influenced by recent movements like liberation, feminism, and black theologies. According to Osborne, such movements "seek to recreate biblical theology in light of the needs of the present community."[9] For liberation and black theology, he further claims, "salvation means freedom from economic and racial oppression. Hence, their primary need today is not spiritual but economic liberation. Likewise, Feminist seeks to liberate women from patriarchal domination and exploitation."[10] Based on their theology, such church groups, even if they indulge in political activism, are justified.

On the contrary, Seventh-day Adventists claim to subscribe to the biblical concept of God. That conception views God as the only One in control of world affairs and all political dynamics. In the light of this assumption, following are several biblical factors that define God's relationship with this world: creatorship, sovereignty, omniscience, and salvation. Each of these four factors provides a foundational base upon which theocratic principles of the church's approach to politics and governance may be established.

6. Biblical Bases for Political Neutrality

Who God is to all humanity (believers and non-believers), and how He relates with them, is crucial towards a person's attitude to politics and governance issues. The term "theocracy" is derived from two Greek words θεός (*theos*) "god", and κρατέω (*krateo*) "to rule." Thus, the word θεοκρατία refers to "the rule of God." This implies a form of governance in which God exercises all authority in designating who does what in His kingdom. The concept of "theocracy" is anchored on God's essence as the only One παντοκράτωρ (*Pantokrator*) "the Almighty," a title that He

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9Grand R. Osborne, "Hermeneutics" in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Development*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1997), 471-484.

10Ibid., 473.

frequently claims in Revelation[11] to emphasize His overall sovereignty above all creation or creatures. This system of governance is different from Democratic governance. According to Abraham Lincoln, democracy refers to "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people."[12] This study presupposes that unless God permits, humanity cannot do anything of itself, by itself, and for itself.

With this understanding in mind, the following subsections amplify some biblical bases in favour of theocracy as a foundational reason for practicing political neutrality among Christian believers. Key bases include God's creatorship, God's Sovereignty, God's omniscience, God's salvific role, and God's role in eschatology. Each of these factors clearly distinguish God's supreme authority over this world in comparison to human limited understanding of people and circumstances.

6.1. God's Creatorship

To some extent, human perception regarding the questions of origin, determines a person's attitude regarding political governance of this world.[13] The two cannot be easily separated. The world was created by God, through Him, and for Him (Gen 1:1; Col 1:16-17). Each weekly cycle reminds us that God created His world and inhabitants (Gen 2:1-3; Ex 20:8-11). Because God created this world in its fullness, He has full prerogative to govern it. Whether *He does that governance* directly *appoints whoever* He desires to do so on His behalf [Adam, Noah, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Daniel, etc.] and *for whatever reason* [Isa 45:1-13], it is *His privilege*. Our duty as a church is to trust that He can accomplish all without our aid. Doubt on God's creatorship role or confusion in this regard not only weaken one's trust on His Sovereignty but also triggers a militant interest towards involvement in governing God's creation.

Lucifer's example serves as a good reference for this assumption (Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-19; Rev 12:7-17). Lucifer was the first creature to be

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11Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 9:6; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 16:14; 19:15; and 21:22.

12For more information on democratic governance and other forms of political governance, See http://www.democracy-building.info/definition-democracy.html. Democracy is by far the most challenging form of government - both for politicians and for the people. The term democracy comes from the Greek language and means "rule by the (simple) people". The so-called "democracies" in classical antiquity (Athens and Rome) represent precursors of modern democracies. Like modern democracy, they were created as a reaction to a concentration and abuse of power by the rulers. Yet the theory of modern democracy was not formulated until the Age of Enlightenment (17th/18th centuries), when philosophers defined the essential elements of democracy: separation of powers, basic civil rights / human rights, religious liberty and separation of church and state.

13"Where did we come from?" Our answers to this question determines our attitude towards questions of existence (why are we alive and how we should treat each other), and questions of destiny (where are we going and what will happen at the end of this world's history).

politically active against the ruling government of his time, and the great controversy commenced. He mobilized supporters and found them. Together, they fought against their *perceived* evil system of governance. They lost the fight and were cast out of heaven and its privileges (Luke 10:18; Rev 12:7-12). Adam and Eve bought the same ideology against their Creator and lost their relationship with Him, with one another, and with the whole creation.

6.2. God's Sovereignty

While all politicians need power by appointment from majority votes and only reign for a limited time, God possesses ultimate power within Himself to reign for eternity. That means, He is the only One who can effectively participate in the politics and governance of this world without seeking majority votes by way of campaigning. As echoed earlier on, God is the only *Pantokrator*, "the Almighty" (Rev 1:8; 4:8; 9:6; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 16:14; 19:15; and 21:22). Whereas most politicians seek political positions for the sake of acquiring material wealth, God is self-existent. He does not play politics to enrich Himself. He does not need any support from anyone in order for Him to survive. His sovereignty is not by way of campaigning but is naturally part of Him.

One of the major reasons why most politicians are brutal is selfishness with regard to acquisition of material or financial resources for survival. With such ambition, even human lives can be sacrificed in the spirit of survival of the fittest. Unlike such egoistic tendencies, God's sovereignty is unselfish and non-militant for material or financial advantages. God is self-existent and doesn't need anything to enable Him survival as expressed in Acts 17:24-29. For that reason, He alone must be trusted to deliberate on who should participate in any capacity and at whatever time.

6.3. God's Omniscience

God is not limited as we are in terms of knowing people and understanding their best needs at any given time. Jeremiah declares, "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9 KJV). This claim affirms our limitedness in knowing people and their political ambitions. People generally determine their preferences of political candidates based on historical facts behind a candidate, financial status, and promises during campaigns. They do this instead of consulting God who is able to declare the end from the beginning (Isa 46:10) and "Who establishes kings thrones on kingdoms" (2 Chr 7:13-18); ". . . . Who changes times and seasons, removes kings and raises up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have

understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in darkness, and light dwells in with Him" (Dan 2:21-22).

Based on His foreknowledge, God is able to draw a complete historical timeline from the beginning of time till the end of the age (Dan 2: 7, 8, 11 & 12; Rev 1-22). In that historical timeline, He punctuates details of time, names, events, places, and persecutions of His people and even their defeat to the enemy. He also identifies with heathen super powers such as Cyrus (Isa 45:1, 7) and the papacy and its destructive activities. Such details indicate that God is historically involved in the events and process of time in this world. For that reason, our political activism does not change God's history of this world. The only thing that moves God to change His heart or intentions is humility on our part, repentance from our wicked ways, our search for Him with all our hearts, and   our obedience to His commandments as He recommended to Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:13-14. All these recommendations suggest a passive attitude towards worldly politics.

6.4. God is The Only True Saviour

One of the major setbacks of politics in Africa is the claim by most politicians of the role they played in emancipating their subjects from the iron jaws of imperialists. Such claims are usually made to be more pronounced than the supreme role that God played in liberating Africans from White supremacy. While such role of dear brothers and sisters who sacrificed their lives was invaluable, that should not be the reason to suppress and exploit fellow Africans for personal enrichment of a few ruling class. More so, God played a more significant role in liberating Africa from its initial taskmasters. In view of that, political activism implies entrusting faith to a person or political system that one believes will liberate him/her from suffering. The role that God plays is often overlooked.

Contrary to political activism, the Bible clearly indicates that God is the only true liberator who treats His subjects with love and tenderness. After the fall in Eden, it was God, not Adam and Eve, who played an active role in redeeming humanity from Satan (Gen 3:8-10). In Noah's day, the world was filled with corruption and wickedness. It was God, not Noah, who played an active role in redeeming His people (Gen 6:5-8). The same He did for Israelites after their long suffering in Egyptian bondage. Christ's death on the cross was the epitome of our redemption.

Since God is the Saviour of this world (John 3:16), why can't the church trust Him for the governance of this world? If the church believes that God is the Creator of this world and that He is the Saviour of it, it should also trust Him for the governance of this world.

7. Biblical Lessons for Political Neutrality

This section briefly analyses some biblical examples of political activism among God's people and how it impacted their relationship with God, with one another, and with their missionary mandate.

In heaven, Lucifer questioned God's government system and was finally cast out heaven. God associated Lucifer's activism with rebellion. In Egypt, God played a key role in redeeming His people from bondage (Exod 3:6-10). God saw their suffering, heard their cry, knew their sorrows, came down to deliver them out of bondage, and finally brought them up from Egypt to a good land of milk and honey. It was God who elected Moses and commanded him to confront Pharaoh.

Based on that redemption factor, God initiated a perpetual covenant with His people concerning issues of governance and politics. As long as they believed and remained loyal to covenantal faithfulness, God prospered them, protected them, blessed them, and increased them in every aspect of their life. Whenever they violated this covenantal relationship and sought other gods, God even engaged heathens to deal with them and bring them back to the fold. It was not Moses who delivered them but God. At one point, Moses erroneously implied that he was the one who was in control, and God rebuked him (Num 20:10-12).

Rarely, God would appoint leaders (judges, prophets, etc.) for Israel until Israel sought to indulge in active politics like other nations and requested a king for itself (1 Sam 8). God equated that request with rebellion or idolatry (1 Sam 8:7-8). The eventual consequences of that wayward initiative were disastrous. Israel lost her identity, unity, sovereignty, kingdom, mission, and many other gifts. Later on, God gave them to Nebuchadnezzar—the mighty heathen in all the world (2 Chr 36:15-21). While in Babylon, God declared to Nebuchadnezzar through Daniel that He is the only chief architect of politics and world governance until the end of the world (Dan 2, 7, & 8). Since then, God has proven through successive world empires and super powers, as John also testifies in Revelation, by way of historical recapitulation of vision narratives.

According to God's timing, the birth of Christ took place when Roman government was in power (Matt 2; Gal 4:4). For God, *Pax Romana* through Augustus Caesar offered a better political climate for the birth of Jesus Christ than warring the Hasmonean Dynasty and the religious tension

within Jewish sectarianism.[14] Thus, the Jews erroneously thought that Christ's mission involved political activism in order to overthrow the Roman government. In essence, they anticipated Christ to join their political persuasions. Instead, Christ's kingdom offered no room for political activism. Not that political intervention was not necessary, but the approach was quite different from theirs. To them, Christ was too passive to redeem the Jews from their cruel Roman taskmasters. For the reason of passiveness, most Jews not only doubted Jesus' Messiahship, they also rejected Him and even crucified Him. All His disciples, including Stephen, died martyrdom deaths and never retaliated against their evil persecutors.

Throughout His ministry here on earth, Christ never exhibited any gesture of political activism even though He had the capacity to do so. He even submitted to authorities and suffered in their hands until death. That cross experience does not imply that God had lost His sovereignty over world affairs. Rather, it was in line with His agenda. At the same time, this does not justify those who crucified Him. Christ even predicted wars among nations and suffering of innocent ones as signs of His second coming (Matt 24; Mark 13). Paul and other early apostles maintained similar notions of political neutrality even in the face of persecution because God is in control till the end.

8. Ellen G. White Comments

For further enlightenment on this issue, E. G. White echoed some crucial sentiments that are worth considering. On one hand, she expressed some reservations on church participation in politics. She encouraged members to remain silent in matters of politics. On the other hand, she seemed to have encouraged young people to aspire for positions in the government, including those positions that are achieved through political means.

With such mixed feelings, it is essential to consider the context in which each sentiment was echoed in order to understand the wisdom of her counsel and its potential implications. While she spoke within an American context, there were some general principles that have universal application. Such principles include, but are not limited to, the following guidelines that she echoed in favour of political neutrality:

> The Lord would have His people bury political questions. On these themes silence is eloquence. Christ calls upon His followers to come into unity on the pure gospel principles which are plainly revealed in the word of God. We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for

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14Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 26-30, 513-536.

we do not know whom we are voting for. We cannot with safety take part in any political schemes. We cannot labor to please men who will use their influence to repress religious liberty, and to set in operation oppressive measures to lead or compel their fellow men to keep Sunday as the Sabbath. The first day of the week is not a day to be reverenced. It is a spurious Sabbath, and the members of the Lord's family cannot participate with the men who exalt this day, and violate the law of God by trampling upon His Sabbath. The people of God are not to vote to place such men in office; for when they do this, they are partakers with them of the sins which they commit while in office.[15]

In these words, it appears that White presents a universal principle that should govern church practice with regard to world politics. The need for wisdom and the Spirit of discernment is called for, if ever one desires to vote for anyone. Considering the general tendency of African politics such as common trends of corruption, heartless brutality against opponents, and other forms of ungodly practices within the domain of African politics, there is eloquence in "silence" or "non-activism" on the part of the church. In African politics, higher are the chances of becoming "partakers with them of the sins committed while in office."[16]

The counsel for "silence" or "political neutrality" should never be construed as suggestion for supporting cruel governance such as racial discrimination during E. G. White's context, ethnic genocide of any kind, or political violence in any form. This was not the case in South Africa's Apartheid where the church claimed silence while supporting perpetrators of violence against the black majority. As a result, the church in South Africa not only lost its image and sense of mission but also became divided on racial lines until today. The church retains its image, unity, and fulfils its mission by maintaining non-activism.

From another angle, White acknowledged the possibility of some young people, like Daniel and others, to fulfill God's purposes by assuming influential positions in power structures of ruling governments. She echoes:

God's purpose for the children growing up beside our hearths is wider, deeper, higher, than our restricted vision has comprehended. From the humblest lot those whom He has seen faithful have in time past been called to witness for Him in the world's highest places. And many a lad of today, growing up as did Daniel in his Judean home, studying God's word and His works, and learning the lessons of faithful service, will yet stand in legislative assemblies, in halls of justice, or in royal

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15Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1923), 475.
16Ibid.

courts, as a witness for the King of kings. Multitudes will be called to a wider ministry.[17]

While this understanding is true, it should not be considered as an overall guideline to encourage the church towards political activism. Rather, great caution should be exercised in selecting the Daniels of today. Like Daniel of old, we need young men and women of virtue who can stand for their faith without hesitancy.

To use her own words, E. G. White's echoes:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.[18]

In Africa, such a breed described here, is rare. If one of such quality can be found, White seems to suggest an approval to endorse them. In cases of uncertainty with regard to the moral fibre of potential candidates, silence is eloquent. Silence implies non-activism and total dependence upon God through prayer. A closer analysis of both views clearly indicate that E. G. White too was equally concerned about the issue of political activism among Adventist Church members.

9. Conclusion

In view of African context regarding cultural orientation to power structures and most prevalent trends in African politics, the only sure hope that is left for Africans is total dependence on God for lasting political solutions. Such dependence is anchored on our belief in God's creatorship of the universe and His sovereignty and omniscience in its governance. With this understanding, the Church should desist political activism. Since creation until eternity to come, God remains in control over heavenly and earthly affairs. It is His prerogative to appoint or dethrone leaders (Dan 2:21-22). For these reasons, there is no need for the church to indulge in politics. This implies that political activism is not only a betrayal of faith in God but also a challenge against His sovereignty as lessons from biblical history pointed out. Political activism usually results in anger against God, hatred against fellow beings, loss of religious identity, and loss of the sense of mission.

The Church should remain apolitical and trust God to determine the movement of political winds. By doing so, it stands a better chance to

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[17]Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 262.

[18]Ibid., 57.

keep itself united, focussed on its mission, and even faithful to serve God alone. It is futile for the church today to indulge in politics of all forms, for God remains in total control of world affairs until the end as predicted in biblical apocalypse.

ACCOUNTABILITY: CHARACTER FOR GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

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Abstract

Accountability as a character trait for governance reveals the accountable nature of both leaders and followers of nations and churches in Africa. The concept could be seen as a theological issue which has biblical foundational underpinning in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT), which should not be relegated in handling the day-to-day activities of the church. Biblical examples support the claim of accountability as accepted. Currently, accountable leaders are sought for since the characteristic of being accountable is vital in maintaining trustworthiness and efficient growth in the church in Africa. The import of the character trait as a requirement of God for every person in the body of Christ helps in this understanding. In the Scriptures, it is expressed in a variety of ways which starts and ends with God and His spiritual leading of His church. He is the supreme source of insightful issues of governance and leadership in Africa.

Keywords: Accountability, governance, church growth, Africa, biblical foundation.

1. Introduction

Accountability is said to be the responsibility one assumes in accepting the right to lead the community in one way or another, make decisions, and act in its behalf.[1] Therefore, when one is considered accountable, he/she is answerable for his/her actions.[2] In other words, accountability is accepting responsibility for the outcomes expected of a person, both good

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[1]Paul Chaffee, *Accountable Leadership: A Resource Guide for Sustaining Legal, Financial, and Ethical Integrity in Today's Congregation* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 7.

[2]Ibid.

and bad. In this case, there is no blame game directed either to another individual or to the external environment. This quality is an integral element in leadership. It has to its advantage for growth and advancement while dishonesty and untrustworthiness is the reverse.

Accountability occurs everywhere (home, workplace, church, governance, etc.) making it universal, and Africa is not an exception. All creation will have the privilege of accounting to their Creator regarding their stewardship of the gifts, talents, and all that were entrusted to them in this life. Ellen G. White has pointed out that human beings will be "accountable to God for the light that He has given" to them.[3] Accountability comes with all the roles in leadership. People who take up leadership roles embrace a responsibility of service to both God and humanity. In the church setting, the issue of accountability must be highly valued in leadership.[4] Several leaders have led organizations and other establishments. Their achievements have earned them fame and prestige. The operational responsibilities on them have equally given them authority in many instances. They, directly or indirectly, expect their lives and actions to become openly discussed subjects for public enquiry. There is also the expectation of leaders to explain their actions and decisions if they are called upon to do so. However, some have fallen in the sin of dishonesty and abuse of authority. Leaders in Africa have to be accountable to the people, their organizations, and the general public by being transparent, embracing responsibility, and being answerable. In such a given context, accountability is seen as more than mere responsibility, because a leader can be responsible yet not accountable. Accountability is an individually held sense of duty to account to others for one's assignments.[5] This, in a way, has called for a critical look at the issue of accountability in leadership.

The leadership qualities of several people have engaged the attention of others over the years concerning their accountability. In view of the nature of the character trait expected of leaders, several questions emerge. Therefore, another look at this issue pervading leadership and governance

[3]Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998), 363.

[4]Dioi Cruz, class notes for the course LEAD 882 Management in the Church and Church Organizations, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, May, 2016.

[5]Benzion Barlev, "A Biblical statement of accountability," *Accounting and Religion* 11, no. 2 (2006): 173-197. See also George Barna and Bill Dallas, *Master Leaders: Revealing Conversations With 30 Leadership Great* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2009), 153-158; John Townsend, *Leadership Beyond Reason: How Great Leaders Succeed by Harnessing the Power of their Values, Feelings, and Intuition* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 108.

in Africa is justified. Any meaningful study of accountability as a character trait in leadership must take the biblical foundation of the trait into consideration. Relevant questions in this direction includes the following: Is there a biblical foundation for accountability? What are some examples from Biblical characters? What are the importance of accountability? What is its relationship with leadership? How can accountability be implemented in governance and leadership in Africa? It is in search for satisfactory answers to this problem that this research is conducted.

2. Biblical Foundation for Accountability in Governance and Leadership

In understanding the issue of accountability with the view of enhancing the character of the leader for efficient and effective leadership and governance in Africa, there is a need to examine the biblical foundations for accountability in leadership. In doing this, the Bible becomes the most helpful and essential source for understanding accountability in leadership distinctively. It is therefore critical that leaders of organizations, including the church, get their minds guided by the revealed truth of God as found solely in His word and His creation. In the midst of confusing plurality of the theories that leadership is only concern about meeting goals and getting desired results coming-in in the current setting of the world, the study of the biblical foundations serve as a vital standard for measuring leadership in the perspective of accountability. The evidence of biblical record reveals that various kinds of accountability were instituted in leadership in Bible times. The Bible indicates clearly that God is concerned about proper accountability in leadership.

The scriptures (both OT and NT) provide several foundations that help our understanding of accountability. At a face-reading of the text, these scriptural sources offer supports that are crucial. The OT begins with the sense of accountability. Right from creation, God places accountability at the center of the duty of man. Genesis 1 gives the account of God's creation. After the creation of all things, God created man to provide leadership to the other creations (Gen 1:26-30). Man is to have dominion over all plants, animals, and heavenly bodies. He is to account to the Creator for his leadership. Thus, man is seen by God as a being for accountability in leadership. In this biblical narrative, the Hebrew word

רדה (*radah*) literally translated as "dominion" or "rule", conveys the idea and understanding of accountability on the part of man.[6] Man is empowered by God to lead and to be accountable to Him. Being a steward inversely means being accountable. God entrusting all His creation to man was to place the responsibility of all the creation to him. Human beings cannot go about their duties without any recourse towards accountability. When such a thing happens, then the purpose of God in entrusting His creation to man has not been reached or is defeated.

From the creation account, the Trinity gives indication of accountability. God the father invited the Son and the Holy Spirit to be active actors in the creation. Though the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are co-eternal and co-equal, the Bible provides evidence of an accountability that exists within them. As seen in the creation of man (Gen 1:26), God said "let us make man in our own image according to our likeness." One is not inferior to the Other. Neither does One consider the Other irrelevant. Each has different roles, responsibilities, and things they are accountable for.

Adam and Eve were placed in leadership roles in the Garden of Eden. When failure came their way by virtue of the fall (Gen 3), they could not be accountable. Instead, they started to blame one another and tried to find excuses for their actions. This downplayed on the accountability to God. They could not render proper account to their Maker for what was given to them to rule or have dominion upon. This can be said as the first accountability crisis recorded in Scriptures.

The Pentateuch portrays a figure in leadership who showed great accountability. In the wilderness wandering, Moses proved to be an accountable leader. This helped him to efficiently and effectively lead the people of Israel throughout their sojourn from Egypt through the wilderness of Sinai to the plains of Moab. In Numbers 13, when God wanted to wipe out the people, Moses accounted for the people and interceded for their sins. God listened to him and pardoned the Israelites. This shows that when leaders are entrusted to lead an organization or people, they should be accountable to both the people and God—the Creator.

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[6]Ernest Jenni, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ernest Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. Mark E. Biddle (1997), s.v. "רדה." See also Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "רדה," *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vols. 1-5 combined, translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson, rev. Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1994-2000), 1:295-296.

Genesis 24 shows a servant who exhibited great accountability to the master. Abraham instructed Eliezer to get a wife for his son Isaac from his people. A leadership role was given to Eliezer when he was to lead other servants to undertake the assigned task (Gen 24:2). With a deep conviction about his calling and the job assigned him, he set out to execute the task. With a sense of responsibility and intelligence, he put his plans in God's hands (24:12-14). After accomplishing the task swiftly and promptly (24:56), he proceeded to account for his actions and leadership. He gave an accurate report to Abraham and equally brought Rebekah to Isaac as a wife (24:66). This shows a true sense of accountability in leadership.

In the NT, several examples of accountability in leadership are indicated. One example is what Paul portrayed about Timothy when he made Timothy in charge of the church in Ephesus. In 1 Timothy 2:2, Paul instructed Timothy to deliver to faithful men what he had learned. This instruction for the selection and training of only faithful men suggests or gives the understanding of accountability. Also, in 1 Timothy 3:1-5, Paul enumerates the qualifications for the office of the elder. At the core of these criteria is accountability on the part of the elder to his own self, his household, the church, and the general public. The import of the requirement is to assess their capacity to effectively promote accountability throughout the body of Christ.[7] The need for accountability, as Paul indicates to the young man Timothy, goes beyond just occupying a leadership role in the church. All the members of the body of Christ are to emulate such a Christian character and this concept runs through the NT.

Ephesians 5 shows Paul's counsel to the church in Ephesus concerning their daily walk with Christ and how they should conduct themselves in their Christian lives. In verse 21, he admonished them to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. The Greek term used here is ὑποτασσόμενοι which is derived from ὑποτάσσω which denotes "submitting or submission of oneself."[8] The expression in its usage also gives the understanding of submitting to a superior in a military sense or a slave submitting to his or her master. It also carries the idea of

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[7]Ajith Fernando, *Leadership Lifestyle: A Study of 1 Timothy* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1985), 59.

[8]Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), s.v. "ὑποτάσσω."

submitting voluntarily or subordinating oneself.[9] In its usage in the context of Ephesians 5:21, it can be seen as a specific exaltation to accountability. In this case, ὑποτάσσω is applied in relation to accountability to God and by extension to one another. In a much broader sense, ὑποτάσσω relates to God (cf. 1 Cor 15:28; Heb 12:9; James 4:7), to Christ (cf. Eph 5:24), to wives (cf. Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1), to parents (cf. Luke 2:51), to masters (cf. Titus 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18), to secular authorities (cf. Rom 13:1), and in a general sense of a voluntary submission to others in the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 16:16; 1 Pet 5:5; Eph 5:21).[10] In all these, the word ὑποτάσσω has the ideas of accountability to another.

The life of Christ also shows the example of accountability needed by the leader. In leadership accountability must be allowed to take root in the leaders and followers lives. If people or the leaders themselves find it difficult to trust the words of leadera, a bad situation and unworthy atmosphere in the organization is created. Jesus set the example of accountability for us to follow.[11] He constantly submitted to the will of the Father. Even before worldly rulers, He stood accountable to all that He taught and said. In John 18:20-21, before the high priest, He boldly accounted for all His sayings by answering him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said" (John 18:20-21). Here, Jesus accounted for all that He said and stood by His statements. He gives a good example for accountability. Leaders like Christ must accept accountability in all aspects of life as something which is necessary.[12]

Furthermore, the NT is strong on the concept of accountability. Romans 14:12 points out that "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God." Although the implication here is for the eschatological coming of the Messiah or the second coming of Christ where all humanity will account for their stewardship, it gives an indication that God holds

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[9]G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1976), s.v. "ὑποτάσσω."

[10]Ibid.

[11]Tom Marshall, *Understanding Leadership: Fresh Perspectives on the Essentials of New Testament Leadership* (Chichester, UK: Sovereign World, 1991), 109-111.

[12]Michael Youssef, *The Leadership Style of Jesus: How to Develop the Leadership Qualities of the Good Shepherd* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1982), 79.

people, and for that matter, leaders accountable for their leadership. Whereas the effect of unfaithful accountability is what the apostle Luke portrays in Luke 12:47-48 that says "And that servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more." Such fate will equally be meted out to unaccountable or unfaithful leaders at the glorious appearing of Christ. Jesus emphatically taught that a day of judgment is coming when every person will have to give an account for his/her stewardship.

These biblical expositions and foundations for accountability give a clear evidence and understanding that accountability in general and specifically in leadership was/is part of God's plan for His people and organizations, especially the church. Thus, the model for accountability should be based on the examples given in both the OT and the NT.

3. African Leaders' Relation and Actions Towards Accountability

In the leadership and governance in Africa today, there is a shift from a God-centered perspective of life and leadership to a man-centered perspective. This can be attributed to the attempt by leaders to do away with any form of accountability to God and the constituents they govern. The fact of the matter is that when leaders seek to ignore accountability to God and others, they leave themselves vulnerable to the distrust of the people and they will eventually become dictators due to the noncompliant attitude the followers will take to their directives. People in leadership and governance in Africa should, therefore, be committed to grappling with what it takes to be deeply ingrained with accountable characters relating to their relationship with God and humanity, what they value most in leadership and in life, and how they act in every aspect of life.[13]

Accountability to God and to one another according to Scripture is the foundation for growth and advancement in the Christian life and could be seen as the pattern for sustainable development. Such growth will equally manifest itself in the continent and its nations and organizations when

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[13]Robert Banks and Bernice M. Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 97.

leaders embrace the character of accounting to the people and followers, respectively. Holding a leadership role or position in Africa is not the right to do as one pleases as a little child. Leadership and governance mean having the capacity to exercise choice for the betterment of the people, but should not be considered as a position devoid of accountability. Leadership and governance are both the responsibility and the ability, by the grace of God, to do what is right according to the absolute and righteous standards of truth as given to us in God's Holy Word. Many see leadership and governance as the right to abandon accountability to God and men in order to do what they please in the promotion of self-gratification.[14] As Paul Chaffee has pointed out "the touchstone of accountable leadership is trustworthiness, not success. The breakdown of accountable leadership is betrayal, not failure."[15] When leaders possess the character of accountability, they will gain the trust of the people and will as well glorify God. The opposite of this is betrayal of the leader as Chaffee highlighted. Mostly it will be difficult to gain back the confidence and rediscover the trust other give you when the leader fails to be accountable. In the Bible, the Priest Eli suffered such a fate. He neglected the issue of authority and accountability of his children, and he lost the trustworthiness of the people and God. Authority that comes with leadership presents a slippery ground and every leader should tackle how he or she handle the issue of authority by moving from controlling the followers to building trust through proper accountability.

Also as Dioi Cruz points out accountable leaders are honest in admitting the wrongs and mistakes, going further to apologize for the impact of those mistakes on the lives of constituents, recognizing that sometimes the only justification is to recognize that there is none.[16] This shows a true accountable leader. Cruz further posits that the nature of accountability assumes the potential for failure. This is because credible and accountable leaders are not flawless. They distinguish themselves, however, by their ability to respond to poor choices in ways that restore credibility and organizational strength.[17]

Paul Chaffee has suggested some standards that depicts the actions and character of a leader. When rightly followed will make a leader excel

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[14]Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Pastor* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 141.

[15]Chaffee, *Accountable Leadership*, 22.

[16]Cruz, class notes.

[17]Ibid.

in all his or her endeavours in leadership. These suggested standards include:

1. With dedication and faithfulness, an accountable leader holds up the best interests of the church, offering a level of trustworthiness and faithful care expected of spiritual leaders in similar circumstances.
2. An accountable leader is conscious of the power of the role, respecting and consistently living within the ethical boundaries that accompany such authority.
3. An accountable leader stays informed about the policies and doctrines that the church follows, the resources that may enrich it, and the requirements of the employing body.
4. An accountable leader create a safe environment and safe institutional habits for the benefit of members, guests, and friends.
5. An accountable leader tells the truth no matter the situation.
6. An accountable leader gives special attention to all financial matters, abstaining from personal gain in congregational affairs and advocating honesty.
7. An accountable leader oversees relationship, building and nurturing them both within the church and with community, guests, service providers, partner institutions, and the state/country.
8. An accountable leader leads, taking responsibility along with other leaders to move the church forward in glorifying God.
9. An accountable leader nurture self-respect in all, beginning with himself or herself, then help bring others to the agenda of God. [18]

These standards serves to guide leaders to a stage where they and their follower will enjoy the trust and belonging that comes in a church or any other organization. When this happen confidence will be restored and the integrity of the leader will be highly regarded. The leader will also be able to guard against temptation and be responsible for all his or her actions and inactions.

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[18]These standards are modified to suit the need of an accountable leader in the church. See Chaffee, *Accountable Leadership*, 11.

4. Implementation of Accountability in Leadership and Governance in Africa

Accountability is an essential character needed to effectively and efficiently lead God's people to His agenda in Africa. This requires the help and assistance first and foremost from God Himself. He can, by the leader's relationship with Him, direct the leader's path and watch over the his/her being. Also, both the individual's effort and that of his/her peers in the governance processes are needed. Perry Pascarella has observed that personal and peer accountability works hand-in-hand. One cannot walk the path alone without checks and balances from others in leadership and governance. He posits that "personal accountability requires that you willingly give another person authority to hold you accountable for specific things in your life. We need accountability if we are going to run excellent companies for God."[19] This helps to implement a good way to be accountable to the nations and the citizens. In the event of forgetfulness, colleagues will be able to prompt and question the decisions and actions of the leader. As the author of the book of Proverbs puts it, "iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another" (Prov 27:17). Thus, the African leader who strives for effective accountability has to place much emphasis on building quality and deep relationships with other that will help promote accountability.

As a way of implementing accountability in Africa, much time should be dedicated to the study and application of the Word of God in order to know the Will of God for the continent. Also through prayer and sharing of needs and concerns on a personal level as well as on corporate level, one can become accountable. Spending time in praying together in leadership and governance serves as a way of accounting for the deficiencies or short falls the leader pray on. Through this way, we become more alert to resist the devil and learn to commune with God more deeply so we can respond to God's principles thoroughly as we have others praying for us. It will help us to be conscious of shortfalls, and in a way we will be eager to overcome and to be on guard against our weaknesses and strengths. It will also help in developing coherence with others so we can communicate and be transparent to them without being defensive.

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[19]Perry Pascarella, *Christ centered Leadership: Thriving in Business by Putting God in Charge* (Rocklin, CA: Prima, 1999), 248.

The use of time of a leader in Africa contributes to his/her accountability. Therefore, there is the need to develop a schedule or plan to give guidance in the use of time with God, family, the church, and other relations or endeavours. This will help minimize the misuse of our time that might have the tendency of leading us astray from God and His agenda. This time usage should be followed by a written report to account for the time and the activities we have carried out.

Furthermore, as leaders go through their duties in their countries, they should deliver what they promise, turn excuses into lessons learned, execute activities on time and within budget, take personal responsibility for the impact, focus attention on what they "can do", take action, own up to everything they do, and emphasize effectiveness.[20] As leaders, leaders should be reminded that God is in control, and trusting and keeping His standards are the best forms of accountability. Accountability takes place in the crucible of a leader's life and he/she cannot overcome the negative aspect unless God comes to the center of the leader's life. The African leader's knowledge of the need or accountability brings faith development and growth in God. This needs patience as accountability builds over time. As Jennifer S. Lerner and Philip E. Tetlock as observed,

> Accountable leaders exhibit congruence between stated values and beliefs and demonstrated behavior (i.e., they 'walk the talk'). They model the organization's values and demonstrate the same commitment to the organization's goals that they ask for from constituents. Accountable leaders communicate and make decisions with openness and straightforward disclosure, in contrast to unaccountable leaders' use of 'need-to-know' communication (cf. Horton & Reid, 1991).[21]

Also, in the area to safeguard oneself not to get into the state of unaccountability, the leader needs to abide by the following principles:

1. The leader need to be honest and humble about struggles. He/she should watch and be careful on the tendency to protect comfort zones and layers of self-protection.
2. The leader must be patient and understanding. There is no need to come to a defensive position or equally condemn others of their actions. He/she should rather maintain a spirit of acceptance of the other person.

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[20]Cruz, class notes.

[21]Jennifer S. Lerner and Philip E. Tetlock, "Accounting for the Effects of Accountability," *Psychological Bulletin* 125, no. 3 (1999): 255-275.

3. Though there will be challenges, exhortations, and even rebuke coming from leaders and even followers/members, they must be done in love and with patience and acceptance.

4. The leader should guard his/her tongue. In following the biblical principles, the leader should guard against gossip and being critical on issues of others. Information and other things expressed to the leader must be kept in strict confidence. Church members need to know that they can trust the pastor or leader so he or she must project him or herself as such (cf. Prov 16:27; 17:4, 27; 18:8, 21; 21:23; 26:30).

5. The leader must be faithful and dependable. The members must have faith in him/her and have the assurance of dependence on you for truth and sincerity.[22]

Furthermore, in the quest to ensure accountability in governance, the following principles or ways are suggested to improve the accountability of leaders.

1. Legislate a limited term of office for executive leadership position in church and countries. In this regard, limitation of the number of terms of a leader should probably not be more than two terms in office.

2. Ensure proper and accurate assets declaration of the leader before and after leaving office.

3. Elect people on merit, and job prescription should precede elections.

4. Devise good ways of rendering account to the constituents.

5. Improve the selection of governance bodies (which should not be carried out at face value).

When these things are implemented in leadership and governance in Africa, accountability will be highly valued and the leader will be regarded for his or her sense of accountability. God will be glorified and the people of the African continent will feel the need to focus on the agenda of God which is what the leaders are presenting to them.

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[22]These principles are taken from Alexander Strauch. See Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1995), 43.

5. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion of accountability as a character for governance and leadership in Africa reveals the accountable nature of the leaders and citizens in the continent as a whole. The concept of accountability can be seen as a theological issue with a biblical foundation from both the OT and the NT, which should not be relegated in handling or running the daily affairs of Africa. Also, biblical examples have been highlighted to support the claim of biblically-accepted accountability. Accountable leaders are sought after, since accountability is a critical and vital character trait in maintaining trustworthiness and efficient growth in the continent. The Bible helps in understanding the import of accountability as a requirement of God from every person in the body of Christ. In the Scriptures, accountability is expressed in a variety of ways. Accountability of the leader, followers, and the nations in Africa do not occur in a vacuum. It starts and end with God and His spiritual leading of His creation/continent. He is the supreme source of insightful issues of accountability in governance and leadership.

God wants African leaders to accept responsibility for the outcomes expected of them—both good and bad. The leaders are not to blame external factors nor the actions of other. This is because accountability is not like responsibility that can be delegated. For God's people in Africa to progress in the governance and development assigned to them, there is the need to be always accountable to Him and to fellow constituents. It is hoped that African leaders may find this exposition on accountability in governance and leadership as well as other related issues worthy of study as accountability enables all to be "in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Rom 12:5).

THE TERM *ΚΟΣΜΟΣ* IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: EXPLORING ITS IMPLICATION FOR THE ADVENTIST CHURCH IN AFRICA ENGAGING IN POLITICS

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Abstract

The Greek term κοσμος rendered "world" in the English Bible embraces a wide range of nuances that carry diverse responses affecting human experiences. More specifically, in the New Testament (NT), κοσμος conveys a wide semantic range that allows for various conceptions and interpretations that undergirds the relationship between the church and the world. These nuances include κοσμος as the physical world (Acts 17:24), κοσμος as the people of world (John 3:16), and κοσμος as the organized system (John 15:18).

The Gospel of John offers the highest number of occurrences of the term κοσμος in the NT. The theology of κοσμος shapes the views on Christians' engagement in politics. Gleaning from the biblical evidence, antecedents of Christian's participation and engagement in politics by other Christian denominations. Should the Adventist Christians engage in politics? With this question in the background, this paper addresses the theological framework of κοσμος in the Gospel of John and its implications in the Adventist Church's involvement in politics. In essence, this paper suggests that the conceptions of the term κοσμος in the gospel of John provide a solid framework for the political engagement of the Adventist Church in Africa and elsewhere.

1. Introduction

The Greek term κοσμος rendered "the world" in the English Bible comprises a wide range of nuances that bears various responses in human experiences. In the NT, the semantic range of the term include the physical world (Acts 17:24), the human world (John 3:16), and the

organized system (John 15:18). These conceptions and interpretations impinge the relationship between the church and social and political activities.

Apparently, the term κοσμος makes its highest number of occurrence in the Gospel of John. More importantly, its theological formulations have shaped the involvement of the Church in local "politics." With its dual representation in the Gospel of John as an object of God's love and wrath (John 3:16; 12:31), the church has viewed the world as either inherently evil or good. Based on the former perception, the world remains under the rule of the devil and, therefore, "conservative" Christians should withdraw or reject active involvement in its public issues (politics).

Certainly, the dichotomized perspective of the world into public and private life or secular and sacred life appears narrow and simplistic. Within this framework, the church tends toward an exclusive position that constricts its engagement in public issues and focuses on the private matters of salvation. Moreover, such a conception appears reactionary and limits the effectiveness of the church in the world. In the light the broad understanding of the Greek term κοσμος, however, the church (particularly Seventh-day Adventist) can espouse a balanced attitude towards public issues.

Based on the fact that some evangelical Christians have made a positive impact in the political arena, an improved biblical foundation promises an added impetus to the Christian engagement in public issues. Thus, the guiding question of this paper is, How does the understanding of the term κοσμος impinge the Adventist engagement in socio-political issues. This paper presupposes that a clear understanding and interpretation of the term κοσμος in the Gospel of John provides a sound biblical framework to the involvement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in politics.

2. A Historical Perspective of Adventist Church and Politics

The Adventists perspective on politics can be traced to the incomplete understanding of the term κοσμος. Jonathan M. Butler attests that the involvement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the public issues of the government of the United States of America (USA) evolved through three phases: 1) "apolitical apocalyptic," 2) "political apocalyptic," and 3)

"a political apocalytic."[1] In the earlier years of the Millerite Movement, the apolitical apocalyptic view informed the relationship of the Adventist Church and the governance of USA. In this conception, the Adventist Church withdrew from any political engagement and concentrated on the preparation for the imminent return of Christ. At this time, the Adventist Church understood any engagement with the government of USA as an involvement in the second beast of Revelation 13. In this sense, such members were considered to have apostatized and became Babylon.[2].

The second view, political apocalyptic, sustained the Adventist conviction that the American Republic fulfilled the Bible prophesies concerning the second beast in Revelation 13. Based John N. Andrews' interpretation of the chapter, Adventists perceived the participation in political engagement as a promotion of the ideologies of the second beast. In this sense, the Adventist members remained "good citizens and obeyed the government as long as its dictates did not conflict with duty to God."[3]

During the political apocalyptic phase, the Adventist pioneers actively contended against slavery and the civil war in the American Republic. John Bates facilitated the establishment of an abolitionist society in his hometown.[4] Ellen White wrote extensively against the slave trade and the war.[5] The participation of the Adventist Church, however, was not an advocacy for change but rather a warning of the fulfilled prophecies of Revelation.[6] At that time, Uriah Smith made a statement that formed the initial principle which eventually controlled the attitude of the Seventh-day Adventist church toward politics:

> To the question why we do not with our votes and influence labor against the tendency of the times, we reply, that our views of prophecy lead us to the conclusion that things will not be bettered. The country, if we are correct in believing it to be symbolized by the two horned beast of Rev. xiii, will finally sustain such an abominable character that it will be landed in the lake of fire, Rev. xix 20. The two-horned beast will speak like a dragon. Rev xiii, 11. We do not therefore feel it incumbent upon us to labor, in this respect either to hasten or retard

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[1]Roger L. Dudley and Edwin I. Hernandez, *Citizens of the Two Worlds Religion and Politics Among American Seventh-Day Adventists* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992), 59.

[2]Ibid., 61; John N. Andrew, "Thoughts on Revelation XIII and XIV," *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 19, May, 1851, 81-86.

[3]Ibid., 62.

[4]Dudley and Hernandez, *Citizens of the Two Worlds*, 63

[5]Ellen White referred to "slavery as the sin of the darkest dye" and the war as considered the national days of prayer and fasting for victory as hypocritical; Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 1:359.

[6]Dudley and Hernandez, *Citizens of Two Worlds*, 61.

the fulfillment of prophecy. God's purpose will surely be accomplished.[7]

Furthermore, Ellen White made a foundational statement that has also been a definitive principle in the later days. She asserts,

> It is a mistake for you to link your interest with any political party, to cast your vote with them or for them. Those who stand as educators, as ministers, and as laborers together with God in any line have no battles to fight in the political world. Their citizenship is in heaven. The Lord calls upon them to stand as separate and peculiar people. He would have no schisms in the body of believers.[8]

With such a mindset, the church viewed the govenment as a system of the devil. Consequently, church members were discouraged from participating in public issues save for matters that seemed to affect their allegiances to God. In this manner, the Seventh-day Adventist Church demonstrated dualistic perspective of the world as the good and the bad.

The third phase of the involvement of the Adventist Church in public issues concerns the political apocalyptic. This perspective emphasised the proclamation of the eschatological kingdom of God on earth. At this point, Adventists began to participate in the shaping of public policies, particularly in regards to religious liberty and temperance. Adventists began to occupy public offices. George Butler, then the president of the General Conference, affirmed that:

> Encouraging Adventist towards the ballot box, petitions, temperance rallies and on occassion, public office, Mrs white typified the political prophetic that brought Seventh-day Adventism within the borders of the political process. The Adventist, as prophetic people, were to use their voice to sustain the Republic as long as possible. The irony of their position of course involved them in a particular vocational hazard. They wished to delay the end in order to preach that the end was soon.[9]

This statements reveals how the Seventh-day Adventist Church gradually began to engage in socio-political matters. Furthermore, it expanded its understanding of the relationship between the church and the government and, by extension, to the world. Seemingly, the pioneers realised their moral responsibility to the world. The Church encouraged its members to get involved in public matters in order to fullfill the divine mandate. Relating the importance of healthy lifestyle and the dignity of

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[7]Uriah Smith, "Politics," *Review and Herald*, 11 September 1856, 152.

[8]Ellen G. White, *Fundamental of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1923), 475-486.

[9]George I. Butler, "Politics and Temperance," *Review and Herald*, 11 April 1882, 234.

all human kind, Adventists used priority to reach out to the world. It is certain, however, that even up to this moment the church maintained the dualistic perception of the world as good and evil.

The overridding emphasis of the Adventist political perspective shows that the pioneers hesitated to engage in political matters. The shift towards restricted political participation emerged in the late 20th century. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that a limited understanding of the term κοσμος might have also attributed to the Adventist perspective on politics. The three phases of the Adventist understanding regarding the relationship between the church and the world show some limitation to the full conception of the term κοσμος.

3. The Adventist Church and the
Protestant Heritage on Politics

Based on the Protestant heritage, from Luther through the Anabaptists, the dualistic perspective of κοσμος as good and evil shaped the understanding of the relationships between the church and the world.[10] Therefore, the trends of the church following the reformation promoted the church's separation from politics. Drawing from the theological understanding of Tertulian, Richard H. Niebuhr intimates that Christians were to withdraw from any engagement in politics and focus on its heavenly citizenship.[11] The church proclaimed an apocalyptic message that saw the world as corrupt and evil, thus fullfilling the biblical prophecy.

Meanwhile, the Adventist Church focused much of its effort to fullfil the Great Commission with little or no inclination towards secular political engagement. At this juncture, the Adventist Church maintained the held view of the separation between the church and the state. In this manner, it prolonged the reformation heritage that emphasized a moral approach to politics. Moreover, the Adventist Church resisted alliances between the church and state in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church.

10According to Ronald J. Sider, Luther and the Anabaptists called for the separation of the church and the state. Based on Luther, Sider observes that Luther insisted that the "secular government is a Kingdom of sin, because its theme is nothing but sin and checking sin." For the Anabaptists, Sider notes that they insisted that the Christians could not serve in the army or the government. Ronald J. Sider, *Just Politics: A Guide for Christian Engagement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2012), 16-17.

11H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1951)

At the reformation, the Roman Catholic Church advanced the Constantinian union of the church and state. Augustinian and Thomist political reflections revealed a positive outlook on the role of the state.[12] Later, the Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anabaptists held a diametrically opposite approach to the relationships between state and church. The Calvinists preferred a radical severance of the church from the state.[13] These perspectives and tendencies formented the Protestants' moral approaches to politics. The propositions shaped the larger section of the Protestants' dialogues concerning politics. In addition, these theological foundations built the understanding of the late 20th century evangelical political engagements. Given these overly unbalanced theological views and approaches to the relationship between the state and the church, it is necessary to make another investigation of the biblical data to offer an improved perspective for a balanced relationship between the Adventist Church in Africa and the political engagements. In order to clarify the wide range of semantic values of the term κοσμος, it is important to understand the its meaning within the biblical and contemporary era of the Bible. The analysis includes relevance and applicability and standard senses and conventions associated with the term κοσμος in the Greco-Roman and Jewish backgound.

4. Background of the Term Κοσμοσ

The origin, development, and use of the term κοσμος is examined within the social world of the Greek and Jewish backgrounds. These foundational elements represent the basis for intepretation of the usage of κοσμος in the Gospel of John.

4.1. Κόσμος in Greek Philosophy

The Greek orientation of the term κοσμος provides limited information concerning the etymology of the word.[14] Stanley B. Marrow offers a well condensed summary of the wide conception of the term κοσμος in the Hellenistic world. He includes 1. Iliad usages of the word to denote

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[12]Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York, NY: Modern Library, 1950); Stephen J. Pope, "Natural Law in Catholic Social Teaching," in *Himes* ed., Modern Catholic Social Teaching, 43-45.

[13]Helmut, Thielicke, *Theological ethics: Politics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 17; Harro Hopfl, ed., *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge university Press, 1991), 11.

[14]Gerhard Kittel, "Κοσμος," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans, Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 2: 601.

"order," whether physical or moral; 2. Herodutus' perception to include "organization and constitution;" 3. Pindar's understanding of the term κοσμος in the sense of "honor and glory;" Pythagoras, Parmenidas, and Plato's use the term κοσμος to denote "order of the world" and "universe;" and the later Greek usages of κοσμος to denote "inhabited world" (οίκουμένη).[15] The Hellenistic world provided a wide range of usage and understanding that allowed for the diverse application of the term. Thus, the NT corpus, particularly the Gospel of John, established its meaning and importance from these backgrounds.

In addition, the term included the reference to the structure either of artifacts like the "horse of wood" (ϊππου κοσμον . . . δουπατεου). Relating to human beings, the term indicates "order." According to Homer, it includes the sense of the sitting arrangement in the ship that would bring Odysseus to Ithaca or the order of the soldiers in battle.[16] This perception lends its meaning to "public social order" and denotes the union of the citizens and the state.[17]

Within the Greek philosophy, order expressed beauty; thus, the derivation of the term "cosmetics" from the term κοσμος. In this perspective, the term κοσμος assumed the meaning of orderly adornment.[18] In reference to the world, universe, and the orderly heavens, however, the term κοσμος encapsulated the order of heavens, of our world, of the universe, and its harmony and unity. Consequently, the understanding of the term κοσμος in the Greek background offers a sense of unity between the universe with all its elements including "man as the microcosm." Adams quotes Mansfield and asserts that the "Greek thought concerning κοσμος is optimistic with the pessimistic views being, as a rule against the current."[19]

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[15]Stephen B. Marrow, "Κοσμος in John," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64 (2002): 90.

[16]Homer, *Odyssey* 13:76: "Then they sat down on the benches, each in order (κοσμεω) Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. A. T Murray, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 2.9.

[17]Plato, *Laws* keeping and conserving of public system of the state (τόν κοινόν της πολεως κοσμον), Plato, *Laws,* trans. R.G. Bury, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 3:89.

[18]Marrow, "κοσμος," 91.

[19]Edwards Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language* (Edinburgh, UK: T. & T. Clark, 2000), 68.

4.2. Κοσμος in the Old Testament Usage

The term Κοσμος has identical correspondence in the OT.[20] The equivalent of the term is heaven and earth.[21] The LXX (Septuagint) renders the Hebrew term "host" for the term κοσμος (πάς ό κόσμος αύτω), "the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them" (Gen 2:1; cf. Deut. 4:19; 17:3). Elsewhere, the term κοσμος is rendered in "ornaments" in the LXX, "So, now put off your ornament from you" (Exod 33:5, 6), "their beautiful ornament they used for vainglory" (Ezek 7:20), "decked with ornaments" (Ezek 23:40), and "the glory of the young men is their strength" (Prov 20:26).

The LXX edition in some Wisdom literature (Apocrypha) follows a philosophical meaning of the term κοσμος. The presence of wisdom in creation, "thou make the world" (Wisdom 9:9), "the whole world" (11:22; 17:19), "the structure of the world" (7:17), "how through the devils, evil, and death entered the world" (2:24), and "the salvation of the world" (σωτηρία κόσμου) (6:24).

Philo of Alexandria introduced Hebraic nuances to the term κοσμος OT. According to Sasse, "no thinker of antiquity used the word more than he did."[22] Philo drew upon the Platonic-Stoic background to build his philosophical framework of the Bible. For example, in Genesis he indicates that the "universe, incorporeal as known through the senses."[23] Adam attests that Philo employed the term κοσμος within the Greek philosophical understanding of the sense of the world/universe in order with beauty and perfection.[24] Josephus uses the term κοσμος with the sense of ordering (e.g., government systems,[25] market places,[26] political constitution,[27] inhabited world, etc.).[28]

Notwithstanding the diverse presupposition among the Greek and Hellenistic philosophers of the term κοσμος, the underlying assumption

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[20]Sasse, "κοσμεω," 874.

[21]Genesis 20:11; 31:17; Deut. 4:26; Deut. 30:19; 31:28; 2 Kings 19:15; 2 Chron. 2:12; Ezra 5:11; Ps 69: 34; Ps. 115:15; Ps. 121:2; Ps. 124:8; Ps. 134:3; Ps. 146:6; Isa. 37:16; Jer. 23:24; 33:25.

[22]Sasse, "κοσμεω," 877.

[23]F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, et al, trans., *Philo*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929-53) 4:190-193, 318-19; De Opificio Mundi 16, "So when He willed to create this visible world, He first fully formed the intelligible world in order that He might have the use of a pattern wholly God-like and incorporeal to produce the material world" Philo l: 14-15.

[24]Adam, *Construction the World*, 59.

[25]Josephus Flavius, *Antiquity of the Jews*, 3:84, trans. Thackeray, Loeb Classical Library, 3:84.

[26]Flavius, *Antiquity of Jews*, 3:289.

[27]Ibid., 5:132.

[28]Ibid., 9:245; 10:205.

of the descriptions included the sense of ordered structure, united various elements, beauty, related human beings, and objects of praise.

4.3. Κοσμος in the New Testament Usage

In the NT, the term κοσμος retains both the positive and negative nuances. The positive connotations build on the LXX while the negative notions draw upon the earliest Judaism sources.[29] The positive nuances are included in Matt 25:7, "the wise virgins trimmed (ἐκοσμησαν) their lamps;" Rev 21:2, "Jerusalem is seen as a bride adorned for her husband;" 1 Pet 3:5, "wives to adorn (κοσμειν) themselves;"Acts 17:24, "God made the whole world and everything (τον κοσμον και πάντα) in it;" Rom 5:12 "into this world came sin, and death came through sin;" and 2 Cor 5:19, Paul states that Jesus has come to "reconcile the world to himself."

In contrast , the negative connotations of the term κοσμος are notable in several biblical texts in the NT. The Apostle Paul states that the "world did not know God through wisdom... and God made foolish the wisdom of the World" (1 Cor 1:21). The Apostle James explicitly declares, "Friendship with the world is enmity with God" (Jas 4:4). Peter considers the world as "defiled"(2 Pet 2:20).

With the positive and negative renderings of the term κοσμος in the NT writings, scholarship has subscribed either to the positive or the negative view. Seemingly, in the texts highlighted above regarding the negative connotation of the term κοσμος, it is used in the sense of the contrast between the spiritual and the natural. Therefore, it seems that the positive connotations bear the wider semantic meaning of the term. It is necessary, however, that contextual elements are considered in determining the nuances of the term of κοσμος.

5. The Gospel of John

The gospel of John contains references to the term κοσμος that bear both positive and negative meanings. Burrow, however, introduces a third neutral category.[30] For instance, he identified these following verses to consist of the neutral nuances of the term κοσμος: "He was in the world and the world was made through him" (John 1:10a and b), "show yourself to the world" (John 7:4), "the world has gone after Jesus" (John 12:19), one does not stumble because he sees "the light of this world" (11:9), "his hour

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[29]Jacob Neuser and William Scott Green, eds., *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period 450 B.C.E. to 600 B.C.E.* (New York, NY: Macmillian, 1996), 2:677, s .v. "World."

[30]Burrow, "κοσμος," 98.

had not come to depart out of this world" (13:1; 16:28), "a child is born into the world" (16:21), Jesus speaks "in the world" (17:13: 18:20), "the glory he had before the world was made" (17:5, 24), "his kingdom is not from this world… my kingdom is not from here (ἐντεῦθεν) (18:36), and "the world could not contain the books"(21:25).[31] The usages of the term κοσμος in these verses do not easily fit to either the positive or the negative connotations but offer a neutral hue.[32]

Given this observation, it is plausible to perceive the world as innately evil. It is seems the negative aspect emerges from the corrupt and evil human activities. Edward Adams observes that Plato perceives the κοσμος as the "quintessence of beauty."[33] He intimates that according to Plato, κοσμος designates "ordered unity in which heaven and earth, gods and human beings are bound together."[34] Plato's underlying assumption, however, consists of some misconstrued ideas. For instance, Adams elaborates that Plato assumes, "the deity fashioned the world as a living creature with soul and body, and that it is indestructable because of its perfect construction."[35] Notwithstanding, Plato's philosophical framework of the world resonates with the biblical understanding that God created the world perfect (cf. Gen 1:31).

The idea of a world created perfect is reflected in the NT corpus. As mentioned above, the world is the object of both God's love and wrath. N. H. Cassem's insightful exposition supports the notion of a world that God created perfect. Cassem understands the use of the term in the Gospel of John in two ways. He sees that chaps. 1-12 as portraying κοσμος as the object of God's love, while the chaps. 13-21 depicts κοσμος as the object of negative aspersions.[36] As an object of God's love, it follows that "for God so loved the world that he gave His only Son" (John 3:16), God sent His son into the world not to condemn it, but save it (John 3:17; 12:47). Jesus is the "savior of the world" (4:42), He is "the lamb who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29), He is "life to the world" (6:33, 51), and He is the "life of the world" (8:12; 9:5; 12:46; 11:9).

[31]Ibid.

[32]Bill Salier "What's in a World? A Prologue of John's Gospel," *The Reformed Theological Review* 56, no. 3 (1997): 106.

[33]Adams, *Constructing the World*, 66.

[34]Ibid., 47

[35]Ibid., 48

[36]N. H. Cassem, "Grammatical and Contextual Inventory of the Use of κοσμος in the Johannine Corpus with Some Implication for a Johannine Cosmic Theology," *New Testament Studies* (1972): 81-91.

Negatively, the world is depicted as an object of God's wrath. The world lies under the wrath of God. For instance, it cannot receive the Holy Spirit (14:17), "for Judgment I came into the world" (9:39), and "the world was made through Him" but chose to "know Him not" (1:10). Jesus attests, "Now is judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out" (12:33).

Although the various references of the Gospel of John portray the world positively, Bill Salier contends that the "fourth Gospel's view on κοσμος is negative."[37] Notably, such observations seem inaccurate, given the apparent overwhelming scriptural data in the Gospel that provide the positive nuance. In addition, it is important to note that the negative connotations of the term κοσμος occur in contexts that include the response to Jesus or the truth that He reveals.

Apparently, the negative connotations of the term κοσμος emerge within the relationship between the world and the revelation of God. In this way, the sense of the term κοσμος points every principle, system, or power that stands against the revelation of God in the Gospel of John. Arguably, it is the poor relationship between the world and revelation of God that set it on a negative position. Adams observes that Democritus, Plato, and Stoics identified human beings with the κοσμος as in "microcosm to macrocosm dimensions."[38] Would this then be the relationship between humans, individually and corporately, to the world? Does what happens to humans affect the world?

The connection between human beings and the κοσμος permeates the Gospel of John. The evil works of human beings set the world against God. For example John states, "And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, people loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to light, lest his deed should be exposed"[39] (3:19-20). Furthermore, John records concerning the paraclete, "He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgemnt, concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the father, and you will see me no more; concerning judgment, because ruler of the world is judged"(John 16:8-11). Without doubt, the Gospel of John advances the thought of correlation between human and the κοσμος.

What can we say about the   pessimistic assessment of the world? According to Adams, the negative view of the term κοσμος emerged in

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[37]Salier, "What is the World," 107.

[38]Adams, *Constructing the World*, 66.

[39]Bo. Reicke, "Positive and Negative Aspect of the World in the NT," *Westminster Theological Journal* 49 (1987): 354.

the second and third centuries within Greek philosophy.[40] He explains that the negative perspectives of the world emerged within the Christian thought along threats of "Gnosticsm, Neo-Pythoreanism, and Neo-Platonism."[41] The main emphasis of the negative aspects of the world, however, appeared from the post-exilic tradition that drew upon Persian and Hellenistic conceptions about the universe. These concepts expanded within the full narrative of the OT (Gen 2:4b—3:24) and the proclaimations of the prophets (Isa 40:9-31).[42]

This negative aspect of κοσμος profligated during the intertestamental literature period and shaped the NT's conception of κοσμος. In addition, the negative attitude towards the world also grew out of the post-exilic apocalypticism that enlarged within the Qumran beliefs that perceived the world in dualist dimensions of light and truth and darkness and lie.[43] The Qumran community understood themselves as the children of light, while the rest of the world dwelt in darkness.[44] Subsequently, these negative perspective grew also in the reading of the Gospel of John (John 1:5, 10).

6. Κοσμος and Politics

The term κοσμος consists of one overarching aspect that relates to the social order. Adams cites Kahn to affirm that κοσμος was applied to "world-order by conscious analogy with the good order of society."[45] Similarly, Adams observes that Plato conceived κοσμος as a well-ordered city-state, and thus, the social system acted as the microcosm of the κοσμος. Therefore, human engagement in social norms and conventions and sanctions and punishments reflected an effective way of establishing the κοσμος.[46]

Adams argues that from Presocrates onwards, the understanding of the κοσμος corresponded to the civic order.[47] Thus, in the light that the social order reflected the structure of the κοσμος, men and women engaged in establishing order to fulfill a divine mandate. The analogy of the κοσμος with the social ordering justifies and endorses the existence of social and political order. The underlying motivation of politics is the

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[40]Adams, *Constructing the World*, 69.

[41]Ibid.
[42]Reicke, "Positive and Negative Aspects," 352.
[43]Qs 3:17-26; 1 Qm 1:1; 1QS 3:21; 1Qm 1:1-2
[44]Ibid., 355.
[45]Adams, *Constructing the World*, 69.
[46]Ibid., 70.
[47]Ibid., 69.

promotion of order in the socio-political issues. At this point, a correlation exists between the meaning of the world and politics. Both concepts illustrate the sense of social order.[48]

Generally, politics includes all the "social activities focused on shaping the state."[49] In this case, the state comprise the social organs that control and direct the authorised social ordering. Andrew Goddard affirms that the modern designs of the social ordering—executive, legislation, and the jurisdiction—evolved out of the Roman political institutions to form the fabric of modern political power. [50]

This function of the political organ of the state is to ensure the coordination of all operation. The political process directs the interest of the state affairs and its distinct from the society. Its orientation includes a centralized decision-making insitution within a society that assumes the responsbility for all the affairs of men and God. Thus, the governing institutions act on behalf of the divine mandate (Rom 13:1-6).

The term κοσμος (world) provides a secure foundation concerning the complimentary relationship between the social institutions and political intitutions. It follows that the individual involved in politics fulfill a divinely ascribed role. In this manner, the strength and fabric of the κοσμος are established. Apparently, in recent times "population growth, mass communication, and belief in popular sovereignity" has exposed the limitation of centralised political institutions. This has instigated the participation of private individuals in politics. This conception expands the political horizon beyond the traditional understanding. The autonomous orientation of politics is replaced with an ideal non-autonomous view. In citing Ellul, Goddard observes that the totalitarian and centralised structure of modern political scenario is the source of the destructive nature of politics.[51]

It is important to see that politics includes a broad and narrow sense. The latter aspect of politics relates to the traditional conception of a centralized political institution that directs all human activites. On a broader sense, politics embraces the array of societal, religious,

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[48]There are different conceptions of politics: Politics viewed as an art of governance (state-centric). Politics as public affairs include the interaction between the free and equal citizens. Politic as consensus and compromises involves the mode of decision-making. Politics as the production, distribution, and the use of resources relates to the context of social existence. Studies have defined politics based on the various disciplines of study. Sociological studies emphasize the human components while the political scientists put emphasis on the governance aspect.

[49]Sider, *Just Politics*, 28.

[50]Andrew Goddard, *Living the World, Resisting the World: The Life and Thought of Jasques Ellul* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2002), 262.

[51]Ibid., 269.

economical, and political sources that shape human activities in a particular area. Thus, the integration and involvement of all the different organs of human activities perpetuates the natural purpose of human existence. In this case, all citizens of the nation, particularly Christians, (including Adventists) should identify their respective roles in the maintanance and preservation of the state. Adams concurs with Cicero's view that "each person is like an actor on the cosmic stage, with the reponsibility of performing a role and playing that part well."[52] Within the social structure, the individual and collective entities promote the κοσμος design.

The basic assumption of this study has been that the linguistic background to John's employment of κοσμος offers a biblical foundation for the involvement of Seventh-day Adventists in political activities. Thus, an accurate view of κοσμος provides the Christian with a balance attitude towards politics.[53] From the reformation, a spiritualized conception of the world has resulted in the Christian's reluctance to engage in politics. Simply, Christians have perceived politics as worldly and evil. Consequently, Christians, including Adventists, have withdrawn and rejected political engagements. The proper biblical understanding of the term κοσμος, however, seem to clarify the misconceptions and supports the engagement of Christians, including Seventh-dayAdventists, in politics and provides significant implications for many matters of government policy.

7. Summary and Conclusions

This study attempted to show that an accurate understanding of the term κοσμος provides Seventh-day Adventists a balanced attitude towards involvement in politics. It is observed that an inadequate or inaccurate understading of political issues results into a disengagement from political matters. Thus, the study explored the linguistic understanding of the term κοσμος within the Seventh-day Adventist and Protentant heritage and the OT and NT. The term κοσμος offers a variety of lexical senses in its Greek usages—social, moral, aesthetic, and cosmological. The study showed that the term κοσμος comprise both negative and positive

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52Adams, *Constructing the World*, 73.

53Wayne Grudem offers six modern perspectives on the relation between Christians and Politics. These are five wrong views: "1. Government should compel religion; 2. Government should exclude religion; 3. All government is evil and demonic; 4. Do evangelism, not politics; 5. Do politics no evangelism; 6. Significant Christian influence on government, this is his proposal;" Wayne Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource For Understanding Modern Political Issues in the Light of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Michigan, 2010), 18.

definitions in the Gospel of John. The majority of the negative definitions of the term κοσμος are seen as later developments. The literary reservoir of later Judaism included facts of human experience after the fall. The fundamental definition of the term, however, also consist of positive connotations that relate to order, orderliness, harmony, beauty, and integration. Consequently, the understanding of the term κοσμος legitimizes social structures, including the church. These social institutions promote the welfare of individuals and collective entities in many geographical areas. Hence, the understanding of κοσμος in the Gospel of John underpins the significance of the political engagement of the Adventist Church in Africa and elsewhere.

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AS ADVENTIST CHRISTIANS - THE POSITIVES AND THE PITFALLS: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Seventh-day Adventists have often found themselves in a dilemma when confronted with the issue of political engagement. More often than not, members instinctively engage in national politics without proper grounding in church policies and guidelines. The ambiguity may stem from a lack of ethical and theological clarity in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy on the matter. Such actions have frequently yielded the church a mixed reputation subsequently impeding its witness and mission. Complexity arises when members are deeply involved in the state where the state looks to the church (rightly) for guidance. Is it ethical for the church to step aside (bad samaritanism) when the state needs help in times of national crisis? The positives and pitfalls of such engagement are drawn through a case study of Adventist members in Fiji who experienced four coups in a span of two decades.

Keywords: ethics, theology, church, Fiji, Africa, political engagement.

1. Introduction

The editorial of the Adventist Review magazine in its August 17, 2000 issue had the caption, "Guns in Paradise,"[1] describing the civilian takeover of the Fijian government on May 19 the same year. George Speight, a raised and baptized Seventh-day Adventist, led a group of indigenous Fijians, stormed through the parliament, took hostage the ruling Fijian government officials with its first ever Indo-Fijian Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry, and declared himself interim prime minister.[2] Speight, a non-practicing church member at the time, is an alumnus of Andrews University with a bachelor's degree in 1981 and a master's of business administration degree in 1983.[3] His takeover of the government was the third of four illegal removals of Fijian administration in a span of 20 years (1987–2006).[4] Johnson was right, "war has come to paradise," and our island paradise reputation of "Fiji, the way the world should be," had been essentially tarnished.

This article considers the issue of "political engagement" from the standpoint and experiences of Fijian Adventist's members in the 2000 coup as a case study for African Adventists involvement in politics.[5] A brief backdrop to the issue under discussion is pertinent, followed by a broad sweep of biblical examples of political engagement/involvement from which some biblical-theological principles drawn, and concludes with some ethical dilemmas and considerations.

2. Background

Fiji had been an independent sovereign state since October 10, 1970. Under the 1970 independence constitution and a communal voting

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1 William Johnson, "Guns in Paradise," *Adventist Review*, August 2000, 5.

2 Robert Wolfgramm, "Fiji: A Social Perspective," *South Pacific Record*, July 1, 2000, 4.

3 Johnson, "Guns in Paradise," 5.

4 Sanjay Ramesh, "Fiji, 1987-2007: The Story of Four Coups," accessed February 19, 2017, http://www.worldpress.org/Asia/2773.cfm

5 The 2000 civilian coup is chosen not only due to Speight's leading role and Adventist member's involvement, but also because Pastor Tuima was a non-Adventist during the first two coups of 1987.

system, indigenous Fijians enjoyed parliamentary majority and political hegemony in their land for 17 years. That supremacy was further protected by the "strong ideology of traditionalism and chiefly order, in which high chiefs occupied positions of great economic and social privilege, in the manner of feudal lords."[6] That ideology incorporated the unity of the indigenous Fijians and continued respect for their chiefs and maintenance of their chiefly system. To buttress that sense of oneness, the British rule established two polities, namely the Great Council of Chiefs and an ethnic Fijian military.[7]

By 1987, however, Indo-Fijians,[8] consistently perceived by chiefs as a threat to the integrity and authority of the indigenous people, had increased in number to the point of outnumbering the locals. Boosted by fractures within the indigenous community in the first half of 1980s, an Indo-Fijian coalition party was founded and later formed government after winning the parliamentary elections of April 1987. Consequently, the new government, with Indo-Fijian majority which had an indigenous Fijian as prime pinister, was overthrown a month later on May 14, 1987 by a lieutenant colonel in the Fijian army, Sitiveni Rabuka. The same officer conducted the second coup after the supreme court of Fiji ruled the coup as unconstitutional. Fearing the loss of the achievement of the May coup amidst the attempt to build a platform for a government of national unity and a more representative leadership under the headship of the Governor-General, he took over the reins again on September 25.

Fast forward to May 19, 1999, Mr. Mahendra Pal Chaudhry, for the record, was sworn in as Fiji's first ever Indo-Fijian prime minister following his Labour Party victory in the elections. His prime ministership was short lived when Speight and company took over the reign on May 19, 2000. He had merely served a year of his five-year term. Clearly, what spurred the first three coups evinced indigenous Fijians aspirations garbed with Christian nationalism. Supporters were predominantly indigenous Fijian Christians who carry nationalistic ideologies. In a nutshell, their worldview included (1) the biblical notions of "land" as a gift with rights given by God and which, despite suffering and hardship, . . . one day will be free of the "stranger in the land;"[9] (2) the maintaining of their hierarchical (chiefly) polity within their "vanua"

6Yash Ghai, "Constitutional Order in Multi-ethnic Societies," in *Coup: Reflections on the Political Crisis in Fiji*, ed. Brij Lal and Michael Pretes (Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press, 2008), 36.

7Ibid.

8A name given to Fiji citizens of Indian origin who are descendants of indentured labourers, from India brought to the islands by the British in 1916 to work on Fiji's sugar cane plantations.

9Wolfgramm, "Fiji: A Social Perspective," 5.

(land); (3) the notion of state religion (imposed by the national Sunday ban of the 1987 military coup); and (4) maintenance of indigenous political leadership.

2.1. Adventist Coup

Speight's Adventist affiliation sadly led to his coup being labelled as an Adventist coup." The show of support by Fijian Adventists during the takeover demonstrated their endorsement of his political aspirations and pro-indigenous stance. A considerable number of members, including some pastors (both retired and in ministry) publicly revealed their support through visitation, donation of cash and kind, provision of transportation, conduct devotionals or worship services, giving of advice, and/or simple provision of moral support at the parliamentary complex during the 56 days (May 19-July 13) of hostage. In spite of the staunch support by Adventist members, the Church through its leaders clearly expressed disapproval of Speight's actions and upheld the church's position on the separation of church and state in the Fiji Times—the country' major newspaper.[10] In a statement expressing censure, the South Pacific Division posted on their weekly South Pacific Record of July 8, 2000, "With sadness and regret the church acknowledges that in recent ethnic and political conflicts and coups in the Pacific, some former Seventh-day Adventists and current members have been involved."[11]

Key questions asked in this paper in relation to Adventists' political involvement at such a time of national crisis are the following. What should be the appropriate position and response/actions of Adventist members in such situation especially when their land and rights come under threat? Should we "stand aside" in a bad Samaritan fashion or be actively engaged? If "yes," to what basis and extent? Should Adventists be involved at all? Answers to the above questions are sought from biblical examples drawing principles that may be useful for reflections amongst African and Fijian Adventist communities.

3. Biblical Examples

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[10]Tihomir Kukolja, "Political Challenges the Church Cannot Afford to Ignore," *Spectrum,* 28, no. 4 (2000), accessed February 19, 2017, http://www.adherents.com/people/ps/George_Speight.html

[11]"SPD to Develop Pacific Peace Strategy," *South Pacific Record*, July 8, 2000, 4.

For Christians, what the Bible says in any topic of discussion is paramount. It is the foundational source where divine principles are given through historical experiences of God's people who were confronted with the same issues we face today. They are principles for Christians to live by. The Bible records numerous examples where God's people found themselves fronting the civil state in political engagement. In such a time, those individuals or groups make critical decisions in a demonstration of their faith and allegiance (or lack of it); and in most cases, they were life and death situations. Their decisions and experiences, according to the apostle Paul, "were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor 10:11).[12]

Two episodes of political leadership and political engagement of the people of Israel and Judah in the Old Testament are examined plus a brief summary of the same for a few occasions when individuals or small groups of Israelites fronted with non-Israelite or heathen political leadership. In the New Testament, the example of Jesus, Paul, and Peter are analyzed briefly. These biblical passages, though not exhaustive, provide a framework from which some principles for the discussion on the issue of political engagement are drawn.

3.1. The Story of Naboth

The murder of Naboth for his vineyard in 1 Kings 21 is a definitive story for the topic under discussion. Ahab, King of Israel given his wealth and presumably all the land that he had, still craved a small block of land belonging to Naboth. The king's rationale behind this offer was twofold: (1) he wants to make a vegetable garden for himself and (2) it is near his palace, even next to his house. He also had two offers for Naboth in the proposed deal: (1) he will get a "better" vineyard than his current one and (2) he may choose to receive a good sum of money for it (1 Kgs 21:2).

The response of Naboth was immediate and straightforward. He did not have to think hard about it. "The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers" (1 Kgs 21:3). Apparently, he did not find difficulty in refusing the king's offer and the reason was quite simple. For him, the piece of land in question was never exclusively his own. It was God-given and he had received it as an inheritance from his father and forefathers. Those who had received the land worked and cared for it, made a living out of it, and passed it on to the next generation as inheritance. Thus, the land was not something he can exchange for a bigger or better one or sell for a fortune. No! Not even to a king. He, like

12All Bible texts are taken from the New American Standard Bible version.

his forefathers before him must pass it on to his children even if it be the only thing which he could pass on to them. More importantly for Naboth, as he understood it, the piece of land was allocated specifically for his ancestors, himself, and his descendants with God as part of His covenant with them.

The story of Naboth sets forth an example of unswerving integrity and a prime illustration of a God-fearing individual who stood his ground on the principle that his land is God-given and, therefore, cannot be given away or sold, neither appealed to, bought, nor even coerced into submission. Compromise for Naboth was a no-no which flies in the face of greed, corruption, and injustices of political power. The ensuing evil plot of Jezebel (Ahab's evil wife) and the murder of Naboth brought judgment upon the house of Ahab namely: condemnation and death to him, the slaughter of his 70 sons, and the eventual extermination of the members of his household (2 Kgs 9:6-10) including Jezebel's violent death (2 Kgs 9:30-37).

3.2. The Story of Joash

The second book of Kings (2 Kgs11) narrates a revolt against Athaliah's murderous rage over the royal heirs after the murder of her son Ahaijah, king of Judah, by Jehu (1 Kgs 9:27-29). Sensing the possible demise of the royal bloodline through the evil action of the queen-mother, Jehosheba/Jehoshabeath, Ahaziah's sister and courageous wife of Jehoiada the priest, spared baby Joash's life by stealing and hiding him in the bedroom with his nurse. Afterward, he was cared for in the temple of God for six years (1 Kgs 11:2-3; 2 Chr 22:11-12). After which, Queen Athaliah's wicked rule came to an end after Jehoiada the priest staged a "coup d'etat" and made Joash as king on the throne of Judah. In the ensuing installation ceremony of the king, Jehoiada ordered the killing of the blood-thirsty Queen Athaliah (2 Kgs 11:13-16; 2 Chr 22:13-15). The process by which Athaliah was deposed and replaced was an intelligent plot by the priest, for Joash's keeping and safety included the equipping of the priests with the temple armoury consisting of King David's spears and shields (2 Kgs 11:10) The well-ordered coup plan of Jehoiada and its execution by the priests and the military officers and the presence and support of "all the people of the land" (2 Kgs 11:14, 18) made it successful. What made it favorable, morally, and ethically sound, however, was not only the defeat of Athaliah's evil rule but also the accordance of the three key parts of the coronation ceremony of Judah's kings namely: the

incoming king has to be presented and accepted by the people,[13] he should have "the testimony"[14] in his hands, and he anointed[15] by the high-priest (2 Kgs 11:12).

3.3. The Story of Shiphrah and Puah

Other stories of political engagement in the Old Testament included Shiphrah and Puah, the two Hebrew God-fearing midwives (Exod 1:17) who saved Hebrew male children in defiance of Pharaoh's ruthless command to kill them at birth (Exod 1:16). Pharaoh's plan was foiled by the two women who were probably the ones in charge of the midwife station. By their actions, the midwives made a moral and ethical choice to honor God's command rather than a political leader's directive. Because of their faithfulness, God rewarded them by giving them descendants (Exod 1:20-21).

3.4. The Story of Daniel and His friends

Daniel and his friends defied Babylonian civil command in honor of and loyalty to their God in heaven and were rewarded in a compelling manifestation of God's power through their deliverance from the fiery furnace and the lion's den. The Hebrew boys were brought to the authorities for refusing to follow civil and religio-political laws namely: bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's golden idol (Dan 3: 4-6) and the decree forbidding prayer to any other god except the King of the Medes (Dan 6:7, 12). In both stories, the Hebrew boys stared death in the face, but fearlessly remained calm with resolute faith, and their God delivered. The story of Daniel and his friends demonstrated that when earthly powers and/or rules conflict with God's clearly revealed will, it is better to obey God rather than man.

3.5. The Example of Jesus, Paul and Peter

Jesus is the supreme exemplar of political involvement for Christians. While He had supreme authority over the powers that were present

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13Acceptance by the people is a mark of true royalty and points to willing subjects. Together, they guard the nation and also set boundaries for the kingly rule.

14The 'testimony' may have refer to the book of the law. Thus, it was used during the coronation service to "denote the king's devotion to the law of the Lord, according to which he would regulate his life and rule his people." See "הָעֵדוּת"[Deut 17:18-20], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976), 4:115. See also Deuteronomy 17:18-20.

15Anointing speaks of divine appointment and equipping of the monarch with the ability which qualifies him to serve in the appointed office.

during His time, He lived as a responsible law-abiding citizen. He recognized them but He never lost focus of His priorities—healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and giving hope to the poor and marginalized, thus drawing them to God in a spiritual way. His ministry was never in any way confrontational nor condemnatory. When checked for His political views, He responded affirmatively, recognizing the legitimacy of the state authority, "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's" (Matt 22:21). He made it clear, however, that "the things of God" takes precedence over every earthly connections (Matt. 22:37) including "the things of Caesar [every civil power]" (Matt. 22:39). The ultimate demonstration of this principle was when He was condemned to die under the authority of the state ignited by religious plotting even when there was absolutely no evidence of wrong doing. Ellen White's comment in her book Desire of Ages summarizes Jesus' political engagement in a nutshell.

> The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.[16]

Paul's epistles to the churches showed that he believes just about the same. Writing to fellow Christians in Rome, he penned, "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God, and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves" (Rom 13:1-2). In addition, he encouraged believers to pray for "kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity" (1 Tim 2:1-2). Undoubtedly, the apostle understood the need for Christian participation in the government. In the same way, the Apostle Peter, although he understood the evils and corruption within the Roman government, still admonished Christian believers to honor human institutions and authority, for "such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet 2:13, 14). Jesus, Paul, and Peter all advocated good citizenship,

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16Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1898), 509.

obedience to the laws of the land, and good deeds to others even if the political environment is unfavorable or evil.

From the above biblical accounts, the following biblical-theological principles are drawn for consideration:

1. Christian worldview informs political engagement.
2. Uncompromising commitment to religious convictions.
3. Political engagement can be unavoidable for God's people.
4. First things first.
5. Christians are citizen of two kingdoms
6. People should reconcile and exert positive influence.
7. State leadership should be divinely elected
8. God honors those who honor Him (1 Sam 2:30) even in political engagement.
9. Political engagement may be unavoidable.
10. God-fearing Christians are law-abiding citizens.

With biblical-theological principles in place, this article will conclude by highlighting ethical dilemmas and recommendations for the consideration of the Adventist community in the vast African continent.

4. Conclusions

4.1. Ethical Dilemmas and Recommendations

A key point that justifies this case study is the significant commonalities between African and Fijian communities. These include:

- Ethnic identity and belongingness including indigenous rights as the heartbeat of both communities
- Both underwent British colonization.
- Fijians and Africans fought for their freedom.
- Chiefs have autonomy in the land especially in their localities.
- Indigenous Fijian hierarchical polity of Great Council of Chiefs – Regional Chiefs-Provincial Chiefs-Group of villages called "*Tikina*," and then the village itself where it consists of "clan" [*mataqali*] which in turn is made up of sub-clan [*tokatoka*] are similar to African polity as well.
- Their social structures share deeply-ingrained indigenous and ancestral views.
- *Coup d'etats* and political upheavals in the south-sea island nations mirror the same for certain parts of the African continent.

▪ Fijians trace their roots to *Taghaniyka*—Tanzania, Africa, that is, the "stranger in the land," (non-indigenous Africans/Fijians).

Given the biblical-theological principles, the Fijian coup culture and commonalities with the African indigenous culture, and political experience and viewpoints, some ethical dilemmas and recommendations are rendered herein.

4.2. Ethical Dilemmas

Adventist Church members have two sets of beliefs. In spite of their core beliefs, Adventist members of both communities hold on to their indigenous, ethnic, and/or tribal ideologies which exert themselves when issues of indigenous concerns arise. At such times, there is an apparent tendency to suppress religious principles and convictions. The Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division recognized this complex situation in their Biblical Research Committee document of October, 2012 on the issue of "Guidelines on Adventists Involvement in Politics in Africa." It stated,

"Hegemonies of various kinds are common phenomena in Africa. They are essentially manipulative in their character. These may include particular ideological stances, dominant religious formations and resultant intolerance, group affiliations such as tribal or ethnic collectives, marginalization and persecution of minorities, the use of sex as an instrument of coercion and subjection, marginalization, deprivation of socio-material opportunities, deliberate systematic infrastructural underdevelopment."[17]

Also,

  i.   Church members can rally behind a politician irrespective of how he/she has assumed power.
 ii.   Latent ethnic political feelings becomes visible at the time of political crisis.
iii.   The church in Africa is growing. This is a critical point to remember.
 iv.   The church in Africa must do more than just publish a statement.
  v.   Political engagement per se is not wrong as long as it does not come in conflict with God's revealed command.
 vi.   All personal, ethnic, tribal, cultural, and traditional beliefs must be surrendered to the clearly revealed will of God.

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[17]Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Guidelines on Adventist's Involvement in Politics in Africa BRC Document, 0ctober, 2012, 9, accessed March 12, 2017, from http://sidadventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GUIDELINES-ON-ADVENTIST%E2%80%99S-INVOLVEMENT-IN-POLITICS-IN-AFRICA.pdf

vii. When granted opportunity to engage in political matters/issues, members must adhere to Christian principles.

4.3. Recommendations

Based on the Fijian experience and common political and cultural grounds shared with the African continent and the biblical-theological principles and ethical dilemmas, a few recommendations are given:

   i. Avoid extremes—non-involvement versus open disobedience. These extremes must be shunned. Political involvement in a non-violent way in respect to the laws of the land (unless it contradicts God's command) is confirmed by the biblical examples of Naboth, Daniel, Shadrach, and Shiphrah and Puah in the OT; and Jesus, Paul, and Peter in the NT. One cannot stand aside in bad-Samaritanism on one hand or resort to violence and law breaking on the other. Instead, we should stand for what is right and do everything possible according to the laws of the civil authorities.

   ii. Address spirituality. The Bible characters were men and women who feared God and never compromised their personal convictions for political aspirations. They stood for principle even when death was beckoning them. Naboth died, but the LORD did not have Ahab live on without being reprimanded for his evil actions. God will reward Naboth's uprightness just as He rewarded the loyalty of the other characters studied. Hence, the fear of the LORD and maintaining spiritual connections is the key to overcoming issues including political engagement.

   iii. Address political engagement (newly baptized members) through Bible and Spirit of Prophecy principles. Church leaders have the vital task of nurturing current and new members (especially after they are baptized). Nurturing includes the teaching of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy on this crucial topic. Members need to be informed and to learn how to present themselves in political crisis. There is a great need for members who will represent God and the church in a way that is consistent with its beliefs and teachings when confronted with political matters.

In addition to the on-going discussion, the Fijian coups have somehow yielded some positives outcomes for the Adventist Church in Fiji in terms of its mission as well as growth of membership. First, the first and second coups of 1987 resulted in the passing of a Sunday Law in the Fijian parliament. Influx of former members and backsliders to the churches was recorded. Secondly, it has been noted that during times of national crisis

such as the coup, membership tithe increases tremendously. There has not been a study on this unique phenomenon. Third, the fourth coup (2006) has created flexibility in laws relating to evangelism. The church has since been able to penetrate and run evangelistic campaigns in places where it used to be prohibited.

CRITICAL BOOK REVIEWS

The Old Testament Today: A Journey From Ancient Context to Contemporary Relevance, by John H. Walton and Andrew E. Hill. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013. xvii+452 pp. ISBN 978-0-310-498209. Hardcover, US $55.99.

Walton and Hill proposes here a real masterpiece for any person (not only for scholars) willing to study the Old Testament (OT). Yet, it is not like other introductions to the OT books. The main objective of usual surveys is to answer the usual "who," "when," "where," "to whom," and "how" questions which is not the case here. Reflected in its title, the main focus is on its relevance for today's Bible reader. In the authors' own words, it is "to introduce students to the Old Testament by going beyond the basic content to help them know just what they are supposed to do with it and what it is supposed to mean to them" (pp. xiii-xiv). It concentrates on orienting the student/reader 1) through the "content of the Old Testament;" 2) through "the world of the Old Testament through pictures, maps and other visuals;" 3) on how to study the OT by providing "principles and methods;" and finally 4) through the "theology of the Old Testament" (see p. xv). The authors have generally succeeded in their goals as one can recognize that it is not simple. Besides, in many ways, it complements the book written by the same authors, *A Survey on the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009). Related to that, I would suggest that a student would rather read the *Survey* before reading the present book

I definitely like the general way the book is presented. The pictures and illustrations, tables, and chronological charts and maps are well chosen and enhanced the overall presentation. Almost every page contains at least one of these. It consequently makes the book very attractive to read through. The book is divided in six distinct units: the first, an introduction—"Orientation Fundamentals;" four main sections: "The Pentateuch," "Old Testament Narrative," "Prophets and Prophetic Literature," and "Wisdom and Psalms," and sixth, an Epilogue. One would appreciate the introduction/highlights at the beginning of each section, and the "Reflections" and "Key Review Terms" at the end of each sections (that are subsections of each unit). Walton and Hill also made use

of a "wide array of sidebars and callouts" that effectively summarize or point out key elements of the content (see p. xv).

Furthermore, this book has been considered as a core textbook by its editor. Thus, *Zondervan* has provided free online resources for students (chapter videos, exam study guides) and instructors (instructor's manual, interesting presentation slides to prepare the class, proposition for midterm and final exam, an library image/map). Known as *textbookplus*, the easy-to-access Zondervan page (www.TestbookPlus.Zondervan.com) is certainly not something one wants to put aside.

Nevertheless, two suggestions could be made, according to its reviewer, to enhance the book. The first one is related to what could be called "Contextual/Archaeological notes (?)" (such as, "ANE Stories: Birth of Sargon" p. 31; "Major Archives" p. 40-41; "Eschatology" p.272; "Sheol" p.352; "is it Unbiblical to be Rich and/or Happy" p.396; "The Use of Psalms in Worship" p. 410). Some of these are very helpful for their content. While not saying too much, they give the reader enough information to highlight the general content of the section or subsection. A table of contents for these "notes" is lacking, however. I came across a good number of surprising information. Yet, if I want to find them again, I either have to look for it manually, or note the page in advance (or eventually do the table of contents myself).

Furthermore, it may even arouse keen interest for some to read and/or to do further research. To comply with such possible interests, a few of these "notes" provides the source(s) (such as, "Creation-Care" p. 136). Very few of them indicate further reading bibliography entries (such as "Date of the Exodus" p.92). I would prefer to have a bibliographic entry accompany many of these "notes." For example, about "Chronological Systems" (p. 218), the book of Edwin Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977), could have been suggested. On "Signs-Acts" (p. 254), the article of K. G. Friebel, "Sign Acts," Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets, eds. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 707-713 could have also been added. The same remark applies to some tables. For example, on "The Plagues and the Gods of Egypt" (p. 89), the article of Z. Zevit, "Three Ways to Look at the Ten Plagues," *Bible Review* (June 1990): 16-23, 42 could have been proposed.

To be fair, however, not every reader will be interested to go further and look for a specialized book/dictionary. Not everyone will even have the patience to go for further research. Further, one could argue against such proposition that it is not a specialized book. These so called "notes" are not specialized articles that automatically require a small bibliography. At the end of the six sections, Walton and Hill does actually provide a general related bibliography called "Going to the Next Level"

(see pp. 24, 138-139, 244, 319, 414-415, 433-434). The authors did their best to not overload the book with information, which is challenging for such a book. They seem to have preferred to keep the book that way for any possible reader, including those without theological background. Nevertheless, it is my suggestion and preference to have at least one bibliographical entry for most of the "notes."

The second suggestion is related to the theological sections of each unit. I have especially enjoyed the exposition on God as "Creator" (pp. 60-62), on the "Holy Land and Sacred Space" (pp. 73-74), the "plotline" in historiography (pp. 169-179), the still-today-needed "Social Justice" (pp. 277-278), "Creation and Wisdom" (pp. 346-348), and respectively their relevance for us today (pp. 117-119; 125-135; 230-241; 302-304; 389-394). One would not equally want to skip the fair and biblical exposition about "the Power of Sex" (pp. 403-407). I took notes of these two statements: "if sex did not have power, it would not have such a prevalent role in movies and advertising" (pp. 403-404). Again, "Behavior can be legislated and regulated, but wisdom is not gained through such methods. It must be taught" (p. 406).

Nevertheless, the choice of main theological perspectives in each unit can, I recognize, depend on what a particular author consider to be "main." I would suggest that 1) in the Pentateuch unit the concept of "Exodus." Vital to the Hebrews, this great act of Salvation from God will be reused elsewhere in the OT (Isa 35:5-10; Hos. 2:14-16) and the New Testament (1 Cor 10:1-6) typologically as the basis for future deliverance. The implications for us today would be to recognize that we have to go out of Egypt (this World) and look forward to the eschatological Promise Land (heaven) and to the promised rest related to it (Heb. 3:7-4:13). 2) Besides the Prophetic section, I would suggest the concepts of "Messiahship," and the related one of the "Remnant." The terms "Messiah," "redeemer," and "savior" are present in almost every prophet. They are related to the promised and free 'grace' that the Messiah would bring and brought in the person of Jesus "the Christ." For today's Christian, to believe in Him means everything for his/her present and future life. Actually, his/her faith will determine his/her fate to be part of the eschatological remnant or not.

Despite these two suggestions offered (some may consider that I have been a "picky one" here), the book deserves to be described as a "proven approach" to connect "the Old Testament with today's World" (see back cover). Walton and Hill have successfully summarized the main thoughts of the OT books in about 500 pages which is certainly not a simple task. Yet, there is another aspect that I have undoubtedly appreciated. The reading of this book is designed to be a "journey" (front cover subtitle), For it invites its reader not only to read, to study, and to understand the

OT; it certainly invites its reader to live its message and to make sure its message outlives today.

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Developing Christian Servant Leadership: Faith-Based Character Growth at Work, by Gary. E. Roberts. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 245 pp. ISBN: 978-1-137-48963-0. Hardcover. US$79.25.

Developing Christian Servant Leadership: Faith-Based Character Growth at Work, is a product of Gary E. Roberts, a Professor in the Master of Public Administration Program at the Robertson School of Government at Regent University. He has written four books and 47 articles and book chapters largely on the area of servant leadership within the human resource management system, performance management and appraisal system effectiveness, and the influence of work/life benefit practices. His latest books are *Servant Leader Human Resource Management: A Moral and Spiritual Perspective* and *Working with Christian Servant Leader Spiritual Intelligence.*

The book is self-explanatory by its title. In a nutshell, it is a call for the integration of faith and the development of biblical-character attributes in the lives of servant leaders in the workplace. Moreover, it underscores that leadership in the workplace necessitates Christian leaders to serve (lead) like Jesus—the best model of servant leadership. Servant leadership, however, does not exist in a vacuum. It entails that the Christian leader's life and character is built and lived in submission to God and is maintained through a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus, enabled by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit of God. Consequently, the character of such servant leaders will show the holistic harmony of moral motives and thoughts needed for servant leadership in the workplace. This is the foundation for enduring success in leadership that brings glory to the Lord.

While servant leadership is a controversial idea in the modern workplace, it "balance morality, mission achievement, and promoting the best interests and wellbeing of the key stakeholders (employees, clients, customers, and the community)," p.1. Therefore, what it brings to the leadership world is not only a new approach to leadership but also challenges. It exposes the many leadership models used in the past as well as those that are used in the present, which have unfortunately yielded the least results. Accordingly, the author's conceptual framework relates

the characters of servant leaders that are informed by their spiritual connections. These characters, included and discussed in the succeeding chapters of the book, are key to the practice of servant leadership in the workplace. In fact, they are useful within both the context of the workplace and beyond; that is, they are useful and apply to any other context such as religion, family, community, and other professional group/s, among others.

This is then traced throughout the book with each chapter adding a new dimension to it. The Christian workplace character begins with and revolves around its three key elements or what the author calls the "triune towers" of encouragement, accountability, and integrity. Servant leadership is not only a biblical concept but it is also a universal one present in the theology of the world's major religions and well attested in the "burgeoning body of literature demonstrating the positive influence of servant leadership on a host of attitudinal, behavioral, and performance outcomes," p.14.

The author builds on the theme of the development of Christian servant leadership with particular focus on the integration of a faith-based character which continues to advance and grow. This is carried out through self-examination, humble acceptance of that which need to be corrected, prayerful seeking for improvement, overcoming obstacles, as well as opening doors to new opportunities and ongoing progress.

A well-organized book is evident by the arrangement of its section and chapters and how each topic help build its main thesis. There is a clear and logical flow of ideas evident in the presentation and layout of the chapters for this book. It is a reflection of the author's careful thoughts, for each chapter represents a major argument in support of the main thesis: the development of Christian servant leaders and the integration of their faith-based character in their workplace. Moreover, the book demonstrates wide research in its selection and use of good literary sources as shown in the in-text referencing and its ten page references or bibliography at the end. Reflections and application questions are well constructed for good reflection on each topic and subtopic. The conclusions are well supported and related to the servant-leadership model. It also included a critique of the model and a response that easily dispels its points. Written in simple English, readers are poised to easily understand and grasp the concept of Christian servant-leadership model.

Robert's book is well-written and thoroughly deserves wide readership particularly among Christian leaders of the modern era. He is a passionate Christian who writes with conviction on a very critical subject poised to bring a revolution and paradigm shift to leadership in the workplace. Everyone who reads *Developing Christian Servant Leadership: Faith-Based Character Growth at Work*, will get hooked by the

simple but in-depth treatment of the subject. His zeal for the accomplishment of mission and objectives of servant leadership in the workplace through the integration of faith-based character saturates the book. On the subject matter, Robert has brilliantly given something to leadership that has the potential to revolutionize organizations, groups, (whatever they may be) and even families

This book highlights practical issues that generally are overlooked byor unknown to leaders in the workplace. There are many gems in this book for leaders in the workplace. For pastors, this is a brilliant resource. What I like about this work is the emphasis on the spiritual life of the leader and the many different aspects of life and work that the leader has to deal with almost every day. This includes the spiritual side of things: spiritual discipline, spiritual virtues, faith, and prayers. Then it also brings in building servant leader character, building a workplace of integrity, and workplace apologetics. Furthermore, he brings in the subject of how to overcome life's obstacles and strongholds, as well as courage to overcome fear. One cannot help but breathe spirituality in the book and its influence in every aspect of the discussion. It is undoubtedly packed with spiritual gems.

It is clear that the author's writing reflects his biblical worldview as evident in the strong emphasis on the value and prominence of the Bible in servant leadership. This is so because the Bible gives the foundational life principles for all human conduct where the Holy Spirit directs a believer in making God-centered decisions. The rich leadership nuggets of the present book is due to the way the author addressed internal personal struggles that are real issues faced by leaders. It is unknown to many what goes on in the deep recesses of the heart, which is "deceitful above all things" (Jer 17:9). What the author offers in chapter 9, 10, and 11 are key to dealing with everything that takes place externally (i.e. behaviourally). These are supplemented by the discussion of spiritual virtues and disciplines including workplace matter and all its dynamics and challenges.

I highly recommend this book to every Christian leaders (pastors, teachers, and local church leaders) or aspiring leaders, university students, and lay members who are passionate about their call to spiritual leadership. It should be used as a textbook and/or compulsory reading for leadership courses in both graduate and undregraduate levels.

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Reconsidering Nehemiah's Judah: The Case of MT and LXX Nehemiah 11-12 by Deirdre N. Fulton. Forschungen zum Alter Testament, 2. Reihe. Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. 258pp. ISBN-13:9783161538810. Softcover US$88.66.

Deirdre N. Fulton examines critically the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) and the Greek Septuagint (LXX) versions of Nehemiah 11-12. She ascertains what reflects the earliest traditions of the different types of lists and genealogies to Nehemiah 11-12. This is a way of looking at the size and scope of Judah during the Persian period as depicted in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The text of Nehemiah 11-12 relates to issues that focus on the people who settled in Jerusalem, a sequence of settlements around the region of Judah, and the lists of temple personnel in Jerusalem. These chapters in Nehemiah also contain a narrative of the dedication of the walls as well as a description of the people connected to the dedication ceremony in Jerusalem.

Fulton, as assistant professor of Old Testament at the Department of Religion at Baylor University, notes that problematic issues that arise from a comparison of Nehemiah 11-12 with Ezra 2, and Nehemiah 7, and Nehemiah 3 due to some uniqueness of some of the text with the chapters (Neh 11-12). She also highlights works by other scholars in their attempt to resolve and reconcile the textual discrepancies of the pericope with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. She argues that the text on the generations within Nehemiah 11-12 reflects a Maccabean reality retrojected into the Persian-period Judah as fully developed in the MT (p. 191). To her, this is because the LXX maintains features of late-Persian and Hellenistic period lists due to the continuation of key genealogies.

The author also assesses the settlement of Jerusalem in Nehemiah 11:1-24, which lists the heads of the families who settled in Jerusalem and their genealogies. She takes the passage of Nehemiah 11:1-24 as representing a discrete unit that is separate from the resettlement of the Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites found in 11:25-36 (pp. 74-85). To her, the Jerusalem settlers are listed as having cultic and civic importance and, therefore, represent different religious and political institutions (pp. 93-94).

The author employs literary criticism and form criticism as well as a detailed study of the archaeological sites in arriving at her conclusions. She argues that the shorter text of Nehemiah 11:1-24 is close to the original and the base text. To her, if the shorter text of LXX Nehemiah 11:1-24 is not the result of ancient carelessness or mistakenly leaving out materials, then it is either possible that LXX Nehemiah 11:1-24 has edited the material from MT Nehemiah 11:1-24. And also either it is intentionally

cut out names and information from the MT list or the LXX Neh 11:1-24 is the older text, preserving what was reflected in an earlier form of MT or a proto-Rabbinic version of Neh 11:1-24. She goes further in arguing that because there is no clear reworking of the MT according to her analysis, the LXX Nehemiah 11:1-124 could be the earlier version. Therefore, LXX Nehemiah 11:1-24 is not based on the present form of MT Nehemiah 11:1-24 but rather based on an earlier Hebrew text which is only preserved in the Old Greek (pp. 52-66).

The central idea in the book is that the textual divergences in Nehemiah 11-12 as between the MT and the LXX are significant since the pericope contains names and positions of temple personnel, areas of settlement, and a narrative of the events surrounding the rededication of the walls, which are commonly used in modern scholarly discussions of Jerusalem during the Persian period (pp. 3, 200-201). To her, the discussion of the cultic institutions in Jerusalem during this important period in Judean history is necessary towards the understanding of Nehemiah 11-12. She further postulates in her conclusion that "a comparison between MT and LXX Neh 11-12 provides biblical scholars with a good case study for understanding the stage of the redaction of Ezra-Nehemiah" (p. 201).

The discrepancies between the MT and LXX of Nehemiah 11-12 cannot be attributed to the works of redactors but rather to scribal errors. If one argues for the works of redactors, it will be an avenue to claim the text of Nehemiah as a work of a later editor and presupposes the work of a different author other than Ezra as conservative scholars claim. This assertion is seen in her extensive use of Dieter Böhler (Dieter Böhler, "On the Relationship between Textual and Literary Criticism. The Two Recensions of the Book of Ezra: Ezra-Neh (MT) and 1 Esdras (LXX)," in *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. A. Schenker, SBL Septuagint and Cognate Studies 52 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 35-50). Böhler argues that the difference in literary shape of the MT and LXX of Ezra and Nehemiah is connected with a whole series of small textual differences between the overlapping material of two versions which, therefore, betray themselves as being part of an intentional recension rather than scribal errors. To him, the Zerubbabel and Ezra account of 1 Esdras does not expect a coming Nehemiah story, whereas MT's Zerubbabel and Ezra text is compatible with the following Nehemiah account.

Fulton follows Böhler in arguing for a later date for the book. Böhler points out that MT reveals a Maccabean reality because the list encompasses the scope of Judah during that period of time. He also argues for a second century BC redaction of Nehemiah 11 (as reflected in the MT), because the settlement list could not have been possible before the Maccabean period. He sees a "Nehemiah renaissance" under the

Hasmoneans when an editor reworked both Ezra-Nehemiah for the purpose of the Maccabean government. He sums up his study that, "the dates of Neh 1:1 and 2:1 which make Kislew precede Nisan of the same year presuppose the Seleucid autumnal year. The extension of Judah according to the city list of Neh 11 was achieved only in Maccabean times. The prayer of Neh 9 cries for political sovereignty which fits Maccabean aspirations. 2 Macc 2:13 reports about Nehemiah's and Judah the Maccabee's literary efforts" (Ibid., 50).

The book of Nehemiah cannot be said to have been transmitted in two recensions—MT and LXX. It should be noted that each of the versions has its own distinct literary shape. Their overlap can be attributed to the works of the scribes and the translators of the LXX who translated from the Hebrew into Greek. Therefore, to use the LXX as a measure for the accuracy and authenticity of the historical results in Nehemiah might not be a good enterprise. This research is worth reading and significant in scholarly discussions on Ezra and Nehemiah. It is also significant for any scholarly examination attempting to reconstruct the composition of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The book is a major contribution to the issues in Ezra and Nehemiah. I commend the author for such a work.

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Nehemiah's Bricks and Mortar Story: Strategy for A Successful Building Project by Carla M. Antoine. Doctoral Dissertations and Projects 894. Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014. 133pp.

Carla M. Antoine's study, *Nehemiah's Bricks and Mortar Story: Strategy for A Successful Building Project,* provides a helpful prescription or strategy for undertaking a building project and the danger of working with detractors and how to contain them. Antoine, an evangelical pastor and an associate professor of leadership, blends his pastoral knowledge with the experience of life to provide a practical blueprint for successful completion of church-building projects. The author examines aspects of Nehemiah's leadership and its effects on the various facets of construction. He presents a review of the theological, sociological, and philosophical views of Nehemiah as well as the vision elements of a project, mobilization of workers, provision, and a structured guide for successfully completing the project (pp. 1-17).

The author argues that Nehemiah's call by God was to repair the physical breach. His task was quiet challenging but the leadership

principles he exhibited is a useful model for contemporary ministers (pp. 20-21). He started and ended his assigned duty with prayers, asking strength and guidance from Him. This shows his leadership style as that of spiritual leadership. He was patient in all his dealings and waited upon the Lord without hastily moving on his own way.

The central idea of the author is that Nehemiah was a man of character, persistence, and prayer (pp. 22-26). He was brilliant motivator, organizer, and planner. The axis upon which Nehemiah's physical work was done manifested religious reform and spiritual awakening for Jerusalem. Considering the challenges of church building projects, a successful model to follow would be helpful. Just as Nehemiah had a spiritual assignment from God, church leaders today are faced with the same challenges (pp. 84-100).

These propositions of Antoine are also shared by Don N. Howell in his book *Servant of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*. Howell points out that through prayerful discernment, Nehemiah detected their intentions and successfully resisted them. Though several detractors repeatedly tried to lure Nehemiah away from Jerusalem, he detected their intentions and refuted them. He gave all his best in making sure that God's work and mission was carried out to the latter. He further argues that leadership brings people together and that Nehemiah's leadership was remarkable in unifying a vulnerable disgraced people, under multiple threats from within and without, to accomplish a historic work. His leadership brought glory to God.

I am overwhelmingly impressed by the content of the dissertation. It is worth reading as it gives an in-depth explanation on biblical strategies for undertaking a successful building project. Indeed, Nehemiah's heart for the city led him to pray to God in praise, confession of sin, and prayer for kindness from the king. A leader is action-oriented. He or she attempts new things, takes initiative, and works toward something. For example, Nehemiah not only had a heart for the city of Jerusalem but he also acted. I recommend that every pastor, leader, teacher should have a copy of *Nehemiah's Bricks and Mortar Story: Strategy for A Successful Building Project* in his/her library. Also, churches and institutional libraries should have copies to assist students and members to have access to this volume. Readers will find the rich insights and principles for reflection and review on their leadership strategies in construction amidst opposition from both inside and outside. The study will be beneficial to readers in the area of leadership and those who seeks to develop their leadership from a biblical and spiritual perspective. It is a major contribution to the discourse in the book of Nehemiah, leadership, and missions as an area of study.

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