Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary 19.1–2 (2016): 67–96

COLONIALISM AND MISSION: SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM IN AFRICA AND THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE ERA

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In 1807, the parliament of the United Kingdom passed the Slave Trade Act 1807 for the abolition of slave trade in the British Empire.[1] The United States adopted its own Acts Prohibiting Importation of Slaves on March 2, 1807. By 1838, the United Kingdom voted its final bold step to end the practice of slavery even among its colonies. With the repatriation of ex-slaves from Europe and America to Africa, especially to Liberia and Sierra Leone during the late eighteen century to the mid-nineteenth century, the world witnessed a great social and religious reform movement. There was a renewal of Christian beliefs and a rejection of atheism and deism across the globe. By the 1840s, this spiritual revival led to the creation of the Millerite Movement in America, whose eminent leaders were abolitionists.[2] With such a religious effervescence, American Christian denominations sought to tell the world about the love of God for all human beings, including the poor and the colored people. American missionaries would leave their continent with the clear intention to spread the good news of the redeeming grace of Jesus into the jungles so far unpenetrated.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was an abolitionist Christian movement that sought the good of the colored people.[3] Adventism, just like other American Christian movements, would follow the general trend of spreading the good news of the cross of Jesus.[4] In 1874, not only the church

1 See Great Britain, *The Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Ulan, 2012).

2 Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler, eds., *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 143.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

expressed an official position to send one of its ablest missionaries, John Nevins Andrews, to Europe but also other missionaries were sent to other parts of the world in the subsequent years.

Europe and Australia were among the first places where Seventh-day Adventists decided to send early missionaries. These areas served as centers not only for getting converts into the church but also to train the first ones to become channels of taking the gospel to other countries. It was in this perspective that many Europeans who accepted the Adventist faith would decide to commit themselves to preach the same truth to others around the world. From all over Europe, North America, and Australia, Adventists volunteered to face adventures and uncertainties linked to missionary work in unknown communities. But their work would coincide with a social injustice of colonialism, something that would lead Africans to look at the missionaries as mercenaries instead of children of God to bring good news to Africans.

This article focuses on the influence of colonialism on Adventist mission in Africa between the 1890s–1980s. It first examines the relationship between colonialism and missionary enterprise to provide a setting for exploring the works of Adventist missionaries during the colonial period. Second, it explores the church's administrative structure and affiliations to European fields and the impact of colonial subsidiaries such as education and medicine on the expansion of mission in the continent.

1. Colonialism and Missionary Enterprise in Africa

Adventist missionaries under the aegis of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church would form a force likened to that of Christian Missionaries Societies to enter African hinterlands from South Africa, Tanzania, and Sierra Leone.[5] These countries, because of their rich multiracial nature, were viewed by Adventist missionaries as a window to the vast continent of Africa. As early as the year 1652, the Dutch penetrated Cape Town through the skillful leading adventure of J. van Riebeeck. And by 1805, the British invaded the Cape (South Africa).[6]

Among the early Europeans who settled at the Cape were the Dutch, the Germans, and the British. Between 1795 and 1806, during the Great

5 Adventist missionaries entered Africa first from South Africa in as early as the year 1887. By early 1900s, Tanzania and Sierra Leone became windows through which countries in East Africa and West Africa were penetrated.

6 A. Adu Boahen, ed., *Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880–1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

Trek, a massive migration within South Africa, Europeans settled in the localities of South Africa basically because of economic reasons and favorable climate conditions. The discovery of mineral resources such as diamond and gold brought the region to the awareness of world economic competitors. By the nineteenth century, South Africa would join the ranks of societies with good prospects of industrialization and unprecedented urban development of infrastructure.

As the Europeans settled in South Africa, they adopted a segregationally-driven policy in 1948. From 1948 to1994, Apartheid, which means *separateness* in Afrikaans, colored South African society. Its proponents developed a theology that supported its practice. Apartheid theologians argued that the Bible taught that humankind was separated into different races in ancient time. They claimed that Apartheid was not condemned by the Scripture. This theological development was connected to the political ideology that led the white minority to rule abusively and to suppress the indigenous people until the sustained Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, through its open political demonstrations and international opposition to the obnoxious system, resulted in the first democratic election of black president Nelson Mandela into power in South Africa in April 1994. The African National Congress gained a historic victory that officially marked the end of Apartheid. Unfortunately, the chauvinistic policy of segregation would showcase in Christian denominational policies in South Africa, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church.[7]

On the other hand, British missionaries such as David Livingstone and William Cotton Oswell travelled to the Northern Cape colony. They crossed the Kalahari Desert in 1849. The Royal Geographical Society awarded Livingstone a gold medal for his discovery of the Lake Ngami.[8] By this time, following Berlin's conference, colonialism permeated the entire African continent. The only independent states by 1895 were Morocco, Liberia (founded with the support of the United States), and Ethiopia (which resisted the invasion of Italian army). When African nations regained their independence between the 1960s–1980s, they were largely in fragmentation. Adventism started sending missionaries to Africa at a time when Africa became a coveted territory among European powers. The Treaty of Berlin (1878) and its conference (1884–1885) culminated with the Scramble for Africa. From this period, Africa became prominent among the world economic powers. Explorers, anthropologists, and European missionaries entered Africa and favored, in most instances, the protection of

[7] Fransjohan Pretorius, *A History of South Africa: From the Distant Past to the Present Day* (Pretoria: Protea Book, 2014).

[8] Andrew Ross, *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), 110.

the European empires.[9] The exploits of missionaries as early as the eighteenth century would help usher in a new era of the annexation of African nations. After the partition of Africa at the 1884–1885 European Conference in Berlin, this continent would become the most competed and coveted territory by European countries. At this time, in the mind of the colonies, Christianity was already associated with colonialism. The major Christian branches, Catholicism and Protestantism, were considered the religions of the whites who were viewed to be engrained in the exploitation of Africa. It was difficult for Africans to strike a balance between the foreign religion and the colonization of Africa, at least not immediately.

Brave and skillful men who were serving as missionaries would be solicited by the colonizers and would, in some instances, join hands with the countries they came from to explore and exploit Africa. It was a process that built on the denigration of African culture and African way of life, which were viewed as demonic and as representing the rudiments of the most barbaric people of the human race. Missionaries would serve as advisors to African kings and facilitate the signing of treaties between the colonizers and the colonies. Most recent narratives of missionaries' activities in Africa are very critical, denouncing the hegemony of the white race. Historians aligned most of the missionaries' mission endeavors to achieving the goal of under-developing Africa and showcasing an apparent complex of the cultural superiority of Western civilization.

The Portuguese and Spanish missionaries in the sixteenth century and the French, German, British, and Belgian missionaries in the nineteenth century were mostly viewed as oppressors and did little to defend the rights of indigenous people. Edward E. Andrews observed the historiography of colonialism and wrote:

> By the middle of the twentieth century, an era marked by civil rights movements, anti-colonialism, and growing secularization, missionaries were viewed quite differently. Instead of godly martyrs, historians now described missionaries as arrogant and rapacious imperialists. Christianity became not a saving grace but a monolithic and aggressive force that missionaries imposed upon defiant natives. Indeed, missionaries were now understood as important agents in the ever-expanding nation-state, or ideological shock troops for colonial invasion whose zealotry blinded them.[10]

9 Christine de Gemeaux, Lorin Amaury, and Amaury Lorin, eds., *L'Europe Coloniale et le grand tournant de la conférence de Berlin, 1884–1885* (France: Editions Le Manuscrit, 2013).

10 Edward E. Andrews, "Christian Missions and Colonial Empires Reconsidered: A Black Evangelist in West Africa, 1766–1816," *Journal of Church and State* 51.4 (2009): 663–64.

The missionaries advanced, in some ways, the agenda of their home countries.

> Like the explorer, the missionary arrived in regions barely touched by Western influences, preaching the superiority of Western religion, technology, and cultural practices. Perversely, missionaries resisted the attempts of their converts to assume an equal social and clerical status in the Church until, in an act of spiritual decolonization, mission churches broke free from foreign control.[11]

Against such a critical view of them, it is worth noting that the traditional historiography of Western missionaries, that depicted them as true agents of truth, proved to be also constructive. Many missionaries were truly consumed by the spirit of Christ to work for the salvation of people; they impacted Africans who later viewed them as saints of the Bible. Indeed, most traditional accounts of the missionaries' activities until recently were hagiographical in nature. E. E. Andrews noted that Christian missionaries were seen as "visible saints, exemplars of ideal piety in a sea of persistent savagery."[12] The trend was evident in the work of famous explorers and missionaries like Livingstone and Henry-Morton Stanley. They were intentional in entering the hinterlands of Africa to spread the good news of Christ's redeeming grace.

2. Western Adventist Missionaries in Africa at the Age of Colonialism

From the 1870s, the Seventh-day Adventist Church developed an acute interest in mission. The General Conference became intentional in its policy to spread the Adventist faith to the world. Through simple means of financial contributions from its adherents, the 10 percent tithes of incomes from members, added to generous giving and offerings opened opportunities to support Adventist missionary enterprise outside North America. Church members who could not leave their countries to travel abroad opted to assist with their finances. The words of Matt 28:19–20 became compelling to them more than in times before: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded

[11] Norman Etherington, "Introduction," in *Missions and Empires*, ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

[12] E. E. Andrews, "Christian Missions," 663. See also Roy R. Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, and Christopher B. Steiner, eds., *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010).

you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (KJV).

Church members believed that this gospel commission spoke to them individually. From North America, Australia, and Europe, Adventists expressed not only the passion for missionary work but also acted as such either through their finances or physically. With this spirit, the commonly portrayed noxious image of Africa could not any longer be a hindrance to people to travel there. So by the 1870s, early Adventists travelled to Africa to explore and evaluate the possibilities of missionary works in Africa. And by early 1892, Western Adventist missionaries expressed a clear engagement to break contemporary barriers by considering Africans not as slaves, not as inferiors to the whites, but as brethren for whom Christ came and died. Each one of these missionaries would portray the missionary zeal of J. N. Andrews, who left North America for Europe as the first official Adventist missionary, and S. N. Haskell and J. O. Corliss, who helped establish a base in Australia which was foundational to evangelizing the South Pacific.

J. N. Andrews's missionary activities shaped the mind of several individuals, especially in Europe, who later pledged their commitment to take the gospel to foreign communities.[13] Before any Adventist missionary was sent to Africa, J. N. Andrews (1829–1883) prepared the way through a research on faithful seventh-day Sabbath observers in Ethiopia. In his book *The History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week* (1859), he stressed the preexistence of a Sabbath community in Ethiopia and Abyssinia to Adventist missionary activities in these territories. Ellen G. White later made use of J. N. Andrews's research in her influential work, *The Great Controversy*.[14] Until recent years, the Coptic church of Ethiopia observed the seventh-day Sabbath. At the same time, adherents of Sabbath-keepers had been growing in Ghana, probably several other African countries as well, because of the Sabbath roots in Africa which run deep, both in Scripture and history. Africans were familiar with a seventh-day Sabbath prior to the coming of Adventist missionaries in Africa.

Adventist missionaries might have been aware that their work in Africa could be promising because of the Sabbath message which was already present. European Adventist missionaries, perhaps partly encouraged by the findings of Andrews, came out en masse to travel to Africa, some as

[13] Charles Bradford, *Sabbath Roots: The African Connections* (Washington, DC: Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1999); Bekele Heye, *The Sabbath in Ethiopia: An Exploration of Christian Roots* (Lincoln, NE: Center for Creative Ministry, 2003).

[14] Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 63, 577–578.

commissioned missionaries, some as independent missionaries, and others as medical or gospel ministers. As a result of such an effervescence of the transforming power of the gospel in the hearts of Adventists in Europe and other parts of the western world in 1878, seven missionaries, led by D. A. Robinson and C. L. Boyd, were sent to South Africa. And a few years later, several corners of Africa, from the south to the north, the east to west, were entered by Western missionaries amidst struggles linked to colonialism.

2.1 East African Experience

In East Africa, among the first Adventist missionaries who were sent in what was then called Abyssinian mission covering territories such as the Italian colony of Eritrea, Abyssinia, and British and Italian Somaliland were the following: E. Lorntz. H. Steiner, and P. N. Lindegren. The mission was opened as early as the year 1907 and was led by H. Steiner.[15] On a parallel note, in British East Africa, the first mission was organized in 1912.[16] The first missionaries entered in 1900. Several missionaries of different backgrounds were sent to head and work in different stations among which were the following stations: Gendia, Kisumu; Karungu, Kisumu; Rusinga, Kisumu; Kaniadodo, Kisumu; and Kamagambo, Kisumu. A. A. Carscallen was the director of the British East Africa mission. The Secretary was B. L. Morse. The two were assisted by J. D. Baker and Peter Nyambo. Carscallen and Peter Nyambo, an indigenous evangelist from Nyasaland who graduated from Newbold College in England, settled in Kenya among the Luo tribe in 1906.[17]

German East Africa (GEA) was established in 1903.[18] The mission was divided into two major fields. The first was South Pare Mission which was led by B. Ohme, who resided in Post Shirati, Victoria. He was assisted by E. Kotz who settled in Friedenstal. These missionaries worked in cooperation with other licentiate missionaries such as A. C. Enns, H. Drangmeister, M. Poenig, and M. Kunze. The second mission field referred to as Victoria Nyanza Mission was led by the following: J. Persson, W. Kolling, F. W.

15 For details, see General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook 1910* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1910).

16 See the yearbooks for the years 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1915 of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics.

17 See the yearbooks for the years 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1915 of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics.

18 See the yearbooks for the years 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1915 of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics.

Vasenius, K. Kaltenhauser, F. Winter, H. Palm, O. Wallath, E. Dominick, V. Toppenberg, R. Stein, W. Seiler, F. Bornath, R. Munzig, B. Schurich, and L. Aberle.[19]

A. C. Enns and J. Ehlers from Germany arrived in Tanganyika in November 1903; they chose to reside in the southern part of the Pare mountain among the Wapare community.[20] By this time, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany was at the heart of European Adventism. L. R. Conradi, the regional president, supported foreign missionary activities. Following the expansion of the German empire in East Africa, German missionaries were in accordance with the colonial structuration of missionary activities. The GEA included the countries of Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania.

The east coast of Africa was first under the control of the Portuguese in Mozambique, the British in British East Africa and British Somaliland, and the Germans in the territory of GEA. Also, the Italians were very active in Italian Somaliland and Eritrea and the French in the French Somaliland. All these imperial forces, while in one way or the other played significant roles in the advancement of mission stations, hampered in many ways the progress of Seventh-day Adventism in Africa, especially after World Wars I and II. Germans were dispossessed of all African territories after these wars. Although they were committed in the progress of Seventh-day Adventism, governmental politics influenced the religious life of Christian churches. The effect of World War I and the defeat of the Germans meant that they had to retreat from the areas where they occupied. Most of the stations previously occupied by the Germans were incorporated into the British East African missions.[21]

2.2. West African Experience

The West African mission known at the time as Gold Coast Mission was organized in December 1913. It was occupied by the British and the French. The mission was based in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Among the pioneering missionaries who worked under the governance of British and French authorities included the following: K. G. Rudolph, Mrs. Rudolph, E. L. Sanford, Mrs. Sanford, D. V. Hale, Mrs. Hale, and G. T. Kerr, Mrs. Kerr, Riggs, J. M. Hyatt, Mrs. Hyatt, D. C. Babcock, Mrs. D. C. Babcock, T. M. French, C.

[19] See the yearbooks for the years 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1915 of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics.

[20] See the yearbooks for the years 1911, 1913, and 1915 of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics.

[21] Geoffrey Mbwana, "Like a Mustard Seed: Adventism in the East-Central Africa Division," *Adventist World* (April, 2014): 24–25.

E. F. Thompson, J. A. Fife, J. B. Kenney, W. H. Lewi, D. C. R. Bergström, and several others.

In most parts of Nigeria for instance, Adventism just like other Christian denominations, was not welcomed because of some political reasons. "Christian missionaries were forbidden to establish in any emirate by the British government which signed an agreement to that effect in the first half of the first decade of the twentieth century when the British took over the emirates."[22] When the British government conquered Northern Nigeria, Sir F. Lugard was made the British protectorate from January 1, 1900. Perhaps, for the purpose of peaceful governance, "Lugard signed a treaty of non-interference with the Muslim religion."[23] Even though the meaning of non-interference was intensively discussed by Christians and later governmental authorities, Moslems understood it simply to mean that Christian missions were not to be implanted among the emirs' territories. In the northern parts of Nigeria, it was obvious that Islamic religion posed a threat to the implantation of Adventist missions. In Southern and Western Nigeria, African traditional religion, especially the Yoruba's worship of pagan gods, constituted obstacles to accepting Seventh-day Adventism, while the eastern part of the country, the Igboland, was fertile to Adventist message.

2.3. Southern African Experience

Southern Africa was occupied by the British. Therefore, British missionaries were dominantly added to several American missionaries. The South African Union was organized in 1902 and was led by the following: R. C. Porter, H. J. Edmed, M. C. Sturdevant, F. B. Armitage, S. C. Austen, R. C. Honey, J. C. Baumann, and J. V. Wilson. These individuals were assisted by several others such as Mrs. M. C. Sturdevant based in Solusi Mission, Bulawayo, Rhodesia; W. H. Anderson, based in SDA Mission, Pemba, Northwest Rhodesia; W. G. Walston, based in Somabula Mission, Gwelo, Rhodesia; M. E. Emmerson in Kolo Mission; Mrs. F. B. Armitage in Maranatha Mission, Trumpeters near Grahamstown, Cape Colony; Miss E. Edie in Victoria St., Germiston, Transvaal, South Africa; and R. Moko and D. Nek in Cape Colony, South Africa; among several other individuals.[24]

[22] D. T. Agboola, *Seventh-day Adventist History in West Africa (1888–1988): A Mustard Seed* (Ilishan Remo, Nigeria: Author, 2003), 43.

[23] Ayuba Mavalla, *Conflict Transformation: Churches in the Face of Structural Violence in Northern Nigeria* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 37.

[24] See the yearbooks for the years 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1915 of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics.

The most difficult social reality that made the success of Adventism in South Africa very unlikely was racism. Adventist institutions in South Africa accommodated racial discrimination. At Claremont Union College, today Helderberg College established in 1893, the population was almost entirely white until 1974. At Plumstead Sanitarium, opened in 1903, a ward was built to accommodate the blacks only. According to Jeff Crocombe, "From 1909, the Seventh-day Adventist church [in South Africa] also operated a separate school for Black students. The institution operated under various names and in various locations—most recently as Bethel College. It was also grossly under-resourced, understaffed, and underfunded."[25] By the 1960s in South Africa, political struggles added to cultural and racial differences became defining marks of the rising Seventh-day Adventism in the African continent. The church administrative structures were divided following racial lines; churches and members were also separated based on races. Apartheid was ubiquitous in the Christian church setting in South Africa. As Matsobane J. Manala writes: "Apartheid, as a church-supported and legislated reality, brought not only separation between the South African people but also serious and sustained oppression and suffering of the black masses in their country of birth."[26] Fortunately, Adventism kept growing amidst gloomy discriminatory practices, defying thus the difficult days of its beginning in the African continent.

2.4. North African Experience

In Northern Africa, the Egypt mission was opened in 1902. The territories for this mission field covered Egypt and Sudan and were under the direction of French authorities. The mission was led by the following team of missionaries: G. Keough, A. A. Elshaheed, O. Bezirdjian, and Wilhelmina Muller, among other key missionaries. The Algerian Mission was organized in 1905. The following were the missionaries there: P. Girard, W. Ruf, R. Birckel, R. Dunkel, and Madeleine Lafourcade. Moroccan Mission was organized in 1928 and had the following as missionaries: W. Fuchs, J. J. Hecketsweiler, A. Rebsomen, and Y. Roullet. The Tunis Mission was organized in 1937 with the help of the following western missionaries: R. Meyer,

[25] Jeff Crocombe, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Southern Africa—Race Relations and Apartheid" (paper presented at the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians meeting, Oakwood College, Huntsville, AL, 19–22 April 2007), 2.

[26] Matsobane J. Manala, "The Impact of Christianity on Sub-Saharan Africa," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 39.2 (2013): 11.

Maria Renouard, R. Dauoeng, R. Esposito, C. Galdeano, M. Khalbous and R. Senty.[27]

In North Africa, the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had been very slow due to the strong presence of Islamic manifestation. The Oriental Union Mission was formed in as early as 1901 and it included Egypt. W. H. Wakeham was the director of this union mission. The headquarters was in Cairo, Egypt. From 1907 to 1916, the union mission expanded to include some few European countries.[28] It was renamed the Levant Union under the direct supervision of the General Conference.

In Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Libya, the few Seventh-day Adventists found in these countries were directly attached to the European Union or Division. In 1886, there was a small group of Sabbath-keepers of French and Spanish nationalities in Algeria, but they immigrated to South America. Seventh-day Adventism disappeared at that time and reappeared only in 1905.[29] The growth of the church in this part of the world had been more difficult. As Spalding wrote: "But all North Africa, having in the seventh century succumbed to the Arab conquest, is dominated by the Moslem religion."[30] Spalding added: "North Africa, by virtue of its Mohammedan character, was linked to the always difficult mission to the Moslems of the East; only in Egypt was there appreciable progress, and that far less than in Africa below."[31] Seventh-day Adventism in North Africa remains scant and unsettled because of the resistance of Islamic people. While the east, the south, and the west have made progress by confronting their difficult past and converting hundreds of thousands to the Adventist faith, Adventism in North Africa remains very precarious even today. The total membership in North Africa is less than 2500 as of 2019. After 120 years of Adventism in North Africa, the hope of tremendous achievement may remain an unrealistic dream.[32]

During this colonial period, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was not ignorant of directives dictated by the colonizers for their colonies. The

[27] General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, *Yearbook 1950*, 221, 222.

[28] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1911, and 1912–1920.

[29] Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of the Seventh-day Adventists: A Revision of the Books Captains of the Host and Christ's Last Legion* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1961), 4:93.

[30] Ibid., 4:8.

[31] Ibid.

[32] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1911, 1912–1920, and 2018-2019.

General Conference Executive committee, in a letter to the church local authorities in Tanganika (today Tanzania) wrote: "We are one church with brethren in every land who are bound by the gospel principle to be loyal subjects wherever they may be, and every phrasing used in speaking of international affairs should be scanned to avoid any use of words that might be misinterpreted. As public speakers and writers, we should choose our words so that no one can mistake what we say as lacking in respect for civil governors or rulers."[33] Adventist missionaries were admonished to be respectful of civil or governmental authorities and to abide by the laws imposed by the imperial powers that regulated lives in the colonies without contravening instructions given by the Home Missionary Board as referring to the identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The committee pointed out that "our missionaries in Tanganyika will relate themselves to political questions in such a manner as to fully satisfy both the government authorities and our home Board."[34] Adventist missionaries were concerned about their missionary work than their involvement in political affairs of the countries where they worked.

Also, when the missionaries came, they did little contextualization. Differences in worldview were the major reason. Gorden R. Doss writes:

> Many early missionaries assumed that African Traditional Religion did not need to be understood or engaged in dialogue because it would disappear with the acceptance of Christianity. Some missionaries did not see African Traditional Religion as a "Religion" at all because it often lacked features they associated with religion. There were no written scriptures, defined doctrines, ordained priesthoods, or sacred architecture. If African Traditional Religion was not seen as a religion, engaging it in dialogue was not possible. The common assumption was that these "pagan superstitions" would simply fade away as people became Christians and adopted a "real" religion. Africa was a tabula rasa (clean slate) upon which Christian mission would write.[35]

African experience was part of the "flaw of the excluded middle."[36] According to Paul G. Hiebert, the cosmos is divided into three different

[33] General Conference Executive Committee, April 10, 1939, p. 1112, General Conference Archives, accessed April 14, 2021, https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1939-04.pdf.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Gorden R. Doss, "Adventist Responses through Evangelism and Discipleship," in *Adventist Mission in Africa: Challenges and Prospects* (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2011), 49.

[36] Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," *Missiology* 10:1 (1982): 35. On some important works dealing with the topic, see Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in*

spheres: the high or upper, lower, and the middle zones. The first constitutes the realm of the ultimate, the supreme, and Creator God. This is an invisible zone. The lower is the visible one, inhabited by physical human beings. The last zone is the realm of spirits, demons, ancestors, and angels; it is also an unseen zone like the upper one. African Traditional Religions operated in the world of the lower sphere through the life of prayer, sacrifices, and meditations. Missionaries who came to Africa in the early 1900s considered the African Traditional Religion as entirely "irreligious." As Africans were asked to join Adventism, no heed was given to their religious African background as to contextualize the Adventist message. Early missionaries who pioneered the Adventist message in Africa failed to do it. Efforts to readjust their legacy have not yet succeeded as the church is not yet ready for a critical contextualization.

Thus, amidst the spirit of discouragement, Seventh-day Adventist missionaries were also confronted with social prejudice due to colonialism. Some Christian missionaries advanced the agenda of the colonial administrators in the oppression of Africans.[37] Christianity was a subtle tool in the hands of the colonialists. The primary mission of the colonies was to civilize the Africans whom they thought were heathen and pagans.[38] Perhaps this was the reason why an Adventist, E. W. Dunbar, reported the resolution of a conference on Christian mission in Africa held at the University of Chicago, February 15-18, that missionaries were to go to Africa "not to westernize but to Christianize the people."[39] Although not all missionaries were bent on seeking the interests of the colonialists, Africans viewed them as people of exploitation. This view was once again due to the past linked to the slave trade carried out the Western world.

Adventist missionaries who came to Africa in the 19th century were caught in the context of a serious consternation of the whites in Africa. Although they came with genuine intention to preach Jesus to Africans, the timing of their coming was not the best. They were viewed as helpmates in the cause of colonial enterprises. Thus, they were mistaken for the

Human Context: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009); Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994); Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986).

[37] Aquino de Braganpa and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., *The African Liberation Reader: The Anatomy of Colonialism* (London: Zed, 1982), 1:169.

[38] Ibid.

[39] General Conference Executive Committee, February 18, 1960, p. 529, General Conference Archives, accessed April 14, 2021, https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1960-02.pdf.

colonizing forces in Africa. European countries viewed them not as missionaries per se but as subjects loyal to the cause of colonialism. It was not a surprise that, in Africa, in the pre-independence era, Christianity spread following colonial structures. The missionaries taught the Western religion under the aegis of imperial overseer. Christianity was viewed as a tool in the hand of the imperial master. But when the imperial masters withdrew, Africans made sense of Christianity and began overflowing the Christian churches.[40]

Because of prejudices and attitudes developed as to resist the exploitation of Africans by the Westerners upon the arrival of Adventist missionaries in Africa, some populations expressed their hostility towards them, rendering the early works difficult.[41] It was against these tumultuous beginnings that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa was able to rise to become a respected and emerging denomination in Africa. The denomination spread in all the junctions of Africa, reaching the north, the east, the south, and central parts of Africa, including the Portuguese-speaking countries such as Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Equatorial Guinea (former colonies of the Portuguese Empire). It is thus noteworthy to sketch the expansion of the church after its difficult beginnings.

But how did colonialism influence Adventist mission? The answer is complex as it still difficult to collect data from different countries in Africa as to how colonialism was a strong factor that reshaped the vision of Christian mission. Adventist missionaries, one can believe, were victims of circumstances connected to colonial vestiges at the time of their arrival in Africa. They did their best to portray the life of Christ, they also headed to instructions from the mission board and the counsels of Ellen G. White as to see Africans as their own brethren. But the popular account of colonial historiography today depicts an intricate relationship between colonial masters and all the missionaries of all denominations. The colonies, in most instances, wanted to rewrite the evil past shaped by the slave trade. They wanted the missionaries to help them portray a positive image of Western

40 A helpful study that provides a comprehensive impact of indigenous contribution to African Christianity is Peggy Brock, "New Christians as Evangelists," in *Missions and Empires*, 132–152.

41 Interview with Yvonne J. Öster, April 2014. She reported that R. Bergström had a difficult beginning because the local population was hostile to the whites. Also from my personal interactions with colleagues, it is evident that Adventist missionaries in Africa faced hostility from local populations during the early stages of Adventist missions in Africa. This hostility is mostly explained by the fact that Africans were responding to a popular view that the white man was at that time associated to the evil of slave trade.

countries in Africa, erasing, if possible, the grudges regenerated by the most dreadful evil in human history from the collective African conscience. Some missionaries were accomplices of their colonies and helped underdevelop Africa by focusing on its mineral resources through "re-drawing its boundaries, re-shaping its political arrangements and structure and considerably re-ordering its economic orientation and its vital institutions."[42] On the other hand, the colonial masters were unhappy of the missionaries' activities which consisted in educating the Africans, because "the colonial administrators saw education as strategic and key to changing the consciousness of the people. They projected that an educated class would be very problematic to govern, at the very least, and would have the capacity to jeopardize their continued stay in the territories."[43] The missionaries were interested in spreading the gospel; therefore, they sought to offer formal education to Africans even though the colonial masters did not appreciate the idea. At the end, both the missionaries and the colonial masters worked together and maintained a working relationship that was diplomatic and tactical. Adventism in Africa reflected the pattern of such complex relationship. In the French colonies, for instance, the missionaries operated under the supervision of France. By the 1960s, as the missionaries came to withdraw from Africa, they were appreciated by the French government for their contribution in working in their colonies. An Adventist missionary, R. Bergström from Sweden who worked in Cameroon, was given a medal called Chevalier de l'Ordre de l'Étoile Noire, translated in English as Knight of the Black Star Order, by the French authorities in Paris in 1954.[44] Bergström received this medal in "recognition of his outstanding contribution . . . in French Cameroon."[45] This single example explains how Adventist missionaries were viewed by the imperial forces; whether British, Belgian, Portuguese, or Spanish.

42 Chukwudi A. Njoku, "The Missionary Factor in African Christianity, 1884–1914," in *African Christianity: An African Story*, ed. Ogbu U. Kalu (Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 2007), 218.

43 Ibid., 253–54.

44 Interview with Yvonne J. Öster, April 2014.

45 Yvonne J. Öster, personal communication to the author, December 29, 2020. See also Gösta Wiklander, *De kallade honom Baba Duniary 'Landsfader'* (Stockholm: SDA Media, 2006), 149–51.

3. Seventh-day Adventism's Administrative Colonial Structures

One of the factors that can inform us about colonial heritage and its influence upon Seventh-day Adventism in Africa is the administrative structure of the church in its early years and even up to recently. African territories were attached to different European fields in line with their colonial structure. Missionaries, who left the European countries, would logically travel to the colonies from their home countries. It was in this line that Adventist missionaries who left Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and France were deliberately supported by the political leaders of their hometown to take their gospel first to their colonies. Each of the African territories was attached to a specific Seventh-day Adventist Church division with respect to colonial links as the church grew in the continent.

In the early 1910s as missions were founded in the southern, northern, eastern, and western parts of Africa, they were first attached to two specifics fields: the South African Union and the European unions, specifically between the British and the Germans unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.[46]

The South African Union covered territories such as Cape Colony, Natal-Transvaal Barotseland (Rhodesia), Basutoland (Kolo), Malamulo (Nyasaland), Maranatha (Kafir), Umkupuvula (Rhodesia), Solusi (Bulawayo), and Somabula (Gwelo). Other African fields were attached to the European Union territories that are part of Africa but not included in Rhodesia, British Central Africa, and the Union of South Africa. These were the following in the 1910s: The British West Africa, British East Africa, German East Africa, Abyssinia, the Italian Colony of Eritrea, British and Somaliland, and the North African Mission.[47]

By 1930, the structure would change with the creation of the European Division in as early as 1913, with its headquarter in Hamburg, Germany.[48] Germany was the center of Adventism in Europe at the time. In 1910, it had two unions, the East German Union and the West German Union; both were organized in 1909. But as World War I broke out, Germany lost all of its colonies. German missionaries were evicted from Africa as its territories were shared between the British and the French. The Central European Division, to which most African fields were attached, was divided into three

[46] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1915.

[47] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1915.

[48] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1931, 1932, and 1933.

divisions: the central, southern, and northern divisions. At the same time, African Division was created.[49]

African territories formerly attached to European Union were now attached to two European divisions in line with the colonial links: the Northern European Division and the Southern European Division. The Northern European Division, organized in 1928, covered a large territory of African fields such as Abyssinia; Eritrea; Kenya; Uganda; Tanganyika; Anglo-Egyptian; Sudan; British Somaliland; French Somaliland and Italian Somaliland; Zanzibar; Pemba; French Guinea; Ivory Coast; Niger; Dahomey; Upper Volta; French Sudan; that portion of French Equatorial Africa north to Lybia and Algeria; Togo; Fernando Po; Annobon; Sierra Leone; Gambia; and the East African Division, Ethiopian Union missions, and detached missions: Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, and Nigeria.[50]

The Southern European Division, organized in 1928, supervised the following African fields: Algeria, Tunis, Morocco, Tangier, Senegal, Mauritania, French Equatorial Africa, Madagascar, Comoro Islands, Mauritius and dependencies, Seychelles Islands, and the North African Union missions. The detached fields were the following: Equatorial African Mission entered in 1928, Cameroon, Ubangi-Shari, Middle Congo, Gabon, Spanish Guinea, Fernando Po, St. Thomas, and the neighboring islands, with the mission headquarter in Yaounde. The mission was led by the following team: M. Raspal, Z. Yeretzian, B. P. Feuilloley and their wives.[51]

The African Union was organized into a division in as early as 1920. It covered the following African territories: the Union of South Africa, British Bechuanaland, Southwest Africa, Portuguese East Africa, Belgian Congo, Angola, Ruanda (now Rwanda), Urundi (now Burundi), Nyasaland (now Malawi), British Bechuanaland Protectorate, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).[52]

By the 1950s, the structure would change but it still showcased the struggles with colonial alignment. The African Division became Southern African Division. Its territories did not change but it was important to align the name of the division with the territories it covered. The name African Division appeared as if it covered all the mission fields in Africa. Such was not the case, as illustrated in the previous pages.

[49] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1920, and 1921.

[50] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1920, 1921, 1930, and 1931.

[51] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1920, 1921, 1930, and 1931.

[52] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1920, and 1921.

The administrative structures to which African territories were attached would run up to the 1970s.[53] With the winds of independence among African nations, the church structure was adjusted. The Southern African Division became Trans-African Division. It covered the following territories: the Republic of South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland South West Africa, Botswana, Rhodesia, Zambia, Malawi, Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Pemba, St. Helena comprising the South African Union Conference and Central Africa, Congo, South-East Africa, Southern Tanzania, and Zambesi unions.

The Southern European Division expanded with new African nations. From the 1970s, among others fields, the following African mission fields were attached: Algeria, Angola, Azores Islands, Canary Islands, Cape Verde Islands, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoro Islands, Congo (Brazzaville), Equatorial Guinea (Fernando-Poo and Rio Muni), Federal Republic of Cameroun, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Madeira Islands, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Portuguese Guinea, Prince Island, Reunion, Rodrigues Island, Saint Thomas Island, Senegal, Spanish Guinea, Spanish Sahara, and Tunisia.[54]

The Northern European Division by the 1960s covered, among other countries, the following African territories: Ethiopia, Eritrea, French Somali Coast and Somalia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Liberia, Togoland, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, and Dahomey and West African Union missions.

In 1970, as many European missionaries left the African mission fields in the hands of the natives, the General Conference restructured the administrative units. There was a creation of new divisions. The Eastern Africa Division was organized in 1970 and reorganized in 1981. Its territories included Ethiopia, Republic of Djibouti, Republic of Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda and then Botswana, Djibouti, Malawi, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, respectively. At the same time, the Africa-Indian Ocean Division was organized in 1980 with the following territories: Benin, Burundi, Cape Verde Islands, Central African Empire, Chad Republic, Comoro Islands, Congo Republic (Brazzaville), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Niger Republic, Nigeria, Principe, Reunion, Rodrigues, Rwanda, Sao Tome, Senegal, Seychelles Islands, Sierra Leone, Togo, United Republic of Cameroun, Upper Volta, and Zaire.

[53] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1920, and 1970.

[54] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks for the years 1910, 1920, 1970 and 1971.

These new organizations did not shake off the colonial links completely as Algeria, Angola, Azores, Canary Islands, Madeira Islands, Morocco, Mozambique, and Tunisia were attached to the Euro-Africa Division, formerly known as Southern European Division. The division was renamed in 1971.

The Trans-Africa Division remained unchanged with its territories. The rest of the African territories were integrated into the Eastern Africa Division, the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, and the Euro-Africa Division. The Middle East Union organized in 1970 added the Arab Republic of Egypt and Sudan mission fields to its territory. At this point, the Northern European Division was stripped off of all African territories.

From the 1980s, African territories would be reorganized mostly as a response to the growth of the church in the continent and also as a reaction to the struggles linked to racial, regional, and cultural diversities. This was an expression of struggles with Apartheid regime that motivated racial segregation. The General Conference made it an attached field for close monitoring until early 1994 when the evil of Apartheid was scrambled. By 2003, there was another organization of administrative structures. This organization was needed because of the unexpected growth in membership in East Africa and southern Africa. The whole of Africa was reorganized into a new division, shaking off completely any colonial links.[55]

Today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa shook off all colonial setbacks. Its growth has been steady and imposing. The nomenclature of Seventh-day Adventism has largely changed. Instead of Europeans coming to evangelize Africans, Africans have now taken the lead to move across Western countries where they are pastors, heads of departments in

55 East-Central Africa Division was organized with the following territories: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Republic of Djibouti, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division was organized in 2003 with the following territories: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Kerguelen Islands, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Reunion, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ascension, St. Helena, and Tristan da Cunha Islands. West-Central Africa Division was organized in 2013 with the following territories: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.
North Africa will be an integral part of an attached field to the General Conference under the name of Middle East and North Africa Union Mission. This field was organized in 2012 and reorganized in 2015. This mission field is part of the 10/40 window which is of special interest to the General Conference. It is an area largely populated by Islam with only a tiny minority of Christians.

conferences and unions, and prayer warriors in Western countries. In a way, this change was the product of early missionary activities that focused on the education and the well-being of the indigenous people in Africa.

4. Education and Medicine: Subsidiaries of Mission at the Age of Colonialism

Seventh-day Adventist missionaries in Africa, just like their colleagues in other Christian denominations, viewed educational and health institutions as a means to support and expand the advance of the gospel. Although, they did not want to interfere with the politics of the liberation of Africa from the oppression of the colonizers, they contributed largely through the training of African elites who later rebelled against their masters in the Western worlds. When they arrived in Africa, Adventist missionaries were specialists in their different fields of needs. Some were licensed ministers, some teachers, and others were medical personnel. Together they worked to prosper the mission of Seventh-day Adventist faith, preaching, teaching, and healing as a holistic approach to the divine mandate they felt they were commissioned to accomplish. Most missionaries were genuine in their activities. They had only one goal: the Christianization of Africa and the spread of the good news of Jesus's redeeming grace for all humanity. Such missionaries sought to educate Africans by all means. They demonstrated their love for Africans as their brethren in Christ. While imperial forces "tried to discourage the missionaries from doing so, until this campaign against education became increasingly untenable and impractical on their part,"[56] the missionaries continued with the education of Africans by constructing not only schools for the education of men and women but also clinics and hospitals for the treatment of Africans. It is in this light that one can better appreciate the mission schools and medical institutions founded by Adventist missionaries in Africa.

The first part of this section focuses on the impact of Adventist mission schools during the time of colonialism, while the last part examines the medical missionary work, a neglected field in the investigation of historical works.

4.1. Education

As noted earlier, a strong subsidiary branch of missionary contribution in Africa was education. Educational institutions were started and remained

[56] Njoku, "The Missionary Factor," 254.

largely in the hands of Western missionaries up to the time of independence of African nations. These endeavors were important in the development of African nations. It is less arguable to note that "when European states had barely begun to assume responsibility for public education, missionaries provided free schooling to people who had yet to grasp the benefits of literacy."[57] Missionaries built schools and invited parents to allow their children to attend and did not request for fees. They even, in the case of "British private schools," "held out inducements for parents who would allow their children to be taught."[58] It was through wise steps that missionaries succeeded to promote schools.

> Missions sought girls as pupils as well as boys and in many places introduced the first co-educational schooling. Missions were also among the first in the world to offer the services of medical practitioners free of charge. In some cases, advances made in missionary education and medicine were exported back to the mother countries. Missions figure prominently as pioneers of modern welfare states and international philanthropy.[59]

The mission schools were not viewed to be an end but as a means to achieve the ministerial work. Thus, the primary cause of founding mission schools was Christian evangelism. Mission schools even though began within the colonial setting were mostly favorable to the emancipation of Africans. These schools educated people who opposed colonialism. The schools' ideals avoided politics but created political elites who demanded freedom from the imperial powers who brought Western education to Africa. For instance, Lovedale, a missionary school in South Africa, taught T. Mbeki, who became a South African president after Mandela. S. Biko—a South African anti-Apartheid activist, African nationalist, and African socialist—went to a Catholic school. K. Nkrumah—a founding member of the Organization of African Unity, a pan-Africanist, and the first prime minister and president of Ghana—attended a Catholic mission school at H. Assini. The first mission school in Nigeria opened in 1859 well ahead of governmental schools; therefore, early politicians were trained in these Christian schools. Several missionary schools became great educational institutions in the shaping of new African nations. These leaders trained in mission schools became "ambivalent towards the missions that had nurtured them, they embraced nationalist and socialist ideologies. More often than not they ignored the mobilizing potential of the churches, preferring to

[57] Norman Etherington, "Education and Medicine," in *Missions and Empires*, 261.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

work with other institutions within civil society. If Africa had a Christian future it seemed to lie with the so-called African Independent Churches."[60]

Seventh-day Adventist missionaries followed the mainline Christian denominations in founding schools as instruments in reaching the Africans. They came at a time when much prejudice about the white people's education was largely reduced. Instead of begging Africans to join the schools they founded across the mission stations all over Africa, African chiefs and governmental authorities were the ones who invited them, in most instances, to found Adventist educational institutions in their territories. In Zambia, it was "chief Chikamatondo of Caprivi Strip who asked missionaries to establish schools in his area."[61] In Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, the emperor, was very encouraging. "The emperor and the royal family" showed their appreciation and favor to teachers and other mission workers.[62] On a special note, "Mr. and Mrs. Herbert A. Hanson, having joined the mission staff as teachers, and the emperor becoming acquainted with them, he engaged Mrs. Hanson, after the war, as the housekeeper and steward of his palace."[63] In Tanzania, the Adventist mission schools were appreciated by the government. During his visit to an Adventist school at Kihurio, the protectorate governor offered a gift of books worth US150, praising the school for its efficiency.[64]

In the West African Coast, D. C. Babcock and his collaborators founded schools among the Kiriyos people in Sierra Leone. Although there were other mission schools prior to Adventist mission in this area, the Mendi did not want to go to school. Babcock remarked, "Most of these tribes are strongly opposed to education, and if one begins to learn to read, he is marked as an enemy to his people."[65] Babcock succeeded in January 1907 to start a school that later educated hundreds of Africans who became leaders in West Africa through the mentorship of Mr. and Mrs. T. M. French of Union College, Nebraska, United States.[66] In Ghana, W. H. Lewis founded a school at Agona through the support of King N. Kwame Boakye.[67] In Nigeria, Babcock opened a school through the support of chief Oyelese, the

60 Ibid., 285–286.

61 Ndala Kayongo, "West Zambia Field," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, para. 7, https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=5D26&highlight=Zambia.

62 Spalding, *Origin and History*, 4:35.

63 Ibid.

64 Mbwana, "Like a Mustard Seed," 25.

65 D. C. Babcock, "West Africa," *Review and Herald* 83.38 (1906): 16.

66 D. C. Babcock, "West Africa," *Review and Herald* 87.2 (1910): 13.

67 Agboola, *Seventh-day Adventist History*, 23.

Baale of Erunmu, who begun to keep the Sabbath with his household.[68] In West Africa, several schools also served as real centers of evangelism. Baptisms took place among student populations as well as staff members. These other schools included the Adventist school at Cape Coast (Gold Coast, 1907), Sierra Leone Adventist School at Freetown (1907), Ghana Adventist School in Axim (1908), the Adventist school at Erunmu (Nigeria, 1914), Adventist Primary School at Divo (Ivory Coast, 1951), and Adventist College of West Africa (Nigeria, 1959; today, Babcock University). These schools also helped the Seventh-day Adventists to secure a positive reputation among Islamic communities and adherents of African Traditional Religion.

The early schools in Southern Africa were strategic in the development of Adventist missions in its early beginning in this region of Africa as well. Among the most influential were the training center at Solusi and the Adventist school at Helderberg. Solusi, for instance, was the mother of Adventist Christian schools for black African students. It was influential in training new evangelists (local pioneers). Amidst the systemic struggle of racism right at the beginning of the church in this region, these schools helped train indigenous people to learn basic leadership skills as well as the art of reading and teaching in order to bring their own brethren to Christ. They served as models to the rest of the schools (Adventist school in Blantyre, Adventist school for girls and boys, Adventist school in Malamulo, training school in Malamulo, training school in Antananarivo, and Rusango Secondary School).

In East Africa, just like in Southern Africa, schools played a significant role in educating people in order to spread the Adventist message. As a matter of fact, Tanzania where the Adventist school was established in 1903 has had a steady progress in membership. Today, it has a considerable number of Seventh-day Adventists. The Adventist school at Pare Mission was at the heart of reaching souls in East Africa. This early school led to the rise of other schools in the region such as Akaki Adventist School (Ethiopia), Adventist Teacher Training College at Suji (Tanzania), Nurse Training Center at Kendu (Kenya), Kamgambo Adventist High School (Kenya), and several other schools including Adventist Nursing School at Gimbie (in Ethiopia) and University of Eastern Africa in Baraton, Kenya.[69]

[68] Ibid., 24.

[69] See Seventh-day Adventist yearbooks 1903–1980; Chiemela N. Ikonne, "Adventist Responses to Mission Challenges in Africa through Education and Leadership," in *Adventist Mission in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2011), 75–98; Delbert Baker, ed., *Adventists in Africa: A Tradition of Progress* (Silver Spring, MD: Review & Herald, 1988);

In Central Africa as well, missionaries built schools as a means of evangelism. They built Adventist Gitwe Mission School in Rwanda in 1921, followed by the Adventist schools at Nanga-Eboko in Cameroon in 1928, and much later other schools followed. All these schools were strategically placed. Today, Rwanda has the highest number of Seventh-day Adventists in Central Africa. Among many other reasons for the growth of the church in this country, one should not ignore the impact of early educational institutions. They served as real centers of mission, evangelism, and transformation of lives. In the same perspective, early Adventist educational institutions had a huge impact on the growth of Adventism in Cameroon. They helped popularize the church and polished the image of the church among many other competing denominations at the time of the implantation of Adventist mission in Cameroon.

Rooted in the Adventist philosophy of education that stressed the importance of not only head knowledge but also the transformation of heart, Adventist missions in Africa at the age of colonialism constructed several schools throughout the continent. Altogether, Adventist schools branded a favorable image of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Mission schools such as Solusi in Zimbabwe and Adventist Seminary of West Africa in Nigeria were among the accepted educational institutions of Africa in the immediate post-colonial era. They facilitated the making of new elites in modern Africa. Many governmental officers were trained in Adventist mission schools. Dr. John L. Nkomo who was the Vice-president of the Republic of Zimbabwe (2009-2013), Ude Oko Chukwu who is Governor of Abia State in Nigeria, Enyinnaya H. Abaribe who is the Senate Minority Leader in Nigeria, Charles Ndongo who is the Director General of Cameroon Radio Television, among several other important political figures in Africa, studied in Adventist institutions. These officers helped not only popularize the Seventh-day Adventist Church by encouraging their children to join Adventist educational systems but also spoke positively of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For instance, in Nigeria, Seventh-day Adventism registered a profound impact through its educational institution, Babcock University.[70] Most Christian churches in Africa promoted formal education, vocational training, and the study of the indigenous languages. Seventh-day Adventist missionaries followed in this traditional outlining. They collaborated with local pioneers whom they trained in languages to assist them to spread the gospel. This step was important because it opened the door for the

K. Owusu-Mensah, *Ghana Seventh-day Adventism: A History*, vol. 1 (Accra, Ghana: The Advent, 2005); David O. Babalola, *Sweet Memories of Our Pioneers* (Lagos, Nigeria: Emaphire Reprographics, 2001).

70 Ayodeji Olukoju, "Christianity and the Development of the Nigerian State," in *Nigerian Peoples and Cultures* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Davidson, 1997), 141.

Africans to read the Bible and translate it into their dialects to make sense of it.[71] This initiative opened up also "scholarly interest in indigenous history and languages."[72]

4.2. Medicine

The second strong subsidiary branch that helped in the implantation of Adventist mission across Africa was the health institutions. Although Adventist medical missionaries were not trained in healing some of the most indigenous illnesses, they were nonetheless far better than the traditional African doctors they encountered. When they arrived in Africa, they suffered from deadly diseases, and several of them died in the mission fields. Many of them would have followed the practical wisdom of Livingstone, a Scottish missionary who "did not hesitate to take medicines recommended by Africans with local knowledge when he fell ill. Nor did Livingstone present himself as an emissary of European well-being to African misery. He believed that the people he encountered in Central Africa enjoyed generally better health than the urban masses he had known in Britain."[73] Medical advances in public health were basically recent. Antisepsis and antibiotics were not yet available in Africa. In most instances,

> medical services for non-Europeans concentrated on mines and plantations. Others relied, as they always had, on traditional healers and remedies. Thanks to David Livingstone and Albert Schweitzer, Christian missions acquired an outsize reputation as conveyors of European medical science. Furthermore, it was certainly true that "throughout most of the colonial period and throughout most of Africa, Christian missions of one sort or another provided vastly more medical care for African communities than did colonial states."[74]

Missionaries and Africans had to rely on supernatural healings. Missions confided their cases of illness to God and submitted to Christ their

71 See Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity* (Oxford: Regnum Press, 1992); Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2009); Lamin Sanneh, "Bible Translation and Ethnic Mobilization in Africa," in *New Paradigms for Bible Study: The Bible in the Third Millennium*, ed. Robert M. Fowler, Edith Blumhofer, and Fernando F. Segovia (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004).

72 Olukoju, "Christianity," 142.

73 Norman Etherington, "Missionary Doctors and African Healers in Mid-Victorian South Africa," *South African Historical Journal* 19.1 (1987): 78.

74 Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 56.

burdens linked to deadly parasites. The One who healed the lepers and raised Lazarus from the dead was the hope of missionaries.

Adventist missionaries promoted the health message as early as the start of the Adventist message. They taught that a vegetarian diet was encouraging and most important for alleviating human suffering. Adventist missionaries— whether medical professionals, gospel ministers, or other missionaries trained in engineering or other fields—preached the same message with regard to health. With their commitment to the Adventist mission added to the basic knowledge of the Adventist health system, Adventist missionaries were not afraid to enter the most difficult parts of Central Africa. It was believed by the British Empire that "in the early years a 'call' to tropical Africa or South Asia could be a death sentence. Out of eighty-nine [protestant] missionaries sent to Sierra Leone between 1804 and 1825, fifty-four died and fourteen returned home in broken health."[75] It was also reported that "sixty-two of 225 missionaries sent by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society between 1835 and 1907 left their bones on West African soil."[76] Yet, Seventh-day Adventist missionaries entered with full passion. In 1912, a medical center was opened for the west coast in Sierra Leone under the supervision of Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Aldrich, both were trained nurses.[77] Later, other medical missionaries, such as Dr. E. W. Meyer, reinforced the medical personnel.[78]

Trained in Western medicine, Adventist medical professionals were able to achieve great success in fighting against local-based diseases. G. and E. Kerr, medical missionaries in West Africa, healed between twenty to twenty-five people each day. Dudley U. Hale, the superintendent of the Advent mission in this area, reported, "With the use of natural remedies, which the Lord has given, they were able to benefit many who had little success with the regular doctors."[79] Health institutions became windows to entering even dangerous areas with high Islamic concentrations. By the 1930s and 1940s, the government and the emirs in Northern Nigeria called upon the missionary societies, including Adventist medical missionaries, to confront leprosy in their areas. Such a medical call provided an avenue

75 Etherington, "Education and Medicine," 276.

76 Ibid. See also Andrew Porter, "An Overview, 1700–1914," in *Mission and Empires*, 40–63.

77 Babalola, *Sweet Memories of Pioneers*, 20.

78 Ibid., 21.

79 Dudley U. Hale, "Cape Coast, West Africa," *Review and Herald* 73.24 (1896): 378.

to preaching the gospel to the lepers who took the good news to people in their communities.[80]

In Tanzania, just like in other African countries, Adventist medical missionaries transformed people's lives. K. B. Elineema documented the work of Dr. F. W. Vasenius, a Scandinavian Adventist medical doctor. He reported that Vasenius worked at Ikizu mission station in 1912, "where he gave treatment to 800 people.... These treated in malaria, intestinal parasites, bronchitis problems, amoeba, and tapeworm."[81] A. F. Bull, another British missionary doctor who worked at Suji from as early as 1922, "never travelled without a box of medicine and medical equipment. He also had a dental equipment all along, giving treatment and extracting teeth."[82] These humanitarian services prospered the Adventist message. People became receptive to the gospel and more of them came for continuous healing. In 1952, wrote Elineema,

> a leper colony with thirteen dwelling buildings was established in Kasulu. The leprosarium was assisted by the German Adventist donation of Shs.20,000in 1960. In 1973, 3100 lepers were registered in Kasulu and it was estimated that Kigoma Region had a total of 5,000 lepers. Many of these lepers had been healed.[83]

Missionary "clinical" healing impacted the local cultures and assisted in the spreading of the Adventist message. Even people who were indifferent to the Adventist message could not be indifferent and hostile to medical missionary services offered by Adventist health institutions. Through this strategy, the local people became consumers of the Adventist message. They had to unlearn that diseases were linked to their ancestors' curses. Also, Adventist missionaries believed that God was the source of miraculous healing and that the doctors and their centers were instruments in the hand of God for the salvation of sinners. They attributed their own healing and miraculous assistance to the love of Jesus, the Master Healer.[84] Thus, Adventist medical institutions were established across Africa with the intent of providing not only healing in the footsteps of Jesus but also religious conversions to the patients. Early Adventist hospitals and health centers

[80] Agboola, *Seventh-day Adventist History*, 43.

[81] K. B. Elineema, "Development of the Adventist Church in Tanzania" in *The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Church in East Africa*, ed. E. Elineema (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: E. Elineema, 1992), 50.

[82] Ibid. See also A. F. Bull, "A Trip in Upare, East Africa," *The Missionary Worker* 32.18 (1927): 2.

[83] Elineema, "Development of Adventist Church," 51.

[84] Agboola, *Seventh-day Adventist History*, 14, 22, 44.

included the medical center at Solusi opened in 1894, Adventist clinic in Sierra Leone (1912), Kanye Adventist Hospital in Botswana (1920), Malamulo Hospital in Malawi (1927), Kendu Hospital in Kenya (1925), and Heri Hospital (1949) in Tanzania. These hospitals treated all kinds of diseases ranging from malaria and leprosy to several other diseases.

In Cameroon, a Swedish missionary named R. Bergström whose nurse wife, H. Bergström, was sent home shortly after contracting malaria, was not discouraged to go back to Cameroon after his wife succumbed to death in 1953.[85] He married a new wife, E. Heilskov-Joasson a physiotherapist, and came back to Cameroon with her to continue the work started by his former wife. "Healing the sick broke down prejudice against the White strangers."[86] The Adventist clinic in Dogba was established in the days of H. Bergstrom. Benghazi Adventist Hospital in Libya, "Vie et Santé" Clinic in Algeria, and Tunis Dispensary in Tunisia likewise granted great medical care to people in Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia. The impact of such medical centers in the healing and transformation of lives was unparalleled in the regions where they were located until the 1990s when more sophisticated hospitals were built.

5. Impact on Socioeconomic Life

A profound implication of educational literacy in the early Christian missions was that adults learned not only to read and study the Bible in their local languages but also produced popular local Adventist hymns in local languages. Some of these hymns were translations from the missionaries' booklets but others were original creations of the local pioneers as they expressed their longing for the return of Christ whom they heard about, of the Christ who would terminate their sufferings.[87] These hymns also embodied the message of the Adventist faith. This tradition of hymns, which is still visible in many Adventist Churches across Africa, is a contribution to African culture and literacy.

85 Yvonne J. Öster, "Early Adventist Missions from Scandinavia," in *Contours of European Adventism: Issues in the History of the Denomination on the Old Continent*, ed. Stefan Höschele and Chigemezi N. Wogu (Friedensau, Germany: Institute of Adventist Studies, 2020), 65.

86 Ibid.

87 An example is hymn 18 "Duniyaru Ndu Mere." Église Adventiste du Septième Jour au Nord Cameroun, "Duniyaru Ndu Mere," in *Deftere Gimmi Be Fulfuldé* (Maroua, Cameroun: Fédération Des Églises Adventiste Du Septième Jour, n.d.), 13. The song is an expression of a longing for the soon coming of Christ.

Vocational training was also significant. The missionaries helped the local people to produce massive architectural buildings that attracted the love of Africans. In Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Cameroon, and other African countries, magnificent constructions were erected by Adventist missionaries. The introduction of brick and the Western style of construction had a huge influence on local architecture. Many public constructions followed the pattern of the mission buildings or edifices.

In a historical setting of constant conflicts and abusive behaviors in the family milieu, Adventist ministry found a prolific ground. It brought healing and responsible behaviors among the people, something that attracted several people to the Adventist faith. The role of Adventist Development Relief Agency with its humanitarian focus of giving food to the needy, assisting to educate the vulnerable children, and providing shelter for the homeless reinforced Adventist doctrinal preaching of adopting the ministry approach of Jesus Christ. These efforts to relieve the suffering of Africans drew positive attention from non-Adventists across the continent.

With regards to the economic lives of Africans, missionaries helped develop massive agricultural training to increase the production of crops. Nearly all the missionaries who came to Africa were interested in the development of agriculture for the well-being of their parishioners. They often financed the production of corn, cassava, rice, and other local products in Africa.

Thus, Adventist missionaries were agents of change in African societies. They labored for the spiritual as well as physical well-being of Africans. Such a missionary approach created a positive impression in the minds of their followers.

6. Conclusions

The relationship between colonialism and Seventh-day Adventist mission is complex to evaluate. Adventist missionaries came to Africa at a time when the continent was eyeballed by Westerners for its riches and wealth in mineral resources. Western countries were also competing to expand their hegemonies and were consolidating and searching for colonies in Africa. Most missionary activities during the early nineteenth century up to the last quarter of the twentieth century were caught up in the quandary of colonial discourse.

Seventh-day Adventism had to wrestle with realities linked to colonial vestige to expand the Adventist mission in Africa. While Adventist missionaries were genuine in taking the gospel to Africans, they nonetheless had to follow the colonial protocol that imposed the respect of norms and regulations set by colonial empires. This reality meant that, at large,

missionaries were preferably sent to the colonies from the empires to which they belonged. Consequently, Adventist mission in Africa grew following the line of colonial attachment up the late twentieth century. This connection was important in the sense that it produced a positive impact in terms of education and medicine, two branches of gospel evangelism. These subsidiaries prepared the way for Adventism in Africa to shake off the precarious beginning to emerge as a competitive denomination in Africa today. They also largely paved the way for new evangelists whose zeal gave a new touch to the legacy of Western missionaries.